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NATO: The View from the East

STEPHEN WHITE*, JULIA KOROSTELEVA* & ROY ALLISON**

*Department of Politics, University of Glasgow, UK & **Department of International Relations, London School of Economics, UK

ABSTRACT Relations between Russia, Ukraine and Belarus and NATO have placed more emphasis on cooperation than confrontation since the Cold War, and Ukraine has begun to move towards membership. At the popular level, on the evidence of national surveys in 2004 and 2005, NATO continues to be perceived as a significant threat, but in Russia and Ukraine it comes behind the United States (in Belarus the numbers are similar). There are few socioeconomic predictors of support for NATO membership that are significant across all three countries, but there are wide differences by region, and by attitudinal variables such as support for a market economy and for EU membership. The relationship between popular attitudes and foreign policy is normally a distant one; but in Ukraine NATO membership will require public support in a referendum, and in all three cases public attitudes on foreign policy issues can influence foreign policy in other ways, including the composition of parliamentary committees. In newly independent states whose international allegiances are still evolving, the associations between public opinion and foreign and security policy may often be closer than in the established democracies.

The end of the Cold War created a security vacuum in Central and Eastern Europe that has not yet been filled. Until 1991, two rival military alliances had dominated the continent: NATO, centred around the United States, and the Warsaw Treaty Organisation, which was dominated by the USSR. Even before the USSR itself had collapsed, the Warsaw Treaty Organisation had been consigned to history: the alliance had been renewed for 20 years in 1985, but was formally dissolved in July 1991, when the six remaining members signed a protocol to that effect after communist rule had collapsed across East-Central Europe. NATO, for its part, sought to reinvent itself, starting with a 'Partnership for Peace' that brought a number of the former communist countries into a more direct relationship and individual agreements with Russia and Ukraine. In 1999, and again in 2004, the Alliance expanded its membership to include former communist-ruled countries in Central Europe and three former republics of the USSR itself. However, although there were periodic references to the possibility of membership it was clear that Russia, and perhaps the other former Soviet republics, would remain outside the Alliance for the foreseeable future, and that relations between them would be conducted through a network of consultative forums of which the NATO Russia Council became the most important after its establishment in May 2002.

The nature of the post-Cold War security relationship was a function of geopolitical weight, wider international circumstances, leadership initiatives and domestic political transformation. It was, however, also a function of each side's perception of the other*of the images they constructed of each other and the lenses through which they viewed each other. There was no reason to doubt that each of the superpowers had been capable of destroying its opponent in thermonuclear war and of engaging in devastating, high-intensity conventional warfare. However, the possession of a destructive capability was not the same thing as the intention to use it; and to this extent the 'threat' was a matter of subjective judgement, and not necessarily of objective reality. In the early years of the new century, after years of degeneration of its military forces, there was even less reason to believe that a post-communist Russia represented a serious military danger to its western neighbours. However, from the Russian perspective, the Western threat was never a simply military one: it was also one of economy and culture. Western economic and cultural development had been seen for many centuries as a potential threat to Russian interests, and even to the existence of Russia as an independent state. Much of the opposition to the pro-Western course of Russian foreign policy after the end of communist rule came from an organised Left that saw a greater community of interest in the former Soviet space; but it also came from nationalists of various denominations, who were concerned about the danger that vital Russian interests might be sacrificed for the sake of an illusory accommodation.

The other post-Soviet Slavic republics, Ukraine and Belarus, shared some if not all of these concerns. Upgrading and institutionalising relations with NATO might offer them some kind of deterrence against unwanted forms of Russian military coercion. Yet, few in Kyiv or Minsk believed Russia was about to attack, or could seriously be regarded as a threat; on the contrary, all three shared common borders, a common language, family ties and historical experiences. NATO, by contrast, was a product of the Cold War, and even afterwards it was widely perceived as promoting a kind of 'colonial' relationship to the east of the continent, with newly post-communist nations obliged to reequip their armies from the catalogues of Western defence firms, and then to supply troops for NATO actions outside the territory of its member states, but without much hope of influencing its central decisions. The NATO air campaign in Serbia in 1999, and then the establishment of a protectorate in Kosovo, helped to reinforce sceptical and even openly hostile perceptions of NATO in the three Slavic republics at the same time as the Alliance was beginning its eastward expansion.

Yet by the time of the second round of enlargement in 2004, the formal Russia - NATO and Ukraine - NATO relationship had been transformed and the diplomatic language was one of enhanced partnership, or even would-be accession in the case of Ukraine. We begin with an evaluation of the nature of these official relationships to provide the context for our subsequent analysis of public perceptions. We recognise that state policy and public opinion operate in different realms, and that the former is not simply a reflection of the latter. At the same time, it is reasonable to postulate that for at least the medium term the sustainability of a particular state's policy towards NATO will be influenced by broad public attitudes as well as elite opinion. NATO, for its part, is keen to ensure that its relations with the post-Soviet states are grounded over time in public understanding and even approval; if the new ties with NATO are no more than elite or leadership projects, their legitimacy as well as their longevity will remain in doubt. Our discussion of these issues draws primarily on representative

surveys in each of the three Slavic republics conducted between 2000 and 2005, using a common questionnaire and a common agency.

NATO and the East: Three Different Policy Paths?

NATO and Russia

Russia's relationship with NATO has inevitably found it difficult to shed its Cold War antecedents and has been suffused with concerns about status, equality and the geopolitics of NATO enlargement. This has not prevented the development of quite a broad framework of institutionalised relations between the two sides, although the tantalising idea of eventual Russian membership in NATO seems to have been pushed beyond any foreseeable policy horizon.

In the late 1990s Russia had become a member of Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (when this replaced the North Atlantic Cooperation Council in 1997), it had a limited and unenthusiastic association with NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) initiative, and it was assessing the prospects for the NATO – Russia Permanent Joint Council (PJC) that had been set up by the Founding Act on Mutual Relations between Russia and NATO, signed in May 1997. NATO air strikes against Serbia in response to the Kosovo crisis led to the evaporation of dialogue under the PJC, which had failed in its purpose as the principal venue of NATO - Russia consultations in times of crisis, and full cooperation with NATO only resumed after September 2001, when President Putin expressed solidarity with the US and NATO in responding to the terrorist attacks against America.

In May 2002 the NATO - Russia Council (NRC) was formed in an attempt to move beyond the frustrations of the PJC. The format of this new body requires joint decision-making in a '20' format, an arrangement that exists with no other non-member country, based on the work of a preparatory committee that seeks to develop a prior consensus. The NRC, which is convened twice a year at the level of foreign and defence ministers, had the ulterior purpose of shifting Russian attention from the controversy over NATO enlargement to the exploration of a kind of partnership with NATO. The NRC has held out the hope of genuine collaboration based on deep and meaningful consultations on an expanding agenda of issues, including some regional political issues. Such collaboration in principle could evolve into an 'informal alliance with the alliance' or Russian 'associate membership' in NATO. This implies that Russia would gradually become a real player in significant areas of NATO decision-making and activities, although outside the collective defence commitment of NATO membership.¹

This scenario, however, now looks unlikely and any serious progress under the NRC continues to be dependent on the wider political and strategic relationship between NATO states and Russia and the sceptical attitude of the new NATO member states to any increased Russian influence on NATO decisions. The wider Russia - NATO relationship is anyway hampered by Russia's sullen - though under President Putin not vociferous or confrontational - opposition to NATO enlargement, and the ingrained suspicions about NATO's strategic intentions that prevail among most senior Russian officers.

