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Engaging Russia as Partner and Participant

The Next Stage of NATO–Russia Relations

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Supported by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the RAND Corporation,
and the Foundation for East-West Bridges of Moscow



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Executive Summary

In May 1997, NATO concluded a Founding Act with the Russian Federation.¹ Then, following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States, NATO and the Russian Federation agreed to create a NATO-Russia Council (NRC), “where NATO member states and Russia will work *as equal partners* in areas of common interest.”²

This report does not review in detail the record of the NATO-Russia Council. Rather, it points to some additional areas in which the members of the NATO-Russia Working Group believe the NRC can usefully become engaged.

Whether the time has arrived for redefining Russia’s relations with NATO—or *within* NATO—is the key point of this report. This matter has two dimensions: the fulfillment of a 20th-century security agenda to ensure that the last century’s European tragedy will “never again” be visited and a new agenda for the 21st century, typified by three concerns: terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, and security for the broader Middle East. These two agendas include

- Russia’s greater and more-integrated participation in security, political, economic, and other arrangements for the great ongoing experiment in determining future security in Europe and beyond
- Russia’s role in the development of Western policy and practice in areas beyond Europe, especially in the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Transcaucasus.

In short, the next phase of NATO-Russia relations should focus on Russia’s *greater engagement as a partner and a participant*.

NATO-Russia in Europe

The first task in forging this new NATO-Russian relationship has focused on what is possible and desirable within Europe. The NATO-Russia Working Group judges that a few key areas should be emphasized.

¹ The term *founding act* was chosen to avoid implying that the arrangements being negotiated had the effect of a treaty, which would have made it subject to ratification by the U.S. Senate and, potentially, by other NATO parliaments (U.S. request) but also to imply both the significance of the arrangements—*founding*—and that they had political if not also legal effect—*act* (Russian request).

² Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security Between NATO and The Russian Federation, Paris, May 27, 1997; online at <http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/fndact-a.htm> (as of 22 September 2004).

Personnel Engagement, Exchanges, and Staffing

An important element of developing NATO-Russia relations is for Russian and NATO officials, personnel, and staffs to engage one another functionally. Much is being done. The following are some of the key areas needing further development:

- Engagement of top-level Russian diplomatic personnel in Brussels and at the key NATO commands and of top-level NATO diplomatic personnel with institutions in Russia, including the Foreign Ministry, should increase.
- Engagement of Russian and allied military personnel should increase in their respective headquarters (as well as in NATO-Brussels and the Russian Defense Ministry), including joint staff training and development of common and compatible doctrines, extending to such newer command structures as the NATO Response Force (NRF).
- Increasingly, the basic approach should be that *inclusion* is the rule and *exclusion* is the exception. NATO and Russia must increasingly seek counsel with one another in any crisis either faces.
- With agreement of the European Union (EU), Russian civilian and military observers should be included in NATO's work with the EU, including the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP).

Military-to-Military Cooperation

The following are the key areas for development of military cooperation:

- Russian military planners should be consulted and engaged in developing NATO peacekeeping doctrine, including the NRF employment doctrine.
- Russia should create significant officer and enlisted training opportunities for NATO personnel in Russia, to parallel increased Russian participation in NATO and NATO-related schools.
- Russia should have a greater role in the Partnership Coordination Cell.
- Russia and other Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) states should be progressively engaged with NATO's Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) headquarters. NATO and Russia should consider whether Russia should play a lead nation role in an NRF rotation.

