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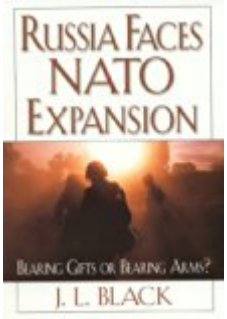
J. L. Black. *Russia Faces NATO Expansion: Bearing Gifts or Bearing Arms?.* Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000. xi + 263 pp. $29.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-8476-9866-0.



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Grimace and Bear it

Given the spate of books published promoting NATO enlargement, J. L. Black's book, illustrating the negative effects of this policy on Russian politics, has been sorely needed. Black is a professor of Russian and Soviet history and director of the Centre for Research on Canadian-Russian Relations at Carleton University in Ottawa. He has written five other books, including a biography of Nicholas Karamzin, an analysis of the Russian educational system in the eighteenth century, and a study of post-Soviet events, from the August coup to the formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

Black's objective in writing *Russia Faces NATO Expansion: Bearing Gifts or Bearing Arms?* is rather modest. He tries to determine the extent of Russian antipathy to NATO enlargement eastward by examining the form it takes in the mass media. Instead of judging the NATO expansion policy itself, Black tries simply to "understand what expansion means, and will mean, to the Russians" (p. 2). In his conclusion he speculates briefly on the consequences of Russian attitudes toward expansion on Moscow's foreign policy-making in the near future.

The book is divided into two sections. Section One, ("The History") contains ten sub-divisions and discusses Russian historical beliefs and key events leading up to the ratification of NATO's decision to expand and the resulting developments in Russian politics. Section Two, entitled "Ripple Effects," examines Russia's attempts to reform the military, forge new "strategic" relationships with other countries to the East and South, and tighten integration with CIS states.

Black begins by drawing the reader's attention to a "long-festering issue" in Russian history: the belief that Russia has been consistently shut out of Europe. Napoleon's 1812 invasion convinced Russians that "the European powers will naturally combine to keep Russia weak and isolated from Europe" (p. 5). In light of this, the famous Russian historian, Nikolai Danilevskii (1822-1885), argued that Russia has a mission to unite all Slavs in a unique civilization based in Constantinople in order to replace the European system. His essay, entitled *Rossiia i Evropa* (1869), became mandato-

ry reading in 1998 at top Russian military academies (p. 5). In a 1996 report, Vyacheslav Dashichev of the Russian Academy of Sciences warned against any further "divisions of Europe" into "competing groups." Ever since the formation of a Triple Entente in 1903, such divisions have always led to war, with Germany as the "fulcrum around which coalitions had been arranged" (p. 19). Dashichev sees NATO expansion as yet another event in this continuum. Had Germany not been reunified, NATO would not have decided to expand to the east. Incidentally, what Black omits to mention is that Dashichev had been a vocal advocate in 1987 of German reunification, arguing mistakenly that it would actually bind Russia closer to Europe [1].

This fear of exclusion has also found expression in the "National Security Concept of Russia." Col. Gen. Leonid S. Maiorov, former Deputy Secretary of the Security Council, explained the concept to his colleagues in ***Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'***, a journal of the ministry of foreign affairs. "NATO's eastward expansion of NATO and the turning of the bloc into a dominant military-political force is creating a realistic threat splitting up Europe and the possibility of a new stand off spiral," he wrote (p.169). This "long-festering issue" has also been discussed by the pro-Western "young reformers" like Anatolii Chubais. In a long interview with ***Trud*** in 1997, Chubais justified the proposed Russia-Belarus union: "It is well-known that there are plans for a type of cordon sanitaire around Russia, stretching from Azerbaijan to the Baltic to separate Russia from the civilized world and isolate it" (p. 24).

Although Black claims not to pass judgement on NATO expansion, in various places throughout the book he reveals himself to be an opponent of the policy. Even Russian sentiments of humiliation and rejection from Europe are false, he writes, the West should not ignore these feelings. It may be the "greatest strategic mistake made by the West in the post World War II years" (p.239). There was "astonishingly" little public discussion prior to the expansion decision, and alternative security arrangements were not contemplated (p. 238). Government leaders and pundits in NATO countries failed to anticipate the backlash in Russia's public domain (p. 242). NATO now provides a "backboard" for Russian hard-liners to "vent their spleen." Furthermore, as NATO tackles more and more international conflicts, the UN's credibility as a forum for conflict resolution will decrease. Thus the "second wave" of NATO expansion should be postponed (ibid.)

