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## Changes in Branding Strategy: A Discourse Analysis of NATO Publications and Speech Regarding its Russian Relationship and the NATO-Russia Council

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CHANGES IN BRANDING STRATEGY: A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF NATO  
PUBLICATIONS AND SPEECH REGARDING ITS RUSSIAN RELATIONSHIP AND THE  
NATO-RUSSIA COUNCIL

by

ALEXANDRA KORNILIA SOWERS

Under the Direction of Dr. Leonard Teel

ABSTRACT

This thesis studies how NATO has changed the way it brands itself to Russia, from a cooperative and humanitarian stance in 2002 toward a critical and confrontational posture between 2006 and 2008. The study is based on a discourse analysis of NATO's publications. In the political climate following the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, NATO's NRC established a cooperative relationship with the new Russian Federation, which included offers of humanitarian aid in food and medical care. This study shows that under the NRC, from 2002 to 2006, NATO's image toward Russia continued to be one of "Strategic Partner." Between 2006 and 2008, the image NATO portrayed toward Russia reverted to confrontational. The analysis of NATO's change can be understood by considering the definition of brand image: a symbolic construct created within the minds of people and consists of all information and expectations associated with a product or service.

INDEX WORDS: Public diplomacy, NATO, Russia, NATO-Russia Council, Branding strategy

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ALEXANDRA KORNILIA SOWERS

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2009

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2009

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## I: INTRODUCTION

NATO's brand and branding strategy are important to its relationships with other countries and organizations, helping to create a positive image of the organization as well as foster positive and collaborative ties with partner nations. The Alliance's branding strategy encompasses all aspects of communication with target audiences and Strategic Partners, such as Russia. This thesis is a discourse analysis, studying the change in NATO's branding strategy toward Russia through analysis of the Alliance's transcribed communications and publications. The period of study focuses on the development of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC), from 2002 to 2008. By studying the changes in NATO's branding strategy toward its Russian Strategic Partner, the importance of branding in international relations and NATO's influence in the actions of non-member nations may become more apparent.

Branding strategy is creating a solid brand identity for a company, organization, etc. and having customers or target audiences associate the identity with the organization's name.<sup>1</sup> In other words, branding strategy is the way that an entity such as NATO portrays an image it wishes to represent to a target audience, such as Russia. This study observes how NATO represents itself to Russia, not how NATO views Russia. International Marketing professors at Northwestern University Philip Kotler and David Gertner observe that "assessing a brand's image and how it compares to its competitors' images is a necessary step in designing [a] country's marketing strategy"<sup>2</sup>. While NATO is not a country, but an organization including several countries, Kotler and Gertner's assessment still applies. By assessing NATO's image toward Russia and comparing it to other images, the Alliance may distinguish and improve its branding strategy toward Russia and/or other target groups. Senior Research Fellow at the Netherlands Institute of International Relations Peter van Ham states that "image and reputation

are...becoming essential parts of the state's strategic equity."<sup>3</sup> NATO's branding and change in image are important parts of its reputation and value in the international political arena.

Before the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO's branding was primarily aimed at showing the Soviets that NATO could deter aggression and maintain stability in the transatlantic region. After the Soviet collapse in 1991, NATO changed its public diplomacy toward the Russian Federation, emphasizing a humanitarian and supportive role. This self-image of NATO led to the establishment of the NRC in 2002. I hypothesize that this self-image highlighted NATO's continued role of ally and supporter to Russia and any former Communist states. I further hypothesize that the Alliance's image toward Russia in recent years (2006-2008) has reverted back to a slightly aggressive and confrontational stance. The source of the recent change in the NATO-Russian relationship seems to be the Alliance's interest in and association with other former Communist states as well as Russia's change in policy.

My fundamental argument is that, based on the organization's own publications, NATO's branding strategy toward Russia has changed throughout the development of their relationship, notably visible in its publications and especially in the development of the NATO-Russia Council. I argue that NATO's image toward the Soviet was one of competitor and opponent in the balance of power in Europe. When the Soviet Union fell, NATO's public diplomacy toward the Russian Federation changed to a humanitarian and cooperative nature. After the founding of the NRC in 2002, NATO's image continued to be one of supporter to any former Communist states. I further hypothesize that the Alliance's image toward Russia now and in recent years has reverted back to a critical and confrontational stance, due to Russia's actions toward Georgia and other former Soviet states.

Since this study is a policy and data analysis of NATO's public diplomacy toward Russia, I will conduct archival research of NATO's publications such as the *NATO Review*, *NATO Update*, transcriptions of press conferences and interviews with NATO officials, and other materials on the NATO website. The words spoken and/or written by NATO officials regarding Russia and the NRC are the main focus of this study. Date ranges of my archival research include from the beginning of the NATO-Russia Council (2002-2003), to the middle years of the NRC (2004-2005), to the latest years of the NATO-Russia relationship (2002-2008). The reason why these publications were chosen for the study is because they show not only the relationship between NATO and Russia, but also the branding strategy of NATO toward the specific target audience of Russia and how NATO's branding strategy encompasses all forms of its communication. The specific date ranges of 2002-2008 were chosen to show the continuity of the change in the NATO-Russia relationship and to see the dynamic as it is evolving. While the Alliance generally brands itself in a positive light, specific images and branding are targeted to Russia and the NATO-Russian relationship. This thesis contributes to the topic of NATO's international relations by focusing on the way the Alliance brands itself to specific nations and critical partners such as Russia.

## II: BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT

Table 1 Timeline

Date	Event	NATO's Image
Late 1940s to 1950s	Beginning of Cold War	NATO as opponent to Soviet Union
1949	NATO is formed	
1989	Berlin Wall falls	
1990	Warsaw Pact collapses	
1991	Fall of Soviet Union	
1991	End of Cold War	NATO as a supporter of new Russia
1999	End of Yeltsin's presidency	
2000	Beginning of Putin's presidency	
1997-2002	Permanent Joint Council	NATO's positive branding strategy
2002 – present	NATO-Russia Council	
7 May 2008	End of Putin's presidency	
8 May 2008	Putin becomes Prime Minister of Russia	
August 2008	Russia in South Ossetia	NATO's more critical branding strategy
August 2008	NRC meetings cease	

## History

Since its inception on 4 April 1949, the purpose of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has been to uphold the solidarity, freedom, and security of its member countries, allies, and other countries in the Euro-Atlantic region. NATO's partnership has been integral in preventing war in Europe during the Cold War. The Alliance's strategic concepts state that

the dangers of the Cold War have given way to more promising, but also challenging prospects, to new opportunities and risks. A new Europe of greater integration is emerging, and a Euro-Atlantic security structure is evolving in which NATO plays a central part.<sup>4</sup>

Although NATO's central role has been protector and defender of freedom, according to the Alliance's website and publications, the nature of its affairs has changed to a more proactive and friendly stance toward the former Soviet Union and former Communist states in Eastern Europe. The creation of the NATO-Russia Council on 28 May 2002 formally established a positive and proactive relationship between NATO and Russia.

Before the creation of the NATO-Russia Council, NATO acquired a more defensive and competitive position toward the Soviet Union. NATO scholar and founding member of the International Institute for Strategic Studies Alastair Buchan remarked in 1960, while Russia was still the Soviet Union, that "Russia has a constant temptation to humiliate NATO; not to goad the Alliance into war, not to attempt the conquest of Western Europe, but rather to display to a skeptical world the real limitations of [the organization]."<sup>5</sup> Such a position toward the Alliance led to its defensive image. NATO did not want Russia, or any other power, testing its abilities and/or mocking its importance and relevance in international relations and security. Public opinion analyst and author Hazel Erskine stated that NATO was formed by several European countries and the United States to defend Europe against Communism. She also observed that "a

major purpose of NATO was to build a common military defense against possible Russian communist attack in Western Europe.”<sup>6</sup> Thus, NATO’s original role was to be an opponent against the USSR.

In the height of the Cold War, NATO positioned itself as a defender of Western Europe against Communist Russia. Buchan stated in 1960, “it is the confrontation of the central Soviet threat which is the primary function of the Alliance [NATO].”<sup>7</sup> The United States and Western Europe feared that the balance of power in the world would tilt toward the Soviet Union. Although military aggression from the Soviet Union was doubtful, the unavailability of NATO’s finances, military, and technological efforts due to the Korean War was a concern to the Alliance. Buchan affirmed that “the role of Russian force as an agent of change in the world has been a consistent thread in Soviet doctrine.”<sup>8</sup> The determination and persistence of the Soviet superpower became an obstacle to Euro-Atlantic solidarity and security. In addition to the Soviets’ struggle for world influence and power, the nation’s relationship with the West was strained.

The Soviet Union’s tense relationship with the West was due to the Cold War and the nuclear arms race. While the Allied forces wanted to avoid war, their approaches to international relations differed greatly and caused the Soviet Union to react in different ways. Founding Director of the Atlantic Community Initiative Stanley R. Sloan observed, “European leaders believed, for the most part, that diplomacy, development aid, and trade policies should be the weapons of first resort...”<sup>9</sup> Many Europeans felt that the United States concentrated too heavily on military responses to security challenges. Because the European member states of NATO were in closer proximity to the Soviet Union and shared common experiences from the two World Wars, Europe was able to obtain more tangible benefits from Détente with the Soviet

Union in the form of “reduced tensions, increased trade opportunities, and improved human contacts.”<sup>10</sup> The European members of NATO appeared to be more open to relations with the Communist regime, while the United States chose to maintain its distant and aggressive persona. Despite hesitation and suspicion between the United States and the Soviet Union, the two nations were able, along with other nations, to achieve peace talks and form treaties such as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaties (SALT I and II).

NATO continued to brand itself as a competitor to the Soviet Union and other former Soviet states. The organization did not wish to wage war on the Soviet Union, but to contain its influence and power in the world. NATO attempted to offset Warsaw Pact numbers, or Soviet allies, through acquiring and advancing its technology. While NATO tried to focus on technological advancements, the nuclear arms race was inevitable. As military scholars von Mellenthin, Stolfi, and Sobik observed, “technology tends to be overemphasized at the expense of command style and numbers of men and weapons”; the opposing nations thought that the more technologically advanced, the better and stronger the nation.<sup>11</sup> NATO, the Soviet Union, and its Warsaw Pact states increased their military resources to ensure their respective national securities and solidarity. As a deterrent to the Soviet military and nuclear powers, the American and European member states began to increase and pool their nuclear resources. Yet, the expansion of European economies only expanded the Soviet threats.

Although the parties involved in the Cold War arms race remained competitors, reality began to take its toll. By the late 1980’s, military overextension and internal economic crises forced the Soviet Union to withdraw from the Cold War stalemate in Europe.<sup>12</sup> Russia also began to withdraw its troops from Eastern European countries, most of which became democracies after the post-communist revolutions of 1989. While Russia remained a Communist

nation, the needs of the fledgling democratic Eastern European states caused NATO to shift its role from competitor to ally and peacemaker. As Sean Imrie Kay of the Mershon Center for International Security Studies at Ohio State University related, “NATO invited East European leaders, including Soviet President Gorbachev, to...establish regular diplomatic liaison with the alliance.”<sup>13</sup> NATO enlargement and inclusion of former Communist nations further constrained Soviet power in Eastern Europe. The Soviet Union finally collapsed in 1991. Through several peace talks and collaborative committees, NATO and the new Russian Federation began to work together.

Yet, following the Cold War, internal roles and activities in NATO began to change. NATO members felt pressure “to free resources for other uses, like preserving welfare benefits...to continue to deal with security threats collectively rather than unilaterally, and above all to preserve NATO itself as a barrier against a renationalization of defense.”<sup>14</sup> NATO struggled to balance its military and economic roles. The United States also wanted to reduce its role as leader and main military force in the Alliance. This brought forward the “*real West European pillar within NATO*,” according to professor and NATO expert Wallace J. Thies; a pillar which shared equal responsibility with the United States. Thies stated that in December 1990, NATO began to “[enhance] the role of the European Allies with a view toward ensuring a full and equitable sharing of leadership and responsibilities between Europe and North America.”<sup>15</sup> Yet, the member nations of NATO are not viewed as equals of power or global status. Former U.S. National Intelligence Officer for Europe and senior associate at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Marten van Heuven asserted that there is equality within the Alliance as an “equally shared ‘acquis’ of NATO – the shared commitments to freedom, democracy, security and human rights, the common policies, the joint capabilities, and



the common achievements during the Cold War in safeguarding Europe.”<sup>16</sup> As NATO member states began incorporating fair distribution of work and responsibility among themselves as well as sharing in equal commitment to the Alliance, their actions paved the way for the NATO-Russia relations to come, as well as strengthened relations within the European community.

### **The European Union**

NATO’s policy changes toward Russia reflect the relationship between the European Union and Russia, including the EU’s expansion into the former Eastern Soviet Bloc. The EU’s relationship with the former Soviet Union is important because it foreshadows NATO’s relationship with Russia and how NATO differs from the EU in this relationship. When the Soviet Union fell in 1991, the actions of the European Union revolved around the development of the new Russia. European political writer and Professor Timothy Garton Ash stated that, “the root cause of the epochal changes in Europe is the decline of the Russian empire.”<sup>17</sup> These changes included European countries becoming more of a community, linked together through common economic, political, and security beliefs. Europe’s beginnings as a community underscore the importance of establishing positive and proactive relationships to show solidarity and Europe’s position as a long-term economic and political force. As more changes have occurred in Europe and more former Soviet countries become new democracies, the European Union has taken on greater responsibilities. In the *NATO Review*, Professor Adrian Pop from Dimitrie Cantemir University in Romania stated that “the European Union has also increasingly become an international actor, performing military and civilian crisis management, security sector reform, rule of law enforcement and border assistance missions both within and outside its immediate neighborhood.”<sup>18</sup> The regions acquiring EU assistance include the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East, as well as Eastern Europe. While there has

been competition between NATO and the EU in the area of foreign aid, NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer acknowledges that there must be a “sustained dialogue on harmonizing military transformation and ensuring smooth cooperation in advanced planning and capabilities, combined with flexible structures for communication.”<sup>19</sup> While the organizations strive toward cooperation and collaboration, both look to enlargement as well.

With the rise of new European democracies since the early 1990s, enlargement has become part of EU and NATO agenda. Professor and British House of Lords Defense spokesman William Wallace stated that “enlargement has now succeeded the single currency as the underlying ‘project’ of European integration – and the greatest challenge to European governments and institutions.”<sup>20</sup> Yet, Russia has been denied membership from both organizations. As professor and NATO-Russian affairs expert Cynthia A. Roberts observed, “neither fully excluded nor embraced, Russia has been relegated to the awkward position of having ‘special relationships’ with NATO and the EU.”<sup>21</sup> These “special relationships” position Russia as a “subordinate nonmember” without full decision-making or full partnership, yet still allow dialogue with the Western European and transatlantic alliances. A further obstacle lies in Russia’s recent economic and political power growth. According to Roberts, smaller former Eastern bloc countries stand to gain “large tangible and intangible economic, social, political, and security benefits from full membership in the EU (and NATO).”<sup>22</sup> These smaller countries need the support of NATO and the EU to help them survive. Russia, on the other hand, is already self-sufficient and is not in need of economic, military, and/or political assistance. The willingness of the smaller former Eastern bloc countries to conform to EU and NATO membership standards shows them in a more desirable light to the organizations, whereas Russia still maintains a competitive and aggressive image.

Inclusion in EU enlargement has become a goal for most Eastern and Central European countries, not only for security purposes, but also for long-term economic stability and civil liberties. To Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs), the EU was “defined as a community of norms and values from which CEECs had been excluded.”<sup>23</sup> Inclusion in a democratic European “family” would help former Warsaw Pact countries recover from their totalitarian past and other hardships. This presentation of the EU as a “civic collectivity” emphasizes the dichotomy of “us” versus “them”; in some contexts, Russia may be perceived as “them.”<sup>24</sup> The ideal status of the EU imagined by its new members portrays a “‘community of values’ based on fairness, solidarity and equality between all European nations.”<sup>25</sup> Russia’s exclusion from the EU and NATO denies the country these values and its place in the European family.

In the past seventeen years, since the Soviet collapse, the newly formed Russia has experienced economic and political growth, becoming an important player in international relations and using its new-found confidence to influence dealings with Western countries. Roberts stated that “since 2005, Moscow has signaled a willingness to use its market power in energy to advance Russia’s influence in the post-Soviet space and dealings with the West.”<sup>26</sup> She added that Russia’s sustained economic growth rates and soaring energy prices are transforming Europe’s distribution of power. Deputy Director of the International Security Program at CSIS Julianne Smith stated that “although few would call Russia a 21<sup>st</sup> century superpower, it still possesses a large nuclear arsenal and has great influence in world politics on multiple fronts.”<sup>27</sup> Such increases in power have made the EU and NATO hesitant about including Russia in their enlargements, which would allow the nation greater power in membership rights and decision-making. Fears of a defiant Russian counter power may be alleviated by the fact that the EU is

Russia's most important trading partner. Roberts observed that Russia's trade with the EU is "remarkably three times larger than with other post-Soviet (non-EU) states," causing then-President Vladimir Putin to upgrade the EU on Russia's list of priorities.<sup>28</sup> The unstable relationship between Russia and the EU has made alliances like NATO more important, shirking its position as a "defunct" organization to the side.

