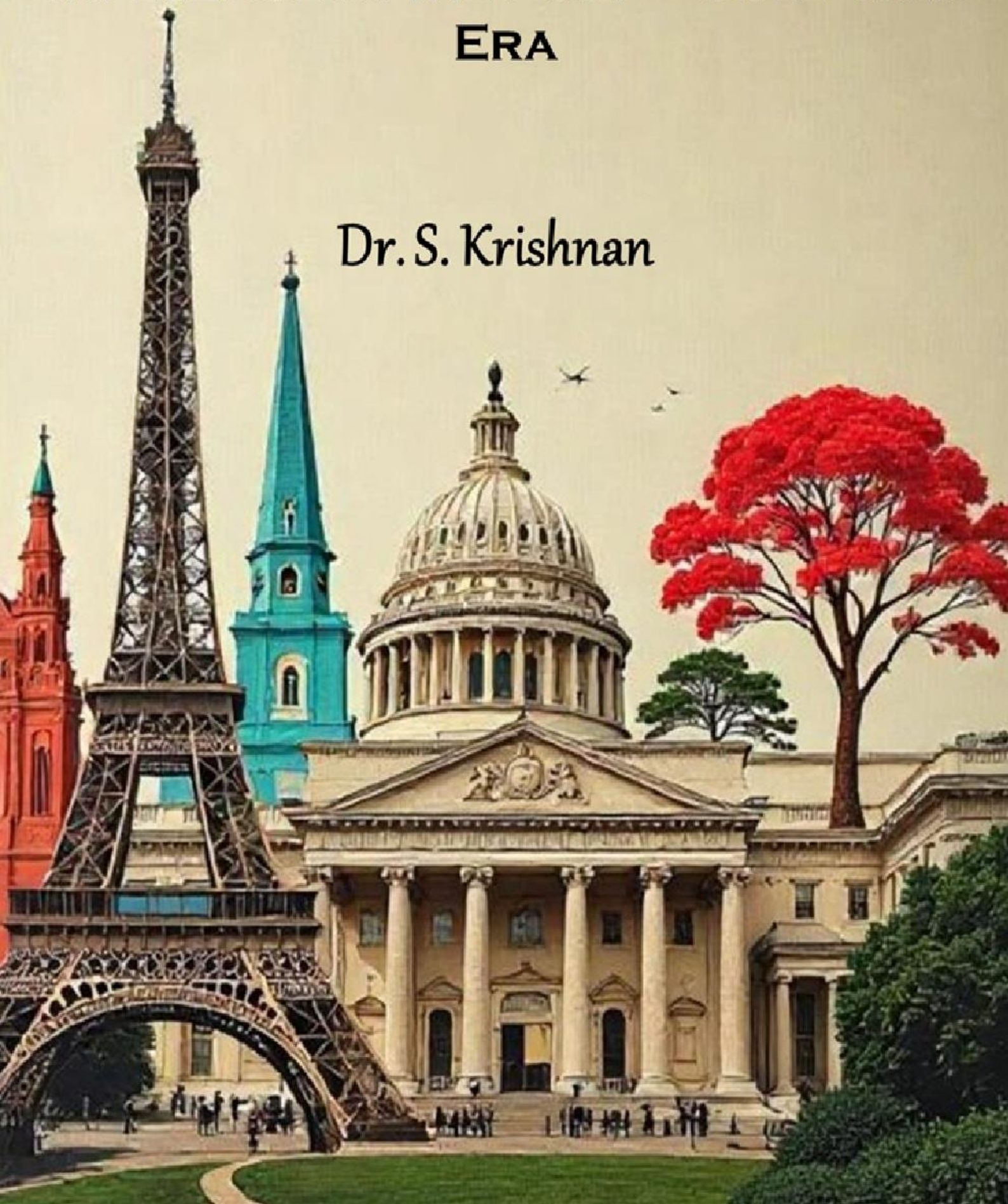


NATO EXPANSION, EAST