Black gives thorough treatment to key events leading up to the actual expansion of NATO and subsequent Russian political and military actions. These events include: the November 1991 NATO Summit in Rome (where the "New Strategic Concept" was articulated and the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, or NACC, created); NATO's June 1992 decision to concern itself with "out of area" conflicts; the 1993 Duma elections and the success of Vladimir Zhirinovsky's Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR); the establishment of Partnership for Peace (PfP) agreements and Russia's entrance into the PfP program in 1994; the Duma elections of 1995 (in which the CPRF gained over 22 percent); Yeltsin's reelection in 1996, the appointment of Yevgeniy Primakov as Russian Prime Minister; Russian cooperation with NATO peacekeepers in Bosnia (IFOR); the formation of a Russian-Belarussian union; the formation of an anti-NATO Commission in the Russian Duma; the NATO-Russia Founding Act of May 27, 1997; the Madrid Summit of July 8-9, 1997; the drafting of the Russian "National Security Concept" on December 26, 1998; the repeated delays by the Duma to ratify START II ; the US sanctions against Russia for alleged arms deals with Iran; the NATO bombing of Kosovo and Serbia; and the March 12, 1999 ceremony in Independence, Missouri welcoming Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic into NATO.

Black bids his readers to recall that, despite Yeltsin's reelection in June 1996, Zyuganov "polled over 24 million votes in the first round (June 16), which was very close to Yeltsin's 26 million" (p. 14). The third contender, Aleksandr Lebed, had publicly denounced NATO expansion in 1995, warning that it would lead to World War III. Had Yeltsin failed to win Lebed over to his side, Zyuganov probably would have won the elections.

Back in 1994, Black points out, there was a feeling within military circles that Russia itself might eventually join NATO, after it first entered the European Union. Military planners were engrossed with the many conflicts on the Russian Federation's southern border (in Chechnya), and ethnic conflicts within Russia itself. These strategic thinkers concluded that the highest priority threats to Russian security were local, ethnic wars and even organized crime (p. 157). Hence, some sort of East-West partnership seemed highly appropriate (p. 9).

However, when in 1993-1994, U.S. policymakers began to characterize NATO as the most efficient mechanism for peacekeeping in East Central Europe, the Russian strategists' attention was drawn back to Europe again. Black illustrates how the NATO expansion policy led Russian planners both to revise military doctrine and to call for greater military reform. At a special Kremlin ceremony for military school graduates on June 30, 1997, former Prime Minister Chernomyrdin said that military reform was a priority, given NATO's expansion "to the borders of our country" (p. 164). In November 1993, Russian strategists signed into law the "Basic Provisions of Russian Federation Military Doctrine." For the first time they stated that they would consider delivering a first nuclear strike, given the Russian Federation's current weak position, its retention of nuclear weapons, and its failure to extract a promise from NATO not to place long-range nuclear missiles in the Visegrad states (p.156).

Russian leaders grew increasingly convinced that, not only did NATO expansion threaten CIS security, but that its aim was actually to thwart the political, military, and economic integration of CIS states (p.157). In early 1996 former Defense Minister Pavel Grachev said (not mentioning NATO expansion), "Clinton's second term is marked by the desire to prevent the integration of the CIS countries" (p.226).

As far as military reform was concerned, there were two factions. One faction consisted of Yeltsin, the new Defense Minister Igor D. Sergeev (who replaced Grachev as Defense Minister in the spring of 1997), and other government officials trying to balance the budget and qualify for further IMF aid (p. 165). Citing the Founding Act (which stated that Russia and the United States were no longer enemies), they urged military budget cuts, troop reductions, the abolition of conscription, ratification of START II, and formation of "smaller but more efficient Armed Forces, armed with advanced hardware and well-trained personnel" (p. 172).

The other faction consisted of high-ranking military officials and politicians like Alexander Lebed, Lev Rokhlin, and Anatolii Kvashnin, who argued, to the contrary, that NATO expansion necessitated increases in both budgets and troops. For example, General Anatolii Kvashnin, First Deputy Defense Minister, said that military professionals could not help but see NATO as a military bloc (p. 169). He mocked the 1997 Founding Act, asking rhetorically: Why talk of standardization of armaments, for example, "when there is no enemy?" Another leader in this faction was Lev Rokhlin, former chairman of the Defense Committee in the Duma. He, Kvashnin, and others were livid when Yeltsin announced his intention to reduce troop levels, without even consulting with his advisers. This move seemed especially foolhardy, given the new vulnerability of Russian territory like Kaliningrad, which would now border a NATO country (Poland) and which Lands-

bergis (then speaker of the Lithuanian Parliament) suggested to Talbott (U.S. deputy secretary of state) should be demilitarized (p. 220).