The role of Vladimir Putin is also a major factor in Russia's relationships. His presidency from May 2000 to May 2008 and current role as prime minister has shaped Russian politics and partnerships in a controlling, hesitant, and not-so-willing way. As president, Putin even defined his political ideal as "the dictatorship of the law" and a reinforcement of the "vertical of power."<sup>29</sup> With such authoritarian governmental control, Putin's Russia can hardly be a formidable partner in international affairs. Scholar and author Juan Goytisolo observed of then-President Putin that "this new tsar, with the blessing of the Orthodox Church, not only enjoys the resigned support of the Russian people but also an aloof attitude from Europe, which has learnt to turn a blind eye when substantial oil or energy contracts are being negotiated."<sup>30</sup> Other views of Putin show him as encouraging the defiance of Russia against the rest of Europe. International relations scholar Uri Ra'anant recounted Putin's 2000 address to the Russian Duma:

[For the first time in decades, Russia] faces forces whose goal is a geopolitical reshuffle. This country has come face to face with those who bet on separatism and a policy of 'a world without Russia.' In this context we must consolidate the state as the guarantor of Russia's independence and solidarity.<sup>31</sup>

Assuming that all other nations want "a world without Russia," Putin made Russia more difficult to work with and less open to outside opinion and influence. By "consolidating the state," Putin hindered Russia's relationships with other nations and organizations. Yet, whatever Russia's relationship with the EU, NATO's desire has been to bridge the gap and establish a partnership where real relations and dialogue may be obtained. The creation of the NATO-Russia

Council in 2002 may be seen as an appeasement mechanism to foster a proactive relationship with the nation.

### **NATO's Role**

Because of the fall of the Soviet Union and the successful solidarity of the EU, NATO may be seen as defunct. The Alliance has fulfilled its duties and has been replaced in some respects by the EU. Yet, scholars such as Carl Cavanagh Hodge, Director of the International Relations Program at the University of British Columbia-Okanagan, disagree. Hodge stated that “the formal dissolution of NATO would be less than a tragedy but more than a mistake.”<sup>32</sup> While some responsibilities could be given to the EU, the termination of such a strategic alliance would only cause destabilization on the European continent as well as other areas of the world. Hodge observed that “to the extent that an international community exists, the United Nations and NATO are rightly regarded as core institutions.”<sup>33</sup> In areas where there has been noted anti-American resistance, the UN and NATO have been able to step in to provide security and humanitarian support. Also, despite anti-American sentiments, the United States is the main nation in the Alliance to provide such robust military support. Hodge asserted that “neither the European Union nor a looser coalition of European allies carries the requisite military heft or the moral authority to do more than supplement American power – even in Europe.”<sup>34</sup> The positive and highly-regarded reputation that NATO, as a collective transatlantic alliance, has established not only assists in implementing its actions, but also helps the Alliance’s public diplomacy strategies in uncertain areas such as Russia.

Although NATO’s reputation as a “core institution” in international politics is important and helpful to the organization, NATO’s public diplomacy and branding strategies are still a priority; the Alliance must still work on its image to foster and maintain positive relationships

with its Strategic Partners. Since the fall of the Soviet Union and the establishment of the NATO-Russia Council, NATO's public diplomacy efforts toward Russia have changed. The 2002 Rome Declaration, from which the NATO-Russia Council was created, stated that

NATO member states and Russia work as equal partners in areas of common interest in the framework of the NRC, which provides a mechanism for consultation, consensus-building, cooperation, joint decision and joint action on a wide spectrum of security issues in the Euro-Atlantic region.<sup>35</sup>

The NATO-Russia Council was established at the NATO-Russia Summit in Rome on 28 May 2002, replacing the Permanent Joint Council. While this is not a definite mission statement showing how NATO legally engaged Russia into partnership, this passage of the Rome Declaration shows the basis on which the NATO-Russia Council was founded. The point of the Rome Declaration is to redefine NATO-Russia relations, "enhancing their abilities to work together in areas of common interest and to stand together against common threats and risks to security".<sup>36</sup> The statement, created by the heads of state and government of NATO member states and the Russian Federation, shows that NATO and Russia are equal partners working together on security issues; there is a commitment on both sides toward cooperation and consensus-building.

The changes in public diplomacy at NATO are related to the expansion of the EU into the former Eastern bloc and the exclusion of Russia. NATO endeavors to foster democratization in the former Eastern Bloc countries, rather than remain solely as a competitor against Russia. Hodge stated that "as NATO has expanded, in fact, Russia's role in NATO and participation in the Atlantic Council has itself expanded."<sup>37</sup> The development of the NATO-Russia Council allows Russia the participation in NATO that it cannot find in the EU. Although the partnership started out on unequal footing, NATO has given Russia more equal responsibilities and decision-making capabilities. NATO fosters relationships with Russia where the EU does not. Positive

and proactive public diplomacy toward Russia, through instruments such as the NATO-Russia Council, improves NATO's image to the Russian state as well as other former Soviet nations. NATO's improved image to Russia is evident from the NRC's continued involvement in military, humanitarian, and other security programs and assignments in and with Russia, such as the NATO-Russia counter-narcotics training project and NATO submarine rescue exercises. The overall purpose of the Council appears to be an instrument or transmitter of public diplomacy between NATO and Russia, where the public diplomacy is NATO's reaching out to Russia to collaborate in these security projects and exercises.

In the past few years (2006-2008), NATO's relationship with Russia has slightly changed. The Alliance's open criticism of Russia's involvement in the South Ossetia region of Georgia has hindered their relationship and the workings of the NATO-Russia Council. While South Ossetia and Abkhazia have remained separate enclaves from Georgia since the break up of the Soviet Union, journalist Peter Hart observed that "Russian forces have been present in both South Ossetia and Abkhazia since the early 1990s, defending the separatist regions against Georgian attempts to forcibly incorporate the territories."<sup>38</sup> War broke out in 2008, with the Russian Federation providing assistance to the separatist enclaves as well as attacking and hindering the Georgian military. The international community, including NATO, criticized Russia's involvement and the nation's relationships suffered. Focused press coverage of "the preferred narrative of Georgia as victim of an expansionist Russia" worsened the nation's image in the international political arena.<sup>39</sup> With this perpetuated image in the media, Russia became angered and the NATO-Russia relationship suffered. NATO continued its critical and authoritarian image toward Russia and NRC meetings ceased in August 2008.

By studying the branding strategy of NATO toward the former Soviet Union over the course of the development of the NATO-Russia Council, NATO's position as ally and supporter in transatlantic and global affairs may become more apparent. NATO's relationship with Russia and other former Communist countries is important, not only demonstrating Russia's growing world status since the fall of the Soviet Union, but also showing the Alliance's shift from aggressor and competitor to ally and supporter of struggling former Soviet states – an image that the Alliance has been trying to project. NATO's Public Diplomacy Division almost immediately changed its strategy and tactics toward the Eastern European Communist countries when the Soviet Union fell in 1991. The Alliance has been trying to foster a proactive relationship with Russia ever since the collapse; their relationship culminated in the formation of the NATO-Russia Council in 2002.



### III. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Theoretical Framework**

##### Target Audience

Through the detailed history of NATO and its relationships with the Soviet Union, the European Union, Russia, and other former Soviet states, NATO's general brand or image as a core international organization dedicated to transatlantic and global security and stability becomes apparent. The Alliance wants to project a positive image as a core institution and as one committed to security issues and the balance of power. One purpose of NATO's Public Diplomacy Division is to "raise NATO's profile and to bring NATO's achievements into public knowledge and debate."<sup>40</sup> NATO's Public Diplomacy Division implements the branding strategy of promoting a positive image for the organization in order to raise its profile. While this strategy implies a general audience, the Alliance sets a target audience in Russia to develop its relationship with the nation as a Strategic Partner. With Russia as the target audience of this study, we may determine how the changes in NATO's relationship with Russia over the course of the development of the NRC reflect the changes in NATO's branding strategy.

##### Branding Theory

Branding is creating a solid identity for a company, organization, etc. and having customers or target audiences associate the identity with the organization's name.<sup>41</sup> Branding also describes the way that an entity such as NATO portrays an image it wishes to represent. According to Gertner and Kotler, images represent a simplification of a large number of associations and pieces of information connected with a place or entity. In this case, branding shows how NATO is portraying itself to Russia, its target audience. While NATO's brand is

apparent to all audiences, a specific branding strategy can be targeted to a specific audience, such as Russia, to foster specific actions or relationships, as in the NATO-Russia Council. NATO projects a generally positive brand as a core international security organization, but also incorporates a specific branding strategy to brand itself as a proactive, supportive, and collaborative partner to its Russian target audience. Similar to nation branding, NATO's branding strategy refers to the entity's image and reputation. Nation branding scholar Ying Fan states that nation branding refers to the "application of branding and marketing communications technique to promote and manage a nation's image."<sup>42</sup> NATO's branding strategy, therefore, applies branding and marketing techniques to promote a positive and proactive image for the organization.

While nation branding is specific to nations, branding strategies may be used for any entity, such as a group, organization, company, or person. A brand or image may exist with or without any conscious efforts from the entity involved. Branding also involves self perception as well as perception directed at a target audience. Co-developers of Social Identity Theory Henri Tajfel and John Turner state that "the self concept is comprised of a personal identity component that includes idiosyncratic characteristics and a social identity component that includes salient group classifications."<sup>43</sup> While Tajfel and Turner's Social Identity Theory is used primarily at the social psychological level, this concept may be applied to NATO's self image and branding strategies toward Russia due to the Alliance's personal identity as a peacemaker and Strategic Partner of Russia as well as its classification as an established core organization in international politics. NATO is one of a group of organizations dedicated to international security and stability as well as a player and partner with other nations. While NATO is part of a network of nations and international organizations, the Alliance also defies the "intergroup discrimination" of

Russia. Ying Fan uses Tajfel and Turner's Social Identity Theory to describe national identity, which relates to NATO's perceived self-image and consequent change in public diplomacy toward Russia. As Fan states, "the degree of self identification and classification determines the behaviour of the nation both of its government and its people. Subsequently this change in national identity needs to be communicated to the outside worlds."<sup>44</sup> Thus, NATO's identity as an international security organization determines its behavior and image toward Russia as a supporter and Strategic Partner.

Director of Global Governance Research Peter van Ham observes that the social power embedded in images and perceptions has become an important factor in international politics, shaping expectations as well as policies. Branding strategy was chosen for this study to focus on this factor. By analyzing the images, or brands, that NATO wishes to portray to Russia, changes in the NATO-Russia relationship and policy may be observed. The study of NATO's branding strategy may also show the importance of branding in international security factors, of which NATO is a major player. Ham states that "it is Europe's task to find a new, postmodern *raison d'être*, a new security brand, which incorporates and reflects the EU's changed role and ambitions."<sup>45</sup> While he speaks mainly of the European Union's role and ambitions, the majority of the members of the EU comprise the member nations of NATO. The EU must also work together with NATO in maintaining security in the transatlantic region, as well as securing relationships with partners such as Russia. NATO's task of transatlantic security and cooperation relates to its soft power efforts. Ham observes that branding, in conjunction with public diplomacy, is now seen as the key to underutilized soft power. Therefore, the Alliance's soft power influence on the Russian relationship may be affected by its image, or brand.

International relations scholar and expert Joseph Nye, Jr. defines soft power as “the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments.”<sup>46</sup> He states that soft power arises from the attractiveness of a country’s culture, political ideas, and policies. The attractiveness in the equality and responsibility that NATO gives Russia in the NATO-Russia Council helps the Alliance exert influence over Russia. Nye called this dimension of soft power “strategic communication,” in which a campaign plans symbolic events and communication over a period of time to brand central themes and advance a particular policy.<sup>47</sup> The continued relationship that NATO fosters with Russia as well as the further access and decision-making the partnership allows demonstrates the soft power NATO exerts over Russia. Further exploration into NATO’s Public Diplomacy Division and its branding strategies may reveal the Alliance’s friendship, support, and mutual responsibility of Russia to be an influence over the nation’s political and security decisions; NATO’s partnership with Russia may be a ploy for influence over the former Communist nation. Other observers, such as NATO-Russia relations scholars Hunter, Rogov, and Oliker, believe that NATO and Russia must recognize their dependence on *each other* to accomplish vital security tasks and to meet Euro-Atlantic needs. Russia’s trust in NATO and the dependability of their alliance helps increase and maintain an overall sense of European and transatlantic security.

The concepts of branding theory, Social Identity theory, the social power of images, and soft power are all considered in the study of NATO’s change of images toward Russia because they all help explain the Alliance’s self-image, projected image, the incorporation of image into a brand, and how branding affects the Alliance’s relationship and influence with Russia. The link of image and branding theory to NATO’s relationship with Russia demonstrates its public diplomacy. *Place Branding* Managing Editor Simon Anholt stated in 2006 that

[public diplomacy] is in fact a subset of Nation Branding: I have always intended Nation Branding to consider how the nation *as a whole* presents and represents itself to other nations, whereas [public diplomacy] appears to concentrate exclusively on the presentation and representation of *government policy* to the other publics: in other words, the international equivalent of what is usually known as Public Affairs, or a type of diplomacy where the interlocutor is society at large rather than other diplomats or ministers.<sup>48</sup>

Here, branding and public diplomacy work together to present and represent an entity, in this case, a nation. While Anholt speaks of nations and nation branding, the same concept applies to the discussion of branding strategy and NATO in this paper. Public diplomacy is a subset of NATO's branding strategy. The actions and relationships in which NATO involves itself are part of creating a solid brand identity for the organization to project to its target audiences. Branding strategies are used in the context of international politics because nations and organizations need to gauge their image or brand in the international political arena. By considering how NATO presents and represents itself in international politics, the organization can better its image and its relationships with other nations and organizations. Branding is not only for the use of commercial markets; nations and organizations have just as much to benefit from using branding strategies.

#### **IV: RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What was NATO's branding strategy toward Russia in the beginning years of the NATO-Russia Council (2002-2003)?
2. What was NATO's branding strategy in the middle years of the NATO-Russia Council (2004-2005)?
3. What is NATO's branding strategy in the most recent years of the NATO-Russia Council (2006-2008)?
4. What main themes arise in the speech and publications of NATO during these times periods?
5. How do the emergent themes reflect NATO's branding strategies toward Russia?

## V: METHODOLOGY

The study of NATO's branding strategy through its speech and publications is a discourse analysis, which studies language in its relation to power and ideology. In this study, the language of NATO's publications shall be related to its power in branding strategy as well as its relationship with Russia. Discourse analyst Norman Fairclough stated in his book, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, that discourse is the use of language seen as a form of social practice, and discourse analysis is analysis of how texts work within sociocultural practices.<sup>49</sup> This study attempts to expose masked themes and meaning within NATO texts and how these themes reflect the sociocultural practices of the NATO-Russia relationship. By studying NATO's discourse, the purpose or social reality of the organization may become more apparent.

Organizational discourse scholars Dennis K. Mumby and Robin P. Clair assert that "discourse is the principal means by which organization members create a coherent social reality that frames their sense of who they are."<sup>50</sup> Through NATO's discourse, the organization creates an image of what it is and the brand that it tries to present. This study observes how NATO represents itself to Russia, not how NATO views Russia. The two subjects correlate with each other, with NATO's branding strategy stemming from its views regarding the nation, and this correlation may be inferred from my findings. Yet, NATO's discourse only shows the projected image, or position, that the organization wants to represent.

Mumby and Clair also observe that organizations are sites of hegemony and coercion. NATO's branding strategy determined through discourse analysis may show aspects of hegemony in the partnership between NATO and Russia as well as the Alliance's attempts to coerce the nation into certain actions or decisions. While most obvious examples of hegemony and coercion are speech acts that are backed by sanctions (commands, laws, etc.), this study also

includes less obvious coercive behavior, such as “setting agendas, selecting topics in conversation, [and] positioning the self and others in specific relationships.”<sup>51</sup> NATO’s speech toward Russia is directly related to its coercive behavior as shown in its political and military commands, agenda setting in speeches and dialogue, and the role the organization plays in the NRC and other Russia-related partnerships.

