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THESIS

**A COMPARATIVE REVIEW OF EXECUTIVE/LEGISLATIVE
RELATIONS IN THE U.S. AND RUSSIA PERTAINING TO NATO
ENLARGEMENT**

by

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September 2001

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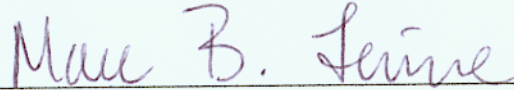
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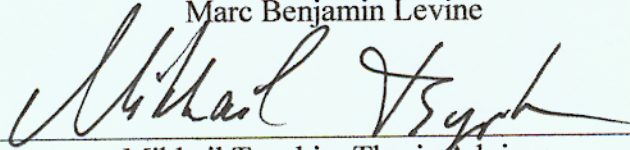
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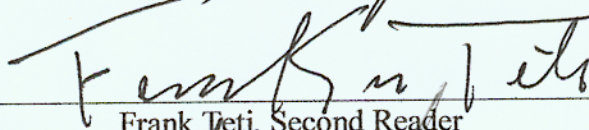


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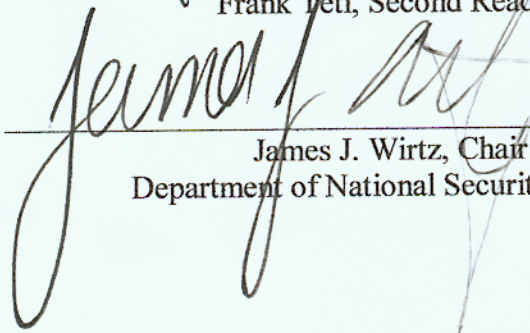
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ABSTRACT

The membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO, expanded in 1999. This enlargement includes countries within the Warsaw Pact. NATO enlargement has important consequences for the Alliance and the United States. It also has tremendous consequences for the focus of the Alliance, the former Soviet Union, and the present day Russian Federation.

The question of whether an active and lively debate has taken place between the branches of these governments on this issue, specifically between the executive and legislative branches, is explored in this thesis. It explains how US foreign policy was determined by leading policy makers, and that the lack of discourse and debate in executive/legislative relations is counterproductive. It describes how NATO enlargement became a non-issue in 1998 in the United States, and a catalyst for reactionary politics within Russia. Further, it provides insight into whether this lack of debate is congruent with past relations between the executive and legislative branches. The thesis also explores Russian constitutional relationships and how they shape Russian attitudes toward NATO enlargement.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this thesis is to study and explain why NATO enlargement was a non-issue in the US Senate during Spring 1998, and why no debate between the executive and legislative branches occurred. The thesis explores relations between the executive and legislative branches of government, the recent round of NATO enlargement, and concerns about Russia.

How enlargement affected relations between the Duma, Russia's lower house of parliament, and the executive branch in Russia will be discussed. The thesis reviews the dynamics that made this an issue in Russia, and how enlargement served as a catalyst for a turbulent debate in Russia's domestic politics.

The comparative aspect of this paper provides a basis for judgement about the development of the young Russian Federation. This perspective, juxtaposed with the United States, lends insight as to how each has acted while on two very different levels of the playing field as active and passive participants in NATO's enlargement. The United States, as the leading nation of NATO, played an active role in bringing in new members to the Alliance. Russia had no say in NATO's decision to expand.

The literature reviewed in this study included newspaper articles, books, the North Atlantic Treaty, articles published in scholarly journals and theses, the Internet and World Wide Web. These sources allowed me to describe how NATO enlargement was debated in 1998, and how inter-branch relations in Russia and the United States influenced this debate.

I. INTRODUCTION

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) expanded in 1999. This enlargement includes countries formerly under the sphere of influence of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union. The enlargement is in accordance with the decisions of the Allied Heads of State and Government at the Summit Meeting in Madrid in July 1997.

This enlargement has obvious consequences for the Alliance and the United States. It also has consequences for the focus of the Alliance, the former Soviet Union, and the present day Russian Federation. Has an active and lively debate taken place between the legislative and executive branches of the governments involved? This thesis explains how US foreign policy was determined by leading policy makers, without debate between the branches of government. I will discuss how NATO enlargement became a non-issue in 1998 in the United States, and a catalyst for reactionary domestic politics in Russia. Further, I will provide insight into whether this lack of debate is congruent with past relations between the executive and legislative branches in both countries. For Russia, I will examine the constitutional relationship between the two branches and how this relationship affected the issue of enlargement.

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II. PERSPECTIVES ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES AND FOREIGN POLICY

A. UNITED STATES

Throughout American history, the tug-of-war between the executive and legislative branches of government pulled power from one branch to the other regarding foreign policy making. Until the 1970's, Presidential power and prerogative in the arena of foreign affairs outdistanced Congress's authority.

Throughout the 20th century, it had been assumed that the American president held authority in dealing with the growing communist threat, building diplomatic relations around the world and charting courses of war and peace for the United States. Two events changed all of this.

US participation in the Vietnam War met with turmoil. Constituents at home in congressional districts gave voice to growing concerns. Due to a groundswell of changing public opinion about US activities overseas and the direction of American foreign policy, Congress made strides to narrow the gap between itself and the overpowering executive branch. Congress began to assert its power and influence in both defense planning and foreign policy making.¹

International affairs, which once seemed a topic for the elite, became a fixture in American living rooms each evening with the nightly news. Congressmen reacted to this new

interest by engaging in debates about foreign affairs. Often, congressional involvement in foreign policy was to the chagrin of the executive branch.

