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**The Cornered Bear: The August 2008 War in Georgia as the
culmination of Russia's Western Security Dilemma**

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by

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my wife Mandy and my five children, who have endured the countless days with me glued to my computer, and who continue to provide the inspiration for every aspect of my life.

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Abstract

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In 2008 Russia surprised the West by going to war with Georgia. While several analyses have pointed to separate actions by NATO and the West as having influenced the 2008 war, this paper endeavors to show that the combined actions of the West and NATO since the fall of the Soviet Union created a security dilemma for Russia. Because the West refused to properly acknowledge and address Russia's dilemma, the West inadvertently created the conditions which led to the culmination of Russia's security dilemma in the form of an invasion of Georgia. Russia's war with Georgia was less an attempt to protect Russian citizens and prevent atrocities as it was a rebuttal of Western actions. This thesis examines the security dilemma and cooperation theories as presented by Dr. Robert Jervis, and looks specifically at Western-Russian relations relating to three spheres: NATO expansion and Western marginalization of Russia, Western unilateral and extra-U.N. military aggression, and Western anti-ballistic missile defense initiatives and programs. Western actions relating to these three spheres created the conditions for the war, and specifics within the Caucasus region and relating to separatist conflicts drove

Russia to deem a war with Georgia a politically safe rebuttal to the West. This paper also examines continued Western refusal to acknowledge Russia's dilemma and developing conditions, as they relate to the three spheres of NATO expansion, unilateral military action and missile defenses, which could potentially lead to further conflict between Russia and the West.

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Introduction

“The Russia-Georgia crisis therefore has become an indicator of a bigger Russia-West crisis.” Andrei Tsygankov (2009, p. 318)

In August of 2008, Russia shocked the world by suddenly invading its smaller neighbor, Georgia. Russia insisted that its invasion was a reactive measure, taken to bolster Russian peacekeepers and protect Russian citizens against a Georgian offensive. Georgia insisted that Russia had preemptively invaded with the goal of destroying Georgian President Michael Saakashvili’s regime. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union (EU) and the United States (collectively, the West¹) pronounced horrification and outrage as Russia embarked on a military campaign aimed seemingly to alter set geopolitical borders – an act which was supposed to have been abandoned with the Cold War; however, the shock and outrage displayed by the West were extraordinary.

Russia had been giving clues for over 10 years that an incident such as this could happen if the West continued policies which Russia perceived as existentially threatening. As Russia saw it, an increasingly self-centered and self-righteous West had been progressively attempting to relegate Russia, the former center of the Soviet Union and arguably one of the world’s strongest military powers, to the status of a banana republic. Moscow had tried diplomacy, cooperation, and political warnings to let the West understand that the Kremlin expected to be treated as equal by the West. When such warnings failed, Russia took action to demonstrate its rightful standing and position in the post Cold War world. Despite such action, the West and Russia continue to face off over several political hotspots in the Caucasus, Syria and Europe; the security

¹ As a note of clarification, the term “West” is applied in this thesis to refer to the United States, NATO and the EU collectively. When certain issues relate to a specific entity, that entity will be named.

dilemma facing Russia has not diminished despite relations “resets” and attempts at placation. If the West is to avoid future direct or indirect conflict with Russia, it must learn the lessons of how it created the conditions which led Russia to invade Georgia, and how the West can avoid creating the same conditions again.

The primary premise of this thesis is that the West, by its actions beginning as early as the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 through the summer of 2008, created a security dilemma for Russia which set in place the conditions which led to the August, 2008, Russo-Georgian war. Western actions and conditions can be broadly grouped into three main areas: NATO expansion and Russia’s marginalization; unilateral or extra-U.N. offensive military action; and missile defense issues. Under the conditions of Russia’s security dilemma, Russia felt it could no longer continue on a path of cooperation with what it viewed as an increasingly hostile West – specifically NATO. Moscow felt that diplomacy and verbal warnings regarding NATO’s actions against Russian interests were no longer being taken seriously and, therefore, Russia had to send a stronger message. This message came in the form of military action against Georgia. Further, this thesis argues that because of a failure to recognize the conditions of Russia’s security dilemma and the connection of these conditions to the cause of the War, the West continues to act in a way that is aggravating Russia’s security dilemma and creating conditions for future conflict between Russia and the West.

This master’s thesis is divided into five chapters and focuses on the specific actions and conditions which led to the 2008 War. The first chapter focuses on an explanation of cooperation under the security dilemma as described by Dr. Robert Jervis, the nature of game theory as it relates to international relations, and briefly relates these theories to Russian-Western relations of the period. The second chapter focuses on NATO expansion and the post-Soviet marginalization of Russia by the West. The third

chapter focuses on extra-U.N. and unilateral military action by the West with a specific focus on NATO action in Kosovo. This chapter will also look at how NATO elevated itself to equal authority with the U.N. Security Council for international military action, and how NATO action in Kosovo set a precedent for the support of separatist groups over territorial integrity. The fourth chapter focuses on the West's development of anti-ballistic missile defense systems (ABMDS, BMDS or ABMS) across the world and the effect of those developments on Russia's security and nuclear deterrent. The fifth chapter examines the 2008 War as the culmination of Russia's security dilemma, including a brief history of Russian-Georgian relations, the separatist conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and the events which led directly to the War. This chapter also looks at evidences that the War was directed at the West and NATO specifically. It must be noted that while this thesis argues that the War is the culmination of the actions and conditions examined, the War itself is not the primary focus. In its conclusion, those areas and issues which are setting conditions for future conflict between Russia and the West are examined within the framework of Russia's security dilemma as caused by the West, specifically NATO expansion, unilateral military action and missile defenses.

The histories involved in Russia-Georgian relations and Russia-Western relations are long and complicated. This paper does not endeavor to give the reader a detailed history of Russia's relations with the West and in the Caucasus, but will only provide a brief history as determined pertinent by the author. While this paper strives to argue NATO's overarching and underlying responsibility for the conditions which led to the War, it will not focus on placing blame for the invasion of Georgia on NATO, only blame for the conditions which led to the invasion. Russia, as an independent and sovereign nation, is more than capable of making its own decisions. Numerous outside geopolitical factors led to Moscow's decision that Georgia would be where Russia put its proverbial

foot down. While it is possible to envision different possible Russian courses of action to achieve the same effect, the fact of the matter is that in August, 2008, Russia chose to invade.

Chapter 1: International Relations and the Security Dilemma

In 1978 Robert Jervis wrote an article published in the journal *World Politics* titled “Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma”. In this influential article, Jervis presented an analysis of the security dilemma as it pertained to international relations and why states act as they do. He also offered a refined view of international relations and politics based on the theories of cooperation presented in Rousseau’s “Stag Hunt” (167) and Rappaport and Chammah’s “Prisoner’s Dilemma” (171), as well as an application of offense-defense theory. While there are critics of the security dilemma and the role of offense-defense theory, Jervis’ analysis proved the most suited for this thesis (Lynn-James, 1995).

Jervis lays out the justifications for larger or “sovereign” states to interfere in both the domestic and foreign policies of smaller neighbors: first, to protect critical physical assets or possessions present in both the sovereign as well as the smaller nation; and, second, to provide both a physical and ideological buffer against attack from other large or sovereign nations (1978; Lynn-Jones, 1995). Jervis explained that larger sovereign nations will manifest this interference on a range of issues, and will feel compelled not to accept compromise for fear that to do so would “be taken as weakness and invite predation” from other large states (169). Jervis quotes Klemens von Metternich, who stated in pertinent part that “any false or pernicious step taken by any state in its internal affairs may disturb the repose of another state, and this consequent disturbance of another state’s repose constitutes interference in that state’s internal affairs” (169). Because one state’s poor or “pernicious” internal decisions and actions can create insecurity in neighboring or competing states, Metternich argued:

Every state – or rather every sovereign of a great power – has the duty, in the name of the sacred right of independence of every state, to supervise the

governments of smaller states and to prevent them from taking false and pernicious steps in their internal affairs (Cited in Jervis, 1978, 169).

Jervis then raises the issue of the security dilemma, which ties the security efforts of one state to the perceived insecurity of other states. As the theory goes, suppose two neighbors are at odds over some small item of disagreement, but despite lingering animosity, the disagreement has never gone beyond harsh words and threatening postures. One day, Neighbor One brings home a baseball bat, having heard rumor that bandits were roaming the neighborhood. Neighbor Two sees Neighbor One take the bat inside, and, concerned that the bat is intended for him, decides to acquire a large knife to even out the situation. Neighbor One sees Two's large knife and becomes concerned that the neighborhood banditry is more rampant than he'd thought, and brings home an even bigger knife. Neighbor Two responds by bringing home a handgun, to which One brings home a rifle, and the "arms race" continues, founded not on an understanding of mutual threat, but rather on the perception of insecurity. According to Jervis, "in international politics, one state's gain in security often inadvertently threatens others" (170) and consequently "states underestimate the degree to which they menace others" (200). Much of the "dilemma" is that states tend to make decisions based not on logical and realistic assessments, but instead on perceived insecurity. The steps taken by one state to increase its own security often inculcate in neighboring or competing states a greater sense of insecurity. Whether or not this insecurity is real or perceived, it has the same general effect. Jervis states that "decision makers act in terms of the vulnerability that they feel, which can differ from the actual situation" (174).

| <i>STAG HUNT</i> | | | | <i>PRISONER'S DILEMMA</i> | | | |
|------------------|-----------|-----------|--------|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------|
| | | A | | | | A | |
| | | COOPERATE | DEFECT | | | COOPERATE | DEFECT |
| B | COOPERATE | 1 | 4 | B | COOPERATE | 2 | 1 |
| | DEFECT | 2 | 3 | | DEFECT | 1 | 3 |

Figure 1: Game theory matrices for “Stag Hunt” and “Prisoner’s Dilemma”.

Using game theory matrices shown in Figure 1, Jervis lays out the possible choices for actors: to cooperate (C); and to defect (D). In any given situation, an actor or state can make one of two choices, with the most mutually desirable being, generally, mutual cooperation (CC or cooperation-cooperation), and the least mutually desirable, generally, being mutual non-cooperation (defection-defection DD), which in the case of nation-states often equates to war. There are four possibilities within this model, the first being CC, as just described, generally equating to “international cooperation and disarmament”. The second possibility is CD, or cooperation-defection, generally equating to “being disarmed while others are arming”. The third possibility is DC, or defection-cooperation, generally equating to “maintaining a high level of arms while others are disarming”. The fourth option, as described earlier, is DD, generally equating to “arms competition and high risk of war” (167). Further adapting the game theory matrices presented in Figure 1, Jervis combined them to a single matrix for the security dilemma (Figure 2). This matrix looks at the differentiation between offense and defense, and the

relative advantage provided by either an offensive or defensive security posture². Jervis referred to each possible combination as a “world” (211).

| | OFFENSE HAS THE ADVANTAGE | DEFENSE HAS THE ADVANTAGE |
|--|--|---|
| OFFENSIVE POSTURE NOT DISTINGUISHABLE FROM DEFENSIVE ONE | <p>1</p> <p>Doubly dangerous</p> | <p>2</p> <p>Security dilemma, but security requirements may be compatible.</p> |
| OFFENSIVE POSTURE DISTINGUISHABLE FROM DEFENSIVE ONE | <p>3</p> <p>No security dilemma, but aggression possible. Status-quo states can follow different policy than aggressors. Warning given.</p> | <p>4</p> <p>Doubly stable</p> |

Figure 2: Jervis’ game theory matrix for the security dilemma.

The first possible world is one where an offensive posture is indistinguishable from a defensive posture, but offensive action has an advantage. This world is “doubly dangerous” for states as offensive action, or Defection, is preferable to deprive competitor states of the opportunity for offense, causing states to “behave like aggressors” to protect their interests. The security dilemma operates most strongly in this first world, and will generally result in a DD scenario.

The second possible world is one where the posture remains indistinguishable, but the defense has the advantage. The security dilemma continues to operate, though not as strongly, with “increments in one side’s strength increasing its security more than they decrease the other’s” (212). Because states cannot determine a competitor’s motives

² For additional discussion regarding offense-defense theory, see Sean Lynn-James’ *Offense-Defense Theory and its Critics* (Lynn-James, 1995).

based on posture, combined with the advantage of the defense, aggression would “create needless conflict” (212) and states would be more likely to use diplomacy to resolve conflicts. While this world has inherent stability, Jervis points out that it is realistically infeasible, as “purely defensive postures are rarely possible because fortifications are usually supplemented by armies and mobile guns which can support an attack” (213).

The third possible world is one in which offensive and defensive postures are easily distinguishable, but the offense has the advantage. In this world the security dilemma is almost non-existent as states “can procure defensive systems that do not threaten others”, but because of the advantage given to the offense, “aggression is possible, and perhaps easy” (213). Because of the ease of aggression, this third world has a greater degree of inherent instability and potential for conflict, though warning signs would be relatively easy to identify for states in defensive postures.

The fourth world is one in which states are given an escape from the security dilemma, and is considered by Jervis as “doubly safe” (214). In this world postures are easily distinguishable and the defense has the advantage. This scenario provides “no reason for a power to be tempted to procure offensive forces, and aggressors give notice of their intentions by the posture they adopt” (214). This world would see a much greater use of diplomatic and “nonmilitary” approaches to resolving conflict. A combination of these four worlds and the four cooperation-defection possibilities comprise the structure against which this paper’s arguments are framed. The various actions taken by NATO and Russia are examined as examples of cooperation and defection.

During over 50 years of Cold War stagnation, the Soviet Union and NATO became what Jervis refers to as “Status Quo” entities, states that are satisfied with the current state of relations and tenability of defense versus offense. At the end of the Cold War, the Soviet Union and NATO each maintained large and relatively matched

conventional armies and arsenals, and a relative defensive and offensive match in unconventional or nuclear arsenals. As Jervis asserts, “it takes great effort for any one state to be able to protect itself alone against an attack by several neighbors” (176), and “the greater the reason for it to join a larger and more secure unit” (172). The Soviet Union’s Warsaw Pact and the West’s NATO were created as competing entities to provide mutual defense against the other³ (Jervis, 1978; Lynn-Jones, 1995). Under the Cold War rules of engagement, the differences between offensive posturing and defensive posture were only mildly distinguishable conventionally, and completely indistinguishable regarding nuclear forces (Jervis, 1978; Lynn-Jones, 1995). The defense, however, held the advantage both conventionally and unconventionally, and the two entities found themselves in an example of Jervis’ second world, allowing for the use of diplomatic posturing and statesmanship to resolve most conflict. The difficult nature of distinguishing between offensive and defensive posturing, however, created the greatest dilemma following the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, NATO remained as an intact organization. While the Soviet counterbalance of the Warsaw Pact no longer remained, the newly emerged Russian Federation continued to view the world through status-quo power eyes, and anticipated that NATO would do the same. Through, and even despite, the creation of organizations such as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Russia, on the one hand, viewed regional politics throughout the sphere of the former Soviet Union as remaining the purview of the Russian Federation. NATO, on the other hand, fell prey to the decidedly non-status-quo attitudes of the United States and despite airs and promises of a

³ Sean Lynn-Jones refers to the creation of alliances as “bandwagoning”. (1995, 669) For further discussion on the security dilemma’s role in the forming of alliances, see Glenn Snyder’s *The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics*. (Snyder, 1984)

status-quo attitude, NATO displayed behavior much more inclined towards an ideological aggressor.

These conditions, with NATO and the West acting as a non-status quo aggressor state, and Russia, attempting to remain a status-quo competitor power, are the conditions which have developed over the years since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The conditions for cooperation and defection from each side are examined in relation to each focus area in each of the following chapters of this paper.

Chapter 2: NATO Expansion and the Marginalization of Russia

“Security! The term signifies more indeed than the maintenance of a people’s homeland, or even of their territories beyond the seas. It also means the maintenance of the world’s respect for them, the maintenance of their economic interests, everything in a word, which goes to make up the grandeur, the life itself, of the nation.” (Jules-Martin Cambon, quoted in Jervis, 1978, 185)

While Russia and the West have never truly enjoyed friendly, productive relations, there have been periods when relations were calm and trended towards openness and cooperation. When the Soviet Union fell, many in both the West and Russia had hopes that as borders opened, so would relations, heralding friendship. The West was ready to embrace what it hoped would be a new and democratic Russia, following in the paths of the free world. Europe and NATO suddenly saw that without the Warsaw Pact or the Soviet Union, matters of European security were now entirely outside NATO’s boundaries (Solomon, 1998; Barany, 2003). Even more, the Warsaw Pact was gone and the Russian military no longer threatened European security, and as evidenced in Chechnya in the mid-1990s, Russia was militarily only a shell of its former self. Russia found itself being pushed aside by the West, categorized as simply a nuclear-armed former Soviet republic, and having condescending lessons in democracy dictated to it. The practical dismissal of Russia by the West is first among the three major issues discussed in this paper which led to Russia’s invasion of Georgia, and a large part of the foundation of Russian relations with the West.

This chapter looks at Russian expectations for post-Soviet relations, NATO expansion and political misuse of Russia by the West. It examines Russian attitudes towards NATO and the West, and the attitudes and opinions of Western leaders in regards to Russia. Finally, it examines Russian President Vladimir Putin’s 2007 address to Western leaders in Munich, which plainly outlined Russia’s perception of offenses by the West, and in which Putin dismissed the unipolar world the West had created for itself.

WHAT RUSSIA EXPECTED

Immediately following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia found itself the heir of a former empire, in both assets and political expectations. The Soviet Union had enjoyed its place as one of two superpowers in a bipolar world. Status as one of two superpowers provided a measure of stability for politicians in Moscow; but when that status was lost, along with hegemonic control over the region, Russia began to struggle to find its proper place in world politics. Author Bobo Lo argues that this struggle rested on the ideas of what Russia meant as a nation, nationally, regionally and ethnically, and whether or not Russia continued to constitute a great power state following the Soviet Union (2002; 2003). With a combination of ethnic and national roots across Eurasia and a decidedly imperial history, Russia “by virtue of its imperial past and identity, simply does not have the option of becoming a nation-state like others” (Lo, 2002, 21). In the words of Richard Sakwa, “Russia exercised the attributes of a world power, with a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council and the second largest nuclear arsenal, but its weakened economic status opened up a contradiction between aspiration and capacity” (2008, 242). The post-Soviet Russia would, in the eyes of the Kremlin and the Russian people, remain a world power and retain the regional influence Russia had enjoyed as the mainstay of the Soviet Union. Still, the Soviet Union no longer existed, and neither did the Warsaw Pact – Russia’s military alliance countering the Western NATO. Though Russia wanted many things to remain as they had been, Moscow recognized the changing nature of regional and world politics. As the United States and the Soviet Union had once stood as polar superpowers, Russia now saw the future as multi-polar, with a diminished role for the United States as well. As the Warsaw Pact and NATO were created to counter each other, Russia expected that NATO would

dissolve as the Warsaw Pact had (Rasmussen, 2009). NATO did not dissolve, but instead sought cooperation with the newly democratically-oriented, former Soviet republics.