Rokhlin was an energetic leader of this military faction, which, not surprisingly, pushed the strongest for the resignation of the "traitorous" Yeltsin, who spoke often of "his friend Bill." After the unexpected murder of Rokhlin in July 1998, he became a martyr of the cause (at least until it was discovered that his wife was the culprit) (p. 173).

With the appointment of Yevgeniy Primakov in January 1996 as Foreign Minister, Russian foreign policy priorities shifted, perhaps to compensate for the real or perceived exclusion from Europe. Unlike Kozyrev who sought close integration with the United States and Western countries, Primakov favored a multipolar approach involving a search for allies among non-NATO members in the Middle East and Asia. A journalist with ties to the KGB and later an academic who helped Gorbachev develop "new thinking" concepts, Primakov had expertise in Middle Eastern affairs and close ties with Iraq's leader, Saddam Hussein. He was less concerned when Russian policies conflicted with U.S. interests in these regions (pp. 14-15). Despite Iraq's failure to cooperate with the UN's nuclear inspection team, Russia advocated the lifting of sanctions on Iraq because they prevented the Iraqi government from paying off its debts to Russia. Despite Madeleine Albright's call for a broader strategy to deal with NBC (nuclear, biological, and chemical) threats from "the Middle East and Eurasia," Russian scientists in Iran continued to work at the civilian nuclear reactor Bushehr (p. 133). Black points out perceptively that poor US-Iranian relations are a boon for Russia, while the possible rapprochement between the two countries would be a setback (p. 137).

Russian anger and confusion reached new heights where NATO actions in Yugoslavia were concerned, especially after the bombings of Kosovo in March 1999. This anger stemmed not so much from a desire of Russia to have a strategic relationship with Yugoslavia. Rather, the Russians had a lot of sympathy for their Slavic kin. Yeltsin Administration leaders had repeatedly warned the US and NATO to no avail that they would oppose the use of military force against Yugoslavia. Hence the anger stemmed from the idea that NATO and the US would ultimately do as they wished and did not respect Russians' feelings and policies. This sympathy with the Serbs, in combination with the simultaneous participation in NATO peacekeeping efforts in Bosnia, added to Russian confusion (p. 14).

Black points out that, in the months leading up to NATO's actions in Kosovo, Russian public opinion polls revealed a sharp rise in anti-NATO sentiments. Seventy percent opposed NATO's actions, according to a survey of October 17, 1998. Surprisingly, Black fails to look at opinion surveys in the spring of 1999, i.e. during and after the military operations. Moreover, he does not analyze the link between this mood shift and the NATO expansion issue. In fact, according to a poll taken on July 10 and 11, 1999, when asked if NATO expansion presented a threat to Russia, 66 percent of respondents said yes, while 14 percent said it did not, and 21 percent could not think of an answer [2] This contrasts starkly with the results of an earlier survey in January 1996, when the All-Russian Opinion Poll Research Center asked a sample group of 2,426 Russians if Poland's membership in NATO posed a threat to Russian security. Eighteen percent of the respondents said yes, it did, while another eighteen percent said it did not. The majority (approximately sixty-four percent) said they had no opinion on the issue.[3]

As with UN and U.S. policies in Iraq and Iran, so with NATO actions in Yugoslavia, causes and effects are unclear in Section Two ("Ripple Effects") of this book. Did preexistent hatred of the NATO expansion policy fuel hatred of the later NATO actions in Yugoslavia, or did the NATO bombings give rise to resentment of NATO expansion? Unfortunately Black does not explore this question.

Perhaps the two factors combined and worked together like a breeder reactor, producing heat and fuel for more heat.

Black does raise an interesting association no doubt present in Russian minds between Kosovo and the current conflict in Chechnya. If NATO will bomb a sovereign country in Eastern Europe to aid a "separatist movement" like Kosovo, might it also do the same in the CIS or in the Russian Federation itself? (p. 224).

In any case, the Kosovo crisis became a litmus test of loyalty to the CIS. Of the former USSR republics, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Armenia, Moldova, and Belarus firmly supported Russia's position on Kosovo in March. The CIS Defense Ministers Council unanimously opposed NATO's action, calling it "inhumane" and illegal because it was not sanctioned by the UN (p. 236). On the other hand, the three Baltic States not only approved of NATO's actions, but offered to help (p. 220).

