

**Isabela de Andrade Gama<sup>1</sup>**  
*Brazil*

## **RUSSIA – USA RELATIONSHIP: R.I.P. COLD WAR?**

### **Abstract:**

*The focus of the proposal is related to the relationship of Russia and the West after the Cold War, especially concerning the NATO enlargement. It is assumed that at this moment the relationship of these entities have changed to a whole new situation. However if the Cold War was about performance of identity conformation, this proposal claims that this logic still persists. In this scenario Russia is trying to find a new role at the international level, as much as NATO is trying to do the same. since their main enemy no longer exists, so the Atlantic Alliance starts a new project of spreading democracy and market economy to the ex-soviet sphere of influence, on the basis of fear of a renewed cycle of Russian nationalist expansionism. Thereby, the rationalism of this debate can be substituted by a new one more inclined to the post-structuralist debate. In this way the main purpose of this paper is to analyze the delimitation of the Russian and West's identities in this space full of "otherness" constituting the "self", in this scenario of tension/distension hark back to the Cold War era, with special emphasis on Russian foreign policy.*

### **Keywords:**

*New Cold War; Russia; USA; NATO; Security*

## **Introduction**

This paper proposes the analysis of a specific case study, rather than research for theoretical ends. It is intended to analyze Russian foreign policy at the time following the Cold War, in which the country was under President Yeltsin and later, in a second moment since 2000 when Russia is already under the presidency of Vladimir Putin,.

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<sup>1</sup> Isabela de Andrade Gama, MA, Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, PhD student of International Relations, Guest Researcher at University of Hamburg, email: isabela\_a\_g@hotmail.com

The analysis of the proposed two moments will be through a lens focused on the post-positivism theoretical approach. Therefore, one of the focal points of the work will be the Russian foreign policy directed towards the West/NATO and Russia's relationship with other so-called external threats like terror attacks in 2001.

The analysis of foreign policy is a fundamental exercise to access the ramifications of the end of the Cold War to Russia, in particular, its implications for defining Russian identity as well as regional security.

After 1991, the Russia-West/NATO relationship should be treated differently in relation to the one previously maintained, whether from the assumption that identities change, objectives change, and the context in which they operate is no longer the same. Although there are controversies over whether this relationship really changed, including the debate about the possibility of a New Cold War has spread.

Although, the theme of this work raises a range of issues, most will not be answered in this paper. The main question that guides this study is: To what extent Russia, in order to (re)define its role in the international scenario after the end of the Cold War, or in a scenario where there's a New Cold War, this is related to external threats?

Thus, historical events will be crucial for the evaluation and discussion of this issue. Therefore, the use of theoretical assumptions will be essential in order to analyze the relationship from the "self" with the "other" as well as the limitations brought by the issue of sovereignty which brings the dichotomous pairs, the logic of exclusion and therefore, the creation of foreign enemies generating security dilemmas.

### **Historical Background**

By the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) the main western military organization, The Organization of the North Atlantic Treaty (NATO) suffered with the transformation of the East-West conflict logic. Without its main enemy, and a crisis of what behaviour to adopt in the new international scenario, NATO changed its policy, monitoring and providing security for the expansion of economic and political liberal principles along the new borders<sup>2</sup>.

The expansion of NATO aimed to increase its area of operation and to establish itself as an organization that would promote peace through the ideological proximity of its members, besides being a military security guarantee for new members. This act of expansion had a major impact in the former Soviet republics, the promise of security and participation in an important forum for the West, also presented as a gateway to greater interaction

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<sup>2</sup> D. Reiter, *Why NATO enlargement does not spread democracy?*, "International Security", Vol. 25, No. 4, 2001, pp. 41-67.

with former rivals during the Cold War, this movement took shape with the creation of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council which aimed to maintain the dialogue between NATO and the former members of the defunct Warsaw Pact<sup>3</sup>.

Security was a factor of great importance for recruiting the ex-Soviet republics to NATO's new course. The countries that emerged at the end of the USSR had great fear of a Russian revanchism, which could try to reoccupy these countries or to directly influence their policies by decreasing their levels of independence<sup>4</sup> achieved in the end of the Soviet Union.

Although the NATO new focus of security has developed a very important role for the accession of the former USSR countries, Russia did not see the situation the same way. This is made clear in the words of Primakov: "Indeed, the leaders of the Central and East European countries declared their firm desire to join NATO. Indications are that a considerable part of their populations – indeed, the majority – supported that position. Public opinion polls and a referendum in Hungary confirm that impression. What was behind the desire to join NATO? Was it fear that the situation in Russia could pose a threat to their security? I don't think that was a major reason or even a valid one. Besides, many leaders of those countries stated emphatically that their choice was not motivated by fear of Russian aggression"<sup>5</sup>.

