

or in life, if one could ever start from a point of innocence." To which I suppose the only answer is to say—Go! Plunge ever deeper, commit more crimes to erase those already committed, and repeat with Macbeth, "I am in blood/Stepped in so far that, should I wade no more,/Returning were as tedious as go o'er." □

■ WHY RUSSIA OPPOSES EXPANSION

NATO Stay Away From My Door

MATTHEW EVANGELISTA

Russia today is a fragmented society, with politics an angry mix of fascism, nationalism, communism, socialism and liberalism. But all parties are as one when it comes to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization: They staunchly oppose its expansion into Eastern Europe. Although Boris Yeltsin paid lip service to NATO's so-called Partnership for Peace during President Clinton's recent visit to Moscow, he still firmly rejects using the agreement as a vehicle for expanding NATO.

Russia's anxiety over NATO's encroachment on its border is profound, and the Clinton Administration seems unwilling to face the fact. As the President formulated it at a NATO summit in January 1994, "It's not a question of whether NATO will take on new members, but when and how." This approach ignores the widespread opposition to NATO expansion within Russia—not only from the Yeltsin government but from its harshest critics, ranging from the extreme nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy to the liberal economic reformer Grigory Yavlinsky.

During the Gorbachev years, both Andrei Kokoshin and Aleksei Arbatov played key roles as supporters of the kinds of military reforms that helped end the cold war. Kokoshin is now the highest-ranking civilian in the Defense Ministry; Arbatov is an opposition member of Parliament and a harsh critic of current military policy. Yet both agree that NATO expansion is a bad idea.

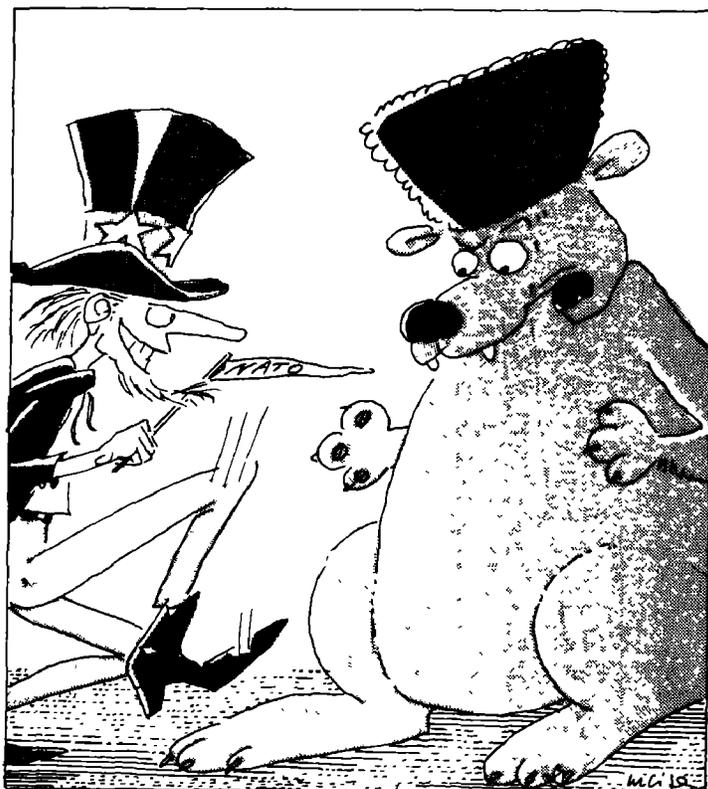
Still, NATO's major players—particularly Britain, Germany and the United States—see expansion as a relatively easy and straightforward foreign policy decision, especially compared with the hard choices they have faced in Bosnia, Somalia and Haiti. Moreover, the NATO bureaucracy, robbed of its rationale to defend against the Soviet threat, needs something new to do, and integrating the states of the former Warsaw Pact into the NATO system seems to fit the bill. The top candidates include the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary and probably Slovakia. Their leaders—most vocally Vaclav Havel and Lech Walesa—have insisted that only membership in the NATO alliance will insure their countries' economic and political security. Havel has gone so far as to say that his country is ready

to fulfill all requirements of NATO membership, including the stationing of nuclear weapons on its territory.