The content in this study is projective content, meaning that the focus is more on the coder’s interpretations of the meaning of the content. Communication professors and authors W. James Potter and Deborah Levine-Donnerstein stated that “with *projective content*, the researcher puts precedence with the coders’ judgments and believes that the elements in the content are symbols that require viewers to access their pre-existing mental schema in order to judge the meaning in the content.”<sup>52</sup> While there is only one person conducting the study and coding the materials, myself, this study seeks to expose themes in NATO’s speech toward and about Russia and the NATO-Russia relationship. Coding of such themes shall be applied through inductive measurement. This method supports the practice of emergent coding, which means that “the basic research question or hypothesis for a formal content analysis emerges from the units of observation.”<sup>53</sup> Coding categories for the emergent themes shall take place during the analysis process.

The content of NATO’s discourse plays an important role in the determination of the Alliance’s branding strategy. As scholar Robert Edward Mitchell observed, “rather than represent an author’s true feelings, many messages are purposely biased so as to manipulate an audience in a predesignated way.”<sup>54</sup> In the early years of the NATO-Russia Council, NATO wanted to create a positive image for itself and for its relations with Russia. In later years, and as Russia became more rogue in its actions toward former Soviet territories, the Alliance sought a



more confrontational and critical image to convey toward Russia. The content of NATO's messages helps convey certain images of the organization. Federal Communication Commission Senior Analyst Douglas Galbi stated that "content can provide inspiration, education, and degradation, it can promote social justice, better public policy, and existing cultural stereotypes, and it can make and break the images and fortunes of politicians and other public figures."<sup>55</sup> Thus, the content of NATO speech and publications can create many images, ideas, and brands for the organization.

I will determine changes in NATO's branding strategy through archival and documentary research of a limited number of the organization's publications, which specifically deal with or mention Russia and/or the NATO-Russia Council. The total number of primary documents in the study is 142. Communication research experts Rubin, Rubin, and Piele stated that "archival/documentary research centers on finding, examining, and interpreting messages that were communicated in the past."<sup>56</sup> More specifically, the form of archival research conducted in this study is policy research, which is both historical and critical in nature. Policy research not only considers the origin and evolution of a particular policy, but also examines the role of societal agencies, government bodies, groups, and media in the status of a legal or policy issue.<sup>57</sup> While this study does not focus on NATO's official policy toward Russia, the organization's branding strategies may reflect official statements, strategies, and business with the nation.

The primary documentation used in this study includes speeches, interviews, press releases, news articles, manuals, and other publications from NATO or NATO officials which provide insight into the Alliance's public diplomacy and branding strategy toward Russia. Data sampling shall include 142 NATO publications that deal specifically with Russia and/or the NATO-Russia Council. Specific quotes and phrases to be used in the analysis will also be chosen

by their specific content related to Russia and/or the NRC. Rubin, Rubin, and Piele observed that “researchers often subject speeches, news stories, and television programs to content analysis to learn about underlying attitudes, biases, or repeating themes.”<sup>58</sup> I attempt to discover NATO’s attitude(s), or branding strategy, toward Russia as well as uncover repeating themes in the messages’ content through discourse analysis.

Date ranges of my archival research include the beginning years of the NATO-Russia Council (2002-2003), the middle years (2004-2005), and the latest years of the NRC relationship (2006-2008). The specific date ranges of 2002-2003, 2004-2005, and 2006-2008 were chosen because the first date range portrays NATO’s initial branding strategy and image, the second date range portrays any gradual change in branding during the continued partnership, and the last date range shows the change in NATO’s branding strategy due to Russia’s relations and actions with other countries. While the Alliance generally brands itself in a positive light, specific images and branding are targeted to Russia and the NATO-Russian relationship.

Primary sources that provide insight into NATO’s public diplomacy tactics include several NATO publications: the *NATO Review*, *NATO Update*, and transcribed interviews, speeches, articles, press releases, and press conferences from past and present NATO officials. These officials are the NATO Secretary General, the NATO Deputy Secretary General, Assistant Secretary General of the Public Diplomacy Division, and other NATO spokespeople. All NATO documents and transcriptions may be found on the organization’s website. Articles written about the Alliance’s position and actions toward the Soviet Union and Russia may be found on other Internet databases provided by Georgia State University. All of the publications exhibit the Alliance’s relationship with Russia and the projected image that the organization wants to portray.

One main source of NATO's branded image is the *NATO Review*, the organization's online journal that discusses issues that are relevant to NATO actions and endeavors. According to its website, the *NATO Review* is "published under the authority of NATO's Secretary General" and is designed to "contribute to a constructive discussion of Atlantic issues."<sup>59</sup> While the *NATO Review* is not an internal publication, its formal presentation as "the Alliance's flagship magazine" provides credibility to its content. The magazine's publisher is Jean-Francois Bureau, who is also the current Assistant Secretary General of NATO's Public Diplomacy Division. Bureau's supervision implies use of public diplomacy, and perhaps propaganda, in the creation and distribution of materials. NATO's Public Diplomacy Division is responsible for "informing the wider public about NATO's activities and policies through contacts with the media, the NATO Web site and print publications, seminars and conferences, as well as NATO's Science Programme."<sup>60</sup> Other NATO documents in this study may also adhere to this NATO PDD mission. Specific sections of the *Review* that may prove useful in NATO's policy analysis include *Analysis* articles, that offer in-depth research; *History* pieces, that consider people or events from the Alliance's past; *Military Matters*, pieces that focus on NATO's capabilities, or missions and operations; and *Specials*, that present alternative perspectives on NATO and its policies.<sup>61</sup> While the magazine may present alternative perspectives on NATO policy, the *NATO Review* would most likely not publish articles that reflect poorly on the organization, creating an overall positive image for the Alliance.

Data from the NATO publications will be analyzed by highlighting passages that indicate a particular position toward the Soviet Union or Russia, that identify actions that the Alliance conducts to or with the nation, and that show the partnership or lack thereof in the NATO-Russia Council. Passages will be coded by their tone (ex. in favor of Russia or against Russia) and

respective theme, as well as their time period. Variability in interpretation of the passages is reduced due to the use of only one researcher: myself. Although this method may have limitations, passage interpretations will have a higher degree of consistency. Yet, the intention of the publication must be taken into consideration. Communication research scholars Wester, Pleijter, and Renckstorf stated that “the material under investigation is produced in a specific institutional context (e.g., a newspaper’s editorial office) and refers to a wider socio-cultural context.”<sup>62</sup> The material may be read in an entirely different context, namely from the context of the researcher posing the research questions. While coding the highlighted passages from the NATO documents and newspaper articles is relatively straightforward, using only two criteria (tone and time period), the limitations of the method should be kept in mind.

## VI: SIGNIFICANCE

The study of NATO's change in branding strategy is important because these practices suggest and reflect upon the organization's public diplomacy and policy-making. Public diplomacy is generally defined as the relationship between diplomats and the foreign publics with whom they work, though public diplomacy scholar Paul Sharp specifies that the term is "the process by which direct relations with people in a country are pursued to advance the interests and extend the values of those being represented."<sup>63</sup> NATO tries to improve its relations not only with the Russian people, but also with Russian officials in order to advance the organization's interests and extend democratic values to the nation. In this study, NATO's audiences are the Russian people, politicians, and the media. NATO's words reach all of these audiences and impact all NATO-Russia relationships. As stated earlier in this paper by *Place Branding* managing editor Simon Anholt, public diplomacy is a subset of branding. He stated that branding considers "how a nation *as a whole* presents and represents itself to other nations, whereas PD [public diplomacy] appears to concentrate exclusively on the presentation and representation of *government policy* to other publics."<sup>64</sup> NATO's branding strategy considers how the Alliance presents and represents itself to nations and partners such as Russia, while its public diplomacy is a part of that strategy, focusing on its governmental relationship with Russia through its partnerships and the NATO-Russia Council.

Public diplomacy expert Jian Wang observed that "public diplomacy is part and parcel of foreign-policy making and has been primarily policy-driven rather than relationship-based."<sup>65</sup> While this study focuses on NATO's relationship with Russia and the image and branding created through that relationship, all of the aspects are part of NATO's international policy to maintain security and stability in the transatlantic region. By studying the content of NATO's

speech in its public diplomacy efforts toward Russia, one may determine the image that the organization wants to project as well as how the image relates to its policy toward Russia. Wang stated that “the sine qua non of public diplomacy has been the advocacy of a country’s specific international policies through cultivating favorable attitudinal environment for the policies.”<sup>66</sup> While NATO is not a single country, Wang’s statement still applies to the organization’s international policies and public diplomacy tactics. NATO cultivates favorable attitudinal environments for its policies through its relationship-building with Russia. According to Jian Wang, as a national government plays the role of sponsor and communicator in public diplomacy, so do organizations like NATO.<sup>67</sup> The Alliance’s projected image toward Russia and other former Soviet states is created to cultivate positive and proactive relationships in order to influence the countries’ decision-making in regards to NATO and the European continent.

In studying and analyzing NATO’s policy changes, one must recognize the two stages of foreign policy. International communication and public diplomacy expert Eytan Gilboa stated that the two respective interrelated stages of foreign policy are

policy making, where policy options, positions, and tactics are considered and decided within the domestic environments of the parties concerned. The second phase, interaction and diplomacy, entails implementing policies toward other actors, presenting positions and demands decided in the earlier stage, and seeking solutions through confrontation, negotiation, or a combination of both.<sup>68</sup>

NATO’s public diplomacy toward Russia, through instruments such as the NRC, lies in the second phase of foreign policy. The Alliance implements its policies toward Russia through its involvement in the NRC and the positive steps it takes in Russia’s equal participation in the partnership. Study of NATO’s public diplomacy through archival research of its publications will help determine the Alliance’s policies toward Russia and the purpose and function of the NATO-Russia Council.

## VII: ANALYSIS

### **NATO's Image during the Beginning Years of the NRC (2002-2003)**

#### NATO-Russia Council

##### *Venue for cooperation*

At the creation of the NATO-Russia Council in 2002, NATO's image toward Russia was one of ally, supporter, and equal partner. NATO Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Alessandro Minuto Rizzo stated at the NATO Defense College in October 2002 that "the challenge, now that we have our new NATO-Russia Council in place, is to no longer simply brief each other, but to start working together."<sup>69</sup> The NRC's purpose was to be a venue for open-minded and constructive decision-making to benefit both parties. Through such transparency and equality, NATO portrayed itself in a positive light toward Russia and the former Soviet Bloc. The *NATO Update* stated in November 2003 that "the need for effective public diplomacy is particularly important today, as NATO takes on new missions and reaches out to new audiences."<sup>70</sup> In the early years of the NATO-Russia Council, NATO sought to engage in effective public diplomacy by creating a positive and proactive self-image.

A year after the founding of the NATO-Russia Council, the Alliance still focused on its underlying, idealistic principles. Robert Bell, Assistant Secretary General and Chairman of the NRC Ad Hoc Working Group on Theatre Missile Defense, stated in February 2003 that "after decades of confrontation and mistrust, today's new security realities present us with a unique opportunity to construct a NATO-Russia relationship based on mutual trust, transparency and shared responsibilities."<sup>71</sup> The present security issues required NATO and NRC members to view the Council as a venue for cooperation. A NATO-Russia relationship based on Bell's

principles of mutual trust, transparency, and shared responsibilities suggests that the NATO-Russia Council must be a venue for cooperation between the two parties in order to combat mutual security threats. Bell even stated that in pursuing NATO-Russia interoperability, “the time has come for genuine cooperative NATO-Russian efforts to safeguard our security.”<sup>72</sup> In the formative years of the NRC’s establishment and development, using the Council as cooperative venue was most desired.

*A working and proactive relationship*

Ambassador Rizzo’s speech at the NATO-Russia Council and Defense Reform in 2002 highlights the need for a working and proactive relationship between NATO and Russia. He calls for a defense reform policy that is “open-minded, constructive, and to our mutual benefit.”<sup>73</sup> Rizzo affirmed that the newly-formed NATO-Russia Council is the venue for such cooperation. The NRC provides “a good venue to share and use the experience of NATO as an organization, and on a national basis, and learn from each other’s experiences in the area of defense reform.”<sup>74</sup> Not only is the NRC a fitting venue to specifically work on NATO-Russia relations, but is also a forum where both parties can learn from each other to foster mutual understanding and a successful partnership.

Guillaume Parmentier of the *NATO Review* had a similar view to that of Ambassador Rizzo. Parmentier noted in the summer of 2002 how much “the experience of joint participation in crisis-management operations in the Balkans has contributed to improving relations between NATO and Russia.”<sup>75</sup> The NATO-Russia Council helped create opportunities for joint ventures in international security operations. While working together on such operations, including crisis management in the Balkans, Parmentier stated that relations between NATO and Russia improved. He also asserted that “cooperation should be extended beyond politics into the



military sphere, including planning. From this point of view, frequent and repeated joint exercises are an absolute must.”<sup>76</sup> Only through repeated collaboration in a variety of security measures can a relationship between the two parties flourish. As a cooperative venue, the NATO-Russia Council provided opportunities for such proactive engagement.

### *Equality*

Ambassador Rizzo’s statements and wishes for NATO-Russia relations through the establishment of the NATO-Russia Council were affirmed by then-NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson in December 2002. At the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Robertson gave a speech on “A New Russian Revolution: Partnership with NATO.” While the Council was relatively new, actions were already being taken to engage both sides in a proactive partnership. Lord Robertson observed that “the way [the NRC] has done business in its first six months demonstrates that we truly have achieved a revolution in NATO-Russia relations.”<sup>77</sup> He focused on the NRC’s marked change from the “19 versus one” arrangement of the Permanent Joint Council to a proposed equal partnership between NATO member states and the Russian Federation. Shortly after the NRC’s creation, NATO and Russia also began working together on assessments of Euro-Atlantic terrorism and peacekeeping missions in the Balkans. The newfound equal partnership of the NATO-Russia Council encouraged both parties to work together and address important issues on the European continent. Robertson’s comments gave NATO the image of a partner eager to form a lasting and productive alliance with the Russia.

While Lord Robertson maintained that the new NATO-Russia Council is an equal partnership between the two parties, Guillaume Parmentier of the *NATO Review* differed slightly in his opinions. He observed in 2002 that “the creation of a NATO-Russia Council in May is a major step in the right direction and it will be important to deepen relations without giving

Russia a veto over future NATO action.”<sup>78</sup> Here, the NATO-Russia Council appears to limit Russia’s decision-making rights and still safeguards NATO action. Lord Robertson’s view shows that the new NATO partnership is better than the “19 versus 1” configuration of the Permanent Joint Council, but does not mention the limited voice of Russia in vetoing NATO decisions. While the new partnership is not truly equal, the arrangement of the NRC is better than the Cold War relationship and the condescending inequality of the Permanent Joint Council.

James M. Goldgeier of the *NATO Review* reflects Parmentier’s view in his Spring 2002 article. He stated that “while optimism for the prospects of NATO-Russia relations has probably never been greater, the core problem that existed in the PJC will be difficult to overcome in a new body, given that NATO does distinguish between members and non-members.”<sup>79</sup> Goldgeier highlighted the miscommunications involved in reaching PJC agreements; Russia was viewed by NATO as undermining NATO consensus, while NATO seemed to only want Russian approval of already decided resolutions. He acknowledged that NATO-Russia equality will be difficult to achieve. While the two parties may participate equally in joint security operations, NRC decision-making may not be as equal. Goldgeier identified one condition to make the new NATO-Russia Council work more successfully than the Permanent Joint Council. He asserted that “new Russian personnel at NATO with both instructions and the ability to engage constructively with their counterparts will be important for ensuring that the new NATO-Russia body is more effective than its predecessor.”<sup>80</sup> In his statement, he advised Russia to take the initiative in maintaining equality in NRC decision-making. While NATO provided an impetus for a new NATO-Russia partnership, Russia would need to hold the organization accountable in its commitment to a truly new and equal relationship.

## NATO-Russia Partnership

### *A “new era”*

While the NATO-Russia Council provided a venue for NATO-Russia relations, a real partnership began to grow. As then-NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson stated in December 2002,

To my mind, the partnership between NATO and Russia today marks the end of a dark century for Europe – a century which, in a very real sense, began with the storming of the Winter Palace in 1917, and ended with the collapse of the World Trade Center in September 2001.<sup>81</sup>

Lord Robertson acknowledged the NATO-Russia partnership as the beginning of a new era; the dark days of the Cold War were over and a new dawn in NATO relations had begun. Throughout his speech to the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Robertson outlined the history and transformation of Russia, from the Bolshevik Revolution to the Cold War to September 11, 2001, where the real partnership between NATO and Russia began to take root. As partners against the international terrorist threat, Lord Robertson stated that “the Alliance truly had changed.”<sup>82</sup> As a changed NATO, the organization could also change international politics.