The creation of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council demonstrates the difficulty NATO faced in establishing an identity to face the new international order. Without a clear military enemy, the organization changes its - approach to that of promoting the development of Western liberal ideas, mainly eastwards. This move was made possible by the identity crisis that occurred in Russia post-USSR. Although NATO initiated a new facet of this, being in the post-Cold War while trying to unite its members based on values and standards, the Alliance continues to have a military character. Indeed, NATO continues to be characterized as the chief military alliance in the region<sup>6</sup>.

Russia as the main heir of the USSR, highlighting this heritage by maintaining a permanent seat in the Security Council of the United Nations, the nuclear and conventional arsenal and the fact that it remained with the status as the major regional power. Moscow would continue to be the centre of decision

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<sup>3</sup> *The North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC)*, <[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_69344.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_69344.htm)>, (1.05.2018).

<sup>4</sup> After the end of the Cold War some countries were "more independent" because of their economic situation, for example. Other regions couldn't be in fact independent, they remained gravitating around Russia, like Chechnya, which stayed in a complicated situation. Other countries like Belarus became independent, but still very dependent on Russian resources. These are a few examples to enlighten the "levels of independence".

<sup>5</sup> Y. Primakov, F. Rosenthal, *Russian Crossroads: Toward the New Millennium*, New Haven, 2004, p. 130.

<sup>6</sup> H. Sjursen, *On the Identity of NATO*, "International Affairs", Vol. 80, No. 4, 2004, pp. 687-703.

making in respect to the former Soviet republics within the region, Russia continued following the thought that those states would continue to be its area of influence<sup>7</sup>.

Meanwhile Boris Yeltsin, as the first Russian president in the post-Cold War era faced internal problems that would prevent Russia from exercising a foreign policy like the one made by the USSR. Yeltsin had great challenges as the government to stabilize the chaotic Russian economy and the formation and articulation of domestic politics. internationally, Moscow sought to establish new behaviour in order to get international help, seeking internal stability. This Russian move would transform their foreign policy into one more convergent with the West, including NATO<sup>8</sup>.

Yeltsin's domestic problems led to a discourse of almost zero conflict regarding the West, NATO interpreted this policy as a weakness on the part of the Russian state<sup>9</sup>. A Russia without the ability to influence international security issues in areas considered strategic for national defence was not well regarded by many domestic actors in the country, highlighted by the security agencies and foreign policy planners<sup>10</sup>. However, the expansion of NATO to the East would be consolidated into a real threat to Russian security policies<sup>11</sup>. The appearance of this problem was evident to Moscow, but internal problems, like the economy and the political pressures faced by Yeltsin, would be the principal guide of Russian foreign policy. A conflict, even if a diplomatic one, with NATO could complicate the search for international aid.

With the thought of minimizing a possible threat of conflict with NATO, Yeltsin opted for dialogue beginning with NATO for the establishment of international debates. Russia joins the North Atlantic Cooperation Council in order to increase the dialogue between the actors, prevent any conflict and create bases for a possible entry of Russia into the treaty, an idea that was present in the thoughts of Yeltsin<sup>12</sup>.

Yeltsin's Russia behaved much different than expected from the main regional power created by the end of the Cold War. This paradigm shift in the Cold War logic by Moscow did not seem to produce the desired effects regarding the international community and the West in particular. The economic<sup>13</sup> aid that was expected to come would not be enough to stabilize the

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<sup>7</sup> R. Colin, *Rússia: O Ressurgimento da Grande Potência*, Florianópolis 2007.

<sup>8</sup> A. Segrillo, *O Fim da URSS e a Nova Rússia: de Gorbachev ao Pós-Yeltsin*, Petrópolis 2000.

<sup>9</sup> C. Thorun, *Explaining Ideas in Russian Foreign Policy: the role of ideas in the post-Soviet Russia's conduct towards the West*, New York 2009.

<sup>10</sup> R. Colin, *op. cit.*

<sup>11</sup> C. Thorun, *op. cit.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>13</sup> *G7 Summit: Munique, 6-8 July, 1992*, <<http://www.g8.utoronto.ca/summit/1992munich/communique/russia.html>>, (1.05.2018).

Russian economy and support on international security issues would not be reciprocal<sup>14</sup>.

The new attitude of Yeltsin's Russia wouldn't last, conflicts in Bosnia in 1994 showed that conflict logic remained a major pillar in Russia-West relations, or Russia-NATO relations. The crisis has put Russia and NATO on different sides, NATO opted for a more belligerent discourse regarding the ceasefire, giving an ultimatum threatening to bomb ex-Yugoslavia. Russia opted for a diplomatic resolution, and in a move that would change his way of acting in the international arena this moment on, started talks for a diplomatic ceasefire, which ended successfully<sup>15</sup>.

At this point it is worth noting that at the beginning of the conflict in Bosnia, NATO and Russia worked together to try to solve the problem. One of gestures that demonstrates more clearly the Russian attempt to cooperation was the opening airspace for NATO flights<sup>16</sup>. For much of the negotiations the two actors tried to establish a unified policy to deal with the situation, but in decision making, Moscow was removed from the debate and their wills were placed in the background.