Russia's expectations for continued global political clout faced several significant hurdles. First, with the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia faced "one of the greatest economic depressions in peacetime in modern world history" (Sakwa, 2008, 242), and lacking a viable economy, Russia's political power was dramatically reduced. Second, Russia faced its own internal political upheaval. Boris Yeltsin's ascension to the presidency was not fully solidified until after 1993's violent military coup attempts, and then democracy passed more to superpresidentialism⁴, and Russian politics remained turbulent until the sudden rise of Vladimir Putin. Third, much of the Soviet Union's clout in international politics came because of its vast military power, with one of the two largest nuclear arsenals in the world, and a conventional military to match. With the Russian military suffering from the same general economic disarray combined with humiliating performance during the first Chechen War, Russia's military was no longer the object of Western fears. Despite Russia's ambitions, "during the 1990s the gap between Russian expectations and realities widened at an alarming rate" (Lo, 2003, 14).

The West, on the other hand, had just finished a successful 100-hour campaign to evict Saddam Hussein's forces from Kuwait and Southern Iraq, and was seeing a high level of military modernization. Western economies were growing and showing the promise of continued improvements in standard of living. Finally, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the reorientation of many former Soviet states toward the West had a unifying effect on Western political systems and philosophies. The West saw the post-

⁴ Zoltan Barany defines superpresidentialism as a "fundamentally authoritarian state in which the president has managed to concentrate extraordinary powers in his hands." (Barany, 2008, 15)

Soviet period as a time for spreading its own brand of liberal, secularist democracy and cooperation throughout Europe and possibly beyond.

NATO EXPANSION AND MARGINALIZATION OF RUSSIA

Immediately following the Soviet Union's dissolution, NATO began making efforts toward communication and cooperation with the former Warsaw Pact, and established the North Atlantic Cooperation Council at the end of 1991 based on the "common assumption that cooperation was the most effective means 'to win the peace' and to ensure stability and order in the post-Cold War geo-strategic space" (Kipp, 2009, 55). The prospect of greater cooperation and communication between former enemies was a positive move, though there was an implicit expectation from Russian leadership that regardless of cooperation, NATO would not expand, especially into the former Soviet Bloc (Barany, 2003; Malevich, 2010). NATO, on the other hand, recognized that the major European issues facing the alliance existed outside NATO's existing borders, and that resolution of post-Soviet European issues would require opening NATO's doors. To answer Russia's concerns over the prospect of NATO expansion, Western leaders made attempts to convince Russia that Eastward expansion of NATO was beneficial for both Russia and NATO. Expansion, the West argued, would "stabilize a historically volatile region" (Barany, 2003, 15), and would therefore bring greater stability to Russia itself. Some in the West also anticipated that NATO expansion would have a bolstering effect on liberal democratic factions within the new Russian government, despite evidence that "NATO enlargement, an issue that even the most pro-Western Russian politicians vocally opposed, was scarcely conducive to the promotion of Russian democracy." (Barany, 2003, 20).

The promise of stability in the near-abroad failed to assuage Russia's fears that NATO expansion was directed at Russia itself, especially given the attitudes exhibited by some of NATO's proponents, who viewed NATO expansion as a form of insurance against a future Russian aggressor (Barany, 2003). NATO expansion soon took on the character of a plot to ensure Russia remained inconsequential on the world stage. As NATO began stepping up air operations in the Balkans, Russia's Boris Yeltsin lamented that "'forces abroad' wanted to keep Russia in a state of 'controllable paralysis'" (Cited in Sherr, 2009, 285). The more nationalist and extreme elements of the Russian government were very vocal in their opposition to NATO enlargement. Russian general Aleksander Lebed flamed the anti-NATO fires among the security apparatuses by stating that NATO expansion would lead to "World War III", and that Russia was taking secret military measures to ensure NATO did not succeed (Cited in Solomon, 1998, 80). Even some prominent Westerners were not sold on the benefits of NATO enlargement. Speaking to the U.S. Senate, Senator Sam Nunn asked the question:

Are we really going to be able to convince the East Europeans that we are protecting them from their historical threats, while we convince the Russians that NATO's enlargement has nothing to do with Russia as a potential military power? (Cited in Solomon, 1998, 81)

Western opponents of NATO enlargement further argued that despite Russia's rhetoric against NATO expansion, Russia could not feasibly constitute a threat to Eastern Europe, militarily or economically (Barany, 2003). With a large portion of the NATO expansion debate focusing on whether Russia constituted a threat to Europe, Russia could not help but view NATO expansion as inherently anti-Russian. The Russian security apparatus viewed the initial expansion with hostility and a sense of betrayal. On this, James Sherr, said:

“To Russia’s military establishment, the notion that NATO is anything other than a classically military alliance is risible. The notion that NATO is not what it used to be – an anti-Russian alliance – is, in Russian eyes, made equally risible by NATO enlargement.” (2009, 295)

Rhetoric from the Russian security services soon became hostile, with several ranking officials making comments equating NATO’s expansion to a direct military threat against Russian national security. Russia’s Defense Minister, Igor Sergeyev said:

The approaching of NATO’s infrastructure to Russian borders is a direct increase of NATO’s combat possibilities, which is unfavorable for our country in a strategic sense. We will regard the approaching of NATO’s tactical aviation to Russian borders as an attempted nuclear threat. (Cited in Blank, 2000, 15)

Russia’s Chief of the General Staff added, “we will view NATO’s further practical actions for eastward enlargement and for annexing Central and East European states to it as a challenge to national security” (Cited in Blank, 2000, 15).

Throughout the 1990s Russia did make attempts to cooperate with NATO and the West, including participating in the Partnership for Peace initiative beginning in 1994. With few concrete protest measures available to Russia, Partnership for Peace participation was ceased in protest of both NATO bombing in Bosnia as well as NATO’s campaign in Kosovo.

Russia’s perceptions of NATO’s purpose remained mostly unchanged throughout the 1990’s, with suspicion and hostility forming the bedrock of Russian attitudes. Because of the disarray of Russia’s military through the 1990’s, Russia did not maintain an updated and active military doctrine until 2000, though “since the mid-1990s, the premise of Russian military planning and policy has been that any activity undertaken by NATO near Russian territory is a threat to Russia” (Sherr, 2009, 295). It was following NATO’s bombing campaign in Kosovo that Russia decided to modernize both its military forces and its doctrine to reflect what Russia perceived as an increasingly aggressive

NATO. Russia's published *Military Doctrine 2000*, while not explicitly listing NATO as one of Russia's primary security threats, contains very direct references, such as the threat of "expansion of military blocs and alliances to the detriment of the Russian Federation's military security," among others. That Russia's official military doctrine referenced the perceived NATO threat demonstrates that opposition to NATO and NATO expansion was deeply entrenched in Russia's political leadership.

"Moreover, in the wake of the events of 9/11, Putin assumed that the West, which now needed Russia in the 'war on terror,' would acquiesce in its preferred format for global cooperation" (Sherr, 2009, 293). NATO's second expansion, combined with Western support for the various "colored" revolutions across the former Soviet sphere dispelled Putin's hopes that the West would alter its ways in favor of Russia. The second round of NATO expansion, between 2002 and 2004, would prove especially troublesome for Russia, as it included bids by the Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. Were the Baltics allowed into NATO, Russia would lose a strategically important stretch of buffer area against NATO, and NATO would now directly border Russia. The NATO inclusion of the Baltics not only reduced Russia's physical buffer, but their ideological sphere of influence, and put several other important regions at risk. Between 2002 and 2004, Georgia announced intentions to join NATO and underwent its Rose Revolution, Ukraine was beginning its Orange Revolution and had been orienting towards NATO, and Finland (a long-time Partnership for Peace member) began militarily supporting NATO's ISAF mission in Afghanistan (NATO, 2012).

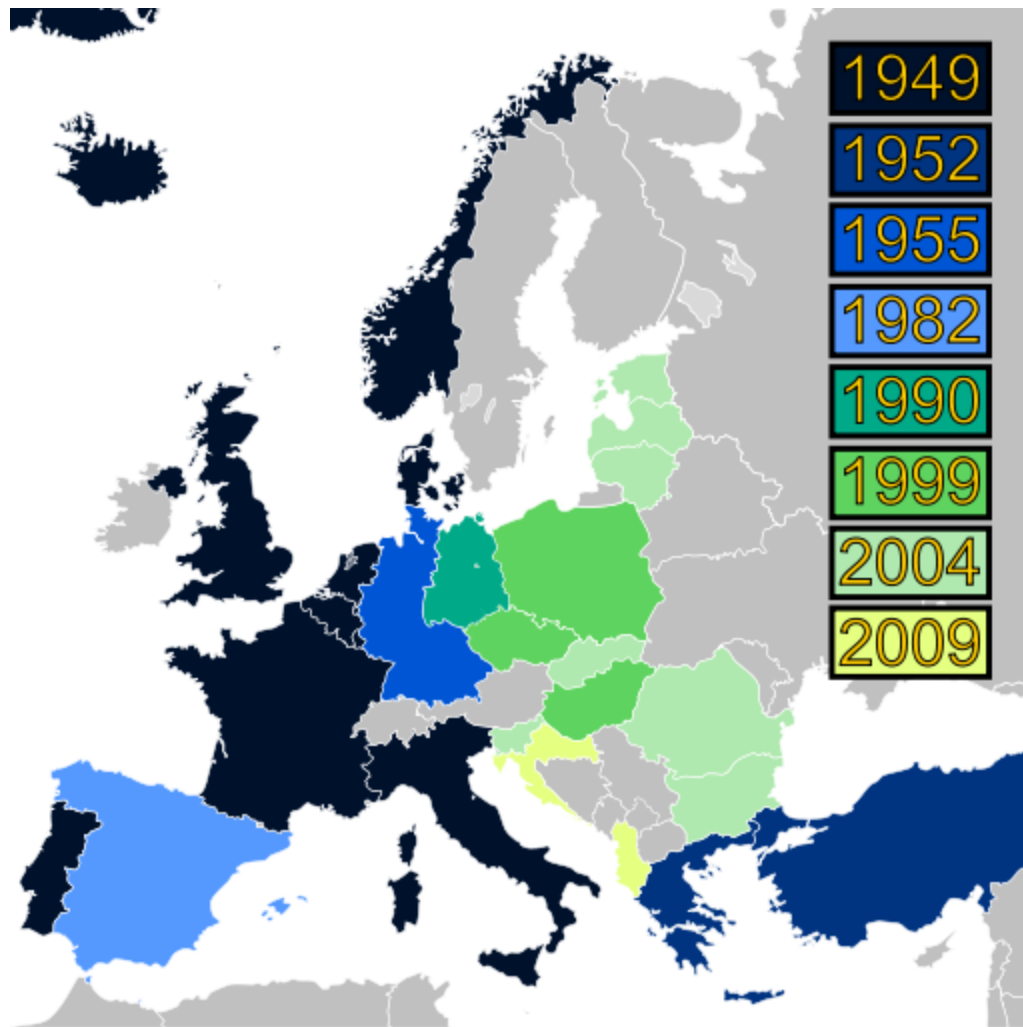


Illustration 1: Graphical depiction of NATO expansion waves. (Patrick Neil, from: http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:History_of_NATO_enlargement.svg&page=1)

THE 2007 MUNICH SECURITY CONFERENCE

By late 2006, Russia was becoming uneasy with its standing in the world, and with the way NATO and the West in general treated Russia. In June, 2006, Putin addressed a gathering of Russian Ambassadors and Consuls. During his remarks, Putin

noted the need for Russia to engage and partner with the other major powers in the world, but that such partnerships, particularly with the United States, “could only be built within a framework of equal status and mutual respect.” Russia continued to give hints that NATO and the West could not continue, without recourse, along the path of Russian relations that they were on. The situation was not yet so dire as to be beyond diplomacy, and President Putin took Russia’s diplomatic grievances to their source.

It was the first time a Russian leader above foreign minister had been invited to speak at the Munich Security Conference. With a participating audience well beyond NATO, and a focus on political and security issues throughout the European and Eurasian spheres, the Munich Security Conference was arguably the largest and most prestigious venue for a national leader outside the U.N. Ronald Asmus refers to the Munich conference as “the citadel of NATO conferences” (105). For this first-ever address, many in the West were expecting Putin to give a speech focused on “friendship and partnership” (Asmus, 2010, 105). This attitude was telling of the West’s growing arrogance towards Russia, expecting Russia’s president to come to the conference with an attitude of conciliation and abrogation to the self-proclaimed bastion of freedom and democracy (Tsygankov, 2009). Instead, Putin addressed the conference as a contemporary, asserting Russia’s independence from the West and dismissing the unipolar worldview fostered by the West.

The West received this speech with confusion, resentment and hostility. Asmus, who was in attendance, described the audience as “stunned,” with the Americans “in shock” at hearing “a stem-winder of an anti-Western speech that contained a laundry-list of Russian complaints against the United States” (105). Asmus wondered if Putin realized “how insulting [this speech] was to the conference hosts” (105). NATO’s Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer described the speech as “disappointing and not

helpful” (Quoted in Watson, 2007). Gordon Johndroe, the U.S. National Security Council spokesman described the White House’s reaction as “surprised and disappointed” (Quoted in Tully, 2007; Shanker & Landler, 2007). The next day U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates joked about Putin’s speech evoking “nostalgia” for the Cold War (Tully, 2010). U.S. Senator Joseph Lieberman joined Secretary Gates in referring to the Cold War, describing the speech as “confrontational”, with “rhetoric” that “takes us back to the Cold War” (Shanker & Landler, 2007). In all honesty, Putin’s speech should not have been unexpected. Indeed, given German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s opening speech at the conference, no one in attendance should have been surprised when Putin took her invitation to “engage in a frank exchange of views” (Merkel, 2007). It seems more that the West was looking neither for frankness nor exchange of differing views, but instead for ideological placation and a form of Russian endorsement for Western policy.

Regardless of how the West received Putin’s speech, it was neither hostile nor insulting, and if the U.S. took specific offense due to Asmus’ “laundry list of complaints,” then perhaps it was because Putin’s comments hit too close to home. Some of the Western response to the speech was likely political showmanship meant to convey solidarity with the greater Western and NATO responses. Because of the alarmist response given by the West, Putin’s speech deserves a specific look to determine if it was, in fact, the figurative *bol’shoi fig*⁵ that the West took it as. Russia analyst Andrei Tsyganov described the likely motivations for Putin’s speech as:

Meant to convey Russia’s frustration with its inability to develop more equitable relations with the United States. Rather than sending the message of a threat, the Kremlin was desperate to be heard that it was Russia, not America, that had to

⁵ Russian – большой фиг. A conversational diminutive of mild vulgarity. To “give someone the fig” is roughly the equivalent of the English “thumbing one’s nose” at someone, but not as harsh or vulgar as “flipping the bird”. The term fig can be incorporated into conversational speech in various and sundry ways.

swallow the war in the Balkans, two rounds of NATO expansion, the U.S. withdrawal from the antiballistic missile (ABM) treaty, military presence in Central Asia, the invasion of Iraq, and, now, plans to deploy elements of nuclear missile defense in Eastern Europe. (2009, p. 317)

Putin's speech encompassed all of the primary issues that Russia has taken with the West, NATO and their attitudes and behaviors since the end of the Cold War.

Putin even began his speech by forewarning that his comments were going to "avoid excessive politeness and the need to speak in roundabout, pleasant but empty diplomatic terms," and asked his listeners, "if my comments seem unduly polemical, pointed or inexact... then I would ask you not to get angry with me." It seems that Putin's task with this speech was neither deliberate offense nor hostility, but instead a chance to plainly delineate Russia's positions and leave no room for Western misinterpretation.

Putin began by framing the actions and mindset of the West against that of the Cold War, of "ideological stereotypes," "double standards" and a "bloc mentality" – a thinly veiled dig at the continued existence of the Cold-War-born NATO. He decried the idea of the unipolar world as "pernicious" for all involved, including the sovereign pole, as it "destroys itself from within." Pointing out one of Russia's main views against the West – the hypocritical nature of export democracy, Putin stated, "We are constantly being taught about democracy, but for some reason those who teach us do not want to learn themselves."

The forcing of Western democracy onto Russia, and the expectation that the Kremlin would conform to Western ideals and intentions was one of Russia's biggest qualms. While the Soviet Union was hardly known for its democratic nature, it was still one of the world's two superpowers. The tone of the Western approach to democratization in Russia, arguably, was initially born out of mutual respect and a

sincere desire to help. As was demonstrated by the way NATO classified Russia as simply one of several post-Soviet states, that tone became increasingly condescending as the West, the U.S. in particular, began to treat Russia not as an equal, but as a subordinate.

In response to Western unipolarity, Putin suggested the need to “seriously think about the architecture of global security,” giving attention to the BRIC⁶ nations, and their increasing political, economic and security power in the world. The GDP of India and China, Putin suggested, outweigh that of the United States in purchasing power parity, and the combination of GDP of the BRIC states is greater than that of the EU. This gap in GDP “will only increase in the future” and “will strengthen multipolarity.” With this strengthened multipolarity will be greater use of multilateral diplomacy. Pointing out the economic strengths of the rising world powers, Putin attempted to give the West the perspective that it was no longer the sole source of power, whether economic or political, in the world.

Putin’s next point of contention is unilateral and extra-U.N. military actions, which, Putin noted, “have not resolved any problems.” This has been one of Russia’s most enduring complaints against the west, beginning with NATO action against Bosnia, and continuing through Kosovo, the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, and the continuation of those conflicts. President Putin decried the West’s penchant for unilateral military action over political solutions as “an almost uncontained hyper-use of force” which was “plunging the world into an abyss of permanent conflicts.” He then lambasted the United States specifically as having a “greater and greater disdain for the basic principles of international law,” meaning the treaties and norms established within the

⁶ The countries of Brazil, Russia, India and China.

legal framework of the U.N. He argued that diplomacy should be the first effort and military force should only be used as an “exceptional measure,” and that “the only mechanism that can make decisions about using military forces as a last resort is the Charter of the United Nations.” He remarked that a Western diplomat had posited that military action should be considered legal when taken under the direction of “NATO, the EU, or the U.N.” Putin dismissed this idea, stating that “the use of force can only be considered legitimate if the decision is sanctioned by the U.N.” adding, “we do not need to substitute NATO or the EU for the U.N.” The issue of whether Russia’s attitudes towards Western use of military force are justified is examined in the next chapter, though at this point it is sufficient to note that the same Western nations which scorned Russia for violating the territorial integrity of Georgia in 2008 had violated the territorial integrity of several sovereign nations by that time⁷.

