

1.1 North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC)

In November 1991, NATO proposed the creation of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) a forum for structured dialogue with former Warsaw Pact countries but without concrete defense guarantees. On December 20 1991, the NACC held its inaugural meeting. Its membership came to include all the members of NATO and (with the break up of the Soviet Union) the former Soviet republics. The focus was on multilateral, political dialogue on security and defense-related issues such as arms control, civil-military relations, air-traffic management and conversion of defense industries.

While a member of NACC, Russia argued against NATO expansion and sought guarantees that would prevent the forward positioning of nuclear weapons or the stationing of alliance forces in any new member states. Russia also advocated an alternative "strategic partnership" with the West which would be a permanent bilateral forum for consultation between Russia and NATO. The Russian Foreign Minister at that time, Andrei Kozyrev, already at this early stage argued that the deepening of relations between NATO and Russia should become an integral part of the alliance's transformation. The Western states for their part firmly rejected both Russia's attempts to achieve a special relationship with NATO and its efforts to stop NATO's eastward expansion.

a) NATO expansion

By the mid 1990s, the fact that NATO continued to exist and even planned to expand to the East, created understandably mistrustful reactions in Moscow. Russians were worried about being isolated and becoming second-class citizens in Europe. Russia's stated preference was for a much more radical expansion which would transform the existing West European-based institutions into pan-European entities, or else strengthen wider borders such as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). Failing this, Russia wanted to establish new