The Russian negotiations were ignored by NATO, that kept its ultimatum on 4<sup>th</sup> February (1994)<sup>17</sup> to all forces fighting to hand off the weapons within 20 km from Sarajevo, something that was extremely criticized by the Russian authorities. The ceasefire occurred within the time stipulated by NATO and the bombing did not happen. It is difficult to determine which side was more important to the ceasefire, Russian or NATO, but the differences between the parties were evident. The differences between the actors remained the same regarding the Cold War logic.

The ceasefire was celebrated as a victory of the Russian independent diplomacy as shows the declaration of Yeltsin and Churkin, Russian diplomatic

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<sup>14</sup> A. Segrillo, *op. cit.*

<sup>15</sup> C. Thorun, *op. cit.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>17</sup> "Excluded from the decision-making process in NATO and understanding that Russia would not be able to convince the Western powers to nullify the February 1994 ultimatum, Moscow decided to initiate an independent mission with regard to the Sarajevo crisis. Russian Special Envoy Vitaliy Churkin delivered to Serb President Milosevic and Bosnian Serb leader Karadzic a proposal from Yeltsin that the Bosnian Serbs withdraw their heavy weapons to positions 20 kilometers from Sarajevo within the time limit set by NATO, while 400 Russian peacekeepers were transferred to Sarajevo. Both leaders accepted this proposal. In the end, the heavy weapons were withdrawn and the February crisis was resolved without the use of force. While it is difficult to assess whether NATO's threat of the use of force was the decisive factor or whether Russia's diplomatic intervention convinced the Bosnian Serbs to withdraw, this event was celebrated in Russia as an example of a successful independent Russian foreign policy. Yeltsin argued in February 1994 that 'unlike the NATO bloc, which gave the Serbs an ultimatum, Russia had asked the Serbs to withdraw their heavy weapons [...], this was in psychological terms a subtly calculated move that worked". C. Thorun, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

envoy to negotiate a ceasefire<sup>18</sup>. Yeltsin argued in February 1994 that “unlike the NATO bloc, which gave the Serbs an ultimatum, Russia had asked the Serbs to withdraw their heavy weapons [...], this was in psychological terms a subtly calculated move that worked...”<sup>19</sup>. Similarly, Churkin argued that the crisis was solved because firstly, the ‘phrase “a request from Russia, “had a powerful psychological effect [...]. Secondly, the letter was signed by the Russian president”<sup>20</sup>.

The success of diplomacy, however, did not last long and was not very effective. Months after the ceasefire the war in Bosnia had resumed, NATO conducted a series of airstrikes trying to end the confrontation. Russia went on to criticize the NATO attacks in Bosnia, but was also unable to stop the war with diplomatic attempts<sup>21</sup>.

The conflict took on a new dimension in the summer of 1995 when NATO bombed Sarajevo mostly in response to an attack on installations of the United Nations (UN). The Russian diplomacy was reaching its limit, and with the creation of the NATO Rapid Reaction Force supported by the Security Council, where Russia abstained, and a subsequent shelling of Sarajevo, the Russian diplomatic representatives spared no criticism on NATO policies<sup>22</sup>. When NATO used air strikes to repel the Bosnian Serbs offensive around Sarajevo, Srebrenica, and Zepa, the Russian foreign ministry characterized them as “senseless”<sup>23</sup>, and Defence Minister Grachev condemned them as “madness”. He argued that political methods of influencing the Bosnian Serbs were still “far from exhausted”<sup>24</sup>.

The difficulty of establishing a new Russian identity continued even after withdrawal during the crisis in Bosnia and the critical approach of Russian representatives regarding the policies adopted by NATO in that episode, Russia remained with the thought of rapprochement with the West and resumed the dialogue with NATO. Proof of this search for a deeper dialogue between the parties was the creation of the Partnership for Peace program (PfP)<sup>25</sup>, with the

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>19</sup> *Yeltsin Criticizes NATO for Seeking to Exclude Moscow from Regional Conflicts*, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 25 February 1994; refer to: C. Thorun, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

<sup>20</sup> *Interview with Churkin on St Petersburg Channel 5 TV*, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 2 March 1994; refer to: C. Thorun, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>23</sup> *Foreign Ministry Says NATO Airstrikes in Bosnia “Unjustified”*, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 13 July 1995.

<sup>24</sup> V. Abarinov, *Kogda v posrednikakh soglas'ia net*, “Segodnia”, 25 July 1995.

<sup>25</sup> *The Partnership for Peace programme* <[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_50349.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50349.htm)> (1.05.2018).

goal of reducing instability in the region. Altogether, there were 34 signatories to the PfP, and Russia entered into July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1994<sup>26</sup>.

During most of the 1990s, Russia maintained cooperative behaviour with the West and NATO. A break and a return to Cold War logic was expected in post-conflict Bosnia, however what happened was the continuation of the thought of conducting foreign policy according to internal demands. This move was not well regarded internally, the feeling of those involved in Russian decision making was the need for a leader stronger than Boris Yeltsin was being.