Putin continued his speech by addressing another of Russia’s primary complaints against the West, and specifically NATO – plans for a ballistic missile defense system in Europe. These plans, born out of a withdrawal by the United States from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, were ostensibly made in response to the threat of ballistic missile-delivered weapons of mass destruction from so called “rogue states” such as Iran or North Korea. Stating that “plans to expand certain elements of the anti-missile defense system to Europe cannot help but disturb us,” Putin asked, “Who needs the next step of what would be, in this case, an inevitable arms race?” The idea that North Korea would try to launch a missile across Eurasia, directed at the United States, “obviously

⁷ These nations include Somalia (1993), Serbia (1999), Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003). As of Putin’s 2007 speech, the Arab Spring had yet to develop and NATO action in Libya had not yet started. While there are varying and often compelling justifications for military action against each of these nations, the fact of the matter remains that NATO and Western forces operating outside of U.N. authority conducted offensive military operations against these nations. Western military operations in Iraq concluded in 2011, but remain ongoing in both Kosovo and Afghanistan.

contradicts the laws of ballistics.” Since no other “problem countries” have missiles capable of reaching those under the protection of the system, this logic amounts to “using the right hand to reach the left ear.”

Beyond missile defenses, Putin sharply criticized the continued expansion of NATO. Due to the shifting attitudes toward eligibility of candidate nations, as well as the geographical nature of the alliance, Putin declared, “I think it is obvious that NATO expansion does not have any relation to modernization of the Alliance itself or with ensuring security in Europe.” Importantly, at this time Russia and NATO were locked in heated debate over the eligibility and right of Ukraine and Georgia to join NATO. While NATO expansion to the Baltics was painful to the former Soviet Union, Russia felt it had both a historical and cultural claim to Ukraine, and to Georgia, in addition to the debate over whether “Europe” extended to the Caucasus. Not only was NATO expanding to Russia’s borders, but the post-Warsaw Pact Adapted Treaty on Conventional Forces of 1999 had still not been ratified by NATO as a bloc. Putin acknowledged that some nations would not ratify “until Russia removed its military bases from Georgia and Moldova,” but assured that Russia was leaving those locations “according to an accelerated schedule.”

“We very often hear... appeals by our partners... that Russia should play an increasingly active role in world affairs,” commented Putin, responding:

In connection with this I would allow myself to make one small remark. It is hardly necessary to incite us to do so. Russia is a country with a history that spans more than a thousand years and has practically always used the privilege to carry out an independent foreign policy. We are not going to change this tradition today. At the same time, we are well aware of how the world has changed and we have a realistic sense of our own opportunities and potential. And of course we would like to interact with responsible and independent partners with whom we could work together in constructing a fair and democratic world order that would ensure security and prosperity not only for a select few, but for all.

In an editorial address published in the L.A. Times, Russian Ambassador to the U.S., Yuri Ushakov echoed President Putin, writing:

What offends us is the view shared by some in Washington that Russia can be used when it is needed and discarded or even abused when it is not relevant to American objectives. Russians do not need any special favors or assistance from the United States, but we do require respect in order to build a two-way relationship. And we expect that our political interests will be recognized. (Ushakov, 2007)

President Putin's speeches in 2007, and the clarification from Ambassador Ushakov a few months later were Moscow's final attempt at diplomatically warning the West that Russia desired to be treated as an equal, as a major power state politically, economically and militarily. Moscow had spent nearly 15 years under the premise that the West remained a status quo entity, and that an overall strategy of cooperation with the West would yield reciprocal cooperation and not defection. However, those 15 years had shown Moscow that cooperation with the West only yielded mutual cooperation when Russia's position conformed to Western desires. Otherwise, Russian cooperation with the West was often met with defection. Looking at NATO expansion specifically:

If NATO were to expand unconditionally, admitting anyone who applied, it would be difficult to portray this to Russians as an effort by a benign security community to foster cooperation, because membership would not be conditional on cooperation. Instead, it would look like an expansionist West attempting to encircle Russia. (Kydd, 2001, 803)

Adding to Moscow's perceptions, NATO expansion was quickly reducing Russia's strategic buffer against the West, especially following expansion to the Baltic states. The reduction of geographical buffers then led to the reduction of important spheres of influence, which Russia had held historically, either under Tsarist Russia, the Soviet Union or both. Whether the West deliberately defected in relations with Russia, or was simply oblivious to the effect of their actions, the Kremlin's perception was that the

West was much more apt to grant defection than cooperation. Russia's appeals for equality were in essence calls for the West to recognize that a mutually cooperative world required cooperation and compromise from both actors.

Chapter 3: Kosovo, Unilateral Military Action and the Beginning of the Downfall of Relations.

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia retained its permanent status on the U.N. Security Council, as well as its veto against what it saw as unnecessary or impractical military action. Aside from internal matters, which were not the purview of the U.N., Moscow believed that the U.N. would be the final grantor of permission for state-on-state military action. During the Cold War, the world existed as Jervis' second world, where defense had the advantage and there was little differentiation between offensive and defensive postures. Soviet and NATO military doctrine taught the preeminence of the offense, but the threat of total nuclear war necessitated defensive politics. Second strike capabilities brought nuclear defense to the forefront, and conventional weapons were optimized for use in both offense and defense. While the security dilemma existed, Soviet-Western relations were generally normalized and diplomacy was used to full effect to maintain the status-quo ante. Were post-Soviet security relations to remain focused between Russia and the Cold-War West, a status quo might have been maintained; however, a handful of newly independent post-Soviet states found themselves thrown into serious internal conflict, and would begin testing both the new Russia and the new West.

BOSNIA: THE FIRST POST-SOVIET TEST OF THE SECURITY DILEMMA

As post-Soviet ethnic tensions in Yugoslavia shifted into armed conflict, the U.N. recognized the potential for large-scale destruction. Following a tentative cease-fire between the various combatants, in 1992 the U.N. instituted the U.N. Protection Force (UNPROFOR) as a peacekeeping effort in both Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. As Bosnia attempted to declare independence from Serbia-dominated Yugoslavia, Bosnian

Serbs with the assistance of the Yugoslav Army began a campaign of oppression to capture Bosnian land and expel non-Serb peoples. Despite the establishment of UNPROFOR protected safe areas, non-Serbs continued to be ethnically cleansed, and several U.N. safe areas fell to Bosnian-Serb forces, with UNPROFOR soldiers being taken hostage (Phillips, 2005). By 1993 UNPROFOR had been rendered ineffective as a peacekeeping entity and as a fighting force⁸.

NATO involvement in the conflict began as an early assistance program to the U.N., utilizing NATO naval airpower to monitor and enforce a U.N. embargo on weapons. NATO's participation was welcomed by the U.N. Security Council as resolutions began to escalate resulting in U.N. air activity evolving from simply monitoring airspace to enforcing resolutions (Beale, 1999; Phillips, 2005). Slowly, though, a shift in authority happened as the U.N. authorized NATO to conduct Operation Deny Flight, which authorized NATO warplanes to enforce no-fly zones and flight restrictions over Yugoslavia, as well as provide close air support to UNPROFOR forces. Initially, requests for close air support had to be approved by the U.N. Secretary General himself, though after this process proved too cumbersome, the Secretary General delegated authority to his in-country representative. Under the framework of Operation Deny Flight, NATO began independent planning to conduct punitive and coercive airstrikes against Yugoslav forces, without close air support requests from UNPROFOR. In late 1994, NATO began conducting U.N. sanctioned airstrikes apart from close air support requests, but quickly stopped due to threats from Serb air defenses (Beale, 1999; Phillips, 2005)

⁸ Given UNPROFOR's inability to affect peace, NATO estimated that a force of 150,000 to 400,000 would be required to effectively conduct UNPROFOR's operations. This estimate was not well received by the U.N. (Phillips, 2005).

NATO's aerial role over Bosnia changed dramatically when, in late 1995, the U.N. Secretary General granted UNPROFOR commanders the authority to approve NATO close air support requests without consulting U.N. civilian representatives (Beale, 1999). Additionally, the U.N. and NATO agreed to an increased role for NATO airpower. Under this agreement NATO planned Operation Deliberate Force, a massive air campaign designed to support UNPROFOR and the U.N. Rapid Reaction Force. While Operation Deliberate Force was conducted in conjunction with U.N. elements, it was an entirely NATO operation, unsupported by a U.N. resolution. For NATO, this was the proverbial foot in the door toward the position that NATO could conduct military action outside of the U.N. charter.

Operation Deliberate Force was successful in bringing the Balkan belligerents to negotiations, resulting in the Dayton Accords and the implementation of a NATO-led peacekeeping force, named the Implementation Force (IFOR) in 1995, which absorbed the EU elements of UNPROFOR. With the Dayton Accords, NATO assumed full responsibility for the Balkan conflict and for peace in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The U.N. Security Council passed resolution 1031, which gave post-facto U.N. authorization for the operation of IFOR, and effectively divested the U.N. of any authority regarding military operations in the area (UNSCR 1031). In 1996 IFOR activities were transferred to NATO's Stabilization Force (SFOR), which remained until 2004.

Russia was an active participant in the U.N. effort to stop the fighting, with Russian airborne battalions conducting peacekeeping duties in Croatia and Sarajevo. Moscow supported each the U.N. resolutions and its paratroopers were some of the only non-EU forces in UNPROFOR. Kremlin opposition to NATO involvement in the U.N. effort came after an ultimatum given to Bosnian Serb forces threatened increased NATO

airstrikes following the shelling of a Bosnian marketplace. Russia convened an emergency meeting of the Security Council, and Russian government officials expressed their opposition to the ultimatum and to NATO's growing role in the conflict. The crux of Russian opposition, though, lay not in the need for airstrikes against the Bosnian Serb and Yugoslav forces, but in the fact that the ultimatum came from NATO, and not the U.N. President Boris Yeltsin expressed on several occasions that Russia believed that only the U.N. could direct military action (McDonald, 1994; Kipp & Warren, 2003).

Another point of Russian consternation with NATO action was what Russians saw as a distinct bias against the Bosnian Serbs. Russian diplomats and military personnel lamented the quickness with which the U.N. sanctioned NATO airstrikes against Bosnian-Serb targets, but were slow to sanction airstrikes against Bosnian Muslims (Kipp & Warren, 2003). Within Russia, public opinion was vastly in support of the Serbs, and support for Yeltsin was low. In 1995, a rocket propelled grenade was even fired at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, fortunately with no injuries or loss of life (Kipp & Warren, 2003). Regardless of public opinion in Russia, the Russian airborne forces were integrated into the NATO peacekeeping plan very successfully under a unique chain of command which placed strategic control of the Russian force in the hands of the Russian General Staff, operational control in the hands of NATO's Deputy Commander for Russian Forces Colonel-General Leontiy Shevtsov, and tactical control in the hands of U.S. Army Major General William Nash (Kipp & Warren, 2003). Both NATO and Russia agreed to this structure, as well as to a suitable location for Russian responsibility. Russian and NATO forces worked very well together under this arrangement, even during the crises presented as a result of NATO action in Kosovo.

KOSOVO AND NATO'S SHIFT

“Kosovo became a moment of truth for Russia that rendered efforts to work with NATO towards equal security ‘totally worthless’” (Blank, 2000, 16).

While NATO's gradual consolidation of military authority in Bosnia caused concern for Russian politicians, the efforts made by NATO to include Russian military forces and leadership went far to create goodwill between Russia and the West, despite ongoing political tensions over the NATO enlargement debate and Western criticism for the poorly executed war in Chechnya. Russia had finally agreed to membership in the Partnership for Peace program in 1994 after initially rejecting membership in protest of NATO airstrikes in Bosnia.

NATO Assumes the Role of Europe's Police Force

In 1997 and 1998, upon seeing successful progress towards true independence in Bosnia-Herzegovina, separatists in the Southern Serbian province of Kosovo began to conduct attacks against the Serbian government. The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) emerged as the primary anti-Serb force, determined to affect independence for the province and its Albanian majority. In response, Serbia began an ethnic cleansing campaign against ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. As hostilities increased, international tensions began to grow as well. Russia made attempts to work with the Serb leadership to enact a cease-fire and establish an international observer mission. The United States and NATO were threatening Serbia with military action and establishing direct ties with the KLA, despite its classification as a terrorist group. Russian President Boris Yeltsin made a joint statement with Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic to the U.N. in which they emphasized the need to resolve the conflict politically and emphasized the importance of territorial integrity and national sovereignty (UNSC PR 6577). The U.N. Security Council passed resolutions 1199 and 1203, which decried the situation and called for all

sides to work towards peace. Neither of the resolutions authorized the use of force, however, and Secretary General Kofi Annan stated his belief that there was no military solution to the problem in Kosovo (UNSC PR 6577).

It is surprising, then, that the North Atlantic Council would vote to issue an Activation Order (ACTORD) and put NATO forces on high alert for action in Kosovo. Without U.N. authorization for action, NATO had no legal justification for preparing for operations in Kosovo. Since the Bosnia campaigns, though, NATO had assumed a much greater role in European security and as the U.N. had granted NATO full authority in Bosnia, NATO began operating under the assumption that the same authority applied across Europe. NATO assumptions of authority for military action received a boost in 1998 when the United States undertook a four-day campaign of airstrikes against Iraq without U.N. authorization. While the United States argued that the strikes were carried out in support of existing U.N. resolutions against Iraq, and as punishment for Iraqi non-compliance with U.N. resolutions, there was nevertheless no sanction for the strikes. Russia responded with strong criticism, with Russian Defense Minister Igor Sergeyev stating that the strikes “flagrantly violated the norms of international law and openly ignored the world community’s efforts to settle the situation” (Quoted in Renfrew, 1998). These were the same concerns which had initially been raised against NATO involvement in Bosnia, and the same which would be reiterated over Kosovo.

There was, however, no serious recrimination against the United States or Great Britain for their strikes against Iraq. After NATO’s ACTORD issuance, a cease-fire was quickly agreed to, and the Kosovo Verification Mission was initiated under the auspices of the Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). At this time, though, there was still no legitimate opposition to NATO’s intentions to conduct both air and ground military action in Kosovo. When the KVM ultimately failed to enforce the cease-

fire and hostilities resumed, NATO arbitrarily assumed the lead for handling the situation in Kosovo and announced that the NATO “Secretary General may authorize air strikes against targets on the FRY territory” (NATO PR 1999). NATO also assumed the lead in negotiations, directing the Rambouillet Talks between delegations from Serbia, Russia, the United States, Albania and Great Britain. The results of these negotiations, known as the Rambouillet Accords, were ratified by the three Western parties, but rejected by both Russia and Serbia due to a requirement for NATO administration of Kosovo and NATO freedom of movement throughout all of Serbia. Throughout the process, though, the U.N. remained uninvolved in negotiations. On March 24, 1999, NATO initiated the bombing campaign against Serb forces titled Operation Allied Force.

Russia, together with China, introduced a draft Security Council resolution to condemn the unilateral use of force in Kosovo, however, the resolution was vetoed by the United States and Great Britain (UNSC PR 6659). The Russian reaction to NATO’s unilateral intervention in Kosovo was both politically and rhetorically hostile, with Russian government support for Serbia and large numbers of Russian civilians volunteering to fight for Serbia. Ronald Asmus describes Russia’s position as believing that “the United States was once again acting as if it had the right to impose its will on the world,” that Russia’s U.N. veto power was “inconsequential,” and that this was a “new doctrine of humanitarian interventionism with NATO as the world’s policeman” (91).

NATO’s shift from a defensive status-quo alliance to an increasingly offensive and expansionary alliance created additional concerns for Russia, who was facing her own internal separatist conflicts. Russia began to worry that the NATO action in Kosovo could have been a precursor toward NATO support towards “secessionist or anti-Russian movements” (Blank, 2000, 16; Hassig, 2009) both within the Russian Federation as well

as throughout the CIS and former Soviet Bloc. Russian news media used a quote from U.S. General Wesley Clark, then Commander of NATO forces, in which he stated that “Russia is Serbia, and Chechnya is Kosovo” (Quoted in Polit.ru, 1999). Attitudes such as this only served to heighten Russia’s anti-NATO sentiments, even among moderates in the Russian government (Blank, 2000; Hassig, 2009). NATO action in Kosovo was also extremely unpopular with the Russian public, which staged massive demonstrations throughout Russia. Steven Blank argued in *Threats to Russian Security* that leading Russian security figures firmly believed that “until and unless NATO recants over Kosovo and gives Russia a veto over its operations, the threat of more Kosovo-like crises and operations will remain, freezing Europe (and Russia) into permanent insecurity” (14).

NATO’s actions in Kosovo created enough consternation in the Kremlin, that some were willing to risk war for a political statement. When NATO’s assembled intervention force, the Kosovo Force (KFOR), announced the date they would enter Kosovo as June 12, 1999, the Russian military executed a high-speed movement of over 200 paratroopers from bases in Bosnia to capture the airfield in Pristina – NATO’s planned headquarters for Kosovo ground operations – on June 11. Despite orders from General Clarke to recapture the airfield, the initial British and French KFOR elements simply moved to the airport and contained the Russian paratroopers, even providing food and water when Russian supplies ran out (Ivashov, 2005; Peck, 2010; Straughan, 2010). Russia quickly attempted to solidify its position in Pristina, by planning to send a battalion of paratroopers by air to reinforce from Russia, though this effort failed after Russia was refused overflight rights (Straughan, 2010; Peck, 2010). The Russian occupation of Pristina was arguably the closest NATO and Russia have ever come to open conflict.

The Kosovo Precedent

The NATO air strikes and subsequent peacekeeping actions in Kosovo ultimately established a precedent for offensive military action, by an aggressor state, beyond established borders, under the banner of “peacekeeping”. Even before NATO began bombing the Serbian Army, Russia recognized the potential for NATO’s “out of area” offensive operations to spread. These attitudes appeared in a 1998 article from the Russian General Staff, which accused NATO of acting beyond its zone of responsibility” and creating “double standards” for security (Quoted in Blank, 2000, 7). The article argues:

When analyzing the development of events in the Balkans, parallels with the development of events in the Caucasus involuntarily suggest themselves: Bosnia-Herzegovina is Nagorno-Karabakh; Kosovo is Chechnya. As soon as the West and, in particular, NATO, has rehearsed the “divide and rule” principle in the Balkans under cover of peacekeeping, they should be expected to interfere in the internal affairs of the CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States] countries and Russia. It is possible to extrapolate the implementation of “peacekeeping operations” in the region involving military force without a U.N. Security Council mandate, which could result in the Caucasus being wrested from Russia and the lasting consolidation of NATO’s military presence in this region, which is far removed from the alliance’s zone of responsibility. (Quoted in Blank, 2000, 8-9)

The article then asks the question, “is Russia prepared for the development of this scenario?” and subsequently answers:

It is obvious that, in order to ensure that the Caucasus does not become an arena for NATO Allied Armed Forces’ military intervention, the Russian Government must implement a well defined tough policy in the Balkans, guided by the U.N. charter and at the same time defending its national interests in the region by identifying and providing the appropriate support for this policy’s allies. (Quoted in Blank, 2000, 9)

By acting offensively in Kosovo, NATO solidified the security dilemma felt by Russia, creating the perception that NATO’s “out of area” actions were directed at Russia specifically, and that the Alliance was not firmly an offensive alliance. Because NATO

had acted without a U.N. mandate, it set the precedent that major powers, or major-power alliances, could conduct offensive military action without U.N. approval, and therefore without Security Council concurrence. By working around the Security Council, NATO effectively invalidated the veto authority and global standing of the permanent members, elevating itself and the NAC to a slightly-more-than-equal footing with the Security Council. The U.S. bombings of targets in Iraq in 1998 only supported the replacement of the U.N. Security Council as the authoritative body for external military action.