President Reagan failed in his attempt to roll back statutes that increased Congressional involvement in what had previously been solely the president's playing ground.² Reagan hoped to capitalize on perceptions that US policy blunders abroad could be blamed on Congress's rise in prominence in the international arena. His plan did not work, and, in fact, legislative activism increased throughout the 1980s. The congressional bureaucratic machine continued to grow.

Defense planning and foreign policy have traditionally been considered the domain of the executive branch. Over the past three decades, this dominance has shifted, and Congress has increased its role and power in the determination of policy. This recent rise of legislative activism leads to the question of why this activism did not appear in the recent debate over NATO enlargement.

Despite attempts by the executive branch to limit congressional growth in power, Congress continued to experience increased gains in its role regarding foreign policy. Congress subsequently experienced dynamic growth in bureaucratic numbers and political power in this field.

The argument that NATO enlargement experienced no earnest debate between the branches of the US government is puzzling, and will be considered in this paper within the

¹Barry M. Blechman, *The Politics of National Security*, Oxford University Press, 1990, p.9

² Ibid

framework of congressional and executive relations. How have these relations evolved, and how has this evolution led up to the recent passage of the enlargement?

B. RUSSIAN FEDERATION

The dissolution of the USSR created an institutional gridlock of competing claims for power, legitimacy and authority in the new Russian Federation.³ Russia's parliamentary election and constitutional referendum approved December 12, 1993, laid the framework for future relations between the Duma and the Russian president.

The election and referendum was intended to normalize politics in Russia after more than a year of tumultuous confrontation between the executive and legislative branches. Such hopes were only partly fulfilled. The constitution, which solidified Boris Yeltsin's position, passed with less than 60% of the vote. Russia now has a strong presidency, and a weaker legislative branch filled with a variety of parties.

The presidency's sweeping powers concerned those who wondered about Yeltsin's eventual successor.⁴ It is too early to tell Vladimir Putin's legacy, and he is not a factor in the NATO enlargement debate that took place in 1998. The Duma consists of various parties with views that did not conform with Yeltsin's political views on domestic issues or foreign policy. These differences showed during the internal debate regarding NATO enlargement. I will review how this issue affected Russian politics and Russian policy making.

³ *Russia's Parliamentary Election and Constitutional Referendum*, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, January 1994

⁴ *Ibid*

C. THE CONSTITUTION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

The Preamble to the Constitution of the Russian Federation begins with one of the hallmarks of democracy and democratization.⁵ The first line of this preamble defines the identity of the people of the Russian Federation as ‘multinational.’⁶ An attitude toward multinationalism contributes to the democratization of countries worldwide, and is proven to be an auspicious beginning for constitutions of newly democratic states. The Articles of the Russian Constitution are similar to the US Constitution and other modern constitutions, with civil liberties and the separation of powers enumerated in an orderly fashion.

In Chapter IV, Article 80, the constitution clearly delegates power to the Russian president to define foreign policy and to represent the country in international relations. Chapter IV continues to outline the powers of the presidency. This chapter gives authority over issues of national security, armed forces and international diplomatic representatives.

Article 86 gives perhaps the clearest definition of the president’s authority over foreign matters. This states that the president shall conduct the foreign policy of the Federation, conduct negotiations and sign treaties, sign instruments of ratification and accept credentials and instruments of recall of diplomatic representatives accredited with him. There is no similar clause, nor any clause describing any foreign policy powers for the Duma.

The effort members of the Duma engage in to influence policy is strengthened by their close proximity to the electorate. Members of the Duma are effective in influencing policy by using their ability to pass laws, and approve the appointment of prime minister for the

⁵ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1991, p.37

⁶ *The Constitution of the Russian Federation*, Ratified December 12, 1993

president. The Duma's close relationship to voters sways the executive branch and influences policy making although such power is not defined in the constitution.

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III. BACKGROUND OF THE RECENT PROCESS OF ENLARGEMENT

NATO completed its most recent round of enlargement in 1999. This enlargement is the fourth in the history of the 50-year-old alliance. According to Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty, the organization may, upon unanimous consent of its members, invite other European states to join if the invitees further the principles of the treaty and contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area.

In 1995, NATO outlined the process for expansion. NATO decided to pursue this fourth enlargement over a period of years. The alliance chose to invite Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary because these countries meet NATO's minimum requirements for membership. Although there is no formal checklist for membership, criteria do exist for interested nations.⁷ To gain membership, nations must: uphold democracy, including tolerating diversity; be progressing toward a market economy; have their military forces under firm civilian control; be good neighbors and respect the sovereignty of other nations; and work toward interoperability with NATO forces.

A. UNITED STATES

The role of the United States in the process of enlargement is great. First, the United States is the largest and most powerful member of the alliance. Second, the top commander

⁷ U.S. Department of State, Fact sheet prepared by the Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs, August 15, 1997

of NATO, the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, has always been an American. Certainly, the US role in creating the framework of enlargement matches its preeminence in the alliance.

According to Article 14 of the North Atlantic Treaty, prospective new members of the Alliance must deposit their instruments of accession, or membership, with the Government of the United States. The US serves as the depositary of the Treaty. Only at that point will the prospects become new members.⁸ While symbolic of NATO membership, this role is underlying evidence of the importance of US involvement in the alliance.

A review of the past year's public debate over NATO enlargement gives rise to the observation that US policy makers all but ignored this issue. And while public debate took place, it took place with futility; there was never a serious or potent effort to sway opinion. By beginning the current process of enlargement over a period of years, NATO became a non-issue in American politics.