Lord Robertson highlighted in another 2002 speech that not only has a new era in NATO-Russia relations begun, but a new era for NATO was also underway. He observed that Russia had changed over the past 10 years, that the Alliance “has reached out to new partners in Europe in a co-operative and trusting way. It has given a secure home to new democracies...”<sup>83</sup>

Robertson suggested that NATO’s new behaviors toward new partners in Europe have signaled a new era for NATO’s international relationships and promotion of democracy and security. No longer a Cold War, anti-Communist opponent, NATO could usher in an era of proactive relationships with new strategic European partners. Lord Robertson also remarked that “as

NATO is changing, so too must the NATO-Russia relationship.”<sup>84</sup> The creation of the NATO-Russia Council denoted a new era for the two parties as well as for their relationship.

*An investment*

In another speech, Lord Robertson related the NATO-Russia partnership to a business investment. He surmised that NATO is “still in the investment phase, but...can see that the revenues will soon start pouring in.”<sup>85</sup> This metaphor predicts that while the NATO-Russia partnership may not be very active or beneficial to the Alliance at that time, the new relationship will soon produce favorable outcomes in security measures for the organization. Both NATO and its officials trusted that the NATO-Russia Council would become a successful partnership and that Russia has the potential to be a contributing ally in NATO operations. NATO’s image as a trusting partner in its engagement with Russia may contribute to Russia’s interest in the Council.

*Images of strength and power*

The new NATO-Russia partnership in the NATO-Russia Council shows strength in both parties. Secretary General Lord Robertson asserted in December 2002 that “in the past, Russia and the NATO countries were on opposite sides...But now, Russia and the NATO nations are partners in the world, a dangerous world, today against common threats and common enemies.”

<sup>86</sup> As partners against the enemies that threaten the transatlantic region, specifically the European continent, NATO and Russia gain images of strength and power. Prior to the NATO-Russia Council, the Alliance still achieved power and respect in the international community, but was still occupied with competition and defense against the Soviet Union. As partners, NATO’s image improves and shows Russia and other former Soviet nations its strength.

Not only does NATO garner images of strength and power from its new partnership with Russia, but the NATO-Russia Council itself acquires credibility, strength, and power in its presence. Tom Donnelly of the *NATO Review* stated in 2003 that

the NATO-Russia Council brings Moscow itself into the inner chambers of Western security policy-making. And, if anything, the relationship with Russia will prove an additional force for European engagement in stabilizing the Islamic world, where Russia has legitimate security concerns.<sup>87</sup>

By associating with and gaining the trust of the increasingly powerful Russia, the NATO-Russia Council obtains more power and control over a greater area of the European continent. Not only the NRC, but also NATO itself may have more influence and power in international security, including stability in the Middle East and other Islamic nations. The potential for control over greater areas of land incorporated with a promising partnership with Russia gives NATO an increased image of strength and power in the realm of international relations and security.

Yet, Donnelly also distinguished NATO's image between two major players in the Alliance, United States and the United Kingdom, and the European continent. He observed that "for the United States, and, to a lesser extent, the United Kingdom, NATO was a power-projection mission, while for continental Europe...it was an issue of homeland defense."<sup>88</sup>

These two images of NATO carry over from the Cold War, but may still be relevant during the creation and formative years of the NATO-Russia Council. The Alliance's image of strength and power may be determined through association with any of its member states, including the United States – one of its main military providers. While Donnelly associated the United States and the United Kingdom with NATO's power projection, he observed that continental Europe viewed the Alliance as an issue and proponent of homeland defense. During the Cold War, this image was plausible, but since the decline of the Soviet Union, such an image may have shifted.

Europe's security threat(s) from Russia may no longer be an issue, but the continent's concern over terrorist threats may encompass the image.

Czech President Vaclav Havel called for NATO to review its identity and the role it wishes to play in the world. He stated in the Spring 2002 issue of the *NATO Review* that the Alliance must "reaffirm its position as a key pillar of international security and serve as a model of an organization committed to the defense of human liberty."<sup>89</sup> While Havel asserted that NATO must review its current identity and determine what role it wants to play in international politics, his remarks referring to the Alliance as a "key pillar of international security" and a "model of an organization" distinguish NATO as a powerful institution in international relations. NATO may need to reaffirm its identity and role in transatlantic security, but the mention and association of the Alliance with any images of power and/or strength show that NATO is moving in the right direction in its branding strategy as an organization of power and strength.

### Transparency

#### *Gaining trust from Russia*

As the NATO-Russia Council progressed in building its partnership between NATO and the Russian Federation, the Council required transparency between the two parties. NATO specifically needed to change its image to a more open stance in order to gain trust from Russia. NATO Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Alessandro Minuto Rizzo observed in October 2002 that

In essence, NATO-Russia cooperation on defense reform is an exercise in transparency and openness. An exercise in putting problems on the table, and examining how we can learn from each other. An exercise in sharing our experiences, our expectations, perhaps even our frustrations. And an exercise, therefore, in building confidence between us, and in promoting the interoperability of our forces and strengthening the NATO-Russia relationship.<sup>90</sup>

Rizzo acknowledged that transparency is crucial to NATO's relationship with Russia and to the interoperability of their forces. A transparent image for NATO would help the organization in all of its relationships and in the promotion of its actions and policy. A more open relationship would also show that the Alliance is dedicated to a lasting and long-term relationship with Russia and any other partners. While Ambassador Rizzo promoted transparency in the NATO-Russia Council, he also accepted that all nations are independent and have the right to operate without regard to the Alliance. He stated that "there is nothing wrong with such individuality, as long as it is accompanied by transparency."<sup>91</sup> Independence and individuality are welcomed by NATO, but transparency must be present in order for its relationships to flourish.

NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson also understood the importance of transparency in gaining trust from Russia. In November 2002, Robertson held several meetings with then-President Vladimir Putin regarding the upcoming NATO Summit in Prague. After briefing the president on subjects from NATO enlargement to new threats, Lord Robertson stated that "none of our decisions in Prague will be in any way contrary to any of Russia's vital security interests. In my capacity as the Chairman of the NATO-Russia Council, I also briefed the President on the work of the Council and on its extremely good collective record."<sup>92</sup> By showing President Putin the accomplishments of the NATO-Russia Council and demonstrating the non-threatening nature of the decisions made at the Summit, Lord Robertson was being open about all NATO activities and relations. The Alliance sought to maintain an open and transparent relationship with Russia by disclosing extensive information about the NRC and the Prague Summit.

Lord Robertson continued to show his commitment to transparency with Russia in a 2003 *Krasnaya Zvezda* article. The article not only contains positive content regarding the NATO-Russia relationship, but its publication in a Russian Ministry of Defense journal shows the efforts

of the Alliance to reach out to the Russian government and people. Robertson described the NATO-Russia relationship as a “special relationship [that] began as a way to build mutual confidence and trust through dialogue.”<sup>93</sup> Here, he acknowledged that open dialogue is the way to gain trust from Russia, emphasizing the mutual aspect of communication and building trust; Russia must also participate in open dialogue to gain trust from NATO. Robertson concluded his article by stating that “closer relations with Russia have become a central element of NATO’s broad transformation agenda.”<sup>94</sup> As the Alliance transforms its image from Cold War opponent to Russian ally, close relations with the nation have become a main priority in their actions and decision-making.

#### *Interoperability of forces*

Stemming from the concept of gaining trust and open dialogue between NATO and Russia comes the interoperability of forces. In order to strengthen the NATO-Russia relationship, partnered activities as well as dialogue are needed. Lord Robertson noted in 2003 that

Russia’s contribution to [the peacekeeping operation in Bosnia], alongside NATO, demonstrated to all that the Euro-Atlantic community was united in its determination to bring peace to the Balkans. It also demonstrated the potential of cooperation between Russia and the North Atlantic Alliance in bringing lasting solutions to threats to our common security.<sup>95</sup>

The interoperability of Russian and NATO forces in maintaining peace and security in Bosnia suggests that the two parties must engage in transparent dialogue and activities in order to accomplish such a monumental task. While all efforts may not have been, in actuality, the most transparent, the general attempt demonstrates willingness between Russia and NATO to progress their relationship in a positive way.

Other NATO officials also perceived the interoperability of NATO and Russian forces and stress its importance in maintaining an open relationship as well as promoting security in the



transatlantic region. Paul Fritch, head of the Russia and Ukraine Relations Section in NATO's Political Affairs and Security Policy Division, stated in the Autumn 2003 issue of the *NATO Review* that cooperation between the two parties "has not been a one-way street. In October 2003, for example, NATO officers participated for the first time in a Russian military training program, a course focused on air crew survival techniques."<sup>96</sup> He added that after years of awkward, formal "partnership," NATO Allies and Russia finally felt like partners. Thus, positive sentiment and aspirations for the relationship and the NATO-Russia Council cannot be the only ingredients to a healthy and proactive partnership.

### Positive NATO Image

#### *An experienced NATO*

With NATO's relationship with Russia in a new phase, the organization exhibited itself in a positive fashion. NATO and its officials not only recalled positive aspects of the organization's history and experience, but also focused on the Alliance as a proactive and integral part of the NATO-Russia Council. Ambassador Alessandro Minuto Rizzo offered that

we would like to make our accumulated knowledge and know-how available to assist Russia, in the best way we can, in defense reform. We must, therefore, move forward with a meaningful dialogue on military reform, to learn from each other's experience, and have confidence that we all have the right capabilities to face together the threats of today and tomorrow.<sup>97</sup>

Rizzo accentuated NATO's experience in defense reform and international politics, creating an image of a wise, experienced, and helpful NATO. While he affirmed that NATO and Russia must work together and learn from each other to face international threats, his speech mimics the humanitarian dialogue of NATO's post-Cold War image. Through Rizzo's speech, NATO maintained its positive image of humanitarian supporter and experienced partner.

Not only did NATO focus on its past accomplishments and experience in international security and politics, but the organization also emphasized its current activities and commitments. Christopher Bennett, editor of the *NATO Review*, noted in Autumn 2003 that “today, barely a week goes by without either the NATO Secretary General meeting with the head of another international organization or the leader of a Partner country, or a visit to Alliance Headquarters by an individual of similar standing.”<sup>98</sup> This statement not only depicts the organization and its officials as busy in the world of international politics, but also shows that NATO is an important institution; World leaders want to meet with the Secretary General and visit NATO Headquarters. Bennett added that “NATO has even developed effective working relationships with international financial institutions and non-governmental organizations working in crisis areas of the world.”<sup>99</sup> Due to the Alliance’s experience with a wide array of international institutions, the organization has gained prominence among other organizations and coalitions as well as nations around the world. Years of experience coupled with a prominent and relevant NATO of today portray the institution in a most favorable light.

*“Victory” in enlargement*

Secretary General Lord Robertson quoted the *Wall Street Journal* in 2002 to support NATO’s image and accomplishments, saying,

A Wall Street Journal article a few days ago said that, by inviting seven countries to join, ‘NATO has achieved the greatest victory in the five decades of its existence, by finally erasing the effects of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact and the Yalta Agreement, which had shackled Europe for half a century.’<sup>100</sup>

The Secretary General referred to the new NATO membership of Bulgaria, Slovakia, Romania, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in the spring of 2002. The accession of these former Soviet Bloc countries portrayed NATO as overcoming the power of the Soviet Union and the Cold War. Exalting NATO’s “victory” and power, Robertson suggested that the Alliance

achieved its initial purpose – to counterbalance the Communist Soviet Union and maintain peace and security on the European continent. Inferring that NATO outlasted the Soviet Union and Communism in Europe, Lord Robertson gave NATO a positive image.

Yet, Lord Robertson is not the only NATO official to offer such praises. Assistant Secretary General to NATO's Political Affairs Division, Günther Altenburg, noted in the Summer 2002 issue of the *NATO Review* that through the admission of former Warsaw Pact nations into the Alliance, NATO “played a key part in overcoming Europe's division.”<sup>101</sup> He observed that the initial membership of three former Soviet nations would leave open the option for future invitations of other former Soviet states. The beginning process of enlargement supposedly led to the democratization of other former Warsaw Pact nations; NATO membership was so important as to change the political make-up of Eastern Europe. Thus, Altenburg suggested that NATO's victory in enlargement is also a victory in the democracy of the European continent.

While NATO officials praised the organization's “victory in enlargement,” they also observed that the new NATO members must contribute to and add value to the organization. Lord Robertson stated in December 2002 that “any new members of NATO have to add value, both militarily and politically to the work of the Alliance. And we will only invite countries to become members if they satisfy both of these tests.”<sup>102</sup> In this statement, NATO suggested that its intent in enlargement was not to acquire former Eastern Bloc states solely to counter the Communist threat. While the new NATO members must uphold the principles of democracy, the Alliance does not mention that these acts are in competition with the former Soviet Union. In another speech, Lord Robertson observed that “once upon a time, most people in the West looked at Russia as part of the problem. No more. Today, Russia is very much part of the

solution.”<sup>103</sup> NATO’s success in enlargement is a positive step for the organization in the promotion and maintenance of security, but the Alliance also wants Russia to be a part of the process. As NATO reaches out to Russia and other former Communist states, the organization portrays itself positively.

*An integral partner for Russia*

Lord Robertson mimicked Ambassador Rizzo’s image by focusing on NATO’s supportive humanitarian image as well. He stated in 2002 that “few people would have guessed, in 1990, how integral a role NATO would play in [bringing Russia in from the Cold and into the European family of nations].”<sup>104</sup> Here, Robertson concentrated on the Alliance’s shift from Soviet opponent to Russian aid, being the integral force in Russia’s acceptance back into the European community. Without NATO, Lord Robertson inferred that Russia could not have achieved a place in the current European community and partnership. Through his inference, NATO’s image as an integral partner for Russia in the NATO-Russia Council is strengthened.

NATO officials also mentioned the interest that other countries have in NATO partnership. *NATO Review* editor Christopher Bennett observed in Autumn 2002 that “as the Alliance continues to transform itself to meet the security challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and moves beyond the Euro-Atlantic area, interest in partnership with NATO grows.”<sup>105</sup> He mentioned China’s interest in collaborating with the organization. By announcing the interest of other major international players in relationships with NATO, Bennett’s statement shows Russia and other potential allies that the Alliance is a hot commodity in international affairs; NATO is a core political institution that can enhance a country’s political, military, and/or security ambitions.

## NATO vs. Russia

### *Russia's Communist past*

NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson also focused on Russia's Communist past when delineating the organization's history and relationship with the nation. In 2002, he described Europe and the world as divided by the Cold War "into two massive armed camps: one threatening to export its repressive model through intrigue or violence; the other a group of democracies determined to protect their security and their values."<sup>106</sup> Although Robertson discussed the fallen Soviet Union, his remark still referred to the current Russia. His words painted the former Soviet Union as an evil and threatening opponent to the Alliance. While he associated Russia with a negative connotation, his remark painted NATO in a positive light. Robertson grouped NATO with nations striving to protect democracy and international security, those who were against the Soviet Union. Such speech may improve NATO's image toward its allies and member states, but may also hinder its relationship with the current Russian Federation. The Soviet Union may be in Russia's past, but the nation is trying to make its way as a new democracy.

Lord Robertson was not the only NATO official to bring up Russia's Communist past. Günther Altenburg also referred to NATO's relations with the former Soviet nation. In his 2002 *NATO Review* article, Altenburg described the hesitance and suspicion of NATO members toward the recently fallen Soviet Union. He stated that "when the Cold War ended – not without considerable intra-Alliance squabbles over the question of whether Mikhail Gorbachev was a genuine reformer – the Alliance could look back with a sense of achievement."<sup>107</sup> Altenburg suggested that although NATO members questioned the reformation of Gorbachev and the former Soviet Union, the Alliance was strong enough and confident enough to engage in

relations with the nation. As he correlates Russia with suspicion, he also associates NATO with integrity and trust.

*NATO alienating Russia*

While NATO marked the creation of the NATO-Russia Council in 2002 as a big step in its relations and dealings with Russia, the organization sometimes characterized the nation in an alienating fashion. Lord Robertson stated that the advancement in NATO-Russia relations “proved that Russia is now ready to take her place as a fully, equal and trusting partner in Euro-Atlantic security.”<sup>108</sup> His tone suggested that NATO engaged in unequal partnerships with Russia, such as the Permanent Joint Council, because Russia was not ready or not worthy to gain the organization’s trust in security procedures and initiatives. While the NRC grants Russia equal representation and equal decision-making in its actions, this comment alienates the country as an “other” that still needs to prove its worth and reliability in a turbulent era in international security.

NATO also alienated Russia by criticizing and questioning the nation’s policy on certain humanitarian and possibly destabilizing circumstances in former Soviet territory. Paul Fritch stated that the “Allies continue to voice concerns about the prolonged crisis in Chechnya – its humanitarian consequences, its potential to destabilize neighboring states, and certain aspects of Russian policy toward the breakaway republic.”<sup>109</sup> By calling attention to Russian policy and actions toward the former Russian province, NATO may have alienated the nation and/or hindered decision-making and participation in joint security ventures.