Affirming this belief, Russia's *Military Doctrine of 2000* outlined "attempts to weaken (ignore) the existing mechanism for safeguarding international security (primarily the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe [OSCE])," "the utilization of military-force actions as a means of 'humanitarian intervention' without the sanction of the UN Security Council, in circumvention of the generally accepted principles and norms of international law" as having a "destabilizing impact on the military-political situation" of the world. Plainly these references in Russia's official military doctrine referenced NATO and Western activities through the 1990's. Even in Russia's newest update to their official doctrine, *Military Doctrine 2010*, extra-U.N. military action is deliberately specified, stating that, "the desire to endow the force potential of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) with global functions carried out in violation of the norms of international law" constitutes one of Russia's primary military threats.

NATO's actions in Kosovo also solidified the preeminence of popular separatist movements over sovereign governments. Russia's concern over the possibility of NATO intervention over Chechnya or any of the number of CIS separatist movements was driven by NATO's quickness to support Kosovo's bid for independence. Russia's understanding of this is shown in the following editorial from a Russian news website:

The parallels with Chechnya help us to understand why Russia is so shaken over Kosovo. If Kosovo can achieve independence, then why not Chechnya? Irrespective of assurances that Kosovo's case is unique and does not set a precedent, Moscow will continue see what it wants to see. (RIN.ru, 29 March, 2007)

NATO argued that its support to Kosovo was in response to Serbian criminal activity against the ethnic Albanian majority, but Russia ardently maintained that the only evidence that Serbia had committed criminal acts came after NATO began bombing, thus negating in Russia's mindset NATO's moral justification for supporting Kosovo's independence. Comparisons to the U.N. mandated peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and Croatia were also invalid in Russia's eyes, as Kosovo had never had status as an independent republic, where Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia had held such status (RIN.ru, 2007). As Russia saw it, separatism and independence would be given favor over territorial integrity and established spheres of influence

The final precedent set by NATO's actions in Kosovo were in regards to the usefulness of large-scale air operations designed to pound an aggressor into submission, prior to insertion of ground forces. The precedent for airstrikes as a first resort for offensive or punitive military action was also reinforced by the American airstrikes against Iraq in 1998. Russia observed both the successes and failures of NATO's air campaign and then attempted to replicate them later that year in their second Chechen campaign. A *New York Times* article from 1999 outlined the similarities between NATO's Kosovo campaign and the initial stages of Russia's second Chechen campaign, including quotes from Russian Air Force Commander Colonel-General Anatoly Kornukov, Russian analyst Pavel Felgenhauer and Russian newspaper *Vremya* to demonstrate that Russia was indeed taking its first page from NATO's playbooks (Gordon, 28 September 1999).

What began as a trend towards extra-U.N. military action and intervention on the part of the West soon became the way of life. After the September 11, 2001 attacks by Al Qaida against the World Trade Center towers in New York City, the West embarked on a string of wars and military actions. While this paper attempts to avoid comment on the moral justifications used for these actions, it does, however, look at the legality of global, unilateral or coalition military actions. While Western aims have never been occupation or annexation, they have openly been for regime change or as punishment for political-military developments. The quickness with which the West turns to military solutions was one of President Putin's primary complaints in his 2007 Munich speech, in which he said, "today we are witnessing an almost uncontained hypertrophied use of force – military force – in international relations... and as a result we do not have sufficient strength to find comprehensive solutions," and that nations were "airily participating in military operations that are difficult to consider legitimate," and finally asking, "why should we start bombing and shooting now at every available opportunity?"

Beyond setting precedents for international military intervention, the Kosovo operations also marked the definitive transition of world conditions relative to the security dilemma. NATO ceased to be a purely defensive alliance, and defensive postures no longer held the advantage over offensive postures. The post-Cold War world was evolving to be one of preemptive offensive strikes, expeditionary punitive warfare, regime change and support to separatists and revolutionary movements. Russia, desiring to remain a status-quo power in a status-quo world where NATO remained an alliance focused on collective defense, would have to adapt to living in Jervis' "doubly dangerous" first world, where offense held the advantage, but offensive and defensive preparations and posture remained relatively indistinguishable.

Chapter 4: Western Missile Defense Initiatives and the Negation of Russia's Nuclear Deterrent

The third significant contributor to Russia's security dilemma with the West is that of missile defense efforts. Since the Soviet Union's successful detonation of the *MOLNIYA* atomic bomb in 1949, the Soviet Union and the United States have relied on deterrence under the ideas of guaranteed second-strike capabilities and mutually assured destruction to avoid nuclear war. Under the deterrence policies defensive postures ruled the day – ensuring survivability of weapons arsenals and delivery capabilities to ensure retaliatory strike capabilities should the other side initiate a surprise nuclear strike (Jervis, 1978). As technology began to allow for the prospects of defending to negate a first strike, as opposed to simply surviving it, concerns were raised about the destabilizing effect of such a system. Deterrence and mutually assured destruction provided the stability of the system, stopping possible first strikes out of fear of the resulting second strike and inevitable destruction. If a missile defense shield could significantly reduce the risk of, or level of expected retaliatory destruction, it would remove the inhibitions against a first strike. If either of the two players suspected the other of having an operation missile defense shield, they may even strike preemptively to ensure that their opponent didn't have the opportunity to do the same (Jervis, 1978; Woolfe, 2002). This is why the Space Defense Initiative (SDI, or Star Wars) was so effective, despite its budgetary and operational infeasibility. To the Soviet Union, SDI completely negated both their first and second strike capability, and greatly enhanced the United States' capabilities (Krickus, 2009). Because of the destabilizing effects of these kinds of systems, the Soviet Union and the United States signed the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABMT) in 1972, which initially limited the two powers to only two possible missile defense sites, but was revised in 1974 to just one site (Krickus, 2009).

Despite the ABMT, the United States continued to develop missile defense possibilities, and these efforts created significant consternation in Russian political and security circles. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the ABMT's applicability was debated in the United States, and left standing under President Bill Clinton as a Memorandum of Agreement among the various states of the former Soviet Union (U.S. DoS, 1997; Woolfe, 2002). Even as early as 2000, however, the future effects of continued Western ABMDS initiatives in Europe and the Americas were evident in Russia's security communications. In his analysis of Russia's threat perception and security doctrine, Stephen Blank notes,

If one [considers] the threat posed by our pending decision about theater and national missile defense (TMD and NMD) which Russia regards as a threat to the very basis of strategic stability worldwide, then the reason and context for subsequent Russian statements and policies become much clearer. (2000, 9)

In early 2000 the United States remained a party to the ABMT under the 1997 Memorandum of Agreement, and while Russia chafed at the idea that the United States might decide to develop both a theater and national missile defense system, as noted above, Russia's *Doctrine 2000* has little direct reference to the prospect of Western missile defense, referencing as a threat only "the violation by certain states of international treaties and agreements in the sphere of arms limitation and disarmament." It would seem that while Russia was concerned about the prospect of U.S. missile defense advancements, Russia was not so concerned as to specify missile defense efforts as a threat.

NATO ABMDS INITIATIVES

In addition to advancing missile defense technologies, the United States altered the reasoning for creating a missile defense system. Where previously the Soviet Union's

nuclear arsenal and first strike capability had been the justification, as in the case of SDI, the United States began to cite the existence of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile delivery systems in the hands of so called “rogue states” as being the primary threat (Krickus, 2009). This was primarily derived from the United States’ experience using PATRIOT missile systems to destroy Iraqi SCUD missiles during the first Gulf War in 1991. Advances in PATRIOT capabilities, and designs specifically targeting short range and theater ballistic missiles (SRBM and TBM) gave way to advances in technology capable of destroying intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM). The United States cited the ballistic missile technology existing in several states suspected of having or developing nuclear weapons as the primary threat. Shortly after the 9-11 terrorist attacks in 2001, the United States decided to withdraw from the ABMT, stating:

Today, the United States and Russia face new threats to their security. Principal among these threats are weapons of mass destruction and their delivery means wielded by terrorists and rogue states. A number of such states are acquiring increasingly longer-range ballistic missiles as instruments of blackmail and coercion against the United States and its friends and allies. The United States must defend its homeland, its forces and its friends and allies against these threats. We must develop and deploy the means to deter and protect against them, including through limited missile defense of our territory. (White House Press Office, 2001)

Operating fully on the idea that the greatest missile threat posed were ‘rogue states’, the United States developed a comprehensive missile defense plan with missile defense sites located first along the Pacific, ostensibly to guard against the possibility of North Korean missiles, and began planning for a European based site to protect against a perceived Iranian threat. The European site was to have interceptors and control elements based in Poland and the Czech Republic (Hildreth & Ek, 2011). Moscow, still reeling from the accession of Poland and the Czech Republic into NATO, saw the basing of NATO missile defenses there not as a self-defense measure against rogue states, but

instead as an example of the hostile expansionism of NATO. It also saw the US withdrawal from the ABMT as yet another example of Western disdain for recognized international law, supported by statements regarding the treaty as “ancient history,” “no longer relevant to our strategic framework,” and “outdated” (Woolfe, 2002, 2⁹). Additional Russian concern came from a draft document leaked from the Bush administration which framed the United States as the lone world superpower for the 21st century, and feared that the United States would use missile defenses “to achieve nuclear dominance” (Krickus, 2009, 52).

Even while the United States was still only making rhetorical statements about the inefficacy of the treaty, Russian Defense Minister Sergeyev said in 2001:

The [1972] ABM Treaty, is the cornerstone for strategic stability and the basis for the system of international agreements in the sphere of the monitoring and control of weapons. Now it has been threatened due to the fact that the USA has decided upon the deployment of a national ABM system, which is prohibited by the [ABM] Treaty... If such a system is deployed in the USA, it [the treaty] will become meaningless. (Quoted in Woolfe, 2002, note 5)

The Kremlin considered the ABMT a necessary part of security and stability throughout the world, and worried that if the US abandoned the treaty in favor of a missile defense system, it could trigger a global offensive nuclear arms race (Woolfe, 2002). Primarily, though, Moscow viewed the development of a Western missile defense system as a direct threat to Russia’s offensive nuclear arsenal. Both the United States and NATO have sought to assure Russia that their missile defense plans were not directed at Russia’s nuclear arsenal, but instead at those identified “rogue nations” and “non-state actors” who could potentially develop or possess ballistic missile-based delivery systems for weapons of mass destruction. These assurances have come in the form of official

⁹ Woolfe gives statements including the given quotes from U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell, and U.S. President George W. Bush, respectively.

statements, informal agreement attempts, and even official capabilities briefings detailing how the systems would perform (Woolfe, 2002; Caves & Bunn, 2007).

Russia has never fully accepted these claims, and has offered evidence to contradict the possibility that any existing “rogue states” had either the technical or development capability, nor the financial capital needed to develop ballistic missiles capable of hitting targets on United States territory, or on territory throughout Europe (Woolfe, 2002; Krickus, 2009). Even the technical assurances that the system was simply incapable of intercepting Russian ICBMs did little to persuade Russia, who declared that the initial system would simply be the basis for future upgrades and expansions which would negate Russia’s offensive nuclear capability. The argument to base interceptors in Poland made little sense against NATO’s stated threats, and were the reasoning behind Vladimir Putin’s statement during the 2007 Munich Conference that:

Plans to expand certain elements of the missile defense system to Europe cannot help but disturb us... Missile weapons with a range of about five to eight thousand kilometers that really pose a threat to Europe do not exist in any of the so-called problem countries. And in the near future and prospects, this will not happen and is not even foreseeable. And any hypothetical launch of, for example, a North Korean rocket to American territory through Western Europe obviously contradicts the laws of ballistics. As we say in Russia, it would be like using the right hand to reach the left ear. (Putin, 2007)

With no clear understanding of the threat that was presented by the West, and no acceptance of the level of threat supposed by the West, Russia had no other logical conclusion other than to see Western missile defense efforts as directed against Russia. To make matters worse, a U.S. Missile Defense Agency report in 2009 explicitly stated the need to expand existing defense plans worldwide, and create a system capable of shifting and moving to meet new threats (Saanio, 2010). Russia saw this further move as

indicative of an end goal of providing a system “capable of defending the United States against any... ballistic missile second-strike capability” (Saanio, 2010, 45).

The Kremlin reaction to Western missile defense plans began as political statements and opposition, primarily asserting the same arguments as before – that any missile defense system in Europe was both destabilizing in regards to arms controls and designed to counter Russia’s nuclear arsenal (Putin, 2007). Moscow was additionally incensed that such a defense system would be based out of Poland and the Czech Republic, both former Soviet satellites and both within what Russia considered its sphere of influence. While Russia maintained a U.N. Security Council veto against the West, it had no recognized recourse against NATO or unilateral Western actions. Purely political and diplomatic statements had no real effect against Western actions, and soon Russian statements began taking on greater hostility and adding concrete responses.

With a third round of NATO expansion threatening to include Ukraine and Georgia, Moscow perceived the threat that Western missile defense facilities would soon be based in those countries, further increasing Russia’s perceived insecurity. Between 2007 and 2008, Russian rhetoric against the missile defense systems and the nations which had agreed, or might in the future agree to house facilities, became significantly more hostile. In 2007, Russian Missile Forces Chief General Nikolai Solovtsov warned that “if the governments of Poland and the Czech Republic [agree to base missile defenses in their territory]... the Strategic Missile Forces will be capable of targeting these facilities” (Quoted in Isachenkov, 2007). In August 2008, Russia’s Ambassador to NATO, Dmitry Rogozin stated that Russia would create an “answer” to a European-based system which “would be the most technically simplistic, completely effective and immediate” response possible (Dni.ru, 2008). Chief of the General Staff General Colonel Anatoly Nogovitsyn made much more real the nuclear threat against Poland, the Czech

Republic and any nation who might consider joining the missile defense coalition when he said that Poland had become a “priority target”, warning that:

The United States is developing missile defenses to protect its own government, not Poland. By hosting missile defense elements, Poland is placing itself in the line of fire, 100%. It will become an active target. These kinds of targets are, by priority, destroyed in first order. (NEWSru.com, 2008)

The timing of this particular warning was made poignant by the fact that Russia had agreed to a cease-fire in Georgia only three days prior. Just a few months later in November, 2008, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev reiterated this threat by stating that “as a necessary step to neutralizing [Western] missile defenses, ‘Iskander’ tactical ballistic missile complexes would be moved into Kaliningrad,” (Bilevskaya, Samarina, & Petrovskaya) with a direct border with Poland.

Leading up to 2008, Russia had been consistent in its messages about Western missile defense initiatives. The West’s continued development of a missile defense system and the abrogation of the ABM Treaty by the United States despite these messages and warnings showed Russia that the West was not willing to listen. With a combination of continued NATO expansion, both in geography, influence and authority, continued political wrangling over, and a general Western push for recognized independence for Kosovo, and continued advancement of Western missile defense initiatives, Russia’s security dilemma became markedly pronounced, and the conditions for tragic consequences were solidly in place.

Chapter 5: The Culmination of Russia's Western Security Dilemma

In early 2008 Russia's security dilemma was becoming so pronounced that Russia felt compelled to action. From a geographical perspective, Russia had effectively lost Europe to NATO, either through full membership or partnership with the alliance. The Far East was falling to Chinese strength, and with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States was quickly building influence in both the Middle East and Central Asia. Russia was fighting hard to remain the dominant influence in Central Asia, waging their diplomatic wars particularly against NATO's Manas Air Base, a logistics hub on the outskirts of Bishkek, convincing the Kyrgyz government on a nearly annual basis to deny the Americans presence. Unfortunately for the Kremlin, the United States and NATO fought back financially, making the air base each year more lucrative than Russian political offers. Russia's saving grace in Central Asia is that the United States cannot remain permanently. Eventually the war in Afghanistan will end, with current timelines anticipating that end to come in 2014 or 2015, and as American forces leave the area, so will the United States' willingness to pay large sums of money to ensure loyalty among the Central Asian governments. All Moscow really needs to do to remain the dominant regional power in Central Asia is wait out the Americans and keep the Chinese focused to the South. The growing problem for Russia was the Caucasus region. The West had taken great interest in the region, in part due to the immense oil and gas resources found in the Caspian Sea, and also because of the area's strategic nature, connecting Europe and NATO via a border with Turkey with Central Asia to the East and the increasingly threatening Iran to the South. Both Georgia and Ukraine had publicly expressed interest in joining NATO, with Georgia making every effort to gain membership. Western commercial ventures were planning an oil and gas line from Baku, Azerbaijan, to

Ceyhan, Turkey, via Tbilisi, Georgia, to bypass Russia and create a competitive alternative to Russian energy dominance in the Black Sea region and Europe. North of the Greater Caucasus, Russian interior forces were still involved in a fragile counterinsurgency campaign in Chechnya and Dagestan. In the Caucasus, Moscow could not just wait out the West.