B. RUSSIAN FEDERATION

The dynamics of the relationship between the Duma and President Yeltsin influenced the public debate in Russia. The Duma reacted to Yeltsin's role as Russia's president by ignoring its limited role in determining Russia's foreign policy, and voicing its concerns about the enlargement. This was cause for Yeltsin to react. These actions affected Russian relations with NATO allies, expansion candidates and NATO foes, alike, and which will be discussed

⁸ NATO Basic Fact Sheet, *NATO's Enlargement*, <http://www.nato.int/docu/facts/enl.htm>

elsewhere. NATO did make efforts to include Russia into general dialogue of NATO actions with the forming of the NATO-Russian Council.

Russia's role certainly differed from the one taken by the United States. Russia, NATO's historical antagonist, reacted negatively to the prospect of the creeping border of NATO's alliance. After the parliamentary election and referendum, it was widely believed that Russian objections to NATO enlargement into former Soviet Bloc states would outweigh those in NATO that wished to protect these budding democracies through a formal alliance.⁹ Russia had a voice in the international community, but no vote in the matter of NATO enlargement.

⁹ Ibid

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IV. ARENA OF DISCOURSE AND DEBATE

A. UNITED STATES

NATO enlargement demanded little attention by the time it came to a vote in the US Senate. Leading up to the vote, Senators did make use of several venues to declare their positions on various issues. Policy makers and opinion leaders made use of the print media to advocate their views on enlargement. Many opinion leaders and newspaper columnists lamented the lack of debate within the Senate.¹⁰

The concerns they raised, however, never stirred public debate. Senator Connie Mack of Florida attributed the absence of debate to the lack of interest on Main Street. Senators did little to encourage interest in the issue with their constituents. The historical role of the Senate in participating in treaties and foreign affairs discussion fell by the wayside.

Senator Mack's observation is important. While this issue has implications for US policy, it hardly raised an interest among average Americans.¹¹ And while the foreign policy elite debated the topic across the pages of editorial sections and journals, the issue failed to catch both the imagination and attention of the American public.

According to a Pew Research Center opinion survey, only 5% of those questioned followed the NATO enlargement issue closely compared to almost half who followed the Spring 1998 clash with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. The deference that legislators had shown the executive branch during the 1950's, while communism was a concern among

¹⁰ David S. Broder, "Deciding NATO's Future Without Debate," *Washington Post*, March 18, 1998

¹¹ Tyler Marshall, "US Public Acutely Uninterested in Vote on NATO," *Los Angeles Times*, April 8, 1998

Americans, is different from this example of legislative indifference. There is no great fear of enlarging or not enlarging, nor is there an explicit threat.

Paradoxically, high level legislators and statesmen have participated in bringing this debate out to the public. Former presidential candidate and Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, among many others, promoted enlargement citing among other things, reasons not to postpone a vote.¹² One might figure that a rush to vote is tantamount to stifling debate. An alternative viewpoint is that there was little to debate for the sides were drawn long before enlargement was an issue on the Senate floor in 1998.

A review of editorials written by members of the Senate reveals that leaders of both parties, and, notably, of the party fringes, supported enlargement. Republican Party centrists argued for the main points of the issue, while tearing apart the message of detractors.¹³ Senators Roth and Lugar claimed that critics of enlargement were misrepresenting the minutia of the issue. Roth and Lugar argued that the Open Door clause in the North Atlantic Treaty did not lead NATO down a slippery slope of inviting all comers into the alliance.

Among those who actively sought to turn the tide of Senate opinion was a bipartisan group of 15 former legislators.¹⁴ These concerned statesmen argued that there was a multitude of issues that warranted attention and that enlargement in itself was a serious mistake.

Concerns for the lack of security in Russia due to the closing in of NATO's border was a major issue to consider. This issue did happen to be one small sticking point in the

¹² Bob Dole, "NATO Test of US Leadership," *Washington Times*, March 18, 1998

¹³ William V. Roth and Richard G. Lugar, "NATO's Open Door," *Washington Times*, March 18 1998

¹⁴ Jim Abdnor, et al., "NATO Expansion is a Serious Mistake," *Washington Times*, March 12, 1998

debate about expansion, though it never threatened the passage of the acceptance of new members. Divergent interest groups also aligned themselves against expansion to influence the Senate, though there was never a chance that enough senators would sign on to that side of the cause.¹⁵

The pages of leading newspapers did become an arena for debate of the topic of NATO enlargement. The minority opposing the issue, however, never gathered support for their argument. And the majority, bolstered by both political parties and the White House, never faced a serious threat of changing public attitudes and opinion. NATO enlargement became an issue that called for little attention during the end of the approval process by the United States Senate or the president. As a member of NATO, and literally in the driver's seat, the United States played a decisive role in determining the future of the alliance. The substantial role played by the United States did not factor into the debate over enlargement.

The downfall of the Soviet Union has given congressmen lower political costs when disagreeing with the president.¹⁶ The absence of an immediate threat also gave members of Congress lower political costs for inaction on issues of national interest and security. Alternatively, Congress and the president both are in agreement that a stronger NATO reduces a possible long term threat.

¹⁵ *National Journal*, April 11, 1998

¹⁶ James M. Lindsay, *Congress and the Politics of US Foreign Policy*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994

B. RUSSIAN FEDERATION AND EXECUTIVE/LEGISLATIVE RELATIONS PERTAINING TO NEW NATO MEMBERS

In contrast with the United States, leaders of Russia's political parties took an active role discussing the perceived merits, or rather the critical lapses, of NATO enlargement. These leaders made NATO enlargement an opportunity to attack the executive branch although a majority of the population in Russia ignored the issue.¹⁷ Issues of more importance remained crime and wages, the Russian Diaspora, the disappearance of national resources, restoring national dignity and returning to superpower status.