The return of a rapprochement between Moscow and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization gained strength with the Founding Act in 1997<sup>27</sup>, a document that aims to put clearly that Russia and NATO do not treat each other as enemies. This document establishes principles for the creation of cooperation mechanisms and more solid debate organs highlighting the creation in the near future for a permanent council for the establishment of joint solutions to common problems. Maintaining and ensuring stability in the Euro-Atlantic area was of great importance to the parties.

In 1998, another conflict would undermine the relationship between Russia and NATO, the Kosovo conflict. Kosovo had been battling for independence since the early 1990s and in 1998 the conflict escalated into a civil war. The area was a zone of Russian influence and considered of great strategic value by Moscow. However, Russia was a party in negotiations for a ceasefire, which was conducted by NATO member countries<sup>28</sup>.

NATO reproduced the policy implemented in Bosnia after failed negotiations opted for an ultimatum threatening to bomb Belgrade. Russia was moved to a secondary role without decision-making power, even being involved in the initial demands of Slobodan Milosevic for a possible ceasefire. The threats and ultimatum had no effect and Belgrade was bombed, something that would be an insult to Russian diplomacy<sup>29</sup>.

Negotiations for a cease-fire itself were also a reason for the discontent of Moscow, the Rambouillet meetings, the major international forum of decision making for the Serbia conflict were attended only by NATO members. Thus it was clear that Russia was being relegated to a secondary role, again, in the decision making process of a territory that was considered strategic and was yet, in Russian view, inside their sphere of influence.

Russia responded to the bombing of Belgrade by breaking free of the Partnership for Peace and NATO expelling the NATO representatives from

<sup>26</sup> *Signatures of Partnership for Peace Framework Document*, <[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_82584.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_82584.htm)> (1.05.2018).

<sup>27</sup> *NATO-Russia Founding Act, 17<sup>th</sup> May 1997*, <[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_25468.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_25468.htm)> (1.05.2018).

<sup>28</sup> C. Thorun, *op. cit.*

<sup>29</sup> M. Mccgwire, *Why did we bomb Belgrade?*, "International Affairs", Vol. 76, No. 1, 2000, p. 1-23.

Russian territory. The NATO investees in Kosovo were considered by the Russian government an attempt to destabilize the zone of Russian influence and made Yeltsin maintain its support for Milosevic<sup>30</sup>.

The deepening of friction between Moscow and NATO would gain new faces with NATO enlargement process to the East. In the late 1990s, the policy of NATO to include countries such as Hungary and the Czech Republic to the treaty was perceived as an unfriendly step by the Russians. Moreover, the Russian intention to join the treaty was not reciprocal, which incited the thought that NATO continued to perform actions similar to those made during the Cold War<sup>31</sup>.

The eastward expansion of NATO had begun with the end of the USSR, the attempt to co-opt the former members of the Warsaw Pact was seen by Moscow as an attempt to re-establish a Cold War logic. Yeltsin ruled the hard way with respect to the policy of NATO in 1994: “ideological confrontation has been replaced by a struggle for spheres of influence in geopolitics”<sup>32</sup>.

Boris Yeltsin's words reflected the events in 1994 and responded to the first wave of NATO expansion to the East in the post USSR. The second wave of expansion occurred in the late 1990s and has resulted in more concrete terms of membership for countries from former members of the Warsaw Pact. Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia and Slovenia were invited to begin accession talks at the Alliance's Prague Summit in 2002. On 29<sup>th</sup> March 2004, they officially became members of the Alliance, making this the largest wave of enlargement in NATO history<sup>33</sup>.

Even before an international scenario unreceptive to Yeltsin changing posture, Russia was still open to dialogue with the West and NATO. Before being elected Vladimir Putin told the Star News journal from USA that Moscow would be willing to participate Treaty Organization since the Russian terms are respected: “I don't see why not. I wouldn't rule out such a possibility. But I repeat, if and when Russia's views are taken into account as an equal partner”<sup>34</sup>.

However, the milder words of Putin faded, shortly after his election Russia remodelled its foreign policy. Putin brought back the logic of rivalry with West/NATO, which is presented in a clear New Security Concept of the Russian Federation of January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2000, where Moscow returned to call the Treaty Organization as an external threat. “The second tendency manifests itself in attempts to create an international relations structure based on domination by developed Western countries in the international community,

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<sup>30</sup> C. Thorun, *op. cit.*

<sup>31</sup> R. J. Art, *Creating a Disaster: NATO's open door policy*, “Political Science Quarterly”, Vol. 13, No. 3, 1998, pp. 383-403.

<sup>32</sup> C. Thorun, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

<sup>33</sup> *Member countries*, <[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_52044.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_52044.htm)> (1.05.2018).

