

Comments on the papers of Zhurkin and Iwama

Kenichi Nakamura

The problem of NATO expansion has at least three groups of contexts; (1) US-Russian relations, (2) the Western European context, (3) the Central and eastern European context. I would like to comment on the first two and leave the third to the participants from those countries.

Firstly, in the context of US-Russian relations, Professor Zhurkin starts his paper with a strong word, "confrontation". He mentions "shock" twice on page 153 of his paper, namely the "shock" which the Russian society felt when the North Atlantic Council decided to start preparations for the enlargement of NATO in December 1994. We all know that Russian elites are, almost unanimously, against NATO's plan of eastward expansion, or some even blame NATO for the sense of being "betrayed" by the other Europeans and Americans, as we witness on page 153 of Prof. Zhurkin's paper.

This psychological attitude of Russia should be the starting point for the politics of NATO enlargement. For Russians, the issue is as follows: "Washington, Bonn and the other former Western allies have engaged with Moscow to finish Cold-War. Now, while they continue to engage in Moscow, they started to reassure the central and east Europeans that they have the future within the alliance of NATO, the symbol of Cold-War. This is nothing but betrayal."*¹

For most mainstream Americans, the issue is not a "shock" but a "Russian question" with an increasing sense of detachment from Europe. According to James Baker, "Russian question after the collapse of USSR is the greatest challenge confronting the United States". According to his successor Warren Christopher, if the Russian experiment fails and the country falls back into 'anarchy' or 'despotism', this would make the US new policy-goals nothing. This is the reason why the Clinton administration give a first-order concern at possible Russian collapse (not a

policy-goal!).

For the psychology of America, supporting and endorsing on-going change was not enough. Using the promising title of a "strategic alliance" or a "new democratic partnership", Americans tried to mobilize international support and to create a more congenial environment for Russian reform. Although the name is "strategic", it was essentially a diplomatic initiative, not a military one. Therefore, Americans can assume that US interests were identical to, or at least coincided with, Russian interests.

But Andrei Kozyrev is correct in saying that the Russians had interests of their own which did not necessarily coincide with those of Americans. And Prof. Zhurkin rightly pointed out that the debate about NATO expansion is dividing Europe. But in what sense is it divisive? Membership selection is generally a dangerous power-game. It involves politics in Carl Schmitt's sense because it always has to decide not only who is in, but, inevitably, who is out. And NATO has been, and still is, a symbol of military alliance. The organization with C3I, Carps, Division and bomb cannot be a diplomatic gathering. So, the membership expansion of NATO would involve the high risk of dividing would-be-friends from would-be-enemies.

According to Andranik Migranyan and others, Russians felt they would never be offered a "full voice" in the organization. That is to say the emergence of membership issue in itself is separating Russia from eligible countries, because it is implicitly saying "You Russians, you are out, you are would-be-enemy".

At this point, I have a question. I suspect that even if NATO were to be transformed to be "Europeanized" as well as provided with CJTF, as Dr. Iwama advocated in her paper, the baseline conditions would hardly change. I would request both speakers to respond to this point.

In this context what puzzles me most is the confusing character of Russian leadership. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Yeltsin and Kozyrev clearly directed Russian foreign policy toward, according to Kozyrev's statement on August 1992,

"integrate (Russia) into the democratic community of states and thus the world economy". During these particular months, Russian leadership pursued broad political cooperation with the western partners of the UN Security Council, participation in G7 summit and even membership in NATO.

And as Dr. Iwama properly pointed out on page 164 of her paper, it was the Russian President himself who said that Poland and other countries "did not require Moscow's approval for entering the Alliance". It could be interpreted as a clear green light "to go ahead and join NATO" from the President of the Russian Federation. But from the second half of 1992 onward, the statements of both the President and the foreign minister started to fluctuate widely. Please note that the fluctuation started much earlier than the emergence of NATO's expansion debates. I would request Prof. Zhurkin to tell us why this is so. Was it the result of a shift in Russian foreign policy, or that of a vacuum of European policy?

With respect to European contexts, I will comment only on Germany, where the political epicenter has moved eastward and the political landscape has changed drastically since the fall of the Berlin wall. Her capital will move from Bonn to Berlin later in the decade and at the time the Polish border will be just 50 miles away. We might expect a 'culture-change' in norms, values and identities in its new location. Among former west European countries, German is particularly exposed and will be increasingly so to new forms of security problems such as political instability of the states to the east and south, cross-border criminality, economic migration and so on.

And Germany has been and will be a superpower at least in Europe in the sense that she could act unilaterally and force others to accept its decision if she wishes, as in the case of her early recognition of Croatia and Slovenia. If the EU could proceed successfully to the third phase of European Monetary Union and if NATO could expand eastward, the power of Germany would be less obvious and less apparent. But the fact that it is a superpower would not change.

Post-war West Germany used to depend heavily on foreign policy through European institutional frameworks such as the EC and NATO. She also increased Germany's international roles by the expansion of the institutional framework. But an expanded EU and an expanded NATO would be much more diverse both in their interests and foreign policy cultures and would therefore become far more inflexible and heavier to move than the present organizations.

If so, Germany in the near future will be shaped by a combination of four factors (1) the change of political landscape, (2) the exposure to new security problems, (3) the ability to act unilaterally, (4) the increasing inflexibility of European institutional frameworks. I would like to ask the two speakers to comment on this kind of possibility in Germany.

Finally, a short question to both speakers: can NATO be transformed into an organization which could cope with the new security problems such as failed states like Cambodia, the proliferation of weapons of mass-destruction, the spread of international terrorism, cross-border criminals and so on?

Thank you.

1 Editor's note: a quotation from the original version of Zhurkin' s paper.