Aleksei Arbatov, member of the Duma's Yabloko party knows the issue is not a major point for the general public: "Foreign policy is always a preoccupation of the elites."¹⁸

Arbatov also cited that the public's unease divides along generational lines. The older generations have stronger feelings about the Cold War, and that younger Russians do not have the institutional memories of Russian imperialism. The issue, he continued, is one that affected diplomacy with the West, and that it has stirred up disagreement domestically between political parties in the Duma and the executive branch.

Contrasting the US example of little debate, Russia shrugged off its passive role in this matter. The Russian branches of government, both members of the Duma and Yeltsin's administration, used NATO's growing alliance as opportunities to communicate their dismay with changes in the international community, and to stake out political positions at home and abroad.

¹⁷ Tatiana Parkhalina., NATO Review, Web Edition, NO.3, May-June 1997, vol.45, pp.1 1-15

¹⁸ Michael R. Gordon, "Russia Still Uneasy about Expansion by Western Alliance," *New York Times*, March 13, 1999

This period of time was one of evolution for inter-branch relations in the Russian Federation. Political activism in the Duma ran counter to major public concerns. However, politicians used these issues to put pressure on the executive branch. Parties in the Duma made issue out of many NATO actions and brought the president closer to their position. Russia's passive role in NATO's enlargement did not hamper the legislative branch's desire to move and influence the policy making of the Yeltsin administration.

Members of Russia's State Duma, as well as officials of Yeltsin's Government visited and met with leadership of the prospective new members of NATO in early June 1997. During these visits, and interviews with media, Russian politicians gave varied responses to NATO expansion.

These responses included attitudes of accepting gradual enlargement and dealing with matter of fact nonchalance to declarations of economic warfare and the redrawing of borders that have been the subject of dispute for centuries. Certainly, political ideology was a leader in opinion making for these members of the Duma, but the balance of Russian political power and the consideration for Russia's appearance on the international stage was also a factor in the calculation.

1. Poland

In June of 1997, Polish Deputy Defense Minister Andrej Karkoszka met with Russian officials in Moscow. His impression of Russian attitudes toward Poland's membership in NATO seemed quite grim.¹⁹ He left Russia with the impression that Russian officials would

¹⁹ Piotr Jendroszyk, "Russia May Mount Obstacles," *Warsaw Rzeczpospolita*, June 5, 1997

take actions to delay NATO members from ratifying Poland's treaty with the alliance. "The Russian diplomacy will attempt to stall this process, influencing Western political circles that have doubts whether admitting us to the pact is a correct move", said Karkoszka.

While in Russia, Karkosza met both with members of Yeltsin's administration and the Duma. This was early political posturing of the two Russian branches. This approach was short lived, and Russian leaders swiftly shifted to more polite terms of communicating disappointment regarding an enlarged alliance.

Vladimir Lukin, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the Duma lamented that Poland's new status changed the dividing line in Europe, but does not put an end to the division itself.²⁰ "Poland might play a useful role if it had a foreign policy of its own instead of imitating other countries' policies. After all, you could carry out a policy that is more sensitive to eastern problems," said Lukin.

By March of 1998, then Prime Minister Primakov stressed that there was no crisis in Polish-Russian relations.²¹ In fact, by this time, the entry of the three new NATO members was not an issue in Polish relations with Russia whatsoever. Lukin and Primakov were not on different pages discussing relations between Poland and Russia, however, they communicated differently the way that Russia felt betrayed by eastern countries reliance on western political and military ideology.

²⁰ Waclaw Radziwinowicz, "From Duma on Poland in NATO; This Humiliates Russia," *Warsaw Gazeta Wyborcza*, October 23, 1998

²¹ "Poland's Geremek Sees Moscow More Relaxed Over NATO Entry," *Warsaw TV Polonia Network*, March 4, 1998

The Russia-NATO Founding Act guaranteed Russia a presence within NATO without decision-making powers. However, Russia's activism may give them a larger role in influencing security strategy affecting Russia and throughout Europe in the future.

2. Hungary

Much like the Polish overtures, Hungarian leaders have also cited repeatedly the importance of strong Hungarian-Russian relations.²² In fact, this importance had been stressed so much that both Hungary and Russia declared that Hungary's membership in NATO would not bring about deterioration in their relationship.

Although Russia views Hungary's decision to join NATO as mistaken and cedes that the relationship is not free of problems, Russia will not let Hungary's transition have a negative impact on bilateral relations. Lukin said that Russia was going out of its way to ensure that Hungary's faulty security strategy would not affect Russia's relations with Hungary.²³

At the same time, Russia's then prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin was sacked by Boris Yeltsin. When asked about this dismissal, Lukin demurred to Yeltsin's delayed action on this matter, but not due to NATO enlargement. Lukin was concerned about the government's inability to solve the country's economic crisis, social problems, corruption and crime.

3. The Czech Republic

When Seleznev expressed his remorse over the Czech Republic joining NATO in March 1999, he also allayed fears that Russia may change the status of its relations with one of NATO's newest members.²⁴ Lukin made a similar statement two years earlier in April 1997.

²² "Hungarian, Russian Legislators View Bilateral Relations," *Budapest MTI*, 23 March 1998

²³ *Ibid*

²⁴ "Seleznev Against Czech NATO Membership," *Prague CTK*, March 11, 1999

He stated that the Czech Republic joining the alliance would have no direct consequences.²⁵ However, he did link NATO enlargement with the ratification of the START-2 treaty. While enlargement will have no affect on relations with the Czech Republic, he views a direct relationship between NATO enlargement and START-2.