Transformation, Interoperability, and Defense Industrial Relations

Acquainting Russian forces with NATO's common procedures will help these forces work effectively *with* and *within* NATO and help them develop habits of mind and behavior that can have positive political effects. Russia also needs to increase the interoperability of its forces, equipment, and techniques with NATO's. Key areas for development include the following:

- NATO has opened up some NATO standardization agreements (STANAGS) to Russia, which has adopted some of them. More will be needed. The West needs to address the problem of releasing higher technology data to Russia; Russia needs to show it can be trusted not to pass the data on to third parties.
- Russia should be more fully associated NATO's Conference of National Armaments Directors (CNAD). It should become associated with the NATO Defence Capabilities Commitment and become eligible to compete in providing a wide range of

- equipment, including modernization of Soviet-made weapons in the armed forces of the new Alliance members.
- Russia should be progressively associated with NATO transformation, including work at Allied Command Transformation, consistent with security requirements. Here again, the goal should be *inclusion* as the norm and *exclusion* the exception.
 - Russia should share its transformation work with NATO, engage NATO with its development, again working toward *inclusion* as the norm and *exclusion* the exception.
 - Russia should take part in more NATO military exercises and peacekeeping.

Civil Emergencies

For nearly a decade, NATO and Russia have cooperated in civil emergency preparedness. NATO-Russia cooperation should be extended, in several areas:

- common staffing of headquarters and planning work
- developing joint doctrine
- combining relevant capabilities
- sharing intelligence
- conducting exercises
- deploying jointly to natural disasters (and potentially to sites of terrorist attacks).

Arms Control: The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe

Disagreements over the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) need to be resolved promptly, with each side addressing the other's concerns.

For Russia, this would involve arrangements for relocating relatively small numbers of troops and amounts of equipment from Moldova and agreeing on the time frame and modalities for the withdrawal of Russian forces and equipment from Georgia. For NATO, accession to the treaty of the four non-CFE allies would codify existing political assurances of restraint in deploying forces closer to Russia's borders.

NATO member states should consider expanding financial assistance for the withdrawal process. Other efforts could include an NRC peacekeeping mission in Moldova to monitor a constitutional settlement.

NATO-Russia Beyond Europe

The events of September 11, 2001, and the 2003 War in Iraq changed much for NATO and NATO-Russian relations. A natural agenda has emerged in terms of key issues of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Regarding Russia's role, the Working Group believes the following:

- NATO's engagement in Asian territories bordering on Russia is not detrimental to Russia's security interests, and there is an urgent need for NATO-Russian cooperation and, potentially, even for joint action in and around these territories.

- Concerns and possibilities about Afghanistan, Iraq, and other parts of the Middle East should involve discussion and agreement (especially in the NATO-Russia Council) and practical steps in political, security, and military cooperation.

A Russian Role with NATO on Afghanistan

NATO's leadership of the UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan presents an opportunity for NATO-Russia cooperation. The NRC should consider engaging Russia with ISAF, primarily outside Afghanistan, to

- monitor Afghanistan's borders
- combat drug trafficking and terrorism
- assist in the return of refugees to Afghanistan
- contribute to intelligence collection, assessment, and coordination
- help train and equip Afghanistan's police and armed forces
- assist in general reconstruction efforts.

Special command-and-control arrangements for Russian forces would be needed (perhaps using the Deputy to the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, for Russian Forces, whom Russia should appoint), along with guiding principles for the Russian area of responsibility and military tasks in antidrug and antiterrorist operations. Whether there is strong resistance to Russian participation because of the Soviet Union's invasion in the 1980s may depend on the ability of NATO and Russia to reassure the Afghans that Russian participation does not pose a threat.

A Russian Role in Iraq

The period following the transition from the U.S.-led Coalition Provisional Authority to a sovereign Iraqi government might present an opportunity for NATO-Russia cooperation, depending on the desires of the Iraqi interim government.

NATO and Russia should consider participating in a joint civil-military operation in Iraq in 2005. This could take the form of special units in which NATO and Russia work together. Joint operational objectives could include the following:

- assisting in the monitoring of Iraq's borders
- improving the effectiveness of the National Police, army, and other security forces
- assisting the United Nations (UN), if present, with force protection and intelligence
- taking part in reconstruction efforts.