Black astutely documents the more ambiguous positions of Ukraine and Georgia. The Kuchma Administration signed the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership between NATO and Ukraine at the Madrid Summit (July 8-9, 1997). In the March 1998 elections, the People's Rukh stated that Ukraine should strive for "economic, political, and military integration with Europe" (p. 191). Yet, earlier on January 18, 1996 Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma had told a press conference that he opposed NATO expansion "categorically" (p. 175). In addition, officials from the Ukrainian Supreme Council traveled to Moscow to attend an anti-NATO conference on October 21, 1997, claiming to represent 205 of 416 members of that parliamentary body (p. 188). It is worth remembering that about twenty percent of the Ukrainian population are ethnic Russians (about 11.4 million people). Many of them are members of the Ukrainian Communist Party, which won 25 percent of the votes in the March 1998 election on a platform of "preventing Ukraine from becoming an appendix of NATO" (pp. 191-192). The Ukrainian Communists fear Ukraine's new status as buffer zone between Russia and NATO.

Meanwhile, the Georgian government has expressed interest in possible NATO membership as a solution to the Abkhazian conflict, among other reasons. Nevertheless, a number of factors make further NATO expansion to the east, crossing the infamous "red line," difficult and unlikely. Apart from the growing conviction among Russian military strategists that NATO threatens CIS integrity, as mentioned earlier, recent NATO military exercises on CIS territory (e.g. Sea-Breeze 97 and 98, Strong Resolve-97, Tsentrazbat), use by NATO forces of former Warsaw Pact facilities (e.g. the Yavoriv Testing Ground in Western Ukraine), and Western attempts to profit from oil reserves in the Caucasus and Central Asia all add to Russians' resentment. Finally, Russians will continue to wield influence in the territory of the former USSR due to the large Russian-speaking communities outside Russian borders and to the non-Russian communist parties' shared mistrust of NATO.

In short, Black has done an admirable job documenting a complex and contentious issue in almost exclusively Russian-language sources. Only two key shortcomings come to mind. First, in his zeal to report the Russian moods as reflected in the media, Black often neglects to analyze these statements and events. Thus the book reads almost like a press summary. In Section Two, in particular, the connection between NATO expansion and the political events in Yugoslavia, Ukraine, the Caucasus, and Central Asia becomes obscure. The second shortcoming is virtually unavoidable. Because ***Russia Faces NATO Expansion*** deals with such a current topic, Black is often overcome by events. For example, Boris Yeltsin was replaced in March 2000 by Vladimir Putin as Russian President. The START II treaty was ratified on April 14, 2000 by the Duma (288 to 131 votes), and thus is no longer hostage to the NATO expansion issue. Both U.S. presidential candidates, Al Gore and

George Bush, are far less committed than President Clinton to any second wave of NATO expansion.

Nevertheless ***Russia Faces NATO Expansion*** represents a cogent, organized, and well-written contribution to scholarship. In conjunction with a few more recent articles, the book will fit well in both graduate and undergraduate courses on post-Soviet politics.

Notes

[1]. Dashichev argued in a 1987 report that Europe could never be fully united until Germany was united. A "unilateral initiative" on Gorbachev's part to promote German integration would "encounter irresistible support from the German population and put the Western powers on the defensive." Dashichev advocated unification on the basis of Germany's neutrality and withdrawal from the two blocs. Without Germany, NATO would lose its raison d'etre, and the Soviet Union would be in a good position to propose the immediate dissolution of the two blocs. France and Great Britain would seek better relations with the USSR, in order to counterbalance Germany. See Jacques Levesque, ***The Enigma of 1989: the USSR and the Liberation of Eastern Europe*** (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 69 and 71. Also see my review of this book in the ***Journal of Slavic Military Studies***, vol. 12, no. 4 (December 1999).

[2]. "O Rasshirenii NATO na Vostok," and "K Prekrashcheniiu Boevykh Deystviy v Iugoslavii," Fond "Obshchestvennoe Mnenie," http://www.fom.ru.

[3]. JSK, "Poll, Views of Poles, Russians on NATO Expansion," ***Rzeczpospolita***, 26 February 1996, 5, in FBIS [Foreign Broadcast Information Service] Report: Eastern Europe, FBIS-EEU-96-040, 26 February 1996. See Johanna Granville, "After Kosovo: The Impact of NATO Enlargement on Russian Political Parties," ***Demokratizatsiya***, vol. 8, no. 1 (Winter 2000).

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