*NATO protecting democracy and international security*

While some of NATO’s dialogue about Russia portrayed the nation in a less than favorable fashion, the organization continued to focus on its own accomplishments in protecting

democracy and international security. *NATO Review* editor Christopher Bennett observed that in the area of practical cooperation, “NATO has forged increasingly effective partnerships with other international institutions in the interest of eventually achieving self-sustaining peace processes.”<sup>110</sup> While the Alliance maintained a relationship with the progressing former Soviet Union, the organization also reached out to other nations, organizations, and strategic partners to maintain peace in the transatlantic region and abroad. Bennett suggested that NATO continued to live up to its founding ideals of protecting democracy and international security.

#### *Demeaning Russia’s concerns about NATO enlargement*

In addition to NATO’s focus on Russia’s Soviet past, the organization also demeaned the nation’s concerns about enlargement. Lord Robertson commented that “only completely paranoid people in Russia could seriously argue today that NATO enlargement is about ‘encircling’ Russia.”<sup>111</sup> His remark gave the organization an image of authority over Russia, as knowing better than the non-member nation. NATO’s elitist language presented the organization as an authority figure, while attempting to portray Russia as paranoid, ridiculous, and lesser. Although NATO may succeed in its image as an authority figure, the demeaning of its Russian partner jeopardizes the organization’s relationship as well as diminishes its own image and reputation.

Other NATO officials demeaned Russian concerns about the organization’s enlargement and also advised the nation on how to maintain their relationship with the Alliance. Dmitri Trenin, writer and deputy director of the Carnegie Moscow Center, wrote in the Spring 2002 issue of the *NATO Review* that

Russia has neither the power nor the influence to block NATO membership for other European countries. Moreover, should it try to do so, it would most certainly fail. And the more it tried, the more counterproductive such a policy would likely be.<sup>112</sup>

Trenin implied that Russia's concerns or objections to NATO enlargement do not matter and will not affect NATO decisions. He stated that any opposition to NATO enlargement on Russia's behalf would fail, indicating that the only way to a successful NATO-Russia relationship is through compliance with NATO policy and decisions. Trenin also wrote that the bulk of the Russian political establishment resented NATO's "eastern march" because "it eats away at their self-esteem and the traditional notion of Russia as a great power."<sup>113</sup> He associated Russia's concerns and opposition to that of an inferiority complex. He implied that Russia craves the power and stature it once had as the Soviet Union and that the nation does not want the Allied powers (i.e. NATO) to add former Soviet states to their membership.

#### NATO's Public Diplomacy

##### *NATO's commitment to positive communication*

All images of NATO reflect the organization's public diplomacy and the Public Diplomacy Division (PDD). Simon Walker, Director of Corporate Communication at Reuters and the keynote speaker at a 2003 NATO public diplomacy workshop asserted that "in [today's] environment, no organization can afford to be bad at communicating...public institutions exist only by public consent and you need to take with you the hearts and minds of the people who consent to your existence."<sup>114</sup> Walker's remark and the Alliance's public diplomacy workshop emphasized NATO's commitment to positive communication, not only with governments, but also with other foreign publics. The creation of the NATO Public Diplomacy Division also shows the Alliance's commitment to positive communication, especially concerning the NATO-Russia Council. The *NATO Update* states that the PDD "was created this year [2003], as part of an effort by the Alliance to strengthen its public diplomacy and better communicate the current transformation of NATO."<sup>115</sup> The recent creation of the PDD proves that NATO not only wants



to improve its communication with others, but also that the Alliance wants to convey a better and proactive image to the international community.

In specific relation to the NATO-Russia Council, the Alliance's positive communication involves engaging Russian personnel. James M. Goldgeier stated in 2002 that "new Russian personnel with both instructions and the ability to engage constructively with their counterparts will be important for ensuring that the new NATO-Russia body is more effective than its predecessor."<sup>116</sup> Here, Goldgeier suggested that Russian members of the NRC be more involved and implied that their NATO counterparts must be willing to openly engage them. Only through positive engagement can the newly-formed NATO-Russia Council surpass the failed communication efforts of the Permanent Joint Council.

#### *Need for a new NATO image*

The need for a new image and new public diplomacy skills was reiterated by then-Secretary General Lord Robertson. He observed that

40 years of antagonism is a long time indeed. These years have shaped perceptions of each other that are very difficult to shed. And so, even after the Cold War had ended, we remained prisoners of these old images.<sup>117</sup>

NATO's image of aggressor and opponent during the Cold War was difficult to change, so the creation of a specific public diplomacy department was needed. Robertson acknowledged the organization's image as Russian opponent. The end of the Cold War and the establishment of the NATO-Russia Council with a new NATO-Russia relationship called for the portrayal and emphasis of NATO in a new light.

The 2003 Head of the NATO Countries Relations Section in the Public Diplomacy Division, Stefanie Babst, fully defined the organization's public diplomacy policy. She stated that

NATO's Public Diplomacy policy is very much threefold. It's first of all about informing the public about the Alliance's broad agenda, and secondly about communicating with different opinion-formers in our countries. And it's certainly about promoting NATO vis-à-vis the outside world.<sup>118</sup>

While promoting a positive NATO image, the organization's public diplomacy policy intends to announce its agenda to various publics, including governments, "opinion-formers," and the outside world. The establishment of NATO's PDD and the rejuvenation of its relationship with Russia through the NATO-Russia Council created the need for better communication and an improved image for the Alliance.

James M. Goldgeier also discussed NATO's need for a new image, but in reference to NATO enlargement and the maintenance of international security. He observed that "if 2002 brings both an enhanced relationship with Russia as well as a big increase in members, then the future role of the Alliance may be profoundly affected."<sup>119</sup> With a new role in international security and politics comes the need for a new image. The Alliance already demonstrated a shift from Soviet opponent to Russian partner since the collapse of the Soviet Union. With the acquisition of numerous former Eastern Bloc countries and a new partnership with Russia in the NATO-Russia Council, the Alliance's Communist threat and concerns have diminished. Goldgeier advised NATO to "engage in any real soul-searching about what role members expect NATO to play in the coming years as an alliance in responding to existing and future threats."<sup>120</sup> Terrorism and other concerns may now shape the new role and new image that NATO must project in the global arena. Through open engagement with Russia, new NATO members, and other strategic partners, the Alliance may develop a new image as an organization committed to its relationships and determined to maintain stability and security around the world.

Secretary General Lord Robertson reinforced this stance toward NATO's role and image. In a 2003 *NATO Review* article, he asserted that

we [NATO] need to redouble efforts to bring the wider public along. One of the characteristics of this new security environment is that our security policies — and our institutions — are changing faster than the perceptions of our publics. As a result, the task of explaining what NATO is and what it is doing is becoming ever more demanding. We must therefore exercise additional effort to ensure that public understanding of the new NATO remains widespread, strong and supportive.<sup>121</sup>

As Goldgeier focused on the need for a new NATO image, Lord Robertson emphasized the realities of NATO's image. He recognized that NATO's public diplomacy efforts were not keeping up with the perceptions of the public. NATO's Public Diplomacy Division needed to put forth additional effort to project the organization's new role and image through the NATO-Russia Council.

## **NATO's Image from 2004-2005**

### NATO's Public Diplomacy

#### *Transparency*

At the June 2004 Istanbul Summit, Stefanie Babst from NATO's Public Diplomacy Division showed how the organization reached out to the public, demonstrating the Alliance's capabilities in reaching out to target audiences and creating positive self images. She stated that NATO's public diplomacy campaign was to “[make] the Summit as transparent to the overall public, reaching out to the public and explaining to the public...what actually will be achieved at the Summit and what are the results of the Summit.”<sup>122</sup> While Babst specifically talks about NATO's Istanbul Summit, the public diplomacy campaign used is representative of the lengths the Alliance will go in order to create and maintain a positive image with a target audience. The use of transparency through “reaching out” and “explaining” shows NATO's commitment to positive communication with target audiences.

Babst also focused on public diplomacy and NATO's importance at the Istanbul Summit. She asserted that for a political event such as a Summit, reaching out to young people was important as well as "[demonstrating] that NATO's important, NATO matters, and their encouragement, and their involvement in NATO matters is welcome, is wanted."<sup>123</sup> By involving a specific target audience such as young people, NATO may emphasize a positive image on them and portray itself as a relevant and important organization in international politics. While this example involves young people at the Istanbul Summit, the Public Diplomacy Division's strategy may be used in other situations and toward other target audiences, such as the Russian Federation and its people in order to foster a positive relationship.

*Long-term relationship with Russian public*

In October 2004, NATO Information Office (NIO) Director Isabelle Francois also discussed elements of NATO's public diplomacy strategy. She observed that the Office had already established a good reputation in Russia, but that NATO's image in and relationship with Russia is a long-term investment. Francois stated that

as [the NIO] relates to changing NATO's image in Russia, I guess this is a long-term investment, and I'm sure that responding to the skeptics will continue to be a challenge, and I suspect things will not change overnight. The same thing applies to skeptics on the NATO side about this relationship.<sup>124</sup>

She related the NATO Information Office's work in Russia to an arduous marathon. Francois' description of the NIO and NATO's relationship with Russia portrays NATO's public diplomacy strategy as developing a positive image and relationship over a long period of time. The Alliance is dedicated to a partnership with Russia and is committed to explaining NATO to the Russian people. Such a relationship and commitment demonstrates the organization's transparency.

Francois continued her discussion of public diplomacy strategies in the NIO. She observed that

in terms of public diplomacy, I think it is very important that we tackle together some sort of information strategy whereby we develop these messages together and whereby we address some of the less positive rhetoric, public rhetoric that we often see in the press, and I think that we can look for opportunities as we prepare for the foreign ministerial in December.<sup>125</sup>

Here, she discussed the NATO Information Office's involvement with its Russian colleagues to address positive and negative images of NATO among the Russian people. By working with the Russians, NATO demonstrates an open relationship with its Strategic Partners. Also, the NIO's recognition and explanation of negative and "less positive" rhetoric regarding NATO may improve the organization's image and relationship with Russia by opening dialogue and enhancing transparency.

Francois concluded her October 2004 interview by discussing areas for NATO-Russia improvement. She stated that

beyond the phase of setting up the NRC, I think it is now time for us to look into more operational co-operation...that, ultimately, through this practical co-operation and this open dialogue, we will be able to develop, over time, shared values. This will be the bedrock of this solid relationship.<sup>126</sup>

Not only do both parties need open dialogue, but they also need to physically work together in a constructive manner on operational endeavors. Francois named this area as the only one in need of improvement. According to her, dialogue is not enough without operational cooperation. By encompassing open dialogue, dissemination and explanation of NATO images, and working together in operational cooperation, NATO and Russia may work toward a better partnership and NATO may have an improved image in the nation.

#### *Relationships with other publics*

NATO may improve its public diplomacy strategies through its relationships with other publics, such as with Georgia. In November 2005, Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer met with Georgian Prime Minister Zurab Noghaideli to discuss their new relationship. Scheffer

observed that “needless to say that NATO will support Georgia wherever it needs assistance in implementing those difficult reforms. And we realize there is still a long way to go. But NATO is there, ready to assist.”<sup>127</sup> Here, Scheffer refers to Georgia’s participation in International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and NATO Kosovo Force (KFOR) security reforms. NATO’s support and availability to help Georgia shows that the organization is committed to all of its relationships, which may demonstrate to Russia a positive NATO image.

Prime Minister Noghaideli also commented on NATO’s support and welcoming relationship. He observed that “the door for NATO is open for us [Georgia]. And that’s a most important thing. And it was also being mentioned that no other country should be allowed to veto Georgia’s NATO aspirations. And that’s another very important thing for us.”<sup>128</sup> Noghaideli emphasized the importance of NATO’s open relationship and “open door” with Georgia. He also commented that no other country should be allowed to veto Georgia’s aspirations to NATO enlargement. Such comments portray NATO as a powerful and important organization of which to be a part. The public diplomacy strategy used here demonstrates the Alliance’s relevance and importance in international politics. Developing a positive relationship with NATO may be seen as a secure way to enter into European and transatlantic politics as well as maintain stability.

By developing relationships with non-member nations, NATO avoids the need to sell the organization as a brand; the Alliance’s relationships create and foster a positive image for the organization. In a press conference following the December 2005 meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission, Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer asserted that “my job is not to sell NATO. NATO doesn’t need to be sold. Our job is to explain NATO.”<sup>129</sup> The Alliance’s relationship with the Ukraine in the NATO-Ukraine Commission allows NATO to explain its purpose in current international politics as well as portray a supportive and proactive image to

the Ukrainian people. The Alliance participates in similar endeavors in the NATO Information Office in Moscow, in order to explain its role and image to Russian publics.

### Positive NATO Image

#### *NATO's abilities*

Through NATO's relationships with other countries and non-member states, the organization may be able to project a positive image of itself to its target audiences, specifically Russia. One focus of the positive NATO image is NATO's abilities. In October 2004, Secretary General Scheffer spoke at the Clingendael Institute to delineate NATO's role as a global organization. After recalling NATO's involvement in a series of international events which surpassed its transatlantic boundaries, he observed

Why am I recalling these steps? Three reasons. First they show that NATO's out-of-area evolution happened out of necessity. Second, in taking on these new missions, NATO demonstrated an ability to adapt to entirely new challenges. Third, and perhaps most importantly, the Alliance also demonstrated the stamina to engage for the long term, and – as in the case of Kosovo – to take the heat for controversial decisions.<sup>130</sup>

Scheffer's speech related NATO as a powerful and adaptable organization with long term staying power. NATO's established place as an international political organization has given it experience to adapt to new situations and challenges. Scheffer even claims that the Alliance is able to "take the heat" for controversial situations among other international players. By delineating NATO's abilities in the international political arena, Scheffer paints the organization in a positive and powerful light.

While highlighting NATO's abilities, Scheffer also stated that NATO's involvement in international affairs should be as part of a comprehensive response, not as a world policeman. He asserted in his speech at the Clingendael Institute that "it is evident to me that NATO must be part of that [comprehensive] response – not as a 'gendarme du monde,' however, but as one

important element of a much broader international approach.”<sup>131</sup> While NATO has the ability to maintain transatlantic security, support fledgling nations, etc, Scheffer affirmed that this ability is only part of a comprehensive response from other nations and international organizations. NATO is not, as Scheffer stated, a “gendarme du monde” or world policeman. The Alliance’s abilities are only part of a collective effort along with other nations and organizations.

In specific regard to the NATO-Russia relationship, Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer has been able to give examples of NATO’s abilities. At a news conference following the September 2005 working luncheon of the NATO-Russia Council, Scheffer observed that

you remember when the Russian sailors were trapped in their submersible, NATO countries came to help...and many other exercises we’re having in many different fields, had found a very practical example here when the United Kingdom and others, came to the assistance of the Russians. So we have that to build on.<sup>132</sup>

Here, Scheffer referred to the August 2005 rescue of seven Russian sailors and their submarine by the United Kingdom Royal Navy. Weeks before the rescue, NATO conducted an extensive two-week submarine rescue exercise; after the Russian rescue, NATO developed several other submarine rescue initiatives and a NATO Submarine Rescue System. NATO exercises and capabilities may help strengthen the NATO-Russia relationship as well as improve the Alliance’s image by saving lives.

*NATO as a reward or incentive*

NATO also emphasizes itself as a reward or incentive to those countries who seek membership and/or partnership with the Alliance. Officials such as Secretary General Scheffer project the image of NATO as a core institution, of which any nation would want to be a member. He stated at the April 2004 Ceremonial Session of the North Atlantic Council that

The [seven] new [NATO] members can rightly claim that membership in NATO is a reward for all their hard work in preparing for accession. That should be a powerful incentive to those other nations who share the same values, and the same ambitions, and



are working with us towards their membership. My message to those nations is: staying on the path of reform will ultimately pay off. For NATO's doors will remain open.<sup>133</sup>

As Scheffer referred to the accession of Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia into NATO, he also stressed that the Alliance will be open to relationships with only those nations that choose to reform their governments in a democratic way. Non-member nations such as Russia must change their values and ambitions in order to have a positive and proactive relationship with NATO. While Scheffer's speech regarding NATO membership and partnership is conditional, the overall message emphasized a greater good for the security and stability of the transatlantic region.

Secretary General Scheffer associated the image of NATO with that of a reward or incentive almost a year later during a press conference following the working lunch of the North Atlantic Council in February 2005. He observed that "NATO has an open door policy, that all European democracies who fulfill the conditions for NATO membership can go the long and sometimes complicated road to NATO membership."<sup>134</sup> Scheffer inferred that those nations who work toward NATO's ideals will be rewarded with membership. Not only will these nations be included in enlargement, but they may also receive assistance from the Alliance while fulfilling NATO conditions. Secretary General Scheffer asserted in his speech that "NATO can assist...in giving body to the action plan and giving body to the annual target plans, and that is the way we'll operate."<sup>135</sup> While Russia may never fit in this group of NATO-hopefuls, the nation may still work toward a strategic and working partnership with the organization.