<sup>34</sup> *Star News, 6th March 2018*, <<http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1454&dat=20000306&id=O1hIAAAIBAJ&sjid=ah8EAAAIBAJ&pg=5738,2522991>> (1.05.2018).

under US leadership and designed for unilateral solutions (primarily by the use of military force) to key issues in world politics in circumvention of the fundamental rules of international law. [...]The main threats in the international sphere are due to the following factors: the striving of particular states and intergovernmental associations to belittle the role of existing mechanisms for ensuring international security, above all the United Nations and the OSCE; the danger of a weakening of Russia's political, economic and military influence in the world; the strengthening of military-political blocs and alliances, above all NATO's eastward expansion; [...]"<sup>35</sup>.

The greatest hostility displayed by Putin to NATO was an act with the aim of raising awareness of Treaty Organization policies of expansion to the East, implemented at the end of the previous decade, would not be seen so complacent in the Putin administration. However, the harsh speech rhetoric of the New Security Concept of the Russian Federation has not determined the end of attempt of rapprochement between the parts.

The next important step, regarding the rapprochement between the actors, occurred in the post September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 context. Putin, who had used the speech of combating terrorism to justify the invasion of Chechnya in 1999, aligned his speech to NATO in fighting terrorism. This approach demonstrates the difficulty of dialogue between the actors, because in 1999 the initiative of Moscow to invade Chechnya in order to fight terrorism did not receive support from NATO or USA, despite claims that Al-Qaeda was operating in the region and the fact that Osama Bin-Laden was already one of the most wanted men<sup>36</sup> in the world due to his participation in the terrorist attacks on the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania<sup>37</sup>.

The attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> brought to the table discussions between Russia and NATO needed to develop joint policies to combat this new threat. The identity conflicts between the actors, which proved a hindrance to the support of the Organization towards Russian policies against terrorism, would evolve to joint action.

The moment of cooperation between Russia and NATO continued with the creation of the NATO-Russia Council (NATO-Russia Council/NRC) in 2002. The assumptions for the formation of a permanent body of debate between the two actors was established in 1997 and with the creation of this new mechanism, where Russia would have the same weight as all other 28 members

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<sup>35</sup> *National Security Concept of the Russian Federation 10/01/2000*, <<http://www.mid.ru/bdomp/ns-osndoc.nsf/1e5f0de28fe77fdcc32575d900298676/36aba64ac09f737fc32575d9002bbf31!OpenDocument>> (1.05.2018).

<sup>36</sup> *Attacks on US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania*, <<http://www.globalsecurity.org/security/ops/98emb.htm>> (1.05.2018).

<sup>37</sup> *Wanted by the FBI: Osama Bin Laden*, <<http://www.fbi.gov/wanted/topten/usama-bin-laden/>> (1.05.2018); D. V. Trenin, *The Forgotten War: Chechnya and Russia's Future*, Policy Brief: Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, 2003.

of the treaty, the expectation was a continued approximation and deeper relations by the time<sup>38</sup>.

The history in the post-Cold War and especially after the USSR dissolution shows that the Russia-NATO/West relationship had to be rebuilt. The changing external enemy always present, and the idea of a threat without end, which the USSR represented to Western states, and its main military organization had been disbanded.

With that, NATO had to find a new way of acting in the early 1990s. However, the policies used by the organization of the treaty were based on the existence of an external threat. Russia had been the great heiress of the USSR, which also inherited the status of foreign enemy.

The construction of the identity of NATO as an actor on the international scene depended on an external enemy and defining a new enemy would be the simplest way to maintain their policies. Confrontation with Russia, was used to as the centre of power and the decisions that defined the direction of the USSR region and Russia would not give up that status.

### **“Self” + “Other” = “We” the Russians**

At the end of the Cold War, Russia was in a delicate and complicated situation at many levels. Then-President Boris Yeltsin had to face domestic economic problems, disputes between the presidency and the legislature, and even external issues like civil wars in Moldova, Georgia, among others, and the conflict in Chechnya<sup>39</sup>. The problems affecting Russia contributed to the responsible entities remaining in a situation of uncertainty regarding the conformation of guidelines that lead to both foreign policies as its national security policy. The first document of national security began in 1992 but only in 1994 a permanent commission was established for which the document was completed. The Russian Federation has passed the time immediately after the end of the East-West conflict, with great instability and uncertainty. Even on matters that would be of national interest, there was an ideological vacuum left by the defeat of Communism<sup>40</sup>.

For a long period, Russia remained stuck in a kind of “identity crisis”, characterized by a lack of consistency, especially in their guidelines for foreign and security policies. With the end of the Cold War, Russia is in this context of great indecision and confusion in political, social and economic terms, not only due to the legacy left by the USSR, but also by the administration exercised by then President Boris Yeltsin that culminated in worsening Russian problems. Facing this scenario, which lasted for two terms of Yeltsin, Russia, collectivity,

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<sup>38</sup> NATO-Russia Council, <<http://www.nato-russia-council.info/en/about/>> (1.05.2018).