The Russian goal through the NRC is 'a special form of partnership and cooperation whereby Russia, while participating in NATO political activities, collective decision-making and joint operations with the Alliance . . . would preserve its full sovereignty

and strategic independence'.² A key issue for Russia is that the NRC does not discuss the domestic affairs or political values of its partners. Moscow seeks pragmatic, instrumental cooperation with NATO on a relatively equal footing, which the NRC seems able to offer, and has no interest in a form of integration with NATO structures that could constrain its internal policies or ability to develop its strategic goals.

In this respect it is notable that Russia has rejected the option of developing an Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) with NATO. This is a mechanism, first introduced in 2002, aimed at offering NATO's partner states tailored support related to the process of their democratic transformation in fields including political and security policy issues, defence and military issues, and civil emergency planning. Russia rejects outright a relationship with NATO that has this kind of transformation agency built into it.

This restricts the scope of the NRC, but still leaves it with a role in addressing a variety of practical topics, which are currently discussed in some 20 NRC working groups, committees and expert teams.³ A major part of this practical work has been in the field of combating terrorism.⁴ The options for the interoperability of related NATO - Russia military activities are assisted by Russia's signature in April 2005 of the NATO Partnership for Peace Status of Forces Agreement, which regulates the legal status of the armed forces of both sides on each other's territory. Russia has also agreed to participate in joint naval patrols set up by NATO's Operation Active Endeavour – maritime cooperation to deter and protect against terrorism in the Mediterranean Sea. The modalities of cooperation over crisis management and peacekeeping are under discussion, though Russia is insistent that it will not join 'NATO-led' operations and the geographical location of any possible future NRC peacekeeping deployment is most uncertain. During 2004 - 06 a significant number of Russia - NATO exercises have been held with the aim of improving military-to-military cooperation.

There still remains a provisional quality to much of the dialogue, activity and cooperation under the NRC. Many of the NRC initiatives that are publicised serve the function of the 'public diplomacy of partnership' and are as much about trying to change the psychological climate between Russia and NATO as about concrete achievements, and this in turn reflects wider political dynamics. One possibly important role for the NRC is the discussion of regional security problems. Issues discussed include the situation in Afghanistan, Iraq, in the Balkans in the Far East and conflict zones in the South Caucasus. The fact that the NRC agreed on a joint statement on the Ukraine crisis in December 2004 suggests that it has some potential in responding to major 'East - West' controversies in Europe. Indeed, this role may become more important if there are new foreign and security policy differences between Russia and NATO states in the lead-up to Russia's 2008 presidential election.

The Russian emphasis on its sovereignty and strategic independence - a theme which is reinforced by a growing national self-confidence during Putin's second presidential term, buoyed up by oil and gas revenues - makes the notion of Russia's eventual accession to NATO and submission to the group rules of that body appear most unlikely. The internal reforms Russia would need to undertake to come close to meeting NATO's broad admissions criteria also seem to preclude this outcome. Soon after the NRC dialogue commenced Russian Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov bluntly noted that 'Russia is not keen to join NATO, very much as the alliance is not eager to see Russia among its members'.⁵

In October 2005 President Putin replied more equivocally to a query whether it was possible Russia would ever become a member of NATO. He observed that at the moment NATO was 'undergoing certain internal changes' and that they needed to 'understand what we would be joining, if this issue arises, and what tasks we would tackle in this organisation'.⁶ However, the only kind of NATO that the Russian leadership appears ready to even consider joining would be one that is radically transformed in its systems of decision-making, planning and control so that its emphasis shifts from collective defence to collective security and Russia could become a powerful insider. However, Moscow cannot and apparently does not count on this happening in the near to medium term.

NATO and Ukraine

Ukraine is the post-Soviet Slavic state with the best prospect of accession to NATO and the greatest official desire to achieve this objective. However, it is notable that in Kyiv this has been very much an elite-driven project and that NATO itself will remain reluctant to incorporate Ukraine unless support for NATO membership is more widely diffused in Ukrainian society. Even then there would be formidable challenges ahead for Ukraine to implement the reforms necessary to manage its entry into NATO.⁷

Ukraine acquired a special status with NATO when the two parties signed a 'Charter on a Distinctive Partnership' at NATO's Madrid Summit in July 1997. This remains the most extensive document Ukraine has signed with any Western institution, although its 'distinctiveness' was qualified by the fact that it was concluded shortly after the NATO - Russia Founding Act was signed in May 1997.⁸ Over the following years Ukraine developed quite an advanced and institutionalised relationship with NATO, which was interpreted in Brussels as reflecting a general intent to pursue Euro-Atlantic integration, even if it was not at all clear that the Ukrainian leadership was willing to accept the reforms this path entailed. Indeed, when Leonid Kuchma was president, the NATO - Ukraine relationship was frequently instrumentalised for political and geopolitical purposes - both to ameliorate Western responses to autocratic tendencies in Ukraine and to offset pressures from Russia. Moreover, those Ukrainian political parties and party leaders that supported cooperation with NATO tended to draw a distinction between cooperation and integration; they favoured the former since this left options available for economic links with Russia and the Common Wealth of Independent States (CIS). Integration was regarded as a path better pursued with the European Union, via the World Trade Organisation.⁹ This left some uncertainty, at least until Viktor Yushchenko had been confirmed as president at the start of 2005, about the political depth of the relationship.

The July 1997 Charter did not offer any security guarantees, but it established the right for Ukraine to consult NATO officially through the 'Crisis Consultative Mechanism' of the charter, if it felt there was a direct or indirect threat to its security. It also foresaw the development of NATO - Ukraine links in various central areas, including civil - military relations, democratic control of the armed forces, armaments cooperation and defence planning. A new forum, the NATO - Ukraine Commission (NUC), was formed, to enable the North Atlantic Council (NAC) and Ukrainian representatives to meet periodically to assess the implementation of the Charter and to suggest ways to improve or develop cooperation. A NATO Information and

Documentation Centre was set up in Kyiv, and NATO also established a Military Liaison Mission.

The Kosovo conflict resulted in the Ukrainian leadership temporarily downplaying these ties, mostly for domestic political reasons. By March 2000, however, the North Atlantic Council held a session in Kyiv in its simultaneous capacity as the NUC - for the first time in a non-member state. Exchanges also began to take place between Ukraine's National Defence Academy and the NATO Defence College and the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers in Europe (SHAPE) school in Germany. A Polish - Ukrainian Peacekeeping Battalion was formed and deployed to Kosovo - a unique NATO member - Ukrainian combined unit. As further proof that Ukrainian officials had shrugged off the effect of the Kosovo campaign, in June 2000 Ukraine hosted the largest exercises ever conducted by NATO forces in a post-Soviet state - Cooperative Partner 2000.