One year later in April 1998, Lukin further declared that the Czech Republic would be exercising its rights by joining a defensive union.²⁶ Lukin spoke in terms of tier ranked relations and security. He defined possible terms of relations between European states as levels of friendship, comparing a good neighborhood to an ordinary neighborhood. With the joining of the Czech Republic to NATO, Lukin likened relations to the latter.

Seleznev's public statement that relations would go untouched contrasted with the fiery announcement by Duma member Vladimir Zhirinovskiy that the Czech Republic would become an enemy of the Russian state due to its entry into NATO. Zhirinovskiy further added that economic sanctions would be the first policy used as revenge for joining the alliance.

Duma President Gennady Seleznev only conceded that Russia would not be happy about the creeping borders of NATO coming ever closer to the Russian frontier. He was particularly displeased by the eminent addition of new weapons and technologies to be introduced to the Czech Republic in light of its new status in the alliance.²⁷

²⁵ "Official: 'Confidence' Different After Czech NATO Entry," *Prague CTK*, April 14, 1997

²⁶ Valery Yenin, "Duma's Lukin: Czech Republic Exercised Right to Join NATO," *Prague CTK*. April 17, 1998

²⁷ Ibid

4. Evolving Relations on this Matter

Lukin, Seleznev and Zhirinovskiy represent different views of how Russia will deal with NATO's enlargement within the Russian Duma. Their views tell a very important tale because they have had greater longevity in the Duma than many of the ministers that Yeltsin had employed in his cabinet during his presidency, including former prime ministers Chernomyrdin and Primakov.

While the members of Russia's Duma have more longevity, and perhaps greater stability in their jobs, they use this advantage to influence Russian policy. With closer ties to the electorate, and greater staying power in their jobs, members of the Duma have strong opinion leading positions in Russian politics. They also appear to have a more coherent and better communicated plan for Eastern European security policy than their executive branch counterparts.

This security policy is to be formed and focused with Eastern Europe in mind, rather than the strong Western influenced and dominated view of both Europe and Russia. Duma leaders wish that Russia had the influence symbolically equivalent to its height as a super power, forming and molding the security outlook for all of Eastern Europe. However, this is not meant as a desire to restore the Warsaw Pact. Many in the Duma desire Eastern European countries to design security arrangements central to the region's needs, not needs perceived by NATO.

Russia does not have super power status any longer. However painful this may be, both legislative and executive leaders of Russia are dealing with a world that is changing without their leadership. Their stature will continue to wane until Russia discovers new methods of exerting influence and affecting policy in the international arena.

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V. EXECUTIVE/LEGISLATIVE RELATIONS

A. UNITED STATES

The Clinton administration took the lead on the issue of NATO enlargement. Enlargement became a torch carried by President Clinton. He had championed the issue for the three years following the Madrid Summit.²⁸ Clinton, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and other top-level administration officials pressed the Senate hard on passing the enlargement legislation.

Albright's argument relied upon the theory that democracies do not fight one another. Therefore, by joining the alliance and by strengthening their democratic institutions, these countries will increase the area of Europe in which war does not happen any longer. Secretary of Defense Cohen denied that NATO expansion would be viewed as a backward measure in relations with Russia.²⁹

Clinton's leadership calmed Senate fears of rapid enlargement and delayed any pause in increasing NATO membership until after the last round of expansion.³⁰ The overwhelming acceptance of NATO enlargement gave way only to recommendations for prudence and caution for future rounds. Many also supported Senator Warner's proposal for a three year waiting period before an additional expansion of NATO is considered.

²⁸ Thomas W. Lippmann and Helen Dewar, "Senate Giving NATO Expansion a Virtual Free Ride," *Washington Post*, March 8, 1998

²⁹ Nancy E. Roman and Sean Scully, "NATO Expansion Gets a White House Push," *Washington Times* April 28, 1998

³⁰ Warren P. Strobel, "Clinton Lobbies Senate for Expanded NATO," *Washington Times*, February 12, 1998

To ensure smooth passage for NATO enlargement through the Senate, the Clinton administration opened a position in the State Department to deal solely with building support for the bill and to help guide it to victory.³¹ Clinton needed to make sure enlargement worked, otherwise he would have seemed to judge its priority poorly by declaring it a major policy initiative during his tenure in office.

In fact, Senator Lugar, an advocate of the expansion, believed that the bold move by Clinton to make NATO enlargement an important issue put the Senate in a sensitive position. As a major thrust of the president's foreign policy, the Senate would be viewed as undermining the standing of the United States within Europe if the amendment to the treaty was rejected.³²

To insure against such rejection, a unique offensive was crafted by the Clinton administration to woo Senator Jesse Helms, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Senator Helms is a man in a position to wreak havoc on Clinton's foreign policy goals. He had done so in the past by blocking and delaying ambassadorships from Senate confirmation, and could conceivably block or stall other important votes from reaching the Senate floor. His leadership of Senate Republicans is strong, and his leadership of conservative Republicans is unmatched.

In light of this, Secretary Albright worked closely with Senator Helms to iron out differences in Clinton's and the senior senator from North Carolina's positions.³³ Helms had

³¹ Allison Mitchell, "NATO Debate: From Big Risk to Sure Thing," *New York Times*, March 20, 1998

³² Mitchell

³³ Jesse Helms, "NATO Expansion Has All The Safeguards It Needs," *Wall Street Journal*, March 23, 1998

many reservations about the focus and direction of Clinton's foreign policy team, and such close cooperation was shrewd political maneuvering on the part of Albright and Clinton.

An applicable question for review was whether it was actually the Clinton administration that came out first to propel NATO enlargement to the top of the foreign policy agenda? While Clinton had placed this policy on his agenda in 1995, Congress had been a proponent since 1994. In that year, Congress began an annual tradition of passing legislation in support of NATO enlargement.³⁴ And, in 1996, the issue of enlargement was on both the Republican and Democratic presidential platforms. NATO enlargement was a foregone conclusion before the non-debate of 1998.