NATO and Russia would need to do the following:

- develop special command-and-control arrangement for Russian forces (perhaps using the Deputy to the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, for Russian Forces)
- agree on guiding principles for NATO and Russian peacekeeping operations
- identify the Russian sectors of responsibility (or joint responsibility)
- outline the fundamental military tasks for Russian forces
- establish a legal framework acceptable to all parties.

Russia will never put its forces under NATO's military command, at least as long as it is not a full participant in allied political decisionmaking. Thus, Russia's military engagement in Iraq is unlikely, unless command arrangements were worked out through the NRC. Still, Iraq should be a central topic for consideration within the NATO-Russia Council,

including political discussion, strategic assessments, coordination of policy, and appropriate activities regarding possible cooperation in Iraq.

Cooperation in Central Asia and the Transcaucasus

Central Asia and the Transcaucasus are areas for potential NATO-Russian cooperation, in the contexts both of the NRC and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council. NATO and Russia might conduct joint peacekeeping missions, preferably under a UN mandate. They might form a joint peacekeeping unit to monitor a (future) settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict or to conduct joint border protection in Tajikistan or Georgia.

NATO and Russia, along with states in the region, could also conduct joint exercises to combat terrorism in Central Asia, within the framework of the Partnership for Peace (PFP) or NRF. Technical obstacles can be surmounted, including language; financing (NATO countries should be ready to help underwrite these activities); and a Status of Forces Agreement.

Israeli-Palestinian Peacekeeping

In April 2003, the United States, Russia, the UN, and the EU published their “road map” for peacemaking between Israel and a prospective Palestinian state. The chances of success are problematical, but, at some point, peace negotiations may succeed and produce a two-state solution. Outside help will be needed to help preserve security and build confidence between the parties, perhaps a peacekeeping or “peace enabling” force, led by the United States and including NATO and Russian forces.

The Working Group on NATO-Russian Relations recommends that the NRC and military bodies begin considering such a development and its practical requirements.

New Middle East Security System

It is increasingly clear that a new “security system” is needed for the Middle East, especially for the Persian Gulf region. The West and Russia would benefit from a system among regional states that reduced the need for outside military engagement.

It would be useful for regional countries, NATO, and Russia to begin exploring a new structure and organization (modeled after the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe [OSCE] or another such organization, formal or informal, limited or comprehensive), developed on an inclusive, nondiscriminatory basis.

The Future of Russia *Within* NATO

The long-term nature of the NATO-Russian relationship requires a clear vision and a common strategy. The Founding Act and the new NATO-Russian Council have helped, but they still do not point to a lasting solution.

One school of thought has argued that Russia would be unlikely ever to join NATO. Another school has argued that, nevertheless, the notion of “equal opportunity” to join should be preserved. A third school has suggested some form of “associate” membership. A final school foresees relatively near-term full membership. In the West, the last view has been restricted largely to a limited group of people who see the Alliance as a second OSCE. In

Russia, proponents generally want NATO to become a political and security association instead of a military alliance.

The Working Group on NATO-Russia relations believes it is time to revisit the question of Russia's long-term engagement with NATO. This is not a recommendation for Russia today to seek or be accorded NATO membership. It is about developing the idea of a deeply engaged role for Russia in deliberations about the future of areas contiguous to it, as well as about "globalization."

The objectives in NATO-Russia relations should be to

- solidify the practical bases for day-to-day NATO-Russia cooperation
- work toward a true sense of "equality" in NATO-Russia activities
- ensure that what they do together preserves the interests of third parties
- build confidence, at all levels, and progressively look toward common actions
- promote Russian-EU cooperation
- intensify personnel exchanges and educational opportunities
- promote complementarity and cooperation of nonofficial relationships, including the private sector and nongovernmental organizations.

At heart, the NATO-Russia relationship will be about what NATO and Russia do together to develop a truly equal, mutually supportive relationship that promotes the goal of a "Europe whole and free"—and beyond. NATO and Russia should share responsibilities, and each should behave responsibly toward the other.