Accession into NATO was not only seen as a reward by NATO, but also as helpful to the Alliance's work toward transatlantic stability. Secretary General Scheffer marked the one year anniversary of the seven new member states by observing that "the accession of seven countries to NATO one year ago has benefited not only the Alliance, but also security in the entire Euro-

Atlantic region.”<sup>136</sup> The reward is not only a one-way street; the individual member nations benefit from the Alliance and the continent as a whole improves its security and stability. Scheffer added that all seven new members played their full part in “promoting values that make NATO a true symbol of cooperation, democracy, and peaceful relations.”<sup>137</sup> This comment makes NATO’s views toward enlargement seem more than self-serving. NATO is not only a reward, but the nations involved are a reward for the security of the continent. The two-way beneficial relationship in NATO accession portrays the organization in a positive light, focusing on the improvement of transatlantic security.

#### *Integral partner for Russia*

Another positive image that NATO tries to portray is one of integral partner for Russia. As an integral partner, NATO shows Russia full support in hardships and trouble, as in the 2005 submarine rescue. The Alliance also demonstrated support and partnership after the Beslan school hostage crisis on September 1, 2004. Secretary General Scheffer not only expressed his sympathy and condolences to the Russian people, but he also called on the international community to stand against and put an end to terrorism. He stated that “these attacks reinforce the requirement for the international community to stand together in the fight against terrorism. NATO and the NATO-Russia Council will continue to contribute to this vital international campaign.”<sup>138</sup> Scheffer and NATO demonstrated their support for their strategic partner and also emphasized the importance of the NATO-Russia Council in the international fight against terrorism.

NATO showed its continued support to the Russian Federation on September 7, 2004. Ambassador Karel Kovanda, Dean of the North Atlantic Council, discussed at a meeting of the NATO-Russia Council NATO’s determination to work with Russia in the struggle against

terrorism. He stated that “we extend a helping hand as best we know how, and the Russian Ambassador has graciously acknowledged this assistance. Above all, though, today we grieve with you and your people, Konstantin Vasilyevich, today we mourn your victims with you.”<sup>139</sup> Kovanda’s support to Russia through his words to Russian Ambassador General Konstantin Vasilyevich Totskiy depicted NATO as an ally through such a difficult time. While NATO and Russia may not agree on decisions and topics all the time, the presence of the Alliance in times of need painted NATO in a positive light. NATO’s supportive nature makes NATO an integral partner.

NATO does not only show support to its partners when they are in need. In the third year of the NATO-Russia Council and the development of their relationship, NATO defends Russia to those who would question the partnership. In a speech to the Ukrainian Diplomatic Academy in October 2005, Secretary General Scheffer asserted that

[The Ukrainian people] need to understand that integration into the Alliance and strategic partnership with Russia are not competing, mutually exclusive goals. Indeed, NATO itself launched a very dynamic partnership with Russia and that partnership continues to deepen and row.<sup>140</sup>

He demonstrated that NATO’s relationship with Russia is positive and growing in a proactive way. While former Soviet Bloc nations may fear Russia, NATO reassures them that the NATO-Russia partnership does not affect the Alliance in a negative way; Russia’s existence as a NATO strategic partner will not compete with NATO’s support of other former Soviet nations. Here, NATO supports and defends Russia while reassuring new member states as well as other strategic partners.

## Negative NATO Image

### *Enlargement*

While NATO has tried to focus on the positive aspects of its enlargement and assure its audiences that the accession of former Soviet Bloc nations will add to the security and stability of the European continent, Russia still did not view the enlargement favorably. In April 2004, Director of the Brussels office of the Center for Defense Information Tomas Valasek wrote an article for the NATO website discussing the effects of NATO's enlargement. He stated that Moscow responded to the enlargement with a mixture of skepticism and hostility; the different views of Russia that the new members would bring to NATO could harm the NATO-Russia relationship. Yet, Valasek observed that new views on Russia could help NATO "benefit from acquiring a more finely tuned 'Russia' radar, informed by the knowledge and experience of some of those countries that know Moscow best."<sup>141</sup> While NATO may use these new Russian views to improve its relationship, Russia may feel threatened and the NATO-Russia relationship could suffer. Valasek stated that

the challenge for NATO will be to avoid giving in to irrational fears while tapping into the energy and the focus of the new members' policies toward Moscow. Getting the balance right will be important, all the more so because of the attention that Russia has given to enlargement.<sup>142</sup>

The mixed feelings toward Russia that NATO must deal with could create a negative image for the organization in the eyes of the Russians. While the Alliance needs to foster a positive relationship with Russia, listening to negative views of Russia from its new NATO member states could hinder future dealing with the nation.

## NATO vs. Russia

### *Russia's shortcomings*

Although the Alliance has been supportive of Russia and has tried to maintain a proactive relationship with the nation, negative images of Russia and its shortcomings have been present in NATO publications. In October 2004, Director of the Center for Political and International Studies and of the Center for Euro-Atlantic Security in Moscow Alexander Nikitin wrote an article for the NATO website, assessing the Russian experience of participating in NATO-led peacekeeping operations in the Balkans. Describing the size of the troops involved in the operations, Nikitin observed that “the Russian troops were not decisive to the success of these missions” and that “Russian participation in [peacekeeping and peace-enforcement operations] [was] not exceptional.”<sup>143</sup> He emphasized Russia’s shortcomings and suspicions in any NATO-led operations. His description continued, observing that

many Russians remained suspicious of the Alliance’s ultimate intentions, viewing the entire exercise in terms of its impact on Russia. These attitudes, very much the legacy of Cold War zero-sum thinking, reflected poor understanding among most Russians of NATO’s transformation and an enduring image of the Alliance as a Western military machine designed to wage war.<sup>144</sup>

While Nikitin is not a NATO official, his involvement with the Alliance and the publication of his views on the NATO website show his stature within the organization and possibly reflect its sentiments toward Russian participation in NATO operations. Even as a fellow Russian, Nikitin does not paint a positive picture of his countrymen. His article does critique NATO actions and behaviors as well, but portraying the Russians in this way gives them a negative image. The publication of this article on the NATO website also demonstrates a sort of antipathy from NATO toward their Russian strategic partners.

### *In response to Russian actions*

Negative comments from NATO officials regarding Russia are only apparent in disagreements on security measures and when Russia is forcibly present in former Soviet territories. In May 2005, Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer commented on an agreement between Russia and Georgia regarding the former's military presence in the latter. While the two sides developed their cooperative relations, conditions, and duration of the Russian military in Georgia, Scheffer stated that "it is my hope that outstanding issues related to the withdrawal of remaining Russian military personnel and equipment...can be resolved as soon as possible."<sup>145</sup> Scheffer's statement seemed to be criticizing Russia's involvement in the area, giving a NATO versus Russia feeling. During this era of the NATO-Russia relationship, the Alliance became more critical of its strategic partner and this critical language became more apparent in NATO speeches and publications.

### NATO-Russia Partnership

#### *Russian participation*

Despite various sentiments about Russia, the nation's participation in the NATO-Russia Council and NATO activities was apparent to NATO officials. In an April 2004 interview with Secretary General Scheffer following an informal meeting of the NATO-Russia Council, he found that the atmosphere of the meeting was good. He stated that "the fact that Minister Lavrov has come to Brussels is, of course, a good sign that he and the Russians take the NRC seriously."<sup>146</sup> Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's participation in NRC events demonstrated that the Russians wanted to continue their constructive relationship with NATO. Scheffer even commented that "I think Minister Lavrov and I very much agreed in our bilateral...in our brief bilateral conversation that this partnership is strong and can even be

strengthened.”<sup>147</sup> Thus, bilateral participation and conversation may denote a continued partnership.

Secretary General Scheffer observed in June 2004 that “in the first half of this year, we have made substantial progress in achieving a qualitatively new NATO-Russia partnership, founded on two essential pillars of frank, open political dialogue and pragmatic, result-oriented practical co-operation.”<sup>148</sup> Russia’s partnership and participation in NATO operations has opened the relationship to better communication and cooperation. In October 2004 after the Beslan tragedy, Scheffer found the NATO-Russian partnership open to discussion “to turn our words into actions and to make NATO-Russia increasingly operational through result-oriented practical cooperation.”<sup>149</sup> Over the course of a few months, the NATO-Russia partnership was open to more operations, dialogue, and practical cooperation. Among the partnership’s open dialogue was healthy debate concerning NATO-led operations and endeavors. Scheffer stated in December 2004 that “the NRC is of course important for practical cooperation, but is also important to have broad political debate.”<sup>150</sup> By debating issues relevant to the transatlantic region and the NATO-Russia partnership, better understanding and a stronger relationship may be formed.

### *Terrorism*

While NATO and Russia have many areas of interest in which they work together, terrorism has begun to play a major part. Since the Beslan school hostage crisis in August 2004, Russia’s participation in anti-terrorism efforts has increased and NATO has supported their interest. Secretary General Scheffer stated in June 2005 that “nowhere is the need for such cooperation more urgent than in the struggle against terrorism. Our discussion today will permit us to take stock of our common efforts in this area and reaffirm our solidarity in this struggle.”<sup>151</sup>

By emphasizing the issue of terrorism and the efforts needed to fight against it, NATO reaffirms their partnership with Russia.

*Working together*

By engaging in operations together and opening dialogue between the two parties, NATO and Russia develop a relationship in which they are working together toward a more stable and secure continent. In June 2005, Secretary General recalled Russian President Putin's words to the Russian Security Council. He summed up the NATO-Russia relationship by pointing out that

'in just a very short time, we have taken a gigantic step' away from past confrontation and stereotypes. And [Putin] judged that NATO-Russia relations had 'become a real factor in ensuring international stability,' underlining that this cooperation had made it possible for us to 'deal a serious blow to international terrorism.'<sup>152</sup>

By repeating President Putin's words regarding the NATO-Russia relationship, Scheffer demonstrated the importance of Russia in the partnership and showed solidarity. Scheffer added that "if we are to build a true partnership, it must be based on trust. Trust between genuine partners, working to develop common solutions to shared challenges. Trust in a shared vision of a common future."<sup>153</sup> Through cooperation and trust, NATO and Russia can effectively work together to combat threats to international security, such as terrorism.

Even Russian officials working with NATO in the NATO-Russia Council have described the progress of the partnership. Sergei Ivanov, Minister of Defense for Russia, stated in October 2005 that "time alone will not solve everything. In addition to time, it will take good will, resolve, and a willingness to meet each other half way, gradually setting aside the misgivings and distrust that remain as a legacy of the Cold War."<sup>154</sup> Here, Ivanov admitted that both parties must work together and "meet each other half way" in order to progress and leave behind the sentiments of the Cold War. He added that



the potential in our cooperation and that of the NATO-Russia Council is far from exhausted. I believe, therefore, that in time it will be possible to elevate our relationship to an even higher level, which might rightly be termed a ‘mature partnership.’<sup>155</sup>

Ivanov believed that through the cooperation and equality of the NATO-Russia Council, the partnership between the two parties could mature and grow. By working together, long term stability may be achieved.

### **NATO’s Current Image toward Russia (2006-2008)**

#### NATO-Russia Partnership

##### *Importance of maintaining security*

Throughout the ever-changing course of the NATO-Russia relationship, the objectives of the partnership and the focus on its importance have not changed. Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer observed in June 2007 that

NATO-Russia cooperation is not just about overcoming the legacy of the past; it is first and foremost about building a more secure future: one that is in NATO’s interest, but also in Russia’s interest. Russia is an obvious – and I would even say natural – partner for us.<sup>156</sup>

De Hoop Scheffer refers to security and the importance of the NATO-Russia alliance in maintaining that security. A secure Europe and a secure world are in the interest of not only NATO member states, but also Russia, who is a major player in the global arena. De Hoop Scheffer added that “NATO-Russia relations are a real two-way street, where both Russia and NATO benefit.”<sup>157</sup> In this comment, both NATO and Russia benefit from their partnership, but both must equally contribute and participate in the partnership for its success.

As Russia and NATO benefit from their partnership, the two parties must also work together to create and maintain their security. Since the creation of the NATO-Russia Council in 2002, the partners have worked together on various security and peacekeeping missions. Jaap de

Hoop Scheffer noted the NRC's efforts against terrorism, which has plagued NATO member states as well as Russia. The Russian Federation has worked with the Alliance on anti-terrorist operations such as Operation Active Endeavor, which maintains security in the Mediterranean Sea, as well as anti-narcotics ventures in Afghanistan. He stated in October 2006 that "NATO and Russia have a cooperative project in the fight against terrorism and this is certainly also an area where we should and we can further invest in the relationship between Russia and NATO."

<sup>158</sup> By combating a mutual threat, the partnership between NATO and Russia can grow and strengthen its bond. The security benefits created by the NATO-Russia Council stem from the Alliance reaching out to Russia and other former Eastern Bloc countries. De Hoop Scheffer affirmed that "we have seen a region of security and stability increase when NATO enlargement took place, and not decrease, but increase."<sup>159</sup> Although Russia is not a member of the NATO alliance, partnership with the former Eastern Bloc countries which are now part of NATO enlargement gives all members in the relationship equal standing; NATO enlargement and partnership with Russia have both increased security and stability in the transatlantic region. By participating in security operations with Russia and former Eastern Bloc countries, NATO strengthens its image as a partner and ally.

A strengthened relationship and partnership with Russia and the former Eastern Bloc may help maintain security and development on the European continent and other areas of the world that are helped by NATO. In developing and war-torn countries such as Afghanistan, NATO's presence not only assures humanitarian assistance, but also provides increased security. De Hoop Scheffer stated in December 2006 that

security and development must go hand in hand. Reconstruction and development have almost had to start from scratch; a whole new political process has to be created; fighting and nation building have to be carried out in parallel; and regional neighbors must be engaged. NATO has to do what NATO does best and that is providing security. We can

help with the reconstruction and development, but the main part has to be done by others.  
160

Here, he acknowledged NATO's proficiency at providing security and helping countries in need. Through a strengthened partnership with Russia in the NATO-Russia Council, these goals may be more quickly and/or more easily achieved.

*Improvement of communication efforts*

De Hoop Scheffer remained positive about NATO's commitments and communication skills. He observed in December 2006 that partnership with NATO's many member countries and special relationships with non-NATO members requires "specific mechanisms for coordination and cooperation...it also requires mechanisms to foster transparency and build confidence."<sup>161</sup> Transparency and confidence-building entail open communication between NATO and nations such as Russia. De Hoop Scheffer's optimism and positive take on NATO's communication mechanisms for coordination and cooperation shows commitment to improving its relationships with nations such as Russia.

While Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer spoke positively and optimistically about the NATO-Russia relationship, Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Public Diplomacy Stefanie Babst had a different take on the partnership. On 22 June 2007, she stated that she and NATO's Public Diplomacy Division (PDD) have "put a lot of focus on improving our communication efforts vis-à-vis Russia and in Russia so that [it is very much an asserted priority]."<sup>162</sup> Her stance on the NATO-Russia relationship focuses on the organization's shortcomings. Babst believed that NATO needed to improve its communication efforts, suggesting that the Alliance had not taken all measures to foster a positive relationship and image in Russia. Her final remark in the video interview ends, "we try our very best in order to make NATO more visible and get our story out in a better way. I guess there is not much time

left for vacation.”<sup>163</sup> With “no time left for vacation,” Babst implied that the Public Diplomacy Division and NATO in general have a lot of work to do in their relationship with Russia, more specifically in their public diplomacy tactics and branding strategies; NATO must improve its communication and visibility. While NATO’s official face, Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, painted NATO in a positive light, the officials who work more closely with the Alliance’s public diplomacy and branding strategy, Stefanie Babst, revealed a more real and flawed NATO that needs improvement in its NATO-Russia relationship.

### NATO vs. Russia

#### *NATO becomes more critical of Russia*

In recent years, NATO’s relationship with Russia has become more critical. Russia’s recent conflict with Georgia has received admonishment from the NATO allies. The *NATO Review* observed that the Allies

called upon Russia to respect international values and principles on which [the] international security system is based, to implement fully the commitments agreed with Georgia and to refrain from confrontational statements and threats to the security of Allies and partners.<sup>164</sup>

The *Review* implicated Russia as a dissenting nation, not acting in accordance with NATO’s international relations practices or international security principles. NATO’s firm response to Russia’s military actions in Georgia, South Ossetia, and the Abkhazia region demonstrated a shift from the friendly and supportive NATO image from 2002.