The situation in the Caucasus contained each of the major points of contention with the West which contributed to Russia's security dilemma, namely:

- If NATO were to expand to the Caucasus and Ukraine, Russia would be nearly surrounded by what it regarded as a hostile alliance. Moscow had argued adamantly against NATO accessing states which directly bordered Russia in the case of the Baltics, but the Baltics had only been a part of the Soviet Union by conquest. Georgia and Ukraine were considered historically integral to Russia – extensions of Russia herself. Both Georgia and Ukraine had expressed interest in joining the alliance, and the Kremlin still harbored acute hostility against the “colored revolutions” which had occurred in the two nations, setting them each on a decidedly Western course. Accession into NATO by either of these two would be tantamount to treason in Moscow's eyes, and their loss would be devastating to both the sitting Russian government, especially including President Vladimir Putin, and to the general international prestige and national pride of Russia as a nation.
- If NATO moved into the Caucasus, NATO troops would inevitably follow, especially under the Partnership for Peace program; placing the hotly contested Chechnya within range of what some in Russian security circles saw as a potential NATO “humanitarian mission” designed to affect the independence of Chechnya. Russian pundits argued against the Georgia Train and Equip Program (GTEP), a

United States initiative in 2002 to bring the Georgian military closer to Western standards and improve counter-terror capabilities. GTEP called for U.S. Special Forces and Marines to train the Georgian military. In 2005 GTEP gave way to the Georgia Sustainment and Stability Operations Program (GSSOP), in which U.S. Special Forces and Marines continued to train Georgian forces, with a focus on preparing Georgian troops for deployment to Iraq (Roberts, 2005; Moor, 2005, Tseluiko, 2010). While GSSOP put U.S. troops in Georgia on an annual basis, their numbers were rarely more than 200; definitely not concerning numbers. In 2008 Georgia agreed to host the United States' annual *Immediate Response* exercise, which brought together U.S., NATO and other coalition troops to train jointly. During *Immediate Response 2008* Georgia hosted approximately 1600 troops from the United States, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Ukraine, and focused training on certifying the Georgian 4th Infantry Brigade for deployment to Iraq (Reuters, 2008; Noel, 2008; Kerdzevadze, 2008). Still, much like the small fighter element posted in the Baltics, Russia tilted at the windmills of NATO troops in the Caucasus. Moscow's most direct security concern regarding NATO forces in the Caucasus was the Russian peacekeeping contingent in Nagorno-Karabakh, which was only accessible by air, as Georgia would not allow Russia a ground supply route (Felgenhauer, 2008a). An increased NATO presence, including air forces, could conceivably, no matter how unlikely, cut the Nagorno-Karabakh contingent off, creating a major crisis for Russia. Georgia dismissed Russia's concerns. In a March, 2007, interview with the British Broadcasting Company, Georgian Foreign Minister Gela Bezhuashvili stated that he "could not understand what it [was] that scared Russia so much about nations, for example the Baltics, Georgia, or Ukraine, joining NATO." He continued, "Whenever [the Russians]

tell us, ‘You know, NATO means military bases and the like,’ I answer, ‘NATO does not mean military bases!’ We’ve explained many times, ‘Well, the Baltics joined NATO, did military bases appear there? No.’”

- Georgian NATO membership would also almost guarantee a new base for missile defense facilities, ostensibly directed against the threat from an Iranian “rogue state”. In May, 2007, Georgian Foreign Minister Gela Bezhushvili indicated to the *Financial Times* that “If [the U.S.] came and told us that they want to [base missile defenses in Georgia], we would certainly be willing to talk about it.” (Schmid, Ehrlich & Sevastupolo, 2007). While the previous March Bezhushvili had been cautious about declaring support for missile defense plans, now he openly invited it, though he clarified that there were no ongoing negotiations, nor had the United States approached Georgia about placing missile defense assets in the Caucasian state, but Bezhushvili clearly demonstrated that Georgia was not only willing, but eager to accommodate.

With all three of Russia’s security dilemma factors present in Georgia and the Caucasus region, it is not surprising that this is where Russia took action, especially given the history between the two nations. This chapter examines the historical factors which made Georgia the most advantageous location for Russia to make a military statement against the West, the events of 2008 which brought Russia to the point of action, Russia’s prosecution of the war, and the immediate aftermath of the invasion.

THE TUMULTUOUS HISTORY OF RUSSO-GEORGIAN RELATIONS

The first aspect that must be examined is the long-running and complicated relationship between Russia and Georgia. Since Georgia’s incorporation in to the Russian Empire in the early 1800s, Moscow has seen Georgia as both a protectorate and

ultimately a full-fledged part of Russia. Georgia has chafed under such a categorization, making a few ultimately failed attempts at seceding from both the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union (Nohlen, et al, 2001; Goltz, 2009). The early Soviet Union even invaded Georgia to emplace a Bolshevik government, and continuing “an existing relationship of a protectorate state and its imperial master.” (Mackinlay & Sharov, 2003, p. 64). Following integration into the new Soviet state, Georgia underwent severe repression by the Cheka through the 1920’s and 1930’s (Jones, 1988).

With communist control over Georgia fully situated, relations and life normalized and remained so for the next 60 years Georgia remained happy in a “Socialist Heaven” as Thomas Goltz describes (Goltz, 2009, p. 14). Despite the communist control over the populace, power concentrations within Georgia still tended to gravitate around the historically powerful and nationalist families which remained at odds with the communists (Mackinlay & Sharov, 2003). This current of nationalism which remained, behind the scenes, began to show itself again in the 1980s as policies of glasnost and perestroika enabled a greater freedom to discuss politics. In the late 1980s political conversation began to turn towards the idea of independence; not only in Georgia proper, but in Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Adjara as well (Mackinlay & Sharov, 2003). Discussions inevitably turned into demonstrations, culminating in a series of demonstrations in late March and early April, 1989. Soviet authorities sent internal troops stationed in Georgia to disperse the crowds on April 9, 1989, when overeager and overly brutal local commanders illegally committed Spetznaz airborne forces, resulting in the deaths of 21 Georgian protesters (Sobchak, 1989; Mackinlay & Sharov, 2003; Nohlen, et al, 2001).

Following the April 9th tragedy, the 1990 Supreme Council elections in Georgia were conducted in multi-party fashion, and the Round Table Free Georgia Party, under

the leadership of Zviad Gamsakhurdia, handily won the Georgian parliament (Nohlen, et al, 2001). Even prior to the actual fall of the Soviet Union, Georgia was one of the first of the republics to officially declare independence from the Soviet Union. On March 31, 1991 Georgia held a referendum on independence in which 99.5% of voters approved secession from the Soviet Union (Nohlen, et al, 2001, p. 394). The official declaration of independence from the Soviet Union was delayed and announced in conjunction with the second anniversary of the April 9th tragedy. Shortly after, on April 14, Gamsakhurdia instituted the office of President of Georgia, and won the position with over 85% of the vote (Nohlen, et al, 2001, p. 372; Mackinlay & Sharov, 2003).

Georgia's bid for independence was again short-lived as Gamsakhurdia's nationalists fell to a Kremlin-backed coup in December, 1991, which escalated into open conflict in January, 1992 between Zviadist nationalists and pro-Moscow factions within the Georgian National Guard, and in the autonomous regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia (Nohlen, et al, 2001; Mackinlay & Sharov, 2003). With Gamsakhurdia forced out of leadership by the coup, Eduard Shevardnadze, the former Georgian Communist Party leader and Soviet Foreign Minister, was placed in control of the now more pro-Kremlin Georgian state. Georgia remained in a state of civil war until 1994. In 1995 Shevardnadze was officially elected President of Georgia, with a new pro-Kremlin parliament also elected the same year. Shevardnadze's ruling coalition, the Citizen's Union of Georgia, was reelected as the parliamentary majority in 1999, with Shevardnadze reelected to the presidency in 2000 (Nohlen, et al, 2001). The pro-Kremlin nature of the Shevardnadze government began to wane, though, towards the end of the 1990's, following accusations by the Kremlin of Georgian support to Chechen militants in the Pankisi Gorge and a failed assassination attempt in 1995 (Gordadze, 2009).

This period between 1989 and 1995 was difficult for the collapsing Soviet Union and emerging Russia. Many in Moscow saw Georgia's 1980s bid for independence as an offence toward the greater Russia. Georgians factored deeply into both Russian and Soviet history, with personalities such as Joseph Stalin, Laurenti Beria, and most recently the Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze. According to Ronald Asmus, "many Russians felt they were 'losing' not only a part of the former Russian Empire but a nation that had played a key role in shaping their own history" (Asmus, 2010, p. 56). Asmus argued as well that conservative and nationalist Russians "harbored a special hatred" for Shevardnadze, "blaming [him] for dismantling Moscow's empire in Eastern Europe" as Foreign Minister (Asmus, 2010, p. 56; Gordadze, 2009). Moscow was keenly aware of its strategic interests in Georgia, and felt the need to maintain its influence (Mackinlay & Sharov, 2003). As Russia intervened militarily in the Abkhaz and South Ossetian conflicts with Georgia to maintain and enforce influence, trends within the Foreign Ministry and Defense Ministry emerged that saw Russian peacekeeping operations as a more effective means of ensuring that Russian interests in Georgia were maintained (Sagramoso, 2003). In Georgia, this led to the establishment of the Joint Peacekeeping Force (JPKF).

The JPKF emerged from the initial Joint Control Commission (JCC); a result of the 1992 tripartite Sochi cease-fire agreements among the Russians, Georgians and South Ossetians. The JPKF was structured with a Russian peacekeeping battalion at the center, with a Georgian and a South Ossetian peacekeeping battalion accompanying. This force structure was agreed upon in Sochi and put into power by the JCC; the Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) took on a role as observers. In 1993, Russia established a CIS Peacekeeping Force (CISPKF) to quell violence in Abkhazia, in similar fashion to the JPKF in South Ossetia. The difference between the CISPKF and the JPKF

is that the CISP KF consisted entirely of Russian forces acting as a buffer between Georgian and Abkhaz forces, and was given United Nations monitoring in the form of observers under the UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) (Mackinlay & Sharov, 2003).

Relations with Russia continued to devolve following the nomination of Vladimir Putin as Prime Minister and the beginning of the Second Chechen War, as Shevardnadze refused Russian requests to control both the Russian and Georgian sides of the Chechen border. The Kremlin accused Georgia of aiding and assisting Chechen militants in the Pankisi Gorge, and responded by bombing villages in Pankisi in 2002 with the justification that Chechen militants and facilitators were operating from the Gorge (Gordadze, 2009). As relations worsened, Russian elements of the JPKF and CISP KF – which had historically supported and retained sympathies for the separatists – began to hinder Georgian efforts within the peacekeeping force. “What was supposed to be a neutral peacekeeping force became an imperialist and eventually an invading force” said Ronald Asmus of the Russian peacekeeping elements (Asmus, 2010, p. 65). To make matters worse, beginning in 2002 the Kremlin began citizenship drives in both Abkhazia and South Ossetia, offering Russian citizenship passports to any Abkhazians or South Ossetians who desired to be part of the Russian Federation (Allison, 2008; Illiaronov, 2009; Asmus, 2010). As more and more Abkhazians and South Ossetians accepted Russian citizenship, Moscow could act as it wished, claiming the privilege of protecting Russian citizens (Allison, 2008; Popjanevski, 2009; Asmus, 2010).

Russia’s relations with Shevardnadze deteriorated, with Russia signaling intent to use its UN counter-terror authority for military action against Georgia, and Shevardnadze responding by declaring his intention to join NATO (Illiaronov, 2009; Nichol, 2003). Interestingly, when Shevardnadze appeared on the verge of succumbing to the Rose

Revolution in 2003, Russia made efforts to keep him in power, as “whatever Moscow’s doubts about Shevardnadze, they paled in insignificance compared with its loathing of what have come to be known as the ‘color revolutions’” (Gordadze, 2009, p. 46). Moscow was unsuccessful and the Rose Revolution, led by Mihail Saakashvili, Zurab Zhvania and Nino Burjanadze overthrew Shevardnadze, with Saakashvili officially elected as President in 2004 (Illiaronov, 2009; Asmus, 2010).

BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

Western involvement in Georgia earnestly began shortly after the September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States. The Kremlin had already been pressuring Georgia and threatening military action because of militant attacks in Chechnya, which Moscow claimed were being committed by groups based out of Georgia’s Pankisi Gorge. The Pankisi Gorge is a sparsely-populated mountain pass connecting the Georgian lowlands with Russia’s Dagestan and Chechnya. Aside from the Roki Tunnel in South Ossetia, Pankisi is one of only a few ground transportation routes across the Greater Caucasus, and the rugged passes facilitate unofficial and illicit travel. Russia argued that fighters from Chechnya had moved into Pankisi, gathering there along with Middle Eastern and other Central Asian militants, making Pankisi, in Moscow’s view, a center of international terrorism. Russia even claimed that Osama Bin Laden was hiding in Pankisi and that the Taliban had taken control of the villages there (Gordadze, 2009). The United States took interest in Pankisi after an Al Qaida associate contacted militants in Pankisi (Nichol, 2004, Gordadze, 2009). American intelligence services also tied Pankisi to Al Qaida, but on a much lower level (Powell, 2003).

As Russian pressure on Georgia increased, Shevardnadze requested counterterrorism assistance from the U.S., which came in the form of the GTEP,

involving as many as 150 US special operations, marines and other military personnel. Tensions over Pankisi escalated in June, 2002 when a large group of Chechen militants attacked Russian forces just north of the Georgian border, leading Georgia to deploy GTEP-trained forces to the area to drive out the militants. Russia continued to look for justification to conduct military operations in Pankisi, even making sincere efforts to tie Pankisi into U.N. antiterrorism efforts led by the United States (Nichol, 2003; Gordadze, 2009). Counterterrorism efforts under the GTEP program continued to keep Russian forces within Russian borders, and successful Georgian military operations in Pankisi allowed the tensions over Pankisi to ease greatly. Georgia, however, was quite pleased with the attention the United States was paying, as well as with the prospect of Western assistance in rebuilding Georgia's military. When Georgia agreed to provide troops to the peacekeeping efforts in Iraq, the United States built the GTEP program into the GSSOP program, further solidifying Western influence on the Georgian military and economy (Tseluiko, 2010).

While Georgia was making every effort to bring the West and NATO in, Russia was acting to create conditions in the separatist republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia which would give Western leaders pause about Georgia. Following the loss of the autonomous Adjara to the central Georgian government, Moscow began tightening control over the Abkhaz and South Ossetian governments (Allison, 2008; Illiaronov, 2009). In early summer 2004 Russia began sending heavy military equipment and arms, unauthorized by the peacekeeping treaties, to South Ossetia, appointed a Russian general as the South Ossetian Defense Minister, established direct bus routes between Sochi and Abkhazia, and began stoking the South Ossetian militia to conduct attacks against Georgians (Illiaronov, 2009). The summer of 2004 nearly erupted into a second civil war in Georgia, with increasing hostilities between Georgian and Ossetian forces, including

small-arms, roadside bomb and mortar attacks. Fortunately the situation quieted down after Georgia removed its non-peacekeeping forces late that August (Illiaronov, 2009). Russia also began building up military bases in both Abkhazia and South Ossetia in 2004, expanding capacity and infrastructure (Illiaronov, 2008).

Between 2004 and 2008 internal relations in Georgia normalized some, with a rise in attacks each August, but no significant hostilities. Moscow continued to interfere in politics in the separatist regions, primarily by installing Russian or Moscow-friendly politicians in both the separatist governments. In 2006, in response to a series of Georgian arrests of Russian intelligence agents, the Kremlin imposed economic and political sanctions against Georgia, began deporting Georgian workers from Russia, and increased the distribution of Russian passports to Abkhaz and Ossetian citizens (Allison, 2008; Sherr, 2009). Following Vladimir Putin's 2007 speech in Munich, Saakashvili announced Georgia's intention to join NATO by 2009. In April 2007 Georgia claimed Russia attacked the Georgian-controlled Abkhaz enclave in the Kodori Gorge with helicopters. A UNOMIG fact finding mission found that the attack could not have come from Abkhaz or Georgian forces, but stopped short of suggesting Russia as the attacker (Civil.ge, 2007).

RELATIONS COME TO A HEAD: KOSOVO INDEPENDENCE AND THE NATO SUMMIT IN BUCHAREST, 2008

As Georgian relations with Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Russia quickly soured through 2007, Georgia found itself between a political rock and a military hard place. Saakashvili's administration was making efforts to convince a skeptical "old Europe" that Georgia was a viable candidate for admission into NATO, and making every attempt to gin up support during the upcoming March 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest. At the

same time Saakashvili continued trying to mend what little remained of relations with Moscow and appealed to the international community to avoid what he saw as the potential for conflict (Smith, 2009; Asmus, 2010). Despite these efforts, the Kremlin made little effort to reciprocate, and during bilateral talks, Vladimir Putin even gave Saakashvili advanced warning that conflict would come, when he said, “You know we have to answer the West on Kosovo. And we are sorry but you are going to be part of that answer” (Cited in Asmus, 2010, 106). Later in the same meeting, Putin raised the second point on which Moscow’s decision to go to war with Georgia would rest: “NATO’s purpose is aimed against the sovereignty of Russia... After joining NATO your sovereignty will be limited, and Georgia, too, will be a threat to Russia” (Cited in Asmus, 2010, 107).

Unfortunately for Georgia, the year 2008 began with two important and foreboding events. The first was that in spite of Russian opposition and negotiations, Kosovo unilaterally declared independence from Serbia in February 2008. This declaration came as a surprise to both Russia and Serbia, and was followed with the equal surprise of Western recognition of Kosovo’s independence (Asmus, 2010). Putin’s warning to Saakashvili became suddenly all too real. Georgia’s second major blow came when Russia’s influence among the major European NATO players proved too strong, and neither Georgia nor Ukraine were granted a Membership Action Plan (MAP) at the March 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest (Goble, 2009; Asmus, 2010). After months of diplomatic pressure on NATO to deny the two countries membership, Moscow considered this to be a victory and a sign that Russia could, through international

pressure, influence both NATO as an organization, as well as individual countries within the alliance. When combined with international recognition of Kosovo along primarily NATO lines just two months before the Bucharest summit, Moscow was given a “double pretext to act against Georgia” (Asmus, 2010, 12). NATO’s rebuff to Georgia and Ukraine under pressure from Moscow was seen as one of several steps which contributed to the war, “the Kremlin understood,” wrote journalist Juliya Latynina, “that it’s hands had been loosed” (Latynina, 2008), following which the head of the Russian Military Staff said, “We will do everything to prevent Georgia from entering NATO” (Quoted in Illiaronov, 2008; Tsygankov, 2009). Moscow recognized the opportunity and took action, establishing direct legal and diplomatic relations with both Abkhazia and South Ossetia on 16 April, 2008 (Allison, 2008; Asmus, 2010; Illiaronov, 2008; Tsygankov, 2009).

At this point Russia began taking concrete steps towards preparation for an invasion of Georgia, and setting up a framework allowing Moscow to conduct such an invasion with minimal diplomatic injury. Importantly, Georgia, South Ossetia and Abkhazia each took a number of other steps directly contributing to conditions for war, but the preponderance of the effort rested on steps Russia took. Russian military and political preparation for the invasion began quietly, and was greatly aided by Putin’s withdrawal from the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe the previous year. Russia gathered an invasion force in the North Caucasus Military District, avoiding Western suspicion, and began installing experienced combat veterans in Ossetian and Abkhaz government positions, as well as replacing the commander of the North Caucasus

Military District with one of Russia's most notorious combat commanders¹⁰. Russian fighters were used to shoot down Georgian unmanned reconnaissance drones, and a battalion of Russian railroad repair troops was sent to bring the railroad line from Sukhumi south to Ochamchire¹¹ into working condition (Popjanevski, 2009; Illiaronov, 2009; Asmus, 2010). Regarding the railroad repair, Georgian deputy foreign minister Grigol Vashadze succinctly noted; "No one needs to bring railway forces into the territory of another country unless a military intervention is being prepared" (Cited in Asmus, 150). This railroad was used heavily during Abkhaz phase of Russia's invasion. Retired helicopter and fighter pilots with experience in the mountainous Caucasus region were recruited back into active military service (Illiaronov, 2009; Asmus, 2010). Both the CISP KF and JPKF began receiving unscheduled "reinforcements," which brought their total numbers well above treaty levels (Blandy, 2009; Melek, 2009; Popjanevski, 2009, Illiaronov, 2008). The CISP KF in Abkhazia complained loudly to the UNOMIG and OSCE observers that Georgia was secretly increasing its forces along the border and in the Kodori gorge in preparation for offensive military operations. Though observers were unable to find any evidence to support the claim, Russia continued to reinforce above

¹⁰ Russian General Vasily Lunev was appointed as South Ossetia's Minister of Defense, and Colonel-General Sergey Makarov, "one of the most experienced Russian officers" was appointed as the commander of the North Caucasus Military District (Illiaronov, 2009, 67). A list of Russian officials occupying positions of authority within the South Ossetian government, see the EU Independent International Fact Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia, Volume III (Tagliavini, 2009c).