The executive branch of government worked closely with the Senate regarding the issue of NATO enlargement. Both branches had similar positions before the vote on the latest amendment of the North Atlantic Treaty. However, Senate opinion leaders had some misgivings about the executive branch's focus and interest in including the Senate in foreign policy decision-making, as well as appropriate concerns over details.

The issue did not cause much debate within the Senate, for constituent concerns did not demand such attention. While Clinton did take the most recent lead in pushing forward the current round of expansion, consensus existed across party lines and ideologies to support NATO enlargement dating back a number of years.

Activism in both branches led to a resolution of the issue early on in the debate. By building bipartisan consensus between party leadership, both the executive and legislative

³⁴ Nancy E. Roman and Sean Scully

branches dodged intense disagreement over NATO enlargement. Once Clinton pushed the issue forward on the agenda, Congress deferred to his leadership.

B. RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Yeltsin had a different view of the initiative to expand NATO. The activist parties elected to the Duma in 1993 exhibited much distaste for the closing in of NATO to Russian borders and to former Soviet Republics. Most of the acting out by Yeltsin and his administration on enlargement was due to the surprising showing by fringe politicians in the election.

The great shock of the election was the strong showing by Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's Liberal Democratic Party. This group won about 15 percent of the seats in the Duma. Zhirinovskiy promotes ideas such as nuclear war, a return to Imperial borders, and Russian expansion to the Indian Ocean.

Views like Zhirinovskiy's and the anti-Western Russian Communist Party, led by Gennady Zyuganov literally countered the strong presidency Russian voters approved in 1993. Yeltsin realized the necessity to work amicably with parties in the Duma, formulating policy with their consent.³⁵

Russian Duma President Gennadiy Seleznev commented on this change of politics, commenting that it "is really a phenomenon. It can be explained by the fact that we (Russia) now virtually have a coalition government even though the President does not want to call it that."

³⁵ Kurt Seinitz, "Duma President Views Political, Economic Situation," *Vienna Neue Kronen-Zeitung*, January 16, 1999

Issues ranging from START-2 to the conflict in Kosovo and throughout the Balkans affected and altered Russian perspectives of NATO enlargement. The Duma affected foreign policy by raising each of these issues with Yeltsin. This caused Russia to warn numerous times that former Soviet Republics should never be considered for NATO membership. Russia also has called for a reduction of NATO troops and forces in member states. Russia's posturing will affect NATO's future deliberations about expansion.

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VI. DISTRACTIONS FROM THE ISSUE OF NATO ENLARGEMENT

Both the executive and legislative branches of the US government experienced major distractions from any possible policy debate during 1998. The Clinton administration was beset by a scandal that involved a high profile and intrusive investigation. This scandal evolved into an impeachment with serious consequences for both the nation and policy makers in Washington, DC. The Senate reacted to the growing scandal as it did with other issues, it served as another delay for the debate on enlargement.³⁶ But there were other issues that demanded attention of the Senate, as well as concerns of constituents that drew the attention of senators away from NATO enlargement.

The United States became engaged militarily against Iraq during the time period in which the Senate was to bring up the issue of NATO enlargement. Troubles with Iraq continued to plague US foreign policy makers since the winter months of 1998, and after a deal that UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan brokered with Saddam Hussein.³⁷ The problem with Annan's deal was that Hussein continued to bluff just as he had throughout the year. The United States became engaged in sporadic attacks on Iraq.

Activist political parties within the Duma affected Russian policy regarding Iraq. This detracted from Western attempts to thwart Hussein, and at the same time Prime Minister Primakov's efforts to resolve the conflict growing with Iraq were diplomatic and statesmanlike. His work was more effective than any other diplomat save Annan.

³⁶ Linda Chavez, "Sex Scandal puts NATO expansion on hold indefinitely in Washington," *Baltimore Sun*, March 25, 1998

³⁷ David D. Newsom, "Time to Get Real About Iraq," *Christian Science Monitor*, March 11, 1998

Issues as varied as Iraq and Clinton's scandals met with homespun issues such as education. Democrats maligned Republicans by claiming that the Republican Party did not care much about domestic issues like education. Senator Joseph Biden claimed that the topic of enlargement was being used as filler to stop a debate on education from taking place.³⁸ This claim is unsustainable since there was hardly much debate on NATO enlargement anyway. It further suggests how little an impact this issue made on America's policy makers during this period.

A number of issues, including international confrontation, scandal and domestic policy, served as distractions to the Senate. These distractions took away from what may have become a substantive debate on NATO enlargement, however unlikely that outcome may have been. Fortunately, these distractions were not used politically as reasons for or against NATO enlargement between the two branches of the US. In Russia, this flare up was cause to react diplomatically with Iraq to soothe the problem. However, this diplomacy showed a rift with the West.³⁹ In particular, it showed Russian differences with Western attitudes toward international security.

³⁸ Katherine Q. Seelye, "Senate's Debate Over NATO Expansion is Sandwiched Between Other Issues," *New York Times*, March 19, 1998

³⁹ Unattributed report, "Berezovsky Unhappy with Primakov," *Argumenty Fakti*, January 1, 1999

VII. CONCERN FOR RUSSIA THIS NEEDS TO BEGIN ON NEW AND ODD

PAGE

This is the first round of enlargement since the end of the Cold War and the downfall of the former Soviet Union. The fall of the Eastern Bloc created the by-product of new, fledgling democracies. These new democracies are the stock from which NATO is choosing its new members.