Ukraine has participated actively in Partnership of Peace exercises as well as other bilateral exercises with NATO member states intended to enhance NATO interoperability objectives. The multinational Peace Shield exercises have been carried out at the NATO-designated Yavoriv PfP training ground in west Ukraine since 1995 - although a decade later the Peace Shield-2005 exercise was held in Crimea in July 2005, to the protests of Russian parliamentarians. The Russian Foreign Ministry has also complained since Spring 2004 about a memorandum ratified by the Supreme Rada of Ukraine that permits NATO to move its troops to Ukrainian territory if 'the alliance's common strategy demands this'.¹⁰ Previously Ukraine was the first NATO Partner country to express its support for NATO's invocation of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty in response to the attacks of 11 September 2001. It also offered overflight rights to allied aircraft participating in the air campaign in Afghanistan.

It is uncertain, however, whether President Kuchma viewed Ukraine's active participation in NATO defence activities through and beyond PfP and political support for NATO (and the US-led coalition in Iraq) in the 'War on Terror' as paving the way to eventual accession to NATO (as for previous NATO partners in Central and Eastern Europe) or just as serving the instrumental goals mentioned above and perhaps offering a kind of partial security guarantee. Ukraine took a further step in May 2002 in formally indicating its readiness to move towards full membership. However, this might have been part of an attempt by the Kuchma administration to counteract its growing political isolation in the West.

The option of accession to NATO was implicit in the adoption of a NATO - Ukraine Action Plan at the NATO Summit in Prague in November 2002. An Annual 2003 Target Plan was also proclaimed as part of a larger package; most of the specific actions envisaged in this plan were concerned with military issues.¹¹ However, the Target Plan lacked real substance and there were serious questions about the intentions of the Ukrainian leadership towards it. Criticising the plan, a Ukrainian specialist noted 'we can pretend to be fulfilling our plans, and the NATO partners will listen to our empty reports with a smile'.¹² In the period to 2004 even when various common reform goals were discussed more seriously between Brussels and Kyiv they suggested an agenda of reinforcing 'soft security' ties - civil emergency planning, military - scientific cooperation, base closures and civilian control of the military - rather than a programme focused on the prospects for the real integration of Ukraine in NATO.¹³

At times Kuchma claimed he understood that reform of Ukrainian economic and administrative structures, as well as the armed forces, would be an essential aspect of

any deeper process of partnership with NATO. However, little was achieved outside the military field to demonstrate Kuchma's commitment to such a process. Section 1 of the NATO-Ukraine Action Plan is devoted to internal political, economic and informational issues. However, during Kuchma's second term as president (1999 - 2004) there was a regression rather than improvement in these fields.¹⁴

Circumstances of this kind meant that Ukraine under Kuchma was unable to achieve agreement with NATO on a Membership Action Plan (MAP). The MAP concept was created at the 1999 Washington Summit of NATO to allow declared aspirants to NATO membership to improve their candidacies through practical reforms, especially in political and economic institutions, defence capabilities and institutions, the security sector and legal issues. This demands the identification of milestones and an intrusive set of commitments under NATO scrutiny. Kuchma's preference seemed to be to rely on extensive participation in PfP, on NATO dialogue, and on bilateral engagement programmes with NATO states to try to narrow the distinction between partnership and actual NATO membership, while avoiding steps that might expose him to further scrutiny of Ukrainian domestic political arrangements.

By contrast, under President Yushchenko the vision of NATO membership has become a primary Ukrainian foreign policy objective. Yushchenko views this as a matter of identity; he has described NATO as the 'best system' for protecting the 'shared values' that link Ukraine to Europe.¹⁵ Many of the reforms envisaged by Yushchenko happen, probably by no coincidence, to be of the kind that would be specified in a MAP.¹⁶ The annual NATO-Ukraine Action Plan has been addressed more vigorously. Yushchenko is evidently aware that from the NATO perspective these plans have been a test of how far the previous episodic and unsystematic NATO-Ukraine dialogue will become more sustained and how far Ukraine will develop the necessary instruments for strengthening the media, oversight of the defence sector and so on. NATO officials have indicated informally that if Ukraine were to fight corruption, improve the rule of law, raise political responsibility and make progress with the Action Plan, it would be difficult to oppose renaming it a MAP - which would clearly place Ukraine on the path to NATO accession. Meanwhile, in April 2005 NATO and Ukraine launched an Intensified Dialogue process, which is the precursor to the creation of an individually tailored MAP.¹⁷

In March 2006 a presidential decree established an interdepartmental commission on preparation for Ukraine's entry to NATO.¹⁸ Ukraine is clearly hoping for an accelerated timetable through a MAP to NATO accession, which might be signalled at the NATO summit in Riga in November 2006. The Ukrainian Defence Minister claims optimistically that Ukraine 'will be ready to join NATO at the beginning of 2008 in terms of preparedness of the Ukrainian armed forces and the security sector'.¹⁹ The Ukrainian foreign minister and media have optimistically suggested a membership date of 2008 or 2009. However, such a date would be more realistic during Yushchenko's second presidential term (2009-14), if he is re-elected.²⁰

The issue of the presence of the Russian Black Sea Fleet on Ukrainian territory at Sevastopol in Crimea (under an agreement that remains in force to 2017) would not necessarily be a obstacle to this objective as NATO considers that the presence of third party forces in a member state is not a problem in itself. However, the Ukrainian government will need to address the likelihood of anti-NATO protests in Crimea.²¹ At the same time it cannot be assured that all NATO states would favour Ukrainian accession to the Alliance, given the new security concerns to which this would give rise. Ukraine's claim will also not look convincing if the Ukrainians' image of NATO remains as negative as it is at present (see below). This is one of the main reasons why

NATO has been reluctant to endorse the idea of a rapid timetable for Ukrainian accession. Many NATO officials also have a sober awareness of the size of the reforms Ukraine still needs to undertake to present its candidacy for NATO in a more convincing light, and of the effect any reforms of this kind would be likely to have on Ukrainian public opinion.

NATO and Belarus

Belarus has had a prickly and limited relationship with NATO. The Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko is well remembered for his strident criticism of NATO in the 1990s. The cooperation of Belarus with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly was frozen after the constitutional referendum held in Belarus in November 1996, which was viewed by Brussels as illegitimate. After a period of impasse in relations between the two sides, in May 2000 Lukashenko expressed his approval for a draft Individual Partnership Programme (IPP) with NATO for 2000-2001, which was in turn approved by NATO and began operating in 2002. Belarus expressed its willingness to cooperate in a variety of fields within the IPP, with the emphasis on non-military measures.²² In 2004 a new programme for individual partnership with NATO was signed. This provides the foundation at least for working relations between Brussels and Minsk and Lukashenko has adopted a relatively conciliatory tone towards NATO in the current decade. However, political tensions, which are reflected in the Belarusian leadership's fears of links between the Belarusian opposition and Western organisations, have kept the relationship at a low ebb.

