

than of joining it. The typical Russian perspective remains that since NATO was created as a defensive military alliance against the Soviet Union, therefore it has an enduring anti-Russian bias. This ensures Russian suspicion. NATO is seen a clear-cut alliance. "You're in or you're out". However, as mentioned above, the reality is more complex, and NATO itself has always included a variety of degrees of integration. Distinguishing between the different versions of NATO might help to make the expansion of NATO more palatable to Russians.

Other Russian concerns about fully joining NATO include the fear that Russia would be ignored when decisions on further expansion or military operations are taken and that Russia would have to support US foreign policy moves even if they contradict Russia's interests. If this were the case, Russia's hands would be tied in foreign policy beyond Europe because it would have to be loyal to the Alliance even when its own interests were different. There is also the fear that the West would be tempted to use Russia as a shield against threats emanating from its southern neighbours. The Chair of the Duma's international affairs committee, Dimitri Rogozin, argues against Russia entering NATO because, in his opinion, Russia should develop relations with NATO in terms of joint security, but not joint defence. Rogozin has called for a cessation of all talks about Russia joining NATO for fear it might be interpreted as an indication that Russia does not object to the entry of the Baltic states into NATO.⁵⁰

A more immediate Russian objection to joining NATO is that it does not want to stand in line for NATO membership along with the smaller former Communist nations. Russians would prefer to receive a special invitation from NATO before it makes a formal request to join so as not to be embarrassed by a rebuff. Russian leaders do not want to be in the position of beggar and believe that a rejection would be insulting and costly to Russia in terms of respect from other states.

⁵⁰ *Interfax*, January 15 2002.