Russia is experiencing a shift in allegiance by other formerly communist states toward NATO. By accepting membership in NATO, these new states bring Russia's borders and NATO's borders to their closest points in history. Some agree that Russia perceives NATO as a threat in the region.⁴⁰ Secretary of Defense William Cohen, however stated the US position and denied that an enlarged NATO alliance is a threat to Russia.⁴¹

Russia is not in a strong military position. The Russian Army is currently downsizing and selling off its arsenal.⁴² NATO has done much to calm Russian fears of the alliance creeping upon Russian borders, and NATO leadership realized the importance of a strong NATO-Russian relationship. By creating the NATO-Russia Council, proponents of enlargement were able to demonstrate open lines of communication with the Russians, and deflect attacks of antagonizing the former Soviet Union.

⁴⁰ Robert J. Art, "Creating a Disaster: NATO's Open Door Policy", *Political Science Quarterly*, (Volume 113, No. 3, 1998) pp. 383-404

⁴¹ Nancy E. Roman and Sean Scully

⁴² David Hoffman, "Downsizing a Mighty Arsenal," *Washington Post*, March 16, 1998

In the United States, concern for Russia was a no more objectionable reason for the inclusion of new members into NATO than any other dispute.⁴³ While policy makers dwelled on the subject, concern for Russia did not change the course of debate, nor did it impact the debate. Congressional leaders let such concerns fall by the wayside just as they let the larger issue of enlargement fall off the table while dealing with the executive branch during the Spring of 1998.

Russians, however, felt strongly about the perceived threat NATO presented to their Western frontier. So much so, that Russia's position regarding the START-2 treaty became linked to NATO's overtures toward the Baltic States. Russian politicians began to balk at a relationship between NATO and the Baltic countries.⁴⁴

START-2 became unacceptable to Russia mostly because of NATO's possible enlargement into the Baltic States. Its passage will continue to be affected if NATO doesn't clarify its intentions for possible expansion into parts of the former Soviet Union. Such a stand was, in effect, mobilized by NATO's recent round of enlargement. Although Yeltsin called for the most expedient ratification of the START-2 treaty, the opposition in the Duma has linked ratification with NATO enlargement along with a myriad of other issues including Iraq and the conflict in Kosovo.⁴⁵

Lukin dismissed the idea that the Duma's stalling on START-2 is propelling Central and Eastern European countries to rush and join NATO.⁴⁶ "Give up the idea of joining

⁴³ Robert E. Hunter, "NATO in the 21st century: A Strategic Vision," *Parameters*, Summer 1998, pp. 15-29

⁴⁴ Tallinn, BNS, December 14, 1998

⁴⁵ Natalya Panshina, "Russian Presidential Team Views Duma Politics in START II," *Itar-Tass*, December 15, 1998

⁴⁶ Prague CTK, "Official: Confidence' Different After Czech NATO Entry," April 14, 1997

NATO and I will be the first to press for the ratification of the START-2 treaty,” Lukin said, adding that it was just the fall of Russia’s confidence in the West given the planned NATO expansion that prevents the ratification of the treaty.⁴⁷

Regardless the ratification of START-2, Yeltsin’s main task was to convince Duma leaders that the NATO-Russia Council is a good idea, and delivers the respect, stature and influence expected of a world power.⁴⁸ This agreement guaranteed that Russia may be present for the making of all the important decisions of NATO, but without the right of veto much less a vote. This may prove a difficult task for Yeltsin’s successors, but Russian leaders are now faced with integrating as much they can with the changing face of Europe, or face isolation.

NATO’s campaign in Kosovo severely affected relations with Russia. Russia reacted to NATO’s plans for postwar Kosovo by moving in a surprise deployment of troops to Pristina airport.⁴⁹ This act brought about negotiations between both NATO and Russian military commanders in which Russia earned a piece of the peacekeeping role in the aftermath of NATO’s victory over Serbia.⁵⁰ The outcome over the war in Kosovo is still unclear to determine which path Russia may take, but will surely make a mark on Russia’s worldview.

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ Basa Javurkova, “Russia Did Not Deny That NATO Guarantee’s European Security,” *Bratislava Sme*, March 24, 1997

⁴⁹ Bill Gertz, “Russians Stir Fear of Nuclear Instability,” *The Washington Times*, June 15, 1999

⁵⁰ Steven Lee Myers and Michael Wines, “Russia, NATO End Dispute Over Troops,” *New York Times*, July 6, 1999

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VIII. CONCLUSION

A. UNITED STATES

The evolution of executive and legislative relations regarding the issue of NATO enlargement leaves many questions to be answered. In a historical perspective, how might one account for the interaction between these two branches of government? The deference shown by Congress toward the executive branch leading up through the 1960's was indicative of a Congress unaffected by constituent awareness of issues abroad rather than cooperation with the President.

Congress began to step into the fray during the Vietnam War. From that point, the legislative branch began to wage attempts to limit presidential powers in foreign policy.⁵¹ On the issue of NATO enlargement, however, the branches of government didn't engage in any pushing or pulling over the direction of the debate.

In fact, an active or purposeful debate regarding NATO enlargement was missing from Spring 1998's Senate vote amending the North Atlantic Treaty to include former Soviet Bloc nations in the alliance. Due to prior agreement on the issue, shrewd and clever work between the executive and legislative branches, and various issues competing for policy-makers attention, NATO enlargement became a forgone conclusion and a relative non-issue.