<sup>39</sup> A. Segrillo, op. cit.

<sup>40</sup> M. de Haas, *The Development of Russian Security Policy: 1992-2002*, BASEES Annual Conferences, 2003.

demanded more than ever the internal unity of its people. Russia lacked redefinition of its identity, and in a moment of crisis of such gravity, the Russian identity redefinition needed an “other” sufficiently compelling as to generate a new direction for this country. In previous decades the US and NATO, as well as Western Europe, were Russians enemies, your source of self-perception, so this “other” could be re-definition of its source, through its foreign policy<sup>41</sup>.

According Kassianova<sup>42</sup>, policy issues in Russia are largely influenced by internal demands, which ultimately generates something like an internal dispute for the definition of national interests. That is, the definition of identity, at least regarding the contribution of this author, puts it, internally, there is a big debate on the issues of ideational Russian identity, and this is not defined only in relation to a State, as “black box”, with another State, but also by domestic ideational motivations. However, for Kassianova, the State will not assume only the mediating role of internal and external voices, this will also assume a posture a bit more dynamic and independent, through its political elites and organizations like intelligence. Therefore, Kassianova brings to the debate the diversity of some of the groups of thought that coexist within Russia. There are liberals who believe that Russia should modernize and liberalize; the nationalists, who believe in the inherent relationship enmity with the West and do not want the situation to change, prescribing the maintenance of independent values of his country and the restoration of Russian power in the territory comprising the former Soviet Union. There are also groups skewed more toward the centre as the liberal nationalists; statesmen, they who are a little more realistic and the more moderate as liberal patriots.

Usually, the Russians blame the West for failing to end the relationship with Russia based on Cold War logic<sup>43</sup>, whereas the United States similarity to Russia also remained without its main external enemy and remained without their main “source” of identity constitution, and therefore needed another external enemy<sup>44</sup>. Therefore, the West gives continuation to the policies considered hostile by Russia, for example, the expansion of NATO to Eastern Europe throughout the 90s, with the purpose of promoting democratic principles, and the former countries of the region to become members even knowing they were already democratic<sup>45</sup>.

In the early 90s, Russia seemed to have foreign and security policies formed, so trying to maintain ties with the West, given that the country was

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<sup>41</sup> A. Kassianova, *Russia: Still Open to the West? Evolution of State Identity in the Foreign Policy and Security Discourse*, “Europe-Asia Studies”, Vol. 53, No. 6, 2001, pp. 821-839.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>43</sup> R. Colin, *op. cit.*

<sup>44</sup> D. Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*. Minneapolis 1992.

<sup>45</sup> D. Reiter, *op. cit.*

under the rule of a leader a bit more focused on liberal democratic aspects. As soon as issues arose that required the attention of the West and Russia, disagreements also arose between the two parts. One example was the conflict in Bosnia, where Russia praised a resolution based on multilateralism, but the United States eventually took a more unilateral position, especially in the case of Serbia, which displeased Russia. Following this direction, in 1994, unilaterally, NATO gives an ultimatum to Serbia to give an order not to attack Bosnia. At that moment, Russia is placed next to all Slavs, saying an attack on Serbia is also an attack on Russia. This moment is very crucial for the entering of Russia in the international arena, as Russia once again puts the West in its role of enemy and rebuilds ties with the Slavs, inserting themselves as protectors of these people. Likewise, Russia, to some extent, is to reconstruct their identity in the extreme of creating an enemy, the West as a potential danger, and initiates a redefinition to their policies<sup>46</sup>.

One of the biggest problems between Russia and the West was the issue of NATO expansion to the East. For much of Russian public opinion, the open door policy of the Alliance was directed at countering Russia, other views on the subject also put enlargement as a recreation of the division between the West and Russia, Russia is placed on the underground as in the Cold War times, as part of a second world<sup>47</sup>. Anyway, the Russian population was opposed to this attitude. In 1994, NATO had made some concessions to Russia and the Russians to the Alliance, and established the Partnership for Peace, a consultative body between the two parts. However, in 1996 the United States placed priority on NATO expansion to the East, and once more problems arose<sup>48</sup>. Here, Russia takes advantage by declaring its frustration, and starts threatening Western capitals of NATO member countries with missiles, and so definitively determines its major external enemy, and his dialogue with this extreme build their identity in the post-Cold War with vehemence<sup>49</sup>. This enemy will follow Russia in defining its identity, hence their interests and actions for many more years.

The next moment of relative changes in Russian foreign policy and its security policy was marked by the terrorist attacks of 09/11, now under President Vladimir Putin. As previously mentioned, the Russian leader was the first to provide solidarity to the United States at the time of the terrorist attack

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<sup>46</sup> P. Kubicek, *Russian Foreign Policy and the West*, "Political Science Quarterly", Vol. 114, No. 4 (Winter 1999-2000), pp. 547-568.

<sup>47</sup> M. Light, *A Redivisão da Europa*, "Contexto Internacional", Vol. 17, No. 2/1995, pp. 295-312.