NATO’s critical stance toward Russia began in 2006, due to the escalated tensions between Russia and Georgia. NATO Spokesman James Appathurai stated in November 2006 that the Secretary General “does wish to see both parties de-escalate tensions. He has specifically said that he hopes that Russia can take steps to lift the punitive measures that it has taken against Georgia as quickly as possible.”<sup>165</sup> Appathurai and Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer,

who are both official representatives of NATO, specifically called out Russia in their statement about the conflict. NATO reprimanded Russia for the measures it took against Georgia. By singling out Russia as the antagonist and instigator, the Alliance publicly reprimanded the nation. NATO's stance against Russia concerning the conflict with Georgia portrayed the organization in a criticizing and authoritarian manner.

*NATO's image as authority figure*

While Appathurai voiced the organization's concern for and critique of Russia's conflict with Georgia, he also stated that NATO does not want a direct role in the situation. Appathurai observed that "the Secretary General has made it clear that NATO does not intend to play a direct role in mediating between the two parties. That's quite clear."<sup>166</sup> While NATO wanted to see Russia lift the punitive measures it took against Georgia, the organization's removed position from the conflict reflected one of authority and moral standard. NATO does not want to be immediately involved in international conflicts, but wants to set an authoritative and standard image that might influence the actions of non-member nations. The organization's authoritative tone may be seen in more specific directions stated by Appathurai:

NATO's clear sentiment is that both parties should take every step, A) to moderate the language that they use in regards to the current tensions, and B) to take active steps to de-escalate what is a very tense situation and that those steps should be taken as quickly as possible.<sup>167</sup>

The Alliance's formal directions imply that NATO is a major player in international relations and politics, and that Russia and Georgia should heed its command. NATO's authoritative image also shows that the organization is opposing Russia's decisions and actions; Russia is in some ways an opponent of NATO.

NATO's image of authority figure toward Russia continued to appear in the statements of its officials. Current NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer stated in an August 2008

press conference that “the use of force by the Russian side is not in conformity, or is [in] violation [of] the CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States] mandate and it should stop as soon as possible.”<sup>168</sup> The CIS mandate instructed Russian, Georgian, and other CIS member troops to work together as part of the Commonwealth’s peacekeeping initiative. De Hoop Scheffer made his point clear that Russia violated international directives and that the nation should adhere to the mandates of the Alliance. By rebuking Russia’s actions, de Hoop Scheffer and NATO changed the organization’s image to an authoritarian nature.

While NATO’s image and dialogue toward Russia became more critical and authoritarian, the Alliance acknowledged that this image might not produce the desired outcome from Russia. At Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer’s August 2008 press conference, he commented that “giving the remarks the allies have made and I have made about the use of excessive and disproportionate force, I cannot [imagine] that the Allies and Russia will quickly see eye-to-eye on this one.”<sup>169</sup> Any powerful country such as Russia would not enjoy censure and/or authoritative commands from organizations like NATO. Yet, NATO’s new image did let Russia and the world know that such actions are not condoned by the Alliance and will likely affect Russia’s international relationships.

#### *Demands from NATO*

De Hoop Scheffer continued at the 12 August 2008 press conference by saying that a Russian cease fire would be good news, “it would be good news because it would mean that there would be [a] result [from] me and other people urging the Russian side...for a cease fire.”<sup>170</sup> He referred to an alleged remark by current Russian President Dmitry Medvedev to the media earlier that day that Russian military action had halted. Rumors of a Russian cease fire showed that NATO resistance possibly influenced Russia’s decision-making; NATO’s change to a more

aggressive image may be a factor in the actions of non-NATO member countries. Yet, while de Hoop Scheffer remarked that a Russian military cease fire would be good news to the Alliance, he also said that “it’s an important step, but it’s not enough...”<sup>171</sup> De Hoop Scheffer stated that the status quo from 6 August must be restored, returning all forces to the positions that they had on that date. While NATO welcomed news of a cease fire, the most desired outcome was the removal of all Russian forces from Georgia, South Ossetia, and Abkhazia. The Alliance remained firm in its demands from Russia.

### NATO’s Public Diplomacy

#### *Explaining NATO to the Russian public*

NATO’s Public Diplomacy Division (PDD) is the main office through which the organization creates its image and communicates with other nations and publics. A summary on NATO’s PDD states that “the Public Diplomacy Division (PDD) plays a key role in explaining NATO’s policies and activities to the public and, as such, is NATO’s main public interface with audiences world-wide.”<sup>172</sup> The PDD also has a NATO Information Office (NIO) in Moscow that deals directly with Russian publics to more successfully convey the image set by the PDD. The current Assistant Secretary General for the PDD Jean-Francois Bureau asserted in a March 2008 interview,

I think that we have three main challenges. The first one is to take into account the new missions NATO has to fulfill. The organization has changed a lot during the last 16 years, since the end of the Cold War.<sup>173</sup>

Bureau acknowledged that NATO has changed since the fall of the Soviet Union and that the organization still has much to do. His admission to a changing and imperfect NATO demonstrates a strong link to image. He added that “...we strongly believe that the image is a huge way to communicate with the largest publics.”<sup>174</sup> As NATO’s PDD implements new and

different public diplomacy tactics, such as its admonishment of Russian military actions, the department creates a new image that communicates the Alliance's position toward the dissenting nation.

NATO's commitment to its Public Diplomacy Division and communicating with Russia is also seen in the workshops and seminars it has implemented in recent years. A public diplomacy workshop in July 2007 confirmed that

while new media was having a tremendous impact changing communication into a two-way dialogue with audiences, participants stressed that the content of public diplomacy was more important than the medium used for its delivery...public diplomacy should be an integral part of policy definition as well as policy implementation.<sup>175</sup>

The NATO workshop displayed the organization's commitment to improving its public diplomacy and communication skills with foreign publics, especially with integral partners such as Russia. By reaching out to Russian and other former Communist Bloc publics, NATO's image as partner and ally may be more readily accepted.

NATO Spokesman James Appathurai emphasized the importance of NATO's public diplomacy at a 2006 press briefing. He also linked the organization's public diplomacy and communication efforts to the success of maintaining security in the transatlantic region.

Appathurai stated that

NATO has, since the end of the Cold War...a much greater public diplomacy challenge than we ever had before because we are dealing with security issues that can seem abstract or geographically [distant]. And it is our job to do more, to explain better, why NATO is still and it is still keeping people safe.<sup>176</sup>

NATO's task is to better communicate its new identity to foreign publics such as Russia. By better conveying its image as a source of security and stability as well as a partner for Russia, such a relationship may be more favorable to the nation and its people.



### *Credibility*

Thus, NATO's branding strategy relates back to its relationships and its influence in international politics. As Jaap de Hoop Scheffer stated in reference to Russia's military actions in August 2008, "we should realize NATO has no military mandate in the region, so if you say NATO can't solve this question militarily, you're right, we can't. And that is not NATO's ambition and it's not NATO's mandate."<sup>177</sup> Due to the Alliance's lack of military might and hard power force, the organization must utilize its soft power skills – its branding strategy. Scheffer realized that NATO could never persuade Russia to leave Georgia through military force, but his statement infers that NATO's power and influence lie in its public diplomacy and branding strategy. The Minister of Defense of Denmark and NATO representative Mr. Soren Gade spoke to fellow NATO officials and members in October 2007 about the importance of public diplomacy in NATO-led operations. Gade affirmed that "for us there can be no compromise in terms of our credibility. We must be credible!...That goes for managing expectations of home audiences, the local populations and our international partners in the mission areas."<sup>178</sup> His declaration that credibility applies to the management of international partnerships can be linked to NATO's current relationship with Russia and how the organization is portraying itself. The credibility in NATO's authoritarian image lies in its actions toward the country as well as in the dialogue of its officials and presentations to the media. Yet, while presenting firm opposition to Russia's dissenting military actions toward Georgia, NATO also created another image as a responsible and professional organization through its public diplomacy seminars, workshops, and speeches. Gade's call for credibility holds the organization, including its member nations and staff, accountable for its dialogue and actions in the creation

and maintenance of its image. NATO's international relationships, internal workings, public actions, and core objectives, and branding strategy are all linked together through credibility.

### Positive NATO Image

#### *Stability of NATO*

In addition to NATO's branding Russia in a negative way, the Alliance portrays itself in a positive light. Current Assistant Secretary General for Public Diplomacy Jean Francois Bureau remarked at a January 2008 NATO seminar,

Our [NATO] political dialogue derives from the role of a transformed and still transforming NATO, which since the end of the Cold War is projecting stability through its operations and missions, its broad range of partnerships and through its transforming military capabilities, with the overall objective to maintain stability and peace.<sup>179</sup>

Bureau inferred that the organization projects stability in all of its actions, operating as the voice of reason in international relations. He described NATO's actions in a most favorable light, engaging in a *broad* range of partnerships and conducting *transforming* military capabilities. Bureau suggested that NATO's operations and missions have created thorough knowledge and capabilities in political dialogue, stating, "NATO is an Organization that has been engaged in multi-national security cooperation for more than half a century, with lots of experience and expertise to share with non-NATO countries to work together for stability and peace."<sup>180</sup> NATO can do no wrong and is always successful in maintaining stability and peace in all of its partnerships. By disregarding any negative and unsuccessful relationships in NATO history, including NATO's stance against the Soviet Union during the Cold War, Bureau creates a purely positive image for the Alliance.

NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer also emphasized the organization's efforts in the area of stability. At a 2006 conference in London, he stated that

we need better international cooperation between nations, and more effective engagement by the international institutions. NATO has learned this lesson, and is already playing its part. To continue defending our values in this globalized world, NATO has developed a new approach to security. I call this approach ‘projecting stability’ and it is most visibly demonstrated by NATO’s current operations.<sup>181</sup>

De Hoop Scheffer suggested that NATO’s experience of “learning its lesson” in international cooperation and engagement has improved its approach to security and stability. NATO’s active interest in and development of its image as a secure and stable Alliance positively portrays the organization; NATO seems to have learned from its past experiences in international cooperation and has developed new tactics to defend its core values and beliefs. De Hoop Scheffer listed the Alliance’s essential values as freedom of speech, freedom to travel, freedom to elect your own government, and freedom of religion. He stressed that “these values cannot be taken for granted – they still need to be worked for; they still need to be nourished and, when necessary, they still need to be protected. And this continues to be NATO’s role.”<sup>182</sup> By projecting NATO’s aim for security and stability as well as reaffirming the values it strives to defend, de Hoop Scheffer painted the organization and its aspirations in a most favorable light.

#### *NATO’s belief in equality*

While avoiding any negative image garnered during the Cold War and in other relationships, NATO further enhanced its image by linking equality to its stability characteristic. Jaap de Hoop Scheffer stated at the NATO-Russia Council Seminar on 25 June 2007, “...NATO also believes that every country, including Russia, stands to benefit from a Europe that is whole, free and at peace – with more democracy, more stability, more security, more rule of law and more democratic control of the armed forces.”<sup>183</sup> De Hoop Scheffer talked about a Europe that is free, peaceful, and governed by democracy. This new unified Europe garners equality in its actions, and NATO’s association through de Hoop Scheffer’s speech gives the organization the

characteristic as well. By describing a stable and democratic Europe that is part of the Alliance, NATO associates itself positively with prosperity and peace. The emphasis of democracy in de Hoop Scheffer's speech alludes to the contrasting Communism of the former Soviet Union. While Russia is now a democratic nation, its Communist past and current unstable tendencies do not provide a positive portrayal.

NATO's actions in the NATO-Russia Council also show their commitment to the equality of its members. At the June 2008 meeting of the NRC Ministers of Defense, the ministers "reaffirmed their commitment to the further development of practical cooperation and...welcomed Russia's planned contribution...to Operation Active Endeavor..."<sup>184</sup> The NATO-Russia Council's commitment to practical cooperation between the two parties demonstrates NATO's belief in equality for not only NATO member states, but also NATO's strategic partners. At the meeting, the Ministers of Defense saw Russia's interest and participation in Operation Active Endeavor as "enhanced operational cooperation and a signal of the NRC's continuing commitment to the fight against terrorism."<sup>185</sup> Such participation and constructive work and deliberation show the NATO-Russia Council to be a forum for equality, or at least a forum that strives for the equality of its members.

*NATO honors its commitments to Russia*

Yet, NATO wants to reassure Russia and all members of the transatlantic community that the organization believes in equality in all of its partnerships. While the 2007 NATO-Russia Council Seminar, which focuses on the role of the NRC, discussed NATO-Russia cooperation and the interoperability of their forces, de Hoop Scheffer's speech depicts the organization as a welcoming, cooperating, and equal partner in its relations with the former Soviet Union. De Hoop Scheffer stated that "no matter how many members NATO may have, the Alliance will

continue to fully honor our commitments to Russia, and to view Russia as a strategic partner. I think the word ‘engagement’ is, and should be, the key word for NATO and Russia.”<sup>186</sup> By acknowledging Russia as a strategic partner and placing emphasis on engaging the nation, NATO raised Russia’s standing from lesser rival to equal partner. Despite Russia’s wavering image and actions, which cause NATO member states trepidation about the rising power of the nation, the Alliance still offered a theoretical partnership that includes equality and is proactive in its relationship with Russia. While de Hoop Scheffer’s statements at the seminar offered a different image of NATO to Russia and those involved in the NATO-Russia Council, it may be important to note that the seminar was located in Saint Petersburg, Russia; so, an aggressive and critical demeanor might not be the right choice while visiting the nation.

NATO continued to honor its commitment to the NATO-Russia Council, despite not always agreeing on all decisions. At the April 2008 meeting of the NATO-Russia Council, De Hoop Scheffer recognized the multi-faceted relationship between Russia and the NATO allies, but he also stated that NATO is willing to work toward a better understanding with this strategic partner. De Hoop Scheffer asserted that “at our meeting this morning we will take stock of our commonalities, but also seek ways to intensify the process of finding political denominators on the issues on which we do not agree.”<sup>187</sup> NATO will not let disagreements between the parties hinder their relationship with Russia. De Hoop Scheffer acknowledged the progress that the NATO-Russia Council has made since its inception, calling the partnership an “essential, strategic bridge across Europe.”<sup>188</sup> The Alliance showed itself as committed to its participation in the NATO-Russia Council and any engagement with its strategic Russian partner.

## Other NATO Images

### *Cold War anti-Communist opponent*

The works of NATO's Public Diplomacy Division, more specifically its branding strategy, culminate not only in its authoritarian, critical image toward Russia, but also end in the creation of other NATO representations. Then-Assistant Secretary General for Public Diplomacy Jean Fournet observed in August 2007 that

I think that we speak, maybe, in a more neutral way of NATO and specifically to those countries that have still difficulty to view NATO as something else but a relic of the Cold War. And I think coming with scientific programs, for instance how to help them connect to the Internet, that's very important and positively viewed, how to build a facility to get rid of pesticide or to get rid of chemicals that have been left over after the demise of the Soviet Union.<sup>189</sup>

He discerned that NATO was still seen by some countries to be the Cold War anti-Communist opponent, though this view is changing with the humanitarian and scientific programs that NATO brings to these nations. The countries engaged by NATO and whose view of the organization still reflects the Cold War image may include former Soviet Bloc countries. The acceptance of a new NATO image by these countries through the organization's public diplomacy efforts shows that NATO's engagement and relationship with a former Soviet opponent can end positively; the Alliance can achieve a different image that will be accepted by the targeted nation and/or publics.

NATO Spokesman James Appathurai also acknowledged the Alliance's continued image as the Cold War anti-Communist opponent. He, too, recognized the importance of public diplomacy efforts in shirking this image. Appathurai asserted that "we...need to do more in terms of explaining what the new NATO is. If I talk to my mother, she still thinks of NATO in Cold War terms."<sup>190</sup> He stressed that changing this image is the duty of NATO nations, explaining why the Alliance is important and relevant to the security of all populations. The only

way to rid NATO of its Cold War image is for NATO members to proactively work together through new public diplomacy strategies as well as reach out to and engage with their strategic publics and integral partners, such as Russia.

*Humanitarian and scientific leader*

Another projected image of NATO is one of humanitarian and scientific leader. Through the organization's public diplomacy efforts, NATO reaches out to civil society – including journalists, parliamentarians, and the scientific community. Then Assistant Secretary General of the Public Diplomacy Division Jean Fournet observed in 2007 that

NATO is a political and military organization for collective security. So it's not meant for development. It's not meant for promoting science and so on and so forth. But science is a tool that every big organization must have. And even if it is limited in scope, and even if it is limited in budget, we bring together scientists, we develop collaborative activities.<sup>191</sup>

Although NATO was originally created for security purposes, Fournet discerned that reaching out to civil society produces opportunities for humanitarian and scientific development. He stated that networking between NATO, the scientific community, and foreign publics not only brings progress to the targeted region, but also improves the relationship with that region. Fournet observed that “touching target audiences [means] having a possibility to engage in dialogue, and dialogue with trust and confidence.”<sup>192</sup> Thus, NATO's networking with other entities, such as the scientific community, may help create a positive image for the organization while cementing a trustful and confident relationship with the target audience.