¹¹ The Location of Ochamchire on the southern end of the Abkhaz Black Sea coast would provide an excellent staging area for a large-scale invasion force arriving by rail. The railway repairs were conducted under the auspices of modernization for commercial purposes, though the use of Russian regular army forces to improve "commercial" infrastructure was suspicious at best.

authorizations (Popjanevski, 2009; Smith, 2009). Moscow was trying to find justification for an offensive in Abkhazia, but none could be found.

In South Ossetia Moscow found more favorable conditions, and began to move in heavy artillery and weapons systems beyond what was authorized in the JPKF charter (Illiaronov, 2009; Asmus, 2010). Many of these weapons made their way into the hands of the South Ossetian militias, which began using them in the summer of 2008, often firing on Georgian forces and ethnic enclaves from proximity to, and even directly from Russian JPKF posts (Tagliavini, 2009c; Asmus, 2010). The near-civil war in 2004 had occurred in South Ossetia, and the main focus of annual summer attacks was also between South Ossetian and Georgian forces in Ossetia.

“KAVKAZ 2008” A Dress-Rehearsal for Invasion

On 15 July, 2008, over 1000 U.S. servicemen began a large-scale training exercise involving 600 Georgian troops. The exercise, titled “Immediate Response, 2008”, was designed mostly as a diplomatic measure with tactical goals of preparing Georgian forces for further counter-insurgency service as part of the greater coalition effort in Iraq. On the same day, across the northern border in Russia, over 8,000 Russian troops began their own large-scale exercises, titled “KAVKAZ, 2008”.¹²

KAVKAZ, 2008 was part of a series of annual counter-terror exercises designed as training and certification for Russian MVD troops en-route to duty in neighboring Chechnya and Dagestan. *KAVKAZ, 2008* was billed as focusing on “resolution of anti-terror situations”. Further, Russia reported that some of the troops involved were training

¹² There is speculation that the 8,000 troop figure for the exercise was a misleading figure downplayed significantly to reduce the possibility of calls for international observation of the exercises (Blandy, 2009).

and preparing to replace or reinforce the current contingent of Russian peacekeepers in both Abkhazia and South Ossetia “in light of the fact that recently the situation in the Georgian-Abkhaz and Georgian-Ossetian conflict zones has sharply intensified” (Gabuev & Dvali, 2008). Given the vast difference in numbers between actual peacekeeping forces on the ground, even after Moscow’s unilateral increase, and the numbers involved in the *KAVKAZ, 2008* exercise, it is difficult to accept Moscow’s premise of peacekeeping forces rotations or counter-terror operations as the actual basis of the exercise. The Russian 58th Army, the major headquarters involved in *KAVKAZ, 2008*, as well as the actual invasion, brought over 700 pieces of armor, artillery and aviation to bear in the exercise, which also involved rehearsals of “a military operation in Abkhazia and South Ossetia” (Gabuev & Dvali, 2008; Melek, 2009). *KAVKAZ, 2008* took place along the border areas near the Roki Pass, and once exercises ended on August 2nd, almost the entire Russian contingent of 8,000 troops remained in their positions and on high alert (Melek, 2009; Allison, 2008). Due to Moscow’s repudiation in 2007 of the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty, NATO and western forces were unable to verify the activities and operations of Russian forces participating in *KAVKAZ, 2008*, or to verify the content of orders and status of orientation as the troops remained battle-ready even after the end of the exercise.

Between August 2nd and 5th, the South Ossetian government began evacuating nearly 20,000 civilians from Tskhinvali, sending them to North Ossetia in Russia, and allowing a battlefield generally free of civilians (Illiaronov, 2009). Initially this was done to maintain civilian safety should large-scale conflict break out; however the South Ossetian government then backtracked, explaining that the evacuation was actually part of a leisure camp program and had nothing to do with hostilities (Popjanevski, 2009). During this time Russia also began sending a contingent of nearly 50 journalists to

Tskhinvali with the expectation that they would “cover something big” (Whitmore, 2008; Cited in Popjanevski, 2009, 149). Andrei Illiaronov also reported that foreign journalists were not allowed into Tskhinvali because of “problems with their documents.” (2008).

Attacks between the South Ossetian militia and the Georgian police and peacekeepers also steadily increased through July and the first week of August, reaching levels not seen since 2004. Differences were noted, though, as Ossetian militia was now using large-caliber mortars during attacks, and firing from close proximity to, and sometimes directly from, Russian peacekeeping positions (Asmus, 2010; Tagliavini, 2009c). Georgia, recognizing the quickly worsening situation, turned to the West, and primarily the United States for help, but found very little. The United States warned against any action that might trigger a Russian response, and Saakashvili’s last-ditch efforts at diplomacy were being ignored (Popjanevski, 2009; Asmus, 2010). To add to the matter, the world’s attention was focused on the Olympic Games in Beijing. Saakashvili pulled his 4th Brigade from GTEP pre-deployment training and began deploying the Georgian military to staging areas near South Ossetia (Felgenhauer, 2009; Asmus, 2010). After final attempts at diplomacy, including a unilateral cease-fire, Saakashvili ordered Georgian forces to assault Tskhinvali at 2330, the night of August 7th.

While the official EU reports state that Georgia’s midnight invasion of Tskhinvali on August 7th triggered the Russian invasion the next day, there are several sources which indicate that Russian forces were already in South Ossetia in large numbers as early as August 6th (Tagliavini, 2009a,c; Illiaronov, 2009; Asmus, 2010)¹³. Several sources also claim that Saakashvili ordered the move on Tskhinvali not as a move to restore constitutional order, but in response to reports of massive Russian armor

¹³ Interestingly, the EU’s IIFMCG report is one of those very sources, and despite the report’s own evidences that Russian regular forces were in South Ossetia prior to the Georgian assault on Tskhinvali, it concludes that the Georgian offensive sparked the war (Tagliavini, 2009c).

formations moving through the Roki Tunnel (Illiaronov, 2009; Popjanevski, 2009; Asmus, 2010). These reports are in some measure substantiated by Georgian news casts on the evening of August 7, which reported on the advance of Russian regular forces (Popjanevski, 2009). Though the question of which side actually started the war can be debated, in any case, on August 8, Russia and Georgia were at war.

RUSSIA'S ANSWER TO THE WEST

As the war began, both sides were acutely aware of the need to control the media and the narrative of what was happening. Each side quickly developed its initial story, designed to paint the other as the aggressor and garner sympathy and support for their actions, both internationally and domestically. For Russia, the primary mission was to show that Georgia was the aggressor and that Moscow was not acting, but instead reacting to Georgian offenses. As the Georgians had attacked first, Russia claimed it had the right to intervene first in defense of its peacekeeping forces, and second in defense of its citizens against Russian claims of Georgian human rights violations, invoking the 2005 UN agreements on the “responsibility to protect” (R2P), though R2P specifically required UN authorization to act on its basis (Rubin, 2008; Roudik, 2008; Allison, 2008). Roy Allison claims that Moscow used this argument as a start point for invoking the Kosovo precedent, saying “By presenting the ‘will of the people’ in South Ossetia and Abkhazia as an overriding principle, Russia set itself on a course to recognition of the statehood of these regions” (2008, 1154). Because of these two justifying arguments, the Russian media claimed that Moscow deserved the support of the international community. It was here that the Kremlin invoked the Kosovo precedent and claimed that because the US and NATO enjoyed international support for their actions in the Balkans,

Russia then had a justifiable expectation that the US and NATO would give no serious criticism for its actions (Roudik, 2008; Goble, 2009)

Georgia's response was just that, a response. As Georgia began the build-up to the Tskhinvali offensive and last-ditch diplomatic efforts against large-scale military operations, the Georgian government failed to seize the narrative of the operation early and made the mistake of giving conflicting reasoning for the operation. As Russia's media narrative took form, Georgia saw the need to respond by challenging Russian claims to justification for military intervention. Georgian military operations in South Ossetia were a legitimate domestic deployment, and Russia "had violated international law by invading a sovereign country" (Goble, 2009, 183)¹⁴. More importantly Georgia fought against Russian use of international intervention in Kosovo and subsequent international recognition of the breakaway republic as a principle for justification. Georgia argued that Russia's use of the Kosovo precedent was counterintuitive, and that the same logic Russia was using could be used as an argument for foreign intervention in Russia's Chechnya (Goble, 2009).

As the war progressed and Georgian forces were pushed out of Tskhinvali, and then Russian forces began pushing into Georgia proper the Russian themes began to change. Though the initial reaction and protection theme was generally maintained, the invasion force was deemed a "reinforced Russian peacekeeping contingent," but then soon the operation became "peace coercion", a term widely used to justify full-scale war, despite the fact that Russia's peacekeeping charter limited Russian forces "to monitoring

¹⁴ The EU IIFMCG Volume I specifically states that neither South Ossetia nor Abkhazia had legal basis for seeking sovereignty, and Russia did not have legal basis for recognition of sovereignty (Tagliavini, 2009a, 17). Additionally, the volume addresses Russia's passport and citizenship drives as illegal as such a citizenship drive requires, by international law, consent of the affected country; in this case, Georgia (Tagliavini, 2009a, 18). The report additionally states that Georgia did not have a legal basis for internal military action, due to the various agreements signed by Tbilisi in relation to South Ossetia (Tagliavini, 2009a, 22-23).

the ceasefire, with no provision for peace enforcement” (Allison, 2008, 1152). As Russia was challenged on the apparent inconsistencies with its own internal policies regarding Chechnya, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov tried to argue that “South Ossetia and Abkhazia were never used for terrorist attacks on Georgia,” but “Chechnya was a springboard for such attacks” (Allison, 2008, 1155), despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary.



Illustration 2: The scheme of Russian and Georgian maneuver during the August 2008 war. (Andrei Nacu, from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:2008_South_Ossetia_war_en.svg)

Publicly there was very little mention of the goal of regime change and complete destabilization in Georgia, but it seems it was at least an opportunity which Russia would have liked to have taken. In a conversation with French President Sarkozy, Putin is

quoted as saying he wanted “to hang [Saakashvili] by the balls”. Sarkozy retorted with, “Hang him?” Putin then said, “Why not? The Americans hanged Saddam Hussein.” Sarkozy replied, “But do you want to end up like Bush?” Putin’s answer, “Ah, there you have a point,” (Conversation cited in Asmus, 2010, 199)¹⁵. This conversation belies one last comparison the Russians were likely seeing; not only did Russia feel a need to answer, and even mimic, the West regarding Kosovo, but it is conceivable that after observing the U.S. and its various forms of NATO and non-NATO coalitions invade Afghanistan and Iraq, Moscow felt that new norms under international law were developing regarding the use of force between states. The fact that Putin compared his own desires to the actions of the US coalition in Iraq belies what were likely feelings of animosity towards the US’s ability to conduct military operations with seeming impunity across the globe.

Several of Russia’s actions during the preparation for and conduct of the war, as well as in the years following have given evidence that the war itself was not only the culmination of grievances against Georgia, but as a message directed at NATO. The message was simply that NATO’s expansion into the former Soviet sphere, unilateral aggression outside U.N. authority and beyond the historical regional auspices of NATO, would not go on unanswered by Russia. Not willing to be relegated to a subordinate in a unipolar world, Russia had to act in a manner both consistent with the perceived actions of the U.S. and NATO as well as in complete defiance of the rules which Russia perceived the West had arbitrarily placed on the rest of the world.

¹⁵ Asmus also recounts a conversation between Russian General Vyacheslav Borisov, commander of the Pskov 76th Airborne Division, and Alexander Lomaia, Georgian Secretary of the National Security Council, in Gori on August 15th, 2008, during which General Borisov outlined what was possibly Russia’s strategy to militarily split Georgia and then await a popular sacking of the Saakashvili government (2010, 171-172).

The first of these evidences came as Putin's warning to Saakashvili in 2008, that joining NATO would make Georgia a threat to Russia, as well as Chief of Russia's General Staff General Baluyevsky's statement that Moscow would take any measures necessary to stop Georgia from joining NATO (Asmus, 2010). While these statements were indeed hostile to Georgia, Putin's additional statements are the most revealing that the true target of Russia's hostility was NATO. He said, "we shall respond on Kosovo not to you, but the West – America and NATO... What we will do will not be directed against you but will be our response to them" (Asmus, 2010, 107). Later, while Western leaders were making token efforts toward a diplomatic solution before the war, Russia made a deliberate statement against the involvement of the United States in Georgia, sending a flight of four fighters into Georgian airspace as U.S. Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice was landing (Asmus, 2010). Though it was Georgian airspace which had been violated, the hostile statement was directed clearly at the United States. As an additional snub, the invasion of Georgia came only days after the conclusion of *Immediate Response 2008*, and there were both American military personnel and equipment still in Georgia awaiting transport when the war began¹⁶.

Shortly after the war, during his first State of the Nation speech, Medvedev stated that the "conflict in the Caucasus was used as a pretext to bring NATO warships into the Black Sea" (2008). However, the clearest evidence that Russia's invasion was directed primarily at NATO and as an answer to the West has come only recently. On November 21, 2011, during a trip to the Southern Military District¹⁷ headquarters in Vladikavkaz, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said:

¹⁶ After Russian Marines captured the port city of Poti, they displayed several armored humvees belonging to the U.S. Marine Corps which had been sitting in a loading yard waiting to be shipped to the United States. Russia has refused to return the vehicles.

¹⁷ Formerly the North Caucasus Military District.

Time goes by fast – more than three years have already passed, but what is the most important our approaches towards and our assessments of those events have not changed. We of course consider that it was absolutely necessary action by our army to save large number of our citizens and, if not to remove totally, to curb the threat which was coming at the time from the territory of Georgia. “If we had faltered in 2008, geopolitical arrangement would be different now and number of countries in respect of which attempts were made to artificially drag them into the North Atlantic Alliance, would have probably been [in NATO] now. (Whitmore, 2011; Novosty-Gruziya, 2011)

Medvedev reiterated his point later in the day to a group of reporters, stating:

We have simply calmed some of our neighbors down by showing them that they should behave correctly in respect of Russia and in respect of neighboring small states. And for some of our partners, including for the North Atlantic Alliance, it was a signal that before taking a decision about expansion of the Alliance, one should at first think about the geopolitical stability. I deem these [issues] to be the major lessons of those developments in 2008. (Whitmore, 2011)

During the conduct of the war no mention was given to the idea that Russia invaded Georgia to stifle Western expansion and the hopes of Russian near-abroad states to join NATO. Now, three years later, Medvedev has begun hinting that this did, indeed, play a role in the action. In addition to these statements we can add the Russian recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent nations on August 22nd, 2008, which bolsters the idea that Russia viewed the war as its “answer” to the West over the lingering wound of Kosovo and perceived changes in international norms created by the U.S. relating to justifiable reasons for invading sovereign nations. While relations since August, 2008 have normalized to a degree, significant fear arose during the summer of 2009, when Russia began its military exercises under the name *KAVKAZ, 2009* (Ribakoff, 2009). Many analysts saw similar patterns emerging and predicted a possible attempt by Russia to complete its alleged goals of the previous year of Georgian regime change and full annexation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In March, 2010, Georgian state television bought into a hoax and broadcast that Russian forces were moving on

Tbilisi, sparking panic among the city's residents (Harding, 2010). It is significant that three years after the war there has been no renewed violence between Russian and Georgian forces. With the passing of each year another war becomes, hopefully, less and less likely.

While Western behavior was initially cooperative, attitudes and actions through the 1990's soon moved away from cooperation, but did not reach a stage of deliberate defection. Instead, Russia was afflicted by a form of dismissive defection, in which the West did not act deliberately to deprive Russia of power or influence, but instead acted in a manner that simply ignored the possibility that Russia had any power or influence. As the West continued its own metamorphosis from a defensive to an offensive entity, it continued in its diminutive view of Russia. Cooperation with Russia was not a necessary course for the West, as the prospect of Russian defection was no longer worrisome. So, the West pressed ahead, raising NATO up as an authoritative equal to the U.N. regarding state-on-state military action, expanding both NATO's membership and charter to include former Soviet states and spaces, reducing Russia's ideological and physical buffers, and looking beyond Europe to "out of area" operations. The United States overrode international norms by dismissing historical arms control treaties and unilaterally invading nations, and developing a missile defense system in spite of Russia.

Russia understood that even in the post-Soviet world, a form of status-quo would be maintained and Russia would continue to be treated as a major world power. When this status-quo failed to materialize, Russia was left with deciding on a proper course of action and response. Throughout the 1990s, Russia maintained a course of cooperation, acting out of the hope that should Russia's economy and military improve and politics in Moscow normalize, the West would return to seeing Russia as the world power it had been for nearly 200 years. The dream of a mutually cooperative relationship with the

West disappeared as NATO began bombing Kosovo, and Russia acted in defection by seizing the Pristina airfield, nearly ending in war. The West, however, was less than impressed and instead treated the incident as an annoyance, and not as an indicator of Russia's perceived position. When combined with NATO expansion and the revival of the missile defense discussions, Russia likely perceived further Western defection, and the transition from a stable defensive world to an instable offensive world dominated by an offensively postured West¹⁸.

Whether Russia deliberately began planning for a war against Georgia in the early 2000s is a matter of speculation. Though some evidence can be interpreted as Moscow setting the conditions for the War, the simplest explanation is that Moscow was simply setting the conditions for a politically favorable environment in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In 2006, Vladimir Putin outlined Russia's position that it was "the right of [Russia's] neighbors, the CIS countries, to act independently, both domestically and on the international stage." Even during Putin's 2007 Munich speech he specifically mentions Russia-Georgian relations, saying, "Our army is leaving Georgia, even according to an accelerated schedule. We resolved the problems we had with our Georgian colleagues, as everybody knows." It was during this year that the Kremlin was making its last attempt to help the West understand that Russia would be a major player in world politics and global security. Russia's gambit, though, was still seen by the West through condescending eyes, as evidenced by the reaction described by Ronald Asmus (2010). Instead of realizing that Moscow was on the brink of taking drastic action to regain status, the West viewed Russia as a recidivist Soviet Union, looking not for equal

¹⁸ As evidence that NATO's Kosovo operations represented a major shift in Russian attitudes, a Russian military correspondent, Alexander Zhylin, stated "Generals have told me that we must build a monument to Clinton because the campaign over Kosovo drastically changed political attitudes here. Now there is no more opposition to the idea that Russia should restore its military potential." (Quoted in Blank, 2000, 1)

status but a return to lost glory. Russia's security, whether perceived or real, was at stake. Moscow felt that "the maintenance of the world's respect" (Jervis, 1978, 185) for Russia, as well as the maintenance of Russia's physical territory and economic interests, was under a very real threat, and Russia would need to answer in a clear and decisive way.