<sup>48</sup> P. Kubicek, *op. cit.*

<sup>49</sup> R. K. Ashley, *Untying the Sovereign State: a Double Reading of the Anarchy Problematique*, "Millenium: Journal of International Studies", Vol. 17, No. 2, 1988, pp. 227-262.

of 09/11<sup>50</sup>. This was another turning point for the construction of the Russian position in the international scenario. Until then Russia had not determined what would be its foreign policy for the Caucasus region, with special attention to Chechnya and Georgia. Russia needed to define its national interest and how it would be directed to this region because it remained in a kind of political limbo. When the terrorist attacks happened on the United States, Russia found itself in an important moment of decision, after the US remained the major world power allied to another major partner, the European Union, while the Russians were in a semi-isolation. Thus, Russia instrumentalizes this period in its favour, as a way to remove the West from external enemy position, because there was a necessity to relate in a better way with these poles, considering that Russia lacked foreign investments, for example, and still would find a way to deal with the regions where its foreign policy was still without conformation<sup>51</sup>.

The terrorist attacks resulted in a change in Russian policy. Its support to the United States in combating global terrorism gave Russia a kind of “*carte blanche*” to join this war on terror. The Russian enemy would shift from NATO and its members, to global terrorism and its perpetrators, Islamic radicals. The Russian rhetoric changes, and potential threat becomes imminent danger and the tone changes to a matter of urgency in combating this threat<sup>52</sup>. While the discourse changes, accompanying practices, and Russia becomes more assertive in respect to Georgia, as a place with the possibility of harbouring terrorists and Chechnya, for its history of conflict with the Russians and, reportedly large Islamic population. In this way, Russia joins the West, redefines itself, defines its role in the Caucasus region, and in this scenario arises as a regional power, considering the use of lots of resources to deal with the problems of your surroundings even with occasional use of violence to achieve their goals<sup>53</sup>.

However, the good moments between Russia and the West would not last forever. Although much of the Russian population were more concerned with issues related to the economy, drugs, health, etc, this population was also concerned about the status of their country in the international scenario, and wanted Russia to become a great power again. Putin, in his first term proved to be a strong leader who managed to answer most of the expectations of the Russian population. So, he was elected to a second term with a large majority of votes. With the endorsement of Russian people, Putin could accomplish its foreign and security policies with more assertiveness aside from this, Russia was no longer in the difficult economic and social situations as it was before.

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<sup>50</sup> S. Markov et al., *Rússia. In: II Conferência Nacional de Política Externa e Política Internacional*, Brasília 2008.

<sup>51</sup> J. Hedenskog et al. (ed.), *Russia as a great power: dimensions of security under Putin*, London 2005.

<sup>52</sup> K. M. Fierke, *Critical Approaches to International Security*, Cambridge 2007.

<sup>53</sup> J. Hedenskog et al., *op. cit.*

Putin, while a nationalist leader would promote once more the aspirations of its people to make Russia a great power again<sup>54</sup>.

During the 1990s, Russia manages to maintain, in a large extent, a good relationship with NATO, after all those were domestic threats, and were used to restrain its population. Threats need to convince the population of a state<sup>55</sup>. Thus, while the Russian Federation kept its *raison d'être* fighting the socio-economic problems there was no a need for another “enemy”. Thus is explained the calm relationship between Russia and NATO. However, domestic threats would not be sufficient to maintain the legitimacy of the Russian State, and proceeds to settle a foreign policy less aligned with the West and with the Atlantic Alliance, while the latter, in particular, gives continuity to Cold War logic.

In 2007, Russia-West relationship became bitter again. This year, the acting US would be considered hostile by Russia and lead to new tensions. The United States made a proposal to deploy a missile shield which would be situated in Poland and the Czech Republic, on the grounds that it would be directed to Iran and North Korea. However, Russia felt threatened and said that national security was at stake, so would confront the United States and Europe by declaring that it would point its missiles at European capitals. At that moment, having put European security at stake, the United States declined, and decided to discuss the implementation of the artefact at another time, and that Russia would be included in the debate<sup>56</sup>. That is, Russia once again succeeded in establishing its external enemy, who would be the West again, given the domestic conditions and external interaction, and even more Russia would manage to establish a position of major player in the international scenario, meeting internal political aspirations.

The construction of a new Russian identity is, in this sense, situated so as to destabilize the security of the region. The new Russian enemy would again be NATO because of its ability to maintain, after all, had been one of his main threats for decades. Moreover, the construction of the meanings around NATO within the Federation during the Cold War may not yet have dissipated, and thus currents are easy instrumentalized.

In 2001, Russia and NATO/West found a common enemy, terrorism, which leads to an end of relations as enemies. However, the terrorist threat, though still existing, dissipates gradually but does not end and ceases to be so convincing to the Russian population in subsequent years. This leads to more confrontation between the Federation and the Alliance, as in 2007 when Russia declares moratorium on the CFE Treaty, later there is another turning point with the possibility of the entry of Ukraine and Georgia into NATO, with others to come.