## VIII: DISCUSSION

### **NATO's Branding Strategy from 2002-2003**

I discovered six emerging themes from NATO publications and speech during this time period. The emerging themes derived from the 2002-2003 NATO speech and publications include the following: the NATO-Russia Council, the NATO-Russia Partnership, Transparency, Positive NATO Image, NATO vs. Russia, and NATO's Public Diplomacy. These themes mainly focused on a positive and proactive NATO-Russia relationship, yet also demeaned Russian concerns. Officials such as NATO Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Rizzo affirmed a better venue for cooperation and dialogue in the NATO-Russia Council. The organization stressed that the new NATO-Russia relationship would be based on mutual trust, transparency, and shared responsibilities. Yet, while the Alliance took pride in the new partnership and interoperability of forces through the NATO-Russia Council, the organization still harkened back to Russia's Communist past and demeaned the nation's concerns regarding NATO enlargement. Although there were some negative aspects in NATO's communication, the overall tone of the Alliance's branding strategy was positive.

The *NATO-Russia Council* theme focused on the new group as a venue for cooperation, a working and proactive relationship, and equality. Previous NATO-Russia relationships, such as the Permanent Joint Council, did not give Russia equal footing and did not foster open dialogue. NATO officials stressed that the newly-founded NATO-Russia Council would be based on mutual trust, transparency and shared responsibilities. By shirking any images of the unequal Permanent Joint Council, the Alliance could stress to Russia the differences in the NATO-Russia Council. Russia would no longer be a "subordinate nonmember," but would be a full and equal



member in the NRC. NATO projected a positive image of itself as well as of the NRC toward Russia in order to entice the nation into involvement.

The *NATO-Russia Partnership* theme focused on the new era of the Alliance's relationship with Russia. NATO stressed that the Cold War years were over, Russia had changed, and a new partnership could take place. The term "new era" suggests that this new NATO-Russian relationship would be long-term. As a long-term relationship, the Alliance also focused on the NATO-Russia partnership as an investment. Both NATO and Russia would benefit from working together. NATO officials branded the organization and Russia with images of strength and power, positive images for both parties. With Russia as a changed nation and NATO as a cooperative and trusting partner, this theme portrays the new partnership in a positive light.

The *Transparency* theme focused on NATO gaining trust from Russia and the interoperability of their forces. Cooperation between both parties can only be accomplished through transparency and openness. NATO officials stressed the importance of open, two-way communication in order for the NATO-Russia Council to flourish. Yet, the Alliance also respected the independence and individuality of nations such as Russia, observing that individuality with transparency would create a formidable partnership. NATO also stressed the importance of transparency in the interoperability of NATO-Russian forces. By discussing joint participation in international security programs as well as both parties' commitment to open and sustained dialogue, NATO projected a positive image of the NRC as well as of NATO.

While some themes indirectly portray the Alliance and the NATO-Russia Council in a positive light, through their ideals and behaviors regarding Russia, one theme specifically deals with the *Positive NATO Image*. NATO's positive image focuses on the experienced NATO, the

“victory” of NATO enlargement, and the Alliance’s position as an integral partner for Russia. As an established and experienced international organization, NATO portrays itself positively toward Russia and the rest of Europe. NATO officials observed that Russia’s partnership has helped the Alliance to overcome Europe’s division. Through its relationships, NATO has achieved its original intention of maintaining peace and security in Europe as well as overcoming the power of the Soviet Union and the Cold War. NATO’s experience has also helped the organization to aid and foster new democracies in Europe through enlargement. The Alliance has focused on these aspects to present itself to Russia as a hot commodity and integral partner. Not only has the Alliance helped other nations, but it has also helped Russia be accepted back into the European community. Focusing on NATO’s achievements is a positive aspect to its branding strategy.

Yet, NATO’s speech regarding Russia was not all positive. The *NATO vs. Russia* theme presents aspects such as Russia’s Communist past, NATO alienating Russia, NATO protecting democracy and international security, and demeaning Russia’s concerns about NATO enlargement. While these aspects demonstrate NATO’s negativity toward and about Russia, they mainly show NATO in a negative light. Frequently referring to Russia’s Communist past gives Russia a negative connotation in NATO and the European community. These references alienate Russia and make the nation feel yet again as an “other.” NATO’s on its own accomplishments and goals toward protecting democracy and international security may infer that Russia must prove itself in its partnership with the Alliance. Russia’s relationship with NATO is further jeopardized by the Alliance demeaning its concerns about NATO enlargement. All of these factors, while meant to make Russia look bad, only present NATO in a negative way. While not

part of NATO's official branding strategy, this language does contribute to the Alliance's overall image.

The theme of *NATO's Public Diplomacy* is also part of the organization's branding strategy. NATO's Public Diplomacy Division was created to portray NATO's commitment to positive communication as well as demonstrate the need for a new NATO image. The Alliance's commitment to positive communication not only included communication with governments, but also with foreign publics, such as the Russian people. NATO's emphasis on improving public diplomacy was to better present its transformation while informing the public about its broad agenda. By opening communication with its partners and foreign publics, the Alliance might show itself in a more positive and friendly light. NATO's branding strategy toward Russia in the early years of the NRC (2002-2003), portrayed a NATO that has learned from its past mistakes in the Permanent Joint Council and other skeptical pursuits; the Alliance portrayed itself toward Russia as a proactive, responsibility-sharing partner that was open and more trusting of the nation.

### **NATO's Branding Strategy from 2004-2005**

I discovered five emerging themes from NATO publications and speech during this time period. The emerging themes derived from the 2004-2005 NATO speech and publications include the following: NATO's Public Diplomacy, Positive NATO Image, Negative NATO Image, NATO vs. Russia, and the NATO-Russia Partnership. These themes continued to show a mainly positive image of the Alliance. As the NATO-Russia Council continued its open dialogue and included participation of both parties in peacekeeping activities, the strength of the partnership increased. The organization focused on its original goals and the shared values of NATO and Russia. Some negative aspects of NATO's image, including focus on Russia's

shortcomings and actions, persisted but not to the extent of previous years. NATO's branding strategy maintained an overall positive tone in its relationship with Russia in the NRC.

The theme of *NATO's Public Diplomacy* focused on transparency in its communication, NATO's long-term relationship with the Russian public, and its relationships with other publics. The Alliance's commitment to positive communication from the 2002-2003 period sustained the organization through these relationships. NATO continued to reach out to the public and explain the purpose and actions of the organization, even involving young people in one of its Summit meetings. By encouraging the public to participate in NATO events, the organization improved its transparency efforts. NATO also improved its long-term relationship with the Russian public. Through the NATO Information Office in Moscow, NATO was able to explain its operations and decisions directly with the Russian people. This open dialogue fostered a long-term relationship in the nation. The Alliance's involvement with other publics, such as the Georgian people, demonstrated NATO's commitment to all of its relationships. While all of these aspects of NATO's public diplomacy present the organization as a positive supporter and active communicator, they also demonstrate NATO's relevance and importance in international politics.

The theme of a *Positive NATO Image* emphasized NATO's abilities, NATO as a reward or incentive, and NATO as an integral partner for Russia. Officials from the organization featured NATO's adaptability, stamina, and readiness for new challenges. NATO's establishment as a core international institution gives it experience in such areas, a positive factor and enticement for Russian partnership. The Alliance also portrayed itself as a reward or incentive to other countries vying for NATO membership. NATO officials stressed its open door policy and goal at transatlantic security. These values also portray NATO as an integral partner

for Russia. In addition to its improved communication efforts, NATO supported Russia through its crises and hardships, such as the Beslan tragedies, and defended the NATO-Russian relationship to other questioning nations. NATO's behavior and actions regarding its abilities and relationships continued to emphasize a positive image in its branding strategy.

The theme of the *Negative NATO Image* included views on NATO enlargement. Russian trepidation over new views of the nation from former Soviet states gave NATO a slightly negative image. Yet, NATO or any other organization cannot project a negative image toward a specific audience, so the *Negative NATO Image* theme really focuses on NATO's negative *comments* about the nation. A NATO with a more finely tuned "Russian radar" might not be an attractive ally for the nation. Such anxieties could be exacerbated by the organization's negative Russian views, as depicted in the *NATO vs. Russia* theme. In this area, NATO focused on Russia's shortcomings, such as its less-than-exceptional participation in any NATO-led operations. The Alliance was also critical of Russian actions. The nation's military presence in former Soviet territories caused backlash from NATO. While the organization meant to lessen Russia's image, NATO's own image became more negative because of its critical language.

Yet, NATO's branding strategy continued to work toward improving NATO's image as seen in the *NATO-Russia Partnership* theme, which encompassed Russian participation, terrorism, and how the two parties worked together. NATO officials described Russian participation in the NATO-Russia Council and other endeavors as result-oriented practical cooperation and emphasized open political dialogue. Yet, Russia not only participated in cooperative agreements, but the nation also engaged NATO in political debate. Through such dialogue and debate, the NATO-Russia partnership could grow stronger. The incorporation of terrorism into NATO-Russian relations also strengthened the partnership. NATO spokesmen

confirmed Russia's participation in anti-terrorism programs and other operations geared toward transatlantic security. The NATO-Russia Council fostered trust and cooperation, and willingness to meet each other half way so that the two parties could work together in a proactive way. By working together in an open and proactive relationship, NATO displayed a positive image.

### **NATO's Branding Strategy from 2006-2008**

I discovered five emerging themes from NATO publications and speech during this time period. The emerging themes derived from the 2006-2008 NATO speech and publications include the following: NATO-Russia Partnership, NATO vs. Russia, NATO's Public Diplomacy, Positive NATO Image, and Other NATO Images. Throughout the course of the NATO-Russia relationship, the Alliance has stressed the importance of maintaining security on the European continent. The organization frequently mentioned on its website and in its publications the interoperability of NATO-Russian forces and shared participation in security projects and missions. From the interactions of the NRC, NATO projected a positive image as a stable factor in transatlantic security. This positive image is reflective of its current branding strategy.

Yet, over this time period, the NATO-Russia relationship has also regressed due to conflicting views on Russia's dealings with Georgia. Russia's admonishment from the NATO allies implicates the nation as dissenting from NATO security principles. The Alliance becomes an authority figure against Russia. Thus, NATO's branding strategy toward Russia has regressed to a more critical and skeptical nature. While NATO spokesman James Appathurai stated that the Alliance did not want a direct role in the conflict between Russia and Georgia, NATO's call for Russia to respect the international values and principles upon which the international security system is based branded the organization as a critical authority figure. Yet again, NATO wants to

foster an equal and proactive relationship with Russia through the NRC, but only when the nation acts in accordance with NATO and international security principles.

The theme of the *NATO-Russia Partnership* discusses the importance of maintaining security and NATO's improvement in communication efforts. NATO officials observed that the NATO-Russia relationship has two-way benefits, if both parties work together to foster and maintain security on the continent. NATO enlargement also plays a role in improvement of security; the increase of democratic nations on the continent may help NATO in its security efforts. Despite the Alliance's success in enlargement, the organization still needed to improve its communication efforts. NATO officials called for more transparency, open communication, and confidence-building. While NATO's partnerships remained secure, the Alliance admitted that improvements must be made to maintain transatlantic security. Admitting flaws and conducting improvements may give NATO a positive image in its branding strategy.

NATO's stance toward Russia became more critical and authoritarian, as evidenced by the *NATO vs. Russia* theme. The organization's critical nature also showed itself as an authority figure, as well as making demands from Russia. NATO's formal directions to Russia included telling Russia to respect international values and principles, calling for a Russian ceasefire, and demanding the removal of Russian forces from South Ossetia. These demands from NATO give the organization an authoritarian image, demonstrating its shift in branding strategy.

*NATO's Public Diplomacy* theme exhibits the Alliance's need to improve its communication skills, including explaining NATO to the Russian public and improving its credibility. NATO officials emphasized a changing and imperfect NATO, which must be portrayed and explained to the Russian people in order to maintain a positive relationship. Not only is open dialogue and transparency needed in improving communication skills, but

credibility is needed as well. The Alliance stressed the importance of linking words with actions to maintain credibility. By making these improvements and once again acknowledging flaws in the NATO-Russia relationship, the Alliance may improve its image.

While becoming more critical of Russia, NATO tried to improve its own image, as evidenced in the *Positive NATO Image* theme. This theme includes the stability of NATO, NATO's belief in equality, and NATO honoring its commitments to Russia. NATO officials focused on the Alliance's stability through operations, missions, and partnerships. NATO's operations and missions have created thorough knowledge and capabilities in political dialogue. The Alliance's knowledge and capabilities also encompass its belief in equality, encouraging more democracy, more stability, and more security. Despite NATO's critical stance toward Russia, the organization implements its beliefs by honoring its commitments to Russia as a strategic partner. While contradictory in some of its actions, NATO still attempts to maintain its positive image.

The last theme discovered in the NATO publications is *Other NATO Images*. The organization still retains the image of Cold War anti-Communist opponent in some areas. NATO officials see the need to explain what the new NATO is to foreign publics as well as engage and form relationships with former Soviet nations to promote the organization. Other images of the Alliance include humanitarian and scientific leader. NATO's public diplomacy efforts extend to bring together civil society and the scientific community to improve NATO's relationships in various regions. While NATO's Cold War image can be negative, its humanitarian and scientific image is positive and can bring together several groups of people together in a positive way.

In conclusion, NATO portrayed itself in the NRC as a partner and ally of Russia in the discussion, deliberation, and action toward transatlantic security issues. Hunter, Rogov, and



Oliker state that it is in their mutual interest that “NATO and Russia should forge a new relationship based on genuine partnership that can help to provide lasting security for all nations in Eurasia and that can hasten Russia’s integration into the family of democratic, market-oriented nations.”<sup>193</sup> In order to maintain stable and equal relations, NATO and Russia must incorporate transparency and new mechanisms for resolving differences in their daily actions. The two parties must also recognize their dependence on each other to accomplish vital security tasks and to meet Euro-Atlantic needs. Russia’s trust in NATO and the dependability of their alliance helps increase and maintain an overall sense of European and transatlantic security.

The NATO-Russia Council must incorporate mutual trust, understanding, and partnership in order to continue its relationship. As Wang stated, “managing national reputation is not just about projecting a certain national image but rather negotiating understanding with foreign publics.”<sup>194</sup> In order to foster its relationship with Russia and maintain security in the transatlantic region, NATO must negotiate understanding with the Russian government and people. Russia may not become a full member of the Alliance, but negotiations in the NATO-Russia Council should engage the nation and allow them more say and responsibility in the relationship. By incorporating these strategic communication practices, NATO may improve its image and reputation toward its Russian and Eastern European target audiences.

### Limitations

Limitations of this study include what access to NATO documents I was granted. I was not able to obtain classified documents such as NATO’s Public Diplomacy Strategy, Stefanie Babst’s internally-published article entitled, “Reinventing NATO’s Public Diplomacy,” or interviews with any NATO officials. This thesis analyzes specific NATO publications as they focused on the NATO-Russian relationship, using the time periods of 2002-2003, 2004-2005,

and 2006-2008. These time periods exhibit the gradual change in image and branding strategy of NATO to Russia. One limitation is that this thesis analyzes only the time period relating to the NATO-Russia Council. It does not consider the NATO-Russian relationship during the decade of Boris Yeltsin's presidency. Another limitation is the fact that this is basically a study of one-way communication from NATO to Russia and does not measure the perceptions of NATO and the NRC from the Russian side; there was no content analysis of Russian media or Russian official documents. Limited evidence indicated the specific disclosure of the NATO-Russia relationship to a select number of NATO officials and its discussion at NATO press conferences, in speeches, interviews, and written in articles.

Future studies could also include more researchers and the introduction of different methods of coding and even new themes found in the text. Further study of this subject could include conducting interviews with NATO officials and/or staff regarding NATO's image and the NATO-Russia Council. Shared narratives, such as conducted interviews, can illuminate both the past and present, while giving a more personalized view of the NATO-Russia relationship and the Alliance's branding strategy. Relating this study to NATO's change in policy toward Russia could also be interesting future research. Researchers could also look into obtaining access to the "classified" documents that I could not obtain. Such access would require study of EU freedom of information legislation as well as the process for requesting such documents from NATO. The NATO Archives, which deal with the public disclosure of NATO information, may be reached at <http://www.nato.int/archives> as well as Tel. (32-2) 707.4220.<sup>195</sup> More in-depth study of NATO's process for requesting and retrieving classified information may be found in the document entitled, "Safeguarding Classified NATO Information."<sup>196</sup> The timeline for

requesting and obtaining classified information is unknown, but is most likely at the discretion of the NATO archivist.

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