The clearest answer was Georgia, as the Caucasus region held a convergence of all of Russia's security woes, as discussed during this chapter's introduction. A response involving Georgia would answer NATO expansion, demonstrate Russia's capability to influence regional politics, counter the supposed hegemony of the United States and ensure that no missile defense efforts would spread to the Caucasus. Russia's condition-setting in Abkhazia and South Ossetia was a fortuitous investment, further enabling the use of Georgia to counter the West. Whether or not the decision to go to war with Georgia had been made in February, 2008, the unilateral Western recognition of Kosovo independence certainly set events on the path towards war. Vladimir Putin prefaced his warning to Saakashvili that same month by saying, "There is an urgent need to react to what has happened in Europe on Kosovo. We are currently thinking how to deal with this problem. You shall remember that we are under huge pressure from the republics of the North Caucasus, and we have to answer to their solidarity for Abkhazia." After the weight of the insult and defection that was the Kosovo war and occupation, recognition of Kosovo's independence constituted a defection requiring an answer. At some point likely following NATO's refusal of Georgia, Russia decided that war with Georgia was the acceptable course. A limited war with Georgia would, at worst, enact the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and the level of discord in the West over Georgia's NATO prospects assured Russia that an international response would likely be subdued. At best a war with Georgia would result in the fall of Saakashvili's government and the establishment of a Moscow-friendly regime, geographically connecting Russian

influence to Armenia and creating a Russian-dominated Caucasus. In either case, the war would be relatively bloodless and the Kremlin would be allowed to show off its 21st Century military might, both in size and capabilities. It was perceived that a war with Georgia would return a measure of status-quo to Russia's position in the world, and would signal to the West that Russia had adopted NATO's post-Soviet offensive posture.

Chapter 6: The Future of NATO-Russia Relations

Russia's invasion of Georgia should have been a wake-up call to the West that the unipolar world envisioned by Western powers was no longer going to be simply tolerated in-stride by the Kremlin. The world had completed its move from a number two world, where offensive and defensive motives may have been indistinguishable, but the defense held the advantage, to a number one world, where the offense had overtaken the defense in advantages. According to Jervis, this number one world is the "doubly dangerous" one where the security dilemma is most acute and the possibility of both conflict and arms race are most severe. NATO had demonstrated its offensive posture through "out of area" operations and aggressive expansion, and the United States had solidified that offensive advantage through both retaliatory and preemptive military action in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Russia was now playing by the West's rules that major power states could act militarily and economically against smaller states with impunity. Moscow also now understood that it could not afford to wait for Western acceptance of Russia as an equal major power nation; instead the Kremlin would act the part for itself in the face of reactions from the West.

Looking from the perspective that the international situation since Russia's invasion of Georgia is that of Jervis' world number one, we should be concerned at the potential for both increased hostility and for future armed conflict involving Russia. While a direct major-power war between NATO and a resurgent Russia is highly implausible, we cannot deny the potential for proxy conflicts involving either Russian or Western forces directly, similar to Georgia. At this moment many of the preexisting Russian concerns remain in force, as does Western intransigence on the same issues. NATO and the United States continue to pursue "out of area" operations and look to

expand their military-logistical footprint around the world. Western missile defense efforts continue generally unabated and Russian opposition has only increased to match. Several flashpoints continue to threaten the possibility of cooperation between Russia and the West, and a few of these deserve a brief look.

MOMENTUM TOWARD CONTINUED NATO EXPANSION AND MARGINALIZATION OF RUSSIA

The Kremlin has made no secret of its disapproval of NATO expansion, and as we've argued in this paper, the issue of continued NATO enlargement was one of the overarching reasons for Russia's war in Georgia. Two years after the war Russia released its first military doctrine update, entitled *Doctrine 2010*. While the previous military doctrine, *Doctrine 2000*, referenced NATO expansion indirectly, as discussed in chapter 2 of this paper, *Doctrine 2010* leaves nothing to interpretation. The very first military threat listed in *Doctrine 2010* is:

The desire to endow the force potential of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) with global functions carried out in violation of the norms of international law and to move the military infrastructure of NATO member countries closer to the borders of the Russian Federation, including by expanding the bloc. (Sec. 8, p. a)

This is expanded to include “the deployment (buildup) of troop contingents of foreign states (groups of states) on the territories of states contiguous with the Russian Federation and its allies and also in adjacent waters” (Sec. 8, p. c). Shortly after the release of *Doctrine 2010*, an article in Russia's *Nezavisimoye Voennoye Obozreniye* clarified Russia's stance on NATO expansion, stating that “admitting new governments into the alliance looks less like expanding the democratic field throughout Europe, and more like surrounding Russia with a ring of newly-admitted NATO members, ready to carry out the desires and decisions of the alliance leadership” (Malevich, 2010).

Aside from admitting Albania, Croatia and Romania, following their successful completion of previously-granted MAP requirements in 2009, NATO has not made significant moves toward new expansion since 2008, though Russia continues to make statements to discourage candidate states to join. Russian rhetoric towards prospective NATO expansion will likely increase over the next few years, as several nations continue to bid for NATO inclusion, including Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, Ukraine and possibly Finland. During his comments in November, 2011, Dmitri Medvedev reiterated Russia's commitment to keeping Georgia and Ukraine out of NATO (Whitmore, 2011; Novosty-Gruziya, 2011), and Macedonia's pleas to join are falling on deaf or unconcerned ears (Shanker, 2012). Moscow gave Finland a stern warning against efforts to join NATO when Russian Army Chief of the General Staff Nikolai Makarov spoke in Helsinki. Makarov warned Finland that acceptance into NATO, and even cooperation with NATO represented a threat to Russia. Makarov tied Finnish cooperation with NATO to support to Georgia, and likened Finnish military maneuvers near the Russian border with "'unfriendly' and 'aggressive' actions by Georgia on its own territory" (Blank, 2012; Felgenhauer, 2012c). Vladimir Putin warned Finland that accession into NATO would cause them to "lose their sovereignty", and would negatively affect relations with Russia (RIA Novosty, 2012).

Despite Russian warnings against NATO expansion, Georgian President Saakashvili remains enthusiastic about Georgia's chances of being incorporated into the alliance. Following NATO's 2012 summit in Chicago, Illinois, Saakashvili has made several comments that Georgia has "very good" and "real" chances of being accepted during the next NATO summit (Civil.ge, 2012a, 2012b), which U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated would be focused on further NATO expansion (RFERL, 2012; Parrish, 2012). Saakashvili has good reason to be optimistic. In a December 2009

interview with Russia's Ekho Moskvi radio station, NATO Secretary General Hans Fogh Rasmussen stated that NATO "had long since made the decision that Georgia and Ukraine would become members," based on the decisions of the 2008 Bucharest summit, and that "those decisions remain in force" (Rasmussen, 2009b). Regardless, Georgia will have an uphill battle to climb even among friends, as the Obama presidency has given significantly less support for Georgian NATO membership than the Bush administration, and it is unclear how much support Georgia will receive from either a second Obama administration or a Romney administration.

As the next NATO summit approaches, Moscow will likely become more and more rhetorically hostile, especially towards Finland, Ukraine¹⁹ and Georgia – candidate states which directly border Russia. While the prospect of Russian military action against Finland is unlikely, action against Georgia is still fully plausible, especially if the situation facing Russian peacekeepers in Nagorno-Karabakh were to suddenly worsen²⁰. Russia has positioned significant military forces in South Ossetia and Abkhazia (Lavrov, 2010b), and continues to modernize forces throughout the entire Southern Military District²¹ (McDermott, 2012). Additionally, Stephen Blank argues that Makarov's comments to Helsinki and the Kremlin's silent consent, when combined with a Russian build-up of military equipment and forces in the Western Military District and the Baltic Sea, "illustrate that the Baltic region cannot yet be considered beyond security threats" (Blank, 2012). The conditions for potential conflict in these two areas are significant, and

¹⁹ Russian rhetoric towards the possibility of Ukrainian NATO membership will likely continue, despite Ukraine's 2010 announcement that it would no longer seek membership in NATO. Ukraine agreed to honor existing agreements and continue a cooperative relationship with the alliance, which cooperation will be used by Russia to justify hostility. (RIA Novosti, 2010)

²⁰ Russia's Kavkaz 2012 exercise is possibly based around a scenario which required Russian regular army support to Russian peacekeepers in Nagorno-Karabakh.

²¹ Formerly the North Caucasus Military District.

Russia will likely look for some measure of Cooperation from the West before softening incendiary rhetoric and giving reciprocal Cooperation in return.

EXTRA-U.N. MILITARY ACTION SINCE THE WAR AND IN THE NEAR FUTURE

In addition to naming the threat of further NATO expansion, *Doctrine 2010* also specifically notes NATO's "endowment with global functions carried out in violation of the norms of international law" as a direct military threat to Russia. This is a direct reference to the belief that NATO holds equal authority with the U.N. Security Council for approving or initiating military action. Additionally, the NATO-directed threats also specifically identify "attempts to destabilize the situation in individual states and regions and to undermine strategic stability" (Sec 8, p. b). During the first decade of the 21st Century, the Kremlin came to understand fully that NATO would not wait for U.N. Security Council resolutions or authorization regarding offensive military action. Russia felt that NATO had instead come to see itself as being equal with the U.N., granting itself the authority to conduct offensive military operations. During a 2011 interview with *Russia 24*, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov was asked how he would respond to adherents of the ideas of "a series of experts, including some in the United States, [who] say that the U.N. is an anachronism and thing of the past, and that such an organization is no longer needed. And this because of NATO and its global responsibilities, along with other methods of ensuring international security, which are both faster and more effective." Lavrov answered:

I think that they have not fully analyzed the events of the last ten years, beginning with the war in Iraq, which was undertaken without the sanction of the U.N. Security Council... In the case of the bombing of Belgrade, they didn't ask for any kind of authorization from either the U.N. or the OSCE... This is precisely why a U.N. Security Council resolution on Libya was so important to NATO, since they understood that the legitimacy of their one-sided actions would not be accepted by the global community... It was understood that without the unique

legitimacy of the U.N., it would be impossible to mobilize the full force of the global community for post-conflict restoration in Libya...

Last year, after NATO adopted its new strategic concept, which states that members of the alliance will project their forces to any region of the globe wherever necessary to protect and preserve peace and security, while at the same time respecting international rights and laws, NATO began turning to the U.N. Their precedent turned out to be not very successful. We are taking measures to ensure that similar ambiguous NATO mandates do not happen again. (2011c)

Lavrov's statements outlines where Russia feels that NATO has gone wrong, with several examples. The specific examples relating to Libya require more attention, as they demonstrate the evolution and possible future of Russian international cooperation and relations regarding NATO and the U.N.

NATO's Libya Intervention sets the Stage

As the "Arab Spring" revolutions progressed across Northern Africa, much of the world focused on the popular uprising in Libya, where an Islamist rebellion threatened the long-reigning regime of Muammar Gaddafi. As civil war ensued, the U.N. Security Council was called on to establish controls and execute its R2P duties and protect innocent Libyan civilians. These included sanctions, an embargo against military trade with any party in Libya, and the establishment of a "no-fly zone". Using vague legalistic wording in the Resolutions, NATO began an air campaign in support of the Libyan rebels, destroying Gaddafi-loyal forces and infrastructure through air strikes. The United States entered as a part of NATO, citing the ambiguous Security Council resolution, and became the primary contributor to the air effort supporting Libyan rebels.

During the above referenced *Russia 24* interview, Lavrov spoke harshly of NATO's disregard for established U.N. protocols and the sanctity of Security Council resolutions. He said "We believe that the authority of the Security Council has been damaged severely, because no one before has so rudely or blatantly violated the

understanding of the resolutions.” Lavrov gave two specific examples of the disregard for U.N. resolutions. He said “Resolution 1970 was passed with a consensus, which established a full military embargo against the sale of weapons to Libya. It is already openly acknowledged that this resolution is being violated.” He continued, “Weapons were sent from European countries and from Arab countries, and instructors definitely worked there on the ground. Western press sources have reported, and no one has yet to deny, that special operations forces worked alongside these trainers, that is people who helped to plan and participated in combat operations.”

Lavrov’s second example relates to Resolution 1973 which established a “no-fly zone” over Libya to prevent the Gaddafi regime from using air power against peaceful popular protests. This resolution contained a paragraph which authorized any government the right to use whatever means necessary to enforce the “no-fly zone” and protect the population. Russia, along with several other nations, was skeptical of legal ambiguities in this portion of the resolution, and abstained from voting for the resolution. The resolution received the requisite ten votes, and since Russia did not use its veto, the resolution passed. Lavrov said, “our worries were realized – the actions of NATO and Arab combat aviation neither enforced the ‘no-fly zone’ or ensured the safety of the population, but instead became air support for rebel combat operations” (2011c). Moscow would soon put the lessons learned from the Libyan resolutions to work as the Arab Spring continued.

Russia and NATO Face Off over Intervention in the Syrian Civil War

In March, 2011, the Arab Spring spread to Syria, where popular demonstrations against the regime of Bashar Assad gathered momentum and then boiled over into an armed uprising after the Syrian army committed several massacres in trying to subdue the population (Al Jazeera, 2011a/b). In September, 2011, the Syrian government began its

first major offensive against the newly formed Free Syrian Army, throwing the country into a full civil war. As Syria descended into chaos, the major players in the world were taking sides in the conflict. The Kremlin is a historic supporter of Assad and Syria, maintaining open relations, lucrative military and arms contracts and a Russian naval supply port in the Syrian city of Tartus (Arkhipov, 2012). From the beginning of U.N. Security Council discussions on Syria, Russia has opposed serious action against the Assad regime, and has used the U.N. proceedings on Libya as their precedent. Because NATO used the ambiguity of resolutions on Libya to justify military action, Russia was no longer going to simply abstain from voting, but would instead use their veto power against any resolution which could be interpreted as justifying military action. In an interview with Bloomberg in June, 2011, Lavrov stated:

First of all, the situation doesn't present a threat to international peace and security... Second, Syria is a very important country in the Middle East, and destabilizing Syria would resonate far beyond its borders... We do not see any threat to international peace and security, but if we were to get involved in Syria's internal affairs, it could have very serious consequences for the Middle East.

Lavrov added that "it is not in the interests of anyone to send messages to the opposition that if you reject all reasonable offers, we will come and help you, like we did in Libya," and that such a message would be "very dangerous."

Russia directly used their Security Council veto to deny two resolutions which condemned Assad and declared his regime as illegitimate. The Kremlin was especially concerned with this resolution and how widely it could be interpreted and used to justify foreign intervention, primarily in opposition to an "illegitimate" Assad regime (Voice of Russia, 2011). Moscow continued to support the Syrian government against Western attempts at pressure and sanctions through the Security Council, and once used their veto in September, 2011 – this time against Western sanctions (Reuters, 2011; Voice of

Russia, 2011). Russian statements against the regime have become harsher, as the situation continues.

With U.N. resolutions clearly denying any military involvement, Western countries have begun supporting the Syrian opposition with humanitarian aid and some military-grade communications systems, but have kept clear of direct military support (Schmitt, 2012; Totten, 2012; Solomon & Nour, 2012). Politically, the West continues to give tacit support to the opposition, and to condemn the Assad regime, calling on Assad to step down. Additionally, the West has continued to press for a resolution authorizing a “no-fly zone” over Syria, similar to resolution 1973 for Libya. Russia has continued to oppose establishing a no-fly zone, for fear that it would justify combat air operations in support of the opposition (Middle East Online, 2011; Reuters, 2012). Moscow is also pressing for a condemnation of both sides’ violence, while giving preferential support to Assad, and continuing arms sales and shipments to the Syrian government (AFP, 2012).

While the situation on the ground in Syria has continued to worsen, with the civil war increasing in intensity, the global political situation has recently taken several turns for the worse. Recently the Kremlin began preparing several combat units from Pskov and the Southern Military District for foreign deployment. The exact nature of the foreign deployments is speculative, but there is a distinct possibility that Moscow is preparing to provide direct military support to the established Syrian government (Konovalov, 2012; Felgenhauer, 2012b). Moscow also recently dispatched a small flotilla from the Black Sea Fleet, including three amphibious transports, each with 120 marines, to the Mediterranean, in the vicinity of the port in Tartus. Initially Moscow had claimed the marines were sent in case Russia needed to protect its citizens, but then quickly denied the assertions that the marines would have any presence in Syria (Baczynska & Grove, 2012).

The West, for its part, is trying to make the political case for Libyan-style military intervention, arguing that direct Western involvement on the behalf of the rebels would be beneficial for the West (Totten, 2012). While American support for the rebels has been muted, President Barack Obama recently authorized clandestine intelligence support, designed to determine which opposition groups to support, which supposedly aided in steering arms to rebels throughout Syria (Labott, 2012; Schmitt, 2012). Additionally, Obama has authorized a Syrian rebel proxy group in the United States to provide financial support to the rebels, enabling the purchase of arms from other countries (Labott, 2012). In early August, 2012, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced that the United States and Turkey were considering the feasibility of imposing a no-fly zone, among other options, in order to assist the opposition (Al Salchi, 2012). President Obama moved another step closer to the possibility of military support, stating that it would be a “red line” for the United States if Syria were to use or move their chemical weapons. Crossing this red line would lead to “enormous consequences,” and could lead to unilateral Western military intervention (Associated Press, 2012; Griffin 2012).

The potential for conflict between Russia and the West in Syria is great. Were the port facilities at Tartus to be attacked by rebels, Russia would undoubtedly seize the opportunity to reinforce or recapture its strategic facility, and possibly use the event as justification for large-scale anti-opposition military intervention. Were NATO to unilaterally impose a no-fly zone or begin providing arms or advisers, Russia would feel compelled to act to counter NATO, possibly in the form of improved air defense systems for the Syrian government. The key component to the potential for conflict between Russia and the West lies primarily in the Western penchant for acting outside the the U.N. Moscow will not allow a Security Council resolution which could justify intervention, but the West is likely to act unilaterally, under a NATO banner. For now,

Russia has been content to continue working within the framework of the U.N. The discussions between the United States and Turkey, however, show that the West is not content with working for consensus within the U.N. framework. Without the previous Defection from NATO in Libya, Russia would likely be more willing to grant Cooperation.