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<sup>54</sup> R. Service, *Russia: From Tsarism to the Twenty-First Century*, London 2008.

<sup>55</sup> D. Campbell, *op. cit.*

<sup>56</sup> R. Service, *op. cit.*

## **Why are we still talking about ghosts?**

Since 2008, the relationship between Russia and USA/West holds a lot of tension. In 2008 there was the so called “Five Days War” between Russia and Georgia, the invasion of Libya, then the crisis in Syria, followed by one of the most dramatic events, the annexation of Crimea by Russia. The annexation of Crimea was a crucial point to return to the question: is there a New Cold War?

This question about a New Cold War, or Cold War 2.0, has been debated for a long time by analysts. Some academics disagree and assert Cold War is in the past under the argument that since there is no longer an iron curtain, or an ideological conflict, which was the main point of the Cold War, i.e., without these components it shouldn't be called a Cold War.

On the other hand these same tension points (Libya, Syria, and Crimea, among others) also say something about this relationship, they remain the old proxies from the Cold War. That's just one example, but some analysts who assert “there's a New Cold War”, are highlighting that even the lack of the ideology component, this so called New Cold War has a hybrid characteristic adapted to contemporary forms of war and the “old” forms of war. For example, information war, the problems related to fake news, intertwined with the “old” issues like NATO expansion, proxies, Russian government taking a piece of Ukraine, and spies.

There aren't just two options. Maybe both sides represented here are right, the Cold War might have died and now is hunting this relationship again, because Russia and USA couldn't find another way to relate to each other. Maybe the Cold War has never gone, and it's being reshaped. It seems difficult for Russia and USA to find a common agenda to work together. At some moments they have worked together, but these have been brief.

## **The Relationship After Trump's Election**

As stated previously, the lack of cooperation between these actors shows that maybe they can't find a “new” way to relate to each other after the end of the Cold War. When Donald Trump was elected as American president, even with suspicions that Russia could have meddled in the election, there has been dialogue. Although, there have been no significant changes compared to the previous administration, especially given the latest acts from Russia's side. The annexation of Crimea was an act of showing power, showing that Russia can also act unilaterally, as Russian government is trying to be recognized as a great power again. Russia's search for this recognition and this identity of being a great power can be seen as an increasing threat, and that's why the “New Cold War” can be just a narrative. But the West acquiring force as Russia pursues its greatness in an attempt to stop this kind of behaviour with sanctions, and words, but few acts, sounds like the Cold War we know.

Donald Trump seems to be a small variable in this equation. Russia is going after it's greatness, and he doesn't have enough power, alone, to stop Putin at this moment. As they said after their summit this year, nor Putin or Trump believe in improvements in their relationship<sup>57</sup>.

### **For now...**

Given the moment faced by Russia, the country tried to approach the West, what did not work completely. Western attitudes gave reason to Russian claims that they were a country disrespected, and that their opinions were not heard. The semi-isolation in which Russia was led to a sense of nationalism among its people and then the country was going to act and not just remain reactive. Created again a "second world".

Given the situations exposed as the expansion of NATO to Eastern Europe, the terrorist attacks of 09/11 and the issue of missile shield in Poland and the Czech Republic, Libya and other factors Russia has used these situations to establish itself in the international scenario. Through its foreign policy, Russia is defining its new identity as a great power again and instrumentalizing it to achieve their interests, from the creation of external threats, as was the case analyzed through the three stages mentioned above.

However, as already placed, the identity is in a constant process of transformation, as well as Russia itself. This newborn state seems to be in a constant state of transformation since 1991, which is latent when analyzing its relationship with the West, for example. In this theme, Russia has demonstrated quite pragmatically under the leadership of Vladimir Putin, seeking to adapt to the international scenario for his own constant reinvention. The question that arises is that constant search for an identity, looking through a lense of enemies in order to establish itself as a state, and even more, while a state representative internationally to not endanger the safety of all in the region. After all, according to the theoretical contributions of Ashley<sup>58</sup>, both the "issue of sovereignty", as the "heroic practices", put the State as the great protector of the population, and that this same state invariably needs to rebuild. In this sense, it seems that Russia is doomed to seek enemies, and thus will be caught in a trap to feel threatened and therefore end up threatening others with the use of violence in the name of an inescapable identity.

It seems that the (re)construction of the parts leads them to meet halfway with certain constancy, destabilizing regional security ties that can be observed through some threats, but as in the Cold War, there are more in rhetoric than in practice.

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<sup>57</sup> *Trump and Putin Will Call Their Summit a Success. But Don't Expect U.S.-Russia Relations to Improve*, "Time", July 6, 2018, <<http://time.com/5331253/trump-putin-summit-russia-united-states-relations/>> (1.08.2018).

<sup>58</sup> R. K. Ashley, *op. cit.*

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