As the fourth expansion of NATO in 50 years, one might suspect that changes to this successful alliance would stir up much debate. Review of the public debate over enlargement,

however, shows that there was never a strong or persuasive attempt to change the opinions of policy-makers. Despite appeals to raise a debate by present and former statesmen, the issue never caught on with constituents or built up inertia for an opposing position. This lack of interest in the issue propelled the branches into a cozy relationship, with no conflict, and a quiet path to pushing this item forward on the agenda and through the US Senate.

The US Senate and President Clinton's administration worked closely together to iron out major details of enlargement. By doing so, Clinton was able to bring leaders from both parties together in agreement. The executive branch was able to create a broad general consensus that was impenetrable by fringe movements and detractors. Both the Senate and Clinton had been posturing for a number of years in support of NATO enlargement.

With a broad consensus built into the issue of enlargement, distractions came easily to the US Senate. The erstwhile confrontations with Iraq, Clinton's scandals, domestic issues and plain partisanship provided opportunities to switch the topic of debate in the Senate. Valid concerns about Russia's reaction to enlargement were dealt with swiftly and responsibly. NATO found a way to include Russia in its dialogue without giving away true decision making powers. None of these distractions or issues actually impacted the substance or outcome of the debate.

The evidence and discussion above provide a firm foundation from which to study and analyze the decision making process and level of discourse joined by the executive and legislative branches of the US government regarding NATO enlargement. US foreign policy was determined before the issue appeared before the Senate in the Spring of 1998. An active

⁵¹ Lindsay

and substantive debate did not occur, and NATO enlargement itself was a non-issue. But what does this all mean?

The relationship between the executive and legislative branches continues to evolve and change. The historical battle over the minutia of foreign policy between the branches did not take place during the passage of NATO enlargement. Could this issue have been immune to previous battles over foreign policy making? There are two reasons why the branches did not spend superfluous amounts of time on this issue. First, the general public does not care about issues regarding NATO since the fall of the Soviet Union. Second, leadership in the two branches had been agreeing on enlargement for a period of years previous to its passage in the Senate.

Perhaps during this stage of relations, we have learned that by building consensus and working together, the branches can agree on issues and pass legislation that enjoy mutual support. However, if public opinion had been vocal, we may have seen a very different outcome. That makes the study of politics so unscientific, since we can rarely repeat experiments like the passage of NATO enlargement. However, had public opinion been vocal, we may have seen this issue develop along a much different route. The next test will be during a future round of enlargement. Will US concern be about Russia, or another continental power?

B. RUSSIAN FEDERATION

The passage of the Russian Federation constitution created a strong presidency. This has not stopped the rising strength of parliamentary parties that raise issues to detract from the

executive. It is extraordinary to consider the great distance relations have drifted between the branches since the constitutional referendum. Despite the constitutional functions of the two branches, political parties in the Duma will continue to sway the otherwise more powerful executive. Considering the economic and social turmoil Russia is experiencing today, any populist rhetoric may affect the electorate and national policy as a whole.

This is evident in the Duma's reactionary policy toward NATO and the West over NATO's expansionist policy with former Soviet Republics, especially the Baltic States. Pressure forced Yeltsin to back away from a warm relationship with the Partnership for Peace and the NATO-Russia Council due to political concerns. Yeltsin's administration also made claims that NATO must not creep eastward. However, he has retreated from his demands. A future Russian president also is likely to retreat from this position as well.

Other foreign policy issues have been gravely affected. The START-2 Treaty, which had been sailing along to easy ratification, stalled because of NATO activity in the Balkans, and due to concerns about NATO expansion in the Baltics. This shows that an activist legislative branch is diverting Russia from previously agreed upon positions, goals and worldview. This may cause damage to Russia's place in the international community.

Future elections will further develop the makeup and demographics of the Duma. Also, if a growing number of the electorate participates in voting, it will enable the Duma to more accurately reflect the needs and desires of the Russian public. Future elections will also tell us the direction the executive branch will lead. Due to the strength of the executive in Russia, future presidents will finish the job of molding the office that Yeltsin began in 1993. In

time, we will see if Yeltsin's example leaves an indelible mark, if future presidents can carry a strong role in international policy and if a balance can be had with the Duma.

Unlike their American counterparts, the two Russian branches have not yet learned to work smoothly with one another. And, NATO enlargement became a tool to further divide the two sides. If Russia can create a coherent policy regarding enlargement, START-2 and its role in the world, then its ability to focus on its problems of crime, disappearance of national resources and economic decline may prove effective. At that point, perhaps future rounds of expansion will not appear as a sneak attack on Russia's Imperial borders.

Since 1993, there has been substantial evolution in executive/legislative relations in Russia. Constitutionally, legislative action and activism in the realm of foreign policy does not exist. In the reality of the Russian political system, legislative action and activism are necessary and thrives. The Russian president, while constitutionally strong, is steered by concerns of Duma members. This may very well be a condition related to Boris Yeltsin. Yeltsin's administration constantly changed, and this greatly influenced his foreign policy, but more importantly it affected the Duma's perception of his foreign policy – or it is reflective of the direction of the Duma's interests and political power. A more stable administration may handle foreign policy in a different way, and may coordinate more directly with the Duma on Russia's approach to international affairs.

The experience of the relations between the two branches over NATO enlargement provides the opportunity for an active Duma, one that carries more political power in the area of foreign policy than the constitution enumerates. The Russian branches are growing into and forming their roles. The evolution of the relations between these two branches will take place

over a much greater period than just less than a decade. Over time, we will see how the two branches determine policy of great importance to this young nation, and what shape their roles will form in the future.

Currently, the war in Chechnya and international reaction to it fosters resentment from Russian leaders of the lessening role Russia has in the world. Whether a democracy in Russia's condition can find partners to counter Western dominated internationalism may be the balance Russian leaders are looking toward.

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