Iran and the Potential for Destabilization of the Caucasus

The potential for conflict in Syria is indirectly tied to another potential hot spot – Iran. Early draft U.N. resolutions and reports condemned Iran for aiding the Syrian government, and Russia was quick to deny any support to those documents as well (Reuters, 2011; Voice of Russia, 2011). It could logically be argued that a Western-Israeli attack on Iran would have serious effects in Syria, and vice-versa for intervention supporting Syrian rebels. Like Syria, Iran has close political and economic ties to Russia, and Russia enjoys large-scale arms and defense contracts with Iran. Additionally, Russia has provided significant assistance to Iran’s civilian nuclear power programs. Russia has remained supportive of Iranian rights under the U.N. Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to develop a peaceful nuclear power program. Unilateral Western action to stop an unproven effort to develop nuclear weapons constitutes a dually illegal action on the world stage, with the first violation being that of acting without authorization from the U.N. Security Council, and the second being the violation of rights guaranteed under the NPT. In 2007, Russian Ambassador to the U.S. Yuri Ushakov clearly stated Russia’s position when he stated that Moscow supports “the right of Iranians to pursue peaceful nuclear energy and opposes the prospect of a nuclear-armed Iran. Most important, we believe that the solution should be reached through negotiations with Tehran and not through isolation or confrontation” (Ushakov, 2007).

As political rhetoric against Iran has grown more hostile in 2012, Russia has warned the West against acting unilaterally against Iran. In January, 2012, Russia's Deputy Prime Minister, Dmitry Rogozin warned, "Iran is our close neighbor, just south of the Caucasus. Should anything happen to Iran, should Iran get drawn into any political or military hardships, this will be a direct threat to our national security" (Quoted in NewsInfo.ru, 2012). In the face of potential for airstrikes against Iranian nuclear facilities, Russia moved forward with a plan to upgrade Iran's air defenses by providing the S-300 system, but cancelled the deal after the U.N. imposed sanctions against Iran in late 2010 (BBC, 2010; Arkhipov, 2012). There is some speculation, though, that were Assad's regime to fall in Syria, Russia would go ahead with selling S-300s to Iran (Arkhipov, 2012). Russia is possibly using a potential Western war with Iran as a large portion of the scenario for *KAVKAZ 2012*, stating, "several post-Soviet South Caucasus countries would likely be dragged into a potential war against Iran" (Konovalov, 2012a). *KAVKAZ 2012* is scheduled for September, 2012, which could indicate that Moscow preparing for a possible October Israeli strike.

The Future of Georgia and the Caucasus

While direct Russian involvement in a conflict in Iran is doubtful, the additional scenarios involved in *KAVKAZ 2012* indicate that Russia's plans are instead for the Southern Caucasus. The "post-Soviet countries" alluded to in the previous paragraph are Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Russia maintains peacekeepers in Nagorno-Karabakh, and relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan have recently been very tense, with several small clashes (Al Jazeera, 2012). Armenia, historically friendly to Russia, has been leaning more towards NATO, participating in NATO exchanges and exercises (NATO, 2012a; Georgia Times, 2012). With Georgia's determined efforts to join NATO

and Russia's demonstrated hostility against this possibility, Moscow could use the opportunity of a Western war against Iran to justify military action across the Southern Caucasus (Felgenhauer, 2012a). Russian intervention on behalf of Armenia in Nagorno-Karabakh, while seemingly beneficial to Armenia, could be used to stamp out any inclinations Armenia might have towards NATO cooperation or partnership. Any Iranian conflict would likely spill into Azerbaijan's south as well, and Russia would need to ensure the protection of Caspian oil fields, in addition to the possible resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. Finally, any military action in Armenia or Azerbaijan would necessitate seizing the Eastern half of Georgia to ensure freedom of movement for Russian forces. Any large-scale Russian military movements would most likely come from Vladikavkaz via South Ossetia and through Tbilisi. Since it is highly unlikely that Tbilisi would allow Russian military movements through Georgia, Russia would have to cut its way through to Armenia (Felgenhauer, 2012b).

Since the 2008 war, relations have remained tense between Russia and Georgia, with no official diplomatic relations existing between the two nations, and an atmosphere of suspicion and hostility remaining. As discussed in the previous chapter, fears surrounded the *KAVKAZ 2009* exercises, during which Russian soldiers were given the same pamphlet as the previous year, describing their opposing force as the Georgian Army (Ribakoff, 2009). In March 2010 the state-run television station Imedi TV ran reports that the Russian Army had again invaded and was moving on Tbilisi, sparking panic throughout the capital city (Harding, 2010). Though the reports were a hoax, the panic which ensued was indicative of the atmosphere in Georgia, even two years after the 2008 war. In late August 2012 a group of 20 heavily-armed individuals crossed the Georgia-Russia border from Dagestan and took nearly 10 local Georgians hostage. Georgia launched a paramilitary operation against the group, killing 12 and capturing

one, and losing three Georgian special policemen. The Russian Border Service denied that the group came from Russia, calling the charges a “provocation”, though five of the 12 killed, and the one captured individual were Russian citizens, and Dagestani officials confirmed that the group had originated in Dagestan (RIA Novosti, 2012h; Pik.tv, 2012; Vertanyan & Herszenhorn, 2012). In order to avoid possible misconceptions, Georgia notified Russia of the operation in advance through the Swiss embassy, though Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili opined the possibility that the group had been sent across to test Georgia’s response capabilities, but stopped short of directly implicating Russia (RIA Novosti, 2012g; Innokentniy, 2012; Vertanyan & Herszenhorn, 2012).

There are still several hotspots with the conditions and potential for future direct conflict involving Russia. While it is highly unlikely that any of these hotspots would see direct Russia-NATO hostilities, proxy conflicts would certainly erupt. The current situation extending from the Southern Caucasus and into the northern Middle East is definitely perilous. Avoiding future conflict will require Western recognition²² of Russia’s security dilemma and those factors which continue to aggravate that dilemma.

NATO MISSILE DEFENSE PROGRAMS CONTINUE TO THREATEN RUSSIA’S NUCLEAR DETERRENT

The third distinct NATO-focused military threat outlined in *Doctrine 2010* is “the creation and deployment of strategic missile defense systems undermining global stability and violating the established correlation of forces in the nuclear-missile sphere, and also the militarization of outer space and the deployment of strategic nonnuclear precision weapon systems” (Sec. 8, p. d). *Doctrine 2010* adds to the missile defense issue with the threat of “violation of international accords by individual states, and also noncompliance

²² A critical note is that the West must *recognize* Russia’s security dilemma, though recognition does not necessarily imply *acceptance*. The West must be able to understand Russia’s perceptions and points of view in order to constructively work with Russia.

with previously concluded international treaties in the field of arms limitation and reduction” (Sec. 8, p. f). With Russia’s *Doctrine 2010* based solidly on Russia’s nuclear deterrent, it is understandable that Russia’s opposition to a Western missile defense shield would remain strong, and that suspicions against such a shield persist. As discussed in chapter four, Russia does not accept NATO’s justification for continuing development of missile defense systems, and continues to see any NATO or United States-led European missile defense system as directed at Russia (RIA Novosti, 2012d, e, f). In November 2008 President Medvedev even stated that the War in Georgia had been used “to impose an American anti-missile defense system on Europe.”

Where much of the missile defense initiative was created and put into effect by the Bush Administration, the Obama administration began with the idea of a relations “reset” with Russia (Cooper, 2009). This included a softer stance on European missile defense. The initial Polish and Czech sites for the interceptors and radars were ratified by the United States, Poland and the Czech Republic in late 2008, prior to the end of the Bush presidency. In November, 2008, Russian President Dmitri Medvedev announced that Russia would deploy SS-26²³ “Iskander” missiles to Kaliningrad, located between Poland and Lithuania on the Baltic Sea, and well within range of the planned Polish interceptor sites (Medvedev, 2008; RIA Novosti, 2008). Throughout Obama’s presidential campaign he asserted support for missile defenses, so long as the technology was “workable”, but shortly after his election, Obama’s foreign policy adviser, Dennis McDonough stated that Obama had made “no commitment” that the United States would continue its agreement to base missile defense assets in Poland (BBC, 2008). In early 2009 President Obama announced that missile defense efforts should be continued “as

²³ SS-26 (Stone) is the NATO designation for the 9K270 ballistic missile.

long as the threat from Iran persists” and continued to superficially support the idea of missile defenses. In September 2009 the American position changed when the Obama administration cancelled the Polish and Czech-based missile defense assets (Baker, 2009a). In its place a smaller, lower-key effort for future European deployment “possibly in Poland or the Czech Republic” was announced (Baker, 2009a; 2009b).

Russia’s response to the announcement was cautious, as Moscow remained skeptical that any European missile defense plan was not aimed against it. Through 2010 NATO officials began making efforts towards coordinating a NATO-U.S.-Russian missile defense solution, in order to “demonstrate that missile defense is not against Russia, but to protect Russia” (Quoted in Hildreth & Ek, 2011, p.5). Russia was invited to NATO’s 2010 Lisbon summit in hopes that greater cooperation could be achieved. The summit resulted in a NATO-led European territorial missile defense system, endorsed by the Kremlin and with the assistance of Russian technicians. At the 2010 Munich Security Conference, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov called the Lisbon agreements “encouraging,” but warned “possible cooperation on Missile Defense in no way means that Russia wittingly agrees to accede to the NATO programme developed without Russia“ (2011a).

The United States has pressed ahead with its own initiatives, as outlined by the Obama administration, instead of going along with the Euro-based missile defense system agreed to in Lisbon. This has created tension between the United States and Russia, and has led to increasingly hostile rhetoric from the Kremlin. In November 2011, President Medvedev made a special televised declaration to address the “complicated situation surrounding anti-ballistic-missile defenses in NATO countries.” In this address Medvedev lambasted the United States for developing missile defenses in spite of the Lisbon agreements, for “not seriously moving towards” cooperation, and for trying to

“placate” Russia. “We will not agree,” said Medvedev, “to take part in any program which will, over a relatively short timeframe, weaken our potential for deterrence.” Medvedev outlined several national decisions, including activating early warning radar sites in Kaliningrad, hardening of Russian strategic nuclear sites, targeting of BMD sites by Russian strategic rocket forces, the development of measures to defeat BMD information and control systems, and as a final measure, the deployment of offensive weaponry, capable of physical destruction of BMD sites. Much like Putin’s 2007 Munich speech, this speech to the Russian people was meant for NATO ears, and was a warning that Western missile defense plans and activities were aggravating Russia’s security dilemma. Cooperation, equality and openness were the solution; a position reiterated by General Makarov in early 2012 (RIA Novosti, 2012a). Makarov warned, as well, that positioning offensive weaponry to be able to destroy BMD sites was necessary, and that “a decision to preemptively use these [weapons] would be taken, should the situation become more strained” (RIA Novosti, 2012b).

During NATO’s 2012 summit in Chicago, NATO reiterated its positions on missile defense and its commitment to Obama’s plan of phased implementation. Russia’s NATO representative, Nikolai Korchunov reaffirmed Moscow’s position that Western missile defenses in Europe could only be seen as a threat to Russia, saying “the contradiction between stated policies [of reliance on both missile defenses and nuclear deterrence] only serves to increase Russian concerns about the true U.S./NATO agenda behind the BMD deployments in Europe and other parts of the world.” He continued, “Even the limited current deployments of missile-defense elements are worrying for Russia. The proposed BMD base in Poland, housing increasingly capable SM-3 interceptors, is less than 100 kilometers away from Russia’s Kaliningrad region” (Korchunov, 2012).

Despite the continued suspicion and hostility, Moscow remains rhetorically dedicated to the idea of missile defense cooperation, so long as the solution is beneficial to Russia. Until such a solution is devised, Russia will continue to believe that European missile defenses are directed at Russia, and that the threat of Iranian or non-state nuclear missiles are simply a guise to continue working toward an operational missile defense system.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COOPERATION AND EASING THE SECURITY DILEMMA

Despite the many problems, there are still areas where Russia and NATO are cooperating well. Russia has, since its beginnings, supported the American and NATO efforts in Afghanistan. A number of the militants operating in the Caucasus were tied, directly and indirectly, to Al-Qaida's leadership operating out of the mountainous Eastern Afghanistan and Pakistani tribal areas. Russia has allowed NATO to move supplies by ground and air to Afghanistan, since 2008, which has been especially useful in times when the traditional logistical routes in Pakistan were closed (Marmon, 2010). This secondary supply route is both more expensive and takes longer, but NATO supplies aren't subject to attacks as they are in Pakistan. In June 2012 the Russian State Duma voted to allow NATO an aerial logistics hub in Ulyanovsk, Russia (RIA Novosti, 2012e). Despite stipulations that the hub only be used to transport non-lethal supplies, and that it remain under Russian control, it is a promising agreement which could lead to greater cooperation between Russia and NATO (RIA Novosti, 2012a).



Illustration 3: The Southern NATO supply route (left) and the Northern NATO supply route (right). (Images courtesy Marmon, 2012)



Illustration 4: Location of Ulyanovsk Oblast (in red).
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_Russia_-_Ulyanovsk_Oblast_%282008-03%29.svg



Figure 3: Residents of Ulyanovsk protest the proposed NATO hub. The sign reads “NATO has surrounded us with bases, and we have disarmed ourselves.” (RIA Novosty, Lyubov Chilikova)

Still, there are many in Russia who are at best suspicious, and at worst openly hostile to the Ulyanovsk agreement. General Major Alexander Vladimirov, a member of Russia’s National Strategic Council argued heavily against the NATO hub, complaining that it was “the first time since the existence of the Russian Federation, Russian Empire, and Soviet Union and indeed on the territory of Russia that a military presence has been established by an antagonistic military-political bloc.” General Vladimirov then posited that the Ulyanovsk hub is actually among the first steps in an American plan to “prepare the conditions for a theater of war”, comparing the supply hub to the Pristina airfield seized by Russian paratroopers, ready for NATO to land its “own divisions of paratroopers,” or surmising that NATO aircraft would use the opportunity to airdrop surveillance equipment, drugs, or even to poison the Volga (2012). While General Vladimirov’s positions are certainly outlandish, the fact that a serving Russian general

espouses such ideas indicates that there is still a healthy suspicion of the West throughout Russia, and the fact that Russian citizens protested the NATO hub prior to its ratification show that direct NATO-Russia cooperation is a sensitive subject (RIA Novosti, 2012).

Conclusion

The collapse of the Soviet Union presented a unique opportunity for Russia and the West to move past their antagonistic past towards partnership and a future of cooperation. Both Russia and the West recognized that the world had changed dramatically, though each side viewed the changed state of the world in entirely different terms. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, the West, led by the United States and NATO, drove an optimistic, yet guarded and wounded Russia deep into a security dilemma. Western rhetoric promised Russia cooperation, partnership and security, but Western action showed condescension, isolation and disregard. The security dilemma felt by Russia was acute; Russia remained the second largest nuclear power in the world, the largest nation by landmass, and still held a permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council, yet it was being treated as banana republic and a relic of a by-gone era. Finally, Russia's security dilemma culminated in 2008 with the invasion of Georgia; a military operation conducted to prevent continued expansion of NATO, answer the West's disregard for U.N. authority and use of unilateral military aggression, and to keep Western missile defenses out of the Caucasus.

The Cold War world was characterized by Jervis' security dilemma as a number two world – one where offensive and defensive posturing were difficult to distinguish or discern, but defense held the advantage. This second world retained the security dilemma, but since defense held the advantage, agreements could be made to satisfy the dilemma of each competitor state. Thus, the West and the Soviet Union balanced each other out via NATO and the Warsaw Pact, and numerous strategic and conventional arms treaties. During the 10-15 year period following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the number two world morphed to a number one world where offensive and defensive posturing remained

relatively indistinguishable, but the offense had replaced defense as the advantageous action, as demonstrated by NATO and Western unilateral military aggression. Moscow saw NATO expansion as encircling Russia and reducing strategic buffer zones, and missile defense initiatives as reducing Russia's strategic nuclear deterrent. Each of these actions, while ostensibly taken in the name of "defense" constituted an aggregate offense against Russia, by the West.

Because of the nature of the "frozen" separatist conflicts in Georgia, the strategic nature of the Caucasus region, and the presence of all three major components of Russia's security dilemma in the Caucasus, Moscow undertook to answer perceived Western aggression there. While some blame for the August 2008 war can be placed on Georgia, Russia's thorough preparation for conflict belies not only anticipation, but premeditation for hostilities with Georgia. After the war, Western attitudes toward Moscow eased, especially accounting for President Obama's "Russian relations reset", and reduced Western support for Georgia. Still, NATO continues to eye further expansion and Georgia continues to press for admission into the alliance, NATO and the West continue to see their military capabilities as indicative of authority for their use as demonstrated in Libya, and NATO is continuing to press forward with a United-States-designed European missile defense system which excludes Russian input. Each of the security indicators perceived by Russia continues today, and the potential for renewed hostilities between Western and Russian interests remains. Since the War, Russia has remained diplomatic about expressing grievances, and the West is more apt to work diplomatically with Russia. Despite the issues which complicate Russia's security dilemma, Russian-Western cooperation on issues of counter-narcotics, counter-terrorism, and military exchanges provide a release for some of the pressure felt by Russia.

This thesis has examined the three major areas of concern which led to Russia's acute security dilemma – marginalization of Russia and NATO expansion, unilateral and extra U.N. military operations, and missile defense initiatives – and how each area has led to Russia's perception of western Defection. This thesis has also discussed the context of Russia's relationship with Georgia, the Caucasus and why Georgia became the subject of the culmination of Russia's security dilemma, as well as evidences that the August 2008 war was, in fact, a message directed at the West. Finally each area of concern has been examined, along with how there is still considerable concern, as Western actions continue to complicate Russia's security dilemma, and could lead to a new conflict.

If the West is to avoid this conflict, it must examine the nature of its actions and relationships with the world at large. What is NATO's role in the 21st Century, and what is the purpose of continued NATO expansion? NATO must clearly define and justify expansion, especially to those "buffer" states which border Russia, and ensure Russian objections are rationally addressed. Regardless of its deficiencies, the U.N. remains the globally-recognized legal authority for security and diplomatic matters and the West must use the U.N. Security Council venue to make the case for future military action. Lastly, the West must make the case for missile defense systems. If there is not a logical and legitimate reason for excluding Russia from a global missile defense system, Russia will continue to be justified in perceiving it as a threat to Russia's nuclear arsenal. Given the threats Western missile defenses are directed against, including Russia as a full partner makes incredible sense. The West needs to collectively reevaluate its positions regarding Russia, the assumptions and history behind those positions, and the logical conclusion towards which those positions are leading. The West, whether they like it or not, will either drive Russia to another Georgia-like security dilemma culmination, or find a

workable form of mutual cooperation. The question is which direction will the West choose.

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Vita

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