Moscow's warnings about what it will do if expansion comes should be taken seriously. Russia has threatened not to ratify the START II treaty aimed at substantially reducing strategic nuclear weapons there and in the United States. It has also threatened to abrogate the 1990 treaty reducing conventional forces in Europe (C.F.E.), a pact that was central to ending the East-West military rivalry on the Continent. Western politicians stubbornly refuse to face such consequences of the proposed NATO expansion. During a visit to Poland in mid-April, Douglas Hurd, the British Foreign Secretary, declared that "there is no link between Russia's meeting its obligations under the Conventional Forces in Europe treaty and decisions about expanding NATO"—ignoring the fact that both Yeltsin and his opponents in the Duma have repeatedly insisted on such a link.

In the end, supporters of Russian democracy are likely to be hurt most by any NATO march eastward, since their insistence on the West's generally benign intentions will meet with widespread skepticism. In consequence, they will find it difficult to resist the policy prescriptions of the hard-liners, such as accelerating efforts to integrate the former Soviet republics into a Moscow-dominated defense alliance. More worrisome is the likelihood that the reactionaries may also use the specter of an external threat from NATO to curb democratic freedoms, producing the increased repression that many of them already advocate. Such a development is not likely to come without violence, an upheaval that could expand to neighboring states and perhaps threaten the security of thousands of nuclear weapons within Russia.

Some argue that rejecting the NATO expansion would show too much deference to Russia's militarists, that it would give



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them an unacceptable *droit de regard* over the foreign policy of other states. But curbing NATO's eastward thrust would actually weaken the hard-liners politically by validating the moderates' argument that the West has no military designs on Eastern Europe. Russian militarists now use the specter of NATO expansion to distract attention from the brutal war in Chechnya. Some restraint on NATO's part would benefit the brave critics of that war: people like the human rights campaigner Sergei Kovalev, the committees of soldiers' mothers and the journalists who risk their lives to counter the government's propaganda.

To some, all this is beside the point, because they say Russia will inevitably come to oppose the West, regardless of the moderate forces inside the country. This argument holds that it makes sense to prepare for that eventuality by expanding a proven institution—NATO—to provide security for the states not long out of the Soviet Union's grasp. A corollary here is that alternative security arrangements are inferior, including reliance on collective security, on the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (O.S.C.E.), on the Western European Union (W.E.U.) or on the United Nations. Although many of the criticisms of these organizations may be valid, there is no reason to believe that NATO is necessarily better suited to dealing with the kinds of threats the states of Eastern and Central Europe are likely to encounter. In the near term at least, these countries' problems will not come from Russia but from economic crisis, ecological degradation, internal ethnic conflict and from disputes be-

tween states whose populations contain significant minorities that constitute the majority in a neighboring state, like the Hungarians in Romania, Slovakia or the Vojvodina region of Serbia.

Other institutions might deal with such problems more effectively than NATO. The promise of economic rewards associated with membership in the European Union, for example, has already provided leverage for moderating the policies of Hungary and Slovakia toward their ethnic minorities. The O.S.C.E. provides a means that NATO lacks for resolving regional disputes, primarily because its membership includes all European states, large and small, plus Russia and the United States. At the May summit in Moscow, Yeltsin made it clear to President Clinton that he preferred working through O.S.C.E. rather than an expanded NATO, doubtless because he sees Russia as an equal partner in the former but not in the latter. Finally, if a genuine military alliance were required to defend Central and Eastern Europe, the W.E.U. would be a better choice than NATO, largely because the United States is not a member.

A revival of East-West conflict along the lines of the cold war is hardly inevitable. But few geopolitical decisions would encourage it more than expansion of NATO into Eastern Europe. If the Clinton Administration insists on enlarging NATO it runs a serious risk of rupturing relations with Moscow, a break that could be disastrous at a time when democratic reformers in Russia already face the distinct possibility of being overwhelmed by the forces of the past. □

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