NATO has made clear that it has no wish to extend its special relationship with Russia and Ukraine to Belarus, at least under its current leadership. Russia's positive view of the dialogue within the NRC has meanwhile served to mute Belarusian broadsides against NATO, although Minsk is not confident it can rely on Russia acting on its behalf in the NRC and has been careful not to close off other channels for cooperation. This concern has been reinforced by growing ties between NATO and a number of other CIS states and the fact that proposals for direct consultations between NATO and the Collective Security Treaty Organisation, which Belarus as a CSTO member state has supported, have made no progress.

The priority for the Lukashenko leadership has been to find a way to establish relations with NATO on practical security issues that would divert Western demands for changes in Belarusian domestic political arrangements. A recent tactic has been to argue that Belarus's geographical position provides it with a crucial role in the protection of critical infrastructure, such as pipelines, power stations and pan-European transport corridors, and that NATO and the Western states need cooperation with Belarus to secure their borders against 'terrorists, illegal migrants, drugs and illegal shipments of arms, including nuclear ones'.²³ This argument, however self-serving, seems to have some effect on improving ties in a security climate in which NATO has focused its own attention on new challenges and threats.

A Belarusian detachment was assigned to take part in NATO's Co-operative Best Effort-2005 exercise in June 2005 at the Yavoriv training centre of the Ukrainian armed forces. Belarus also agreed to take part in the PfP planning and review process to achieve operational compatibility between allocated Belarusian troops and unified NATO troops. This is intended to prepare Belarusian troops to participate in multinational search and rescue operations and also in humanitarian and peacekeeping operations.²⁴ However, Lukashenko is uncertain whether Belarus should take the

further step of acceding to a Status of Forces Agreement with NATO and the other states involved in the PfP programme. On the one hand, this would be a precondition for the participation of Belarusian troops in any peacekeeping operations under the auspices of NATO on the territory of other countries and for the organisation of exercises at some future point in Belarus itself. On the other hand, the Belarusian leadership fears any steps that might open Belarus to more influence on the part of Western states that are unreconciled to Lukashenko's authoritarian rule.

Belarus would ideally wish a technical, practical and thoroughly apolitical relationship with NATO. To this effect in December 2005 a Belarusian Defence Ministry delegation visited NATO to consult on arrangements for an IPP between Belarus and NATO for 2006-07. This need for some kind of working relationship has become imperative as Ukraine's prospects for accession to NATO improve-which would bring NATO borders to the south of Belarus as well as to the west (Poland) and north-west (Lithuania and Latvia). A joint statement of the Belarusian and Ukrainian defence ministers in November 2005 declared that if Ukraine joined NATO this would not affect the level of cooperation between the Belarusian and Ukrainian defence ministries and between the two countries in the military field.²⁵ Lukashenko does not want to be forced into a relationship of exclusive geopolitical reliance on Russia, despite the strong military relationship between the two states. He has complained that Russia 'is proceeding towards cooperation with NATO, but we are finding it out from the mass media'.²⁶

This sense of being outflanked in relations with NATO not only by Ukraine but to some extent by Russia, while Belarusian relations with the EU and Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) remain testy, help to explain the objective proclaimed by the Belarusian military leadership soon after the 2004 NATO enlargement of making the border with NATO 'a border of trust, good-neighbourly relations and a border for the mutual resolution of security tasks in Europe'.²⁷ However, even if a limited rapprochement between NATO and Belarus is possible, there remains a deep political gulf between the two sides. To the extent that NATO represents a community of values it is intolerant of authoritarianism on the European continent (a position reinforced by the US administration's current focus on democracy promotion), and it could scarcely envisage a full-fledged partnership with the Lukashenko leadership under such circumstances.

NATO Membership and East European Publics

NATO membership, and foreign affairs in general, have not often been salient to mass electorates in the aftermath of Cold War confrontation. However, there have been occasions when the question of membership has been entirely in the hands of ordinary people. Spain, for instance, became a member of NATO in 1982, but the Socialist government that came to power later in the year had originally been opposed, and it was agreed that a referendum would be held at which the Spanish people would make the final decision. It took place in March 1986, and in the event a limited form of membership was confirmed, by a 53-40 per cent vote on a 59 per cent turnout. In Hungary, similarly, a referendum took place in November 1997 on whether the population wished to 'enhance their security by joining NATO' (the wording of the question itself proved controversial). In the event, only 49 per cent of the electorate took part, but the proposition was approved by an overwhelming 85 per cent, and the

electoral commission ruled that the result was valid because more than 25 per cent of the entire electorate had given their approval.

In Ukraine, too, public opinion is 'divided, passive, and not terribly concerned with foreign affairs'.²⁸ The Yushchenko leadership has at the same time made it clear that any decision about NATO membership will have to secure the support of the Ukrainian people in a national referendum, even though at present there is little prospect of its endorsement. The opposition parties, which are strongest in Russian-speaking areas, favour the earliest possible date for a referendum so that they can take advantage of this distribution of opinion; Yushchenko himself has temporised, indicating that a referendum should be held 'in due course', and nationalist opinion has suggested as late a date as possible so that they can have an extended opportunity to argue in its favour.²⁹ Opposition deputies have meanwhile pointed out that the Ukrainian declaration of sovereignty of 1990 – normally considered a part of the constitution – contains an explicit commitment to neutrality, while the constitution itself prohibits the stationing of foreign troops on national territory.³⁰ Russian spokesmen have for their part made clear that Ukrainian membership of NATO would represent a 'colossal geopolitical shift', and the Duma has warned in an all but unanimous resolution that any development of this kind would have 'very negative consequences'.³¹

Public attitudes to NATO membership are important, as Caplanova et al. have argued, not just because of referendum requirements, 'but also because reluctant members can impact negatively on the development of the organization', and because an understanding of attitudes and aspirations can 'help and inform any evaluation of the impact of membership'.³² And there are other, larger reasons for taking the domestic context into account, connected with the various ways in which the international system can be conceptualised. As Kostadinova has argued, a relative neglect of domestic political factors and their role in alliance formation has stemmed from the 'domination of the neorealist approach, with its state-level assumptions'. Studies of Eastern Europe in particular have generally focused too heavily on national elites and failed to consider the 'public support dimension', which has led to a 'large gap in the current understanding of domestic sources of advocacy for government defense and security policies, of which the issue of East European NATO membership is a particular example'.³³ The 'Almond-Lippman consensus' certainly assumed that ordinary citizens – at any rate, Americans – had an 'extremely limited' grasp of international affairs, but even here it was accepted that they could become dominant when there was an 'immediate threat to the normal conduct of affairs'.³⁴

If there has been increasing agreement on the need to integrate domestic factors into the study of foreign policy formation, there has been less consensus about the key determinants – not perhaps surprising in exercises that have been carried out at different times in different countries with questionnaires that have often been designed for other purposes. Kostadinova is one of several who have used Eurobarometer data of the mid-1990s in a study of attitudes towards NATO in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. Males, it emerged, were significantly more likely to favour membership, all other things being equal, but age, education and residential location were not important.³⁵ Caplanova *et al.*, using the same data in relation to the same countries, also found that males were more likely than females to favour membership, but in this case residence did make a difference: those who lived in the capital cities were more likely to be opposed to membership than those who lived elsewhere.³⁶ In a 2002 study conducted for the US government in Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania and

Slovakia, males were once again found to be more likely to support membership than females, but higher levels of education and younger age were also associated with higher levels of support for membership; the strongest opposition was among the ethnic Russian minorities in the three Baltic republics.³⁷

Studies of attitudes towards NATO in Russia, Belarus and Ukraine are less numerous, but have also yielded contradictory results. Zimmerman, in the most extensive study of its kind,³⁸ used surveys conducted in the second half of the 1990s to examine perceptions of NATO, and of its 1999 enlargement to include three former members of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation (the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland). Clearest, perhaps, were the contrasts between mass and elite perceptions. NATO expansion, at least in 1995, was 'both far more salient and a source of greater concern for Russian elites than it was for mass publics'; but the public mood changed considerably in the aftermath of the bombing campaign in Kosovo in 1999, when 'the salience of, and concern about, NATO expansion was more evident among mass publics than it had been previously'. Perceptions of NATO and of the significance of its 1999 enlargement, it emerged, were closely associated with a range of other opinions: about the kind of economic system that respondents preferred, and about their views on internationalism, whether they considered the United States a threat, and whether they had previously been a member of the Communist Party.³⁹

The socioeconomic determinants of NATO support have been considered more directly in a study by McAllister and White based on surveys conducted in Russia, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine in the first half of 2000, after the Kosovo bombing campaign but before the second round of enlargement that took the Alliance into former Soviet territory. Across the four countries, social characteristics such as gender, age and education made relatively little difference, except in Ukraine, where younger age and higher living standards were both positively associated with support for membership. There were much clearer associations with a range of attitudinal dimensions: left - right self-placement, party family, nostalgia for the USSR, and support for membership of the EU. Supporters of EU membership, for instance, were about three times as likely as the sample as a whole to support membership of NATO, but those who regretted the demise of the USSR were about three times as likely to be opposed.⁴⁰ In 2006, a Russian survey found once again that younger respondents were more likely than others to have a positive view of NATO, but this time it was the better educated, and those who lived in Moscow and St Petersburg, who were the most likely to see NATO as an extension of US military interests and to associate it with aggressive military action.⁴¹

Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian Perceptions of NATO

In what follows we look first of all at the security environment of the three Slavic republics, comparing responses obtained in 2000, 2004 and (in Russia alone) 2005.⁴² We set out the evidence in Table 1; it allows several conclusions to be drawn. First of all, in all three countries NATO continues to be perceived as a significant threat. However, in Russia and Ukraine it comes behind the United States (in Belarus the numbers are very similar); in Russia in 2005 it comes behind China as well. At the other extreme, the European Union and its member countries rank as very minor threats, and so do the other Slavic republics in every case except Ukraine in 2000, when Russia was seen as an important external danger. The most important single finding is the extent to which in almost every case the main external threat, sometimes

by a wide margin, is the United States-testimony to the persistence of Cold War attitudes, or perhaps an accurate reading of the global ambitions of its neoconservative administration; NATO was not normally seen as an external threat of the same magnitude.

Table 1. The security environment, 2000-05

	Belarus		Russia			Ukraine	
	2000	2004	2000	2004	2005	2000	2004
Germany	24	6	15	19	7	16	6
Iraq	35	10	24	9	20	29	24
China	27	6	24	31	31	25	8
NATO	-	30	-	32	30	-	16
EU countries	21	7	22	13	10	12	5
USA	49	28	48	48	41	35	22
Russia/Ukraine	12	5	9	6	9	22	10

Source: authors' surveys. The question wording was 'Which of the following countries or organisations represent a threat to Belarus/Russia/Ukraine?' The figures combine 'serious' and 'some threat' as a percentage of all responses to each option. The surveys in Belarus and Ukraine asked about Russia as a possible threat; the Russian survey asked about Ukraine.

NATO, admittedly, had been demonised over the Cold War period, and in any case it has been changing its membership and declared priorities since 1991. To what extent do East European publics, more than a decade later, actually understand what NATO is, and what view do they take of its objectives in the rather different circumstances that have arisen since the end of the Cold War? We asked in this connection whether our various respondents could pick out the Alliance from a list of three international organisations, or make a suggestion of their own. About half were able to identify NATO as a 'military union with Western Europe led by the United States', a level of knowledge rather better than was apparent in relation to the European Union, although levels of knowledge had dropped somewhat in both Russia and Ukraine between 2000 and 2004/05 in spite of a second enlargement that had taken the Alliance up to the borders of both countries. However, about a quarter, across the three countries, had no idea, and another quarter thought it was a 'big trading and economic bloc connecting Western Europe and the USA' or else a 'peacekeeping agency of the United Nations'.

We offered our respondents a number of possible characterisations of NATO in these new and rather different circumstances (Table 2). Few saw it as a 'relic of the Cold War', and substantial numbers found it hard to say.

Table 2. Defining NATO, 2004-05

	Belarus 2004	Russia 2004	Russia 2005	Ukraine 2004
<i>NATO's objectives</i>				
Strengthening of international security	22	17	22	31
A platform for Western expansion	31	29	33	23
Relic of the Cold War	16	24	19	14
Hard to say	30	29	25	31
(Ns)	1599	2000	2000	2000

Source: as Table 1; column percentages. Question wording was 'In your opinion, what are the real objectives of NATO?' 'Other' and 'No answer' account for residuals.

However, outside Ukraine, there was little support for the rather different self-image that NATO itself has been seeking to propagate - as an organisation concerned with all forms of security in a more dangerous international environment. By contrast, there were many more, generally a plurality, who saw NATO as a 'springboard for Western expansion'. We asked additionally, in Russia in 2005, if NATO was a 'defensive' or an 'aggressive bloc': more than half (53 per cent) saw it as aggressive, twice as many as saw it as defensive (28 per cent). The view in Ukraine was not very different: up to 48 per cent (in 2001) saw NATO as an 'aggressive military bloc', and no more than 25 per cent (in 2002) as a 'defensive alliance'.⁴³ NATO, in other words, is consistently seen not simply as a threat, but as an organisation that is inherently hostile.⁴⁴

There was, predictably, a close association across these various measures, although not always in the expected direction. Not surprisingly, those who thought NATO was a threat of some kind were more likely than others to see it as a 'platform for Western expansion' (44 compared with 26 per cent), and vice versa. Less predictably, the more often our respondents identified NATO correctly, the more likely it was that they would perceive it as a military threat. Across the three countries, 33 per cent of those who identified NATO as a military union of West European and North American states regarded it as a threat, which was considerably more than the 21 per cent among those who were unable to identify it correctly. Similarly, 45 per cent of our respondents across the three countries who were able to identify NATO correctly regarded it as a platform for Western expansion, compared with just 20 per cent among those who were unable to do so. The better informed were not, as we might have expected, less apprehensive, but more so.

There was a more predictable association between perceptions of NATO and support for membership (for the moment, an entirely hypothetical option, at least in the case of Russia and Belarus). Overall, attitudes to the possibility of membership were varied, with a quarter typically in favour, a quarter neutral, a quarter against, and another quarter unable to offer an opinion (Table 3; the neutral option was not offered in earlier years). On the evidence of our Russian surveys of 2000 and 2004, in which identical questions were asked, there was some movement away from the possibility of membership; but by 2005 supporters and opponents of membership were evenly balanced, with neutrals

Table 3. Support for NATO membership, 2004-05

	Belarus		Russia			Ukraine	
	2000	2004	2000	2004	2005	2000	2004
Very good	6	5	8	6	5	11	5
Quite good	23	17	28	23	17	25	18
Neutral	-	29	-	-	34	-	28
Not very good	23	15	18	26	18	21	16
Very bad	15	6	10	12	6	15	7
Hard to say	32	27	32	33	20	25	26
(Ns)	1090	1599	1940	2000	2000	1590	2000

Source: as Table 1; column percentages. Question wording was 'In your opinion, if Belarus/Russia/Ukraine became a member of NATO, would it be . . .?' Refusals to answer account for residuals.

more numerous than either. Neutrals were also more numerous than any other category in Belarus and Ukraine; it was an option, indeed, that we introduced into the questionnaire as a result of our pilots, in which respondents had insisted on offering a view that was neither for nor against rather than no view at all. Patterns of support,

more generally, were remarkably uniform across the three countries; so too were the substantial proportions that were unwilling to express an opinion.

There were closer and more predictable associations between knowledge, threat perceptions and views of NATO, and support or otherwise for the principle of membership. Of those who thought membership desirable, only 17 per cent across the three countries regarded NATO as a threat, compared with 42 per cent among those who were opposed to membership (an intriguing 15 per cent regarded NATO as a threat but thought they should join all the same). Similarly, of those who supported NATO membership, only 21 per cent across the three countries regarded NATO as a springboard for Western expansion, as compared with 49 per cent among those who were opposed. In the next part of the paper we explore the association between support for NATO membership and circumstances of this kind more closely before turning in the final part of the paper to multivariate statistics in order to isolate the extent to which these various factors influence support for membership when other factors have been taken into account.

Support for Membership and its Correlates

What, then, about the socioeconomic and other characteristics that are associated with support for NATO membership? The evidence is mostly remarkable for its lack of clear patterns (see Table 4). In Belarus and Ukraine, NATO membership is more strongly supported by males than females, in Russia the reverse: but the differences are modest, not just between male and female support for membership, but also between the propensity of either males

Table 4. Support for NATO membership by socioeconomic characteristics, 2004-05

	Belarus 2004		Russia 2005		Ukraine 2004	
	Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose
Male	26	23	23	27	28	23
Female	19	19	21	21	19	23
Under 30 years	30	16	26	20	31	17
60 or older	15	24	16	27	15	28
Urban	21	22	23	24	22	24
Rural	25	20	20	25	22	23
Primary education	14	20	17	22	13	27
Higher education	26	23	24	27	30	22
Low income	25	23	20	28	18	27
High income	14	28	29	21	36	18
<i>Total</i>	22	21	22	24	22	23

Source: As Table 1; row percentages. Question wording as in Table 4. ‘Neither’ and ‘No answer’ account for residuals.

or females to support or oppose it. Age made more of a difference, with younger respondents up to twice as likely to support membership as to oppose it.⁴⁵ However, residential location made little difference, and the effects of education were inconsistent - in Russia, for instance, but not elsewhere, respondents with a higher education were more likely to oppose membership than to support it. The effects of higher incomes were also inconsistent: those with a higher self-assessed income were more likely to support membership in Russia and Ukraine, but not in Belarus; those with a lower self-assessed income were more likely to support membership in Belarus than to oppose it, but not in Russia and Ukraine.

If socioeconomic characteristics showed modest differences, rather wider variations were apparent when we considered responses by region. In Ukraine particularly, the importance of regional differences - even when socioeconomic circumstances have been taken into account - is well attested in the literature.⁴⁶ It is hardly surprising that 'region' should make a difference of this kind, given the geographical location and historical experience of each of the three countries and particularly of Ukraine, different parts of which have come under different jurisdictions within the historical memory of the current electorate. We set out these differences in Table 5, dividing Belarus and Ukraine into western, central and eastern regions, and Russia into its European and Asian parts. As Table 5 shows, western regions are strongly associated with support for NATO membership, in Ukraine particularly so, while eastern regions were almost as likely to take the opposite view. In Russia location was also important, although in this case there was more support for NATO membership in the Asian part of the country, where there was more concern about a possible Chinese threat. In each case the differences were statistically significant, in Ukraine and Belarus particularly so.⁴⁷

Table 5. Attitudes to NATO membership by region, 2004-05

	Support	Oppose
<i>Belarus 2004</i>		
Western	31	17
Central	25	17
Eastern	14	27
(N)	1599	
<i>Russia 2005</i>		
European	19	25
Asian	30	20
(N)	2000	
<i>Ukraine 2004</i>		
Western	42	8
Right Bank	19	23
Left Bank	16	20
South	19	26
East	15	36
(N)	2000	

Source: As Table 1; row percentages. Question wording was 'In your opinion, if Belarus/Russia/Ukraine became a member of NATO, would it be . . .?'; don't knows and refusals to answer account for residuals.

We took our analysis further by considering the association between support for NATO membership and a variety of other variables, relating NATO support to broader views about political and economic systems, party preferences, and membership of the European Union (Table 6). The results, taken together, show a much closer relationship than in the case of the socioeconomic variables we considered at the start of this section. In each of the three countries supporters of Western-style democracy were more likely to support NATO membership than to oppose it, while those who supported a Soviet system were more likely to take the opposite view. Supporters of a market-oriented party were also more likely to support NATO membership than to oppose it (except in Russia), while supporters of a communist party were more likely to oppose membership than to support it (again, except in Russia). Similarly, supporters of a market economy were more likely to support membership than to oppose it (except in Russia), while supporters of a Soviet-

style planned economy were – logically - more likely to oppose NATO membership than to support it. The clearest association of all was with opponents of EU membership, who by a margin to four to one were also opposed to NATO entry.⁴⁸

Explaining Support for NATO: A Multivariate Perspective

In the final part of the paper we isolate the importance of these various factors in explaining support for NATO membership, controlling for the other factors

Table 6. NATO membership and policy attitudes, 2004-05

	Belarus 2004		Russia 2005		Ukraine 2004	
	Oppose	Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose	Support
<i>Political system preferences</i>						
Favours Western democracy	18	37	20	31	13	38
Favours Soviet system before Perestroika	28	11	30	20	26	12
<i>Political party preferences</i>						
Supports a pro-market party	18	26	28	27	16	36
Supports a communist party	41	11	24	26	41	11
<i>Economic system preferences</i>						
Favours a market economy	18	29	24	25	21	27
Favours a Soviet-type economy	27	14	24	20	26	19
<i>Foreign policy preferences</i>						
Supports EU membership	19	33	21	32	17	34
Opposes EU membership	43	9	40	10	48	9
Total	21	22	24	22	23	22
(Ns)	1599		2000		2000	

Source: As Table 1; row percentages. Question wording was ‘In your opinion, if Belarus/Russia/Ukraine became a member of NATO, would it be . . .?’; don’t knows and refusals to answer account for residuals.

that might have confounded our cross-tabulations (regional differences, for instance, might be partly attributable to income variations; the effects of supporting a particular party might be at least partly attributable to the age differences among their respective supporters).

Among these various factors, we hypothesised that support for a Western-style political system, for EU membership and for a market economy would each exert a statistically significant effect on support for NATO membership. However, since all three were highly interrelated, each was entered separately into the regression in order to eliminate any problems of multicollinearity. Furthermore, as the relationship between NATO support and some of these variables, in particular support for a Western-style political system and a market economy in the case of Belarus and Ukraine and support for EU membership in the case of Ukraine, appeared to be bidirectional,⁴⁹ standard Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) procedures could not be applied. In other words, it was unclear if support for a Western-style political system, a market economy and EU membership predicted support for NATO membership, or if it was support for NATO membership that predicted it. This problem can however be resolved by a two-stage least-squares methodology incorporating the use of

instrumental variables that are correlated with a respective endogenous variable, but uncorrelated with the stochastic disturbance term.⁵⁰ Since it is difficult to find proxies that are highly correlated with each of the endogenous regressors but uncorrelated with support for NATO, we use an estimate of the mean value of each of these regressors conditional upon some predetermined variables.⁵¹

First, we individually regress ‘support for a Western-style political system’, ‘support for a market economy’ and ‘support for EU membership’ on a number of the exogenous variables that determine them.⁵² Then we retrieve the predicted values of ‘support for a Western-style political system’ and ‘support for a market economy’ and regress support for NATO on each of them and other determinants. In this way, the predicted values of ‘support for a Western-style political system’, ‘support for a market economy’ and ‘support for EU membership’ resemble the original measures, but are uncorrelated with the deterministic term of the second-stage regressions that make the final estimates consistent. Table 7 reports the results we obtained in the second set of OLS regression equations in the case of two-stage least squares estimator used and the results of OLS regression equations in all other cases. The choice of OLS estimator was justified on the basis of a linearity test⁵³ and given the fact that the dependent variable was ordinal, scaled from 1 to 5.

The explanatory power of all three models, each incorporating one of three political, economic and foreign policy attitudes, was satisfactory, explaining between 10 and 26 per cent of the variation in the dependent variable. Socioeconomic characteristics were relatively weak predictors of support for NATO membership, which was in line with our earlier conclusions; only geographical location appears to be a statistically significant predictor in all three countries. Oddly, while in Belarus and Ukraine those who lived in the West were strongly committed to NATO membership, in Russia there were higher levels of support for NATO among our Asian respondents, suggesting (once again) that they were more likely than others to see a Chinese military threat. Older people were opponents of membership in Belarus and Ukraine (in the third model, when support for NATO was regressed on support for EU membership alongside other determinants), but not in Russia, whereas those with higher incomes were more pro-NATO in Russia and Ukraine, but not in Belarus: findings that are again consistent with our cross-tabulations. Perhaps surprisingly, urban residents in Belarus were less likely to support NATO, a result that was statistically significant at the 5 per cent level. Being a female made a difference to the level of NATO support only in Ukraine, and higher education was not a significant predictor in any of the three countries once other factors had been taken into account.

Our attitudinal variables, by contrast, were generally very powerful in Belarus and Ukraine, although less so in Russia. In particular, support for a market economy was a strong predictor of support for NATO in Belarus and Ukraine, although not in Russia; and support for EU membership was a significant predictor of support for NATO across the three countries. All other determinants, including knowledge of NATO, seeing no threat in the Baltic countries becoming NATO members and (not) regarding NATO as a platform for expansion to the east, had a significant effect on explaining support for membership, net of other factors. And as in our bivariate analysis, respondents who had a better knowledge of NATO were (for whatever reason) less supportive of NATO membership than their counterparts in all three countries.

Table 7. Explaining support for NATO

	Unstandardised coefficients								
	Belarus			Russia			Ukraine		
	2SLS	2SLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	2SLS	2SLS	2SLS
<i>Socioeconomic characteristics</i>									
Gender	.02	.01	.05	-.03	-.04	-.04	.08 ^a	.07	.08 ^a
Age	-.001	-.002	-.01 ^b	-.002	-.002	-.002	-.002	-.002	-.003 ^a
Secondary education	.02	.001	-.02	.057	.059	.053	.07	.08	.06
Higher education	.06	.02	.08	.040	.039	.021	.10	.12	.09
City resident	-.09 ^a	-.10 ^a	-.10 ^a	.005	.009	.000	.03	.02	.03
Self-assessed living standard	-.05	-.06	-.06	.09 ^a	.09 ^a	0.83 ^a	.06 ^a	.06 ^a	.05 ^a
Region	.13 ^b	.14 ^b	.15 ^b	-.20 ^b	-.20 ^b	-.17 ^b	.08 ^b	.10 ^b	.104 ^b
<i>Political, economic and foreign policy attitudes</i>									
Support for Western democracy	.32 ^b	-	-	.021	-	-	.228 ^b	-	-
Support for a market economy	-	.39 ^b	-	-	.030	-	-	.510 ^b	-
Support for EU membership	-	-	.20 ^b	-	-	.17 ^b	-	-	.267 ^b
<i>Other determinants</i>									
Knowledge of NATO	.21 ^b	.21 ^b	.21 ^b	.28 ^b	.28 ^b	.23 ^b	.31 ^b	.31 ^b	.28 ^b
Negative perception of NATO objectives	-.16 ^b	-.16 ^b	-.14 ^b	-.22 ^b	-.22 ^b	-.21 ^b	-.33 ^b	-.33 ^b	-.29 ^b
Positive perception of the Baltics' membership of NATO	-.30 ^b	-.30 ^b	-.33 ^b	-.30 ^b	-.29 ^b	-.27 ^b	-.35 ^b	-.35 ^b	-.33 ^b
Constant	2.014	1.962	2.453	2.908	2.870	2.397	1.939	1.017	1.638
Adj. R-sq.	.18	.18	.18	.10	.10	.15	.22	.21	.26
(Ns)		1560			1967			1980	

Source: as Table 1 (2004 surveys). a statistically significant at pB 0.05, b pB 0.01, both two-tailed. Standard errors and details of scoring may be obtained from the authors.

Implications

Our analysis yields a number of conclusions. In the first place, it confirms that NATO is unpopular across the Slavic republics of the former USSR, but less unpopular than the United States; equally, it confirms that there are considerable elements of ambiguity about any assessments of this kind. Relatively large numbers are unable to identify NATO, given a list of three international organisations; and, asked about the possibility of membership, no more than half of our respondents have a clear view (the other half are neutral, or undecided). Indeed, even among those who did feel able to support the principle of membership, there were substantial numbers who took an apparently inconsistent position: who believed that NATO was a threat to their country's security, but wished to join it; or who found it hard to say what NATO was, but all the same wished their country to become a member (11 per cent of all of those who found it hard to identify it).

Looking more closely at the sources of support for membership, we found that standard demographic variables had little explanatory power - a result consistent with a great deal of the survey-based research that has emerged from other studies of the post-Soviet republics, and not a surprising conclusion given the rapid and far-reaching

changes that have taken place in earnings, occupations and social status.⁵⁴ Some of our findings, indeed, were counterintuitive: that higher education should have no direct effect on levels of support for membership, for instance, or that urban residence should reduce support for membership in Belarus, or that greater levels of knowledge should be associated with lower levels of support for membership - results that were sustained in our multivariate as well as our cross-tabulation analysis.

By contrast, attitudinal variables were generally very powerful predictors. Support for Western-style democracy, for a market economy and for membership of the European Union had particularly strong effects in Belarus and Ukraine, although in Russia only support for EU membership was significantly associated with support for NATO membership when other factors had been taken into account. Not surprisingly, support for NATO membership was lower if respondents took the view that NATO was first of all a springboard for Western expansion. And not surprisingly, support for NATO membership was higher if respondents did not believe that Baltic membership of NATO represented a threat to their own country. The variables that were gathered together in our three models, country by country, explained between 10 and 26 per cent of the variation in our measure of support for NATO membership - a satisfactory result for categorical variables of the kind with which we have been dealing.

Does any of this matter? Connections between public attitudes and foreign policy decision-making, as we noted at the outset, are typically loose and distant, and membership of NATO is not in any case on the political agenda in Russia or Belarus. In Ukraine, the issue was nominally resolved by the decision in May 2002 to seek membership at some future point, a decision that was incorporated into the national security legislation of the following year. However, the image of NATO is among the most potent of all that have come down to us from the time of the Cold War, which means within the lifetime of every member of the adult population of the countries we are discussing. Whether NATO is seen as an aggressive alliance that is hostile to the interests of its former adversaries, or an ally in a wider struggle against 'global terrorism', or just a fact of life, provides part of the context of the political process in each of the three countries. It is a context that informs the generalised images that parties and candidates put forward at elections, which in turn help to shape the composition of parliaments, the staffing of parliamentary committees, and the outcome of direct elections at the presidential level.

There are even closer connections between public opinion and foreign policy in Ukraine following the constitutional changes that were agreed at the end of 2004 and the election of Viktor Yushchenko to the presidency. Under the existing constitution, the Ukrainian parliament - re-elected in March 2006 - had the right to 'determine the principles of domestic and foreign policy'. Since the constitutional changes that were a part of the Orange Revolution, it also has the right to approve nominations to the foreign and defence ministries as well as to the premiership. NATO membership itself, as we have seen, will require the support of the adult population in a national referendum, a position confirmed in the agreement of August 2006 on which the new Ukrainian government is based. On the evidence of our own post-election survey, carried out in May 2006, the vote against will be almost three to one (17 per cent in favour, 48 per cent against); but many are still undecided, and support varies widely across the country. And either way, the issue will have a direct bearing on Ukrainian relations with other countries, from NATO fleets in southern ports to visiting Russian politicians with their own agendas. In newly independent states whose international allegiances are still evolving, the associations between public opinion and foreign and security policy may sometimes be very close indeed.

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²⁰*Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 2/197 (24 October 2005).

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³⁸William Zimmerman, 'Survey Research and Russian Perspectives on NATO Expansion', *Post-Soviet Affairs* 17/3 (July - September 2001) pp. 235_261; William Zimmerman, *The Russian People and Foreign Policy: Russian Elite and Mass Perspectives, 1993-2000* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 2002).

³⁹Zimmerman, 'Survey Research', pp. 239, 244, 247.

⁴⁰Ian McAllister and Stephen White 'Nato Enlargement and Eastern Opinion', *European Security* 11/4 (Winter 2002), pp. 47 - 58.

⁴¹*Vospriyatie NATO naseleniem Rossii* (Moscow: VTsIOM, 2006) p. 15.

⁴²Our surveys were carried out by Russian Research on the basis of a common questionnaire and methodology. In Russia, fieldwork took place between 21 December 2003 and 16 January 2004, and again between 25 March and 20 April 2005; in each case 2000 interviews took place in respondents' homes. In Belarus, fieldwork took place between 27 March and 18 April 2004 (n = 1597); and in Ukraine, between 23 March and 2 April 2004 (n = 2000). In each case the agency's standard procedures were employed for constructing a sample and for checking the results.

⁴³See O. Melnyk (ed.), *Razumkov Centre, 2003* (Kyiv: Zapovit 2004) p. 510.

⁴⁴These figures are consistent with other findings: M.K. Gorshkov, *Rossiiskoe obshchestvo v usloviyakh transformatsii: mify i real'nost' (sotsiologicheskii analiz). 1992 - 2002 gg* (Moscow: Rosspen 2002), for instance, cites VTsIOM data according to which 56 per cent in 2002 believed that Russia had reason to fear the NATO member countries, and 54 per cent in 2000 (p. 442n).

⁴⁵The statistical significance of these associations was confirmed by chi-square tests as follows: $X^2 = 23.1$, $df = 2$, $sig = < 0.000$ and $X^2 = 28.8$, $df = 2$, $sig = < 0.000$ respectively for Belarus and Ukraine in relation to gender differences; in relation to age differences, respectively 27.97 , $df = 4$, $sig = < 0.000$ (Belarus), 18.7 , $df = 4$, $sig = < 0.001$ (Russia) and 41.03 , $df = 4$, $sig = < 0.000$ (Ukraine).

⁴⁶See for instance Sarah Birch, 'Interpreting the Regional Effect in Ukrainian Politics', *Europe-Asia Studies* 52/6 (September 2000) pp. 1017-1041; and Stephen Shulman, 'National Identity and Public Support for Political and Economic Reform in Ukraine', *Slavic Review* 64/1 (Spring 2005) pp. 59-87.

⁴⁷The chi-square tests were respectively $X^2 = 56.95$, $df = 4$, $sig = < 0.000$ (Ukraine), $X^2 = 134.54$, $df = 6$, $sig = < 0.000$ (Belarus), and $X^2 = 28$, $df = 2$, $sig = < 0.000$ (Russia).

⁴⁸The association between support for a pro-market party and for NATO membership was not statistically significant in Belarus and Russia, and in order to enhance comparability across the three countries it is disregarded in further analysis.

⁴⁹The endogeneity of ‘support for a Western-style of political system’ and ‘support for a market economy’ regressors in the case of Belarus and Ukraine and of ‘support for EU membership in the case of Ukraine was confirmed by the Hausman test, showing that all three regressors are correlated with the error term. For a discussion of the test see Damodar H. Gujarati, *Basic Econometrics* (London: McGraw-Hill 1995) pp. 670 -671.

⁵⁰For an outline of the relevant statistics see *ibid.*, pp. 686-690.

⁵¹For a discussion of the two-stage least-squares methodology see *ibid.*, pp. 686-689.

⁵²Full results and scorings may be obtained from the authors on request.

⁵³We checked the assumption of linearity by producing a scatter plot of the residuals with the predicted values. The points were symmetrically distributed around a diagonal line and the overall shape of the distribution of points was rectangular in each case, suggesting that the assumption of linearity held.

⁵⁴See for instance Stephen White, Richard Rose and Ian McAllister, *How Russia Votes* (Chatham House NJ: Chatham House 1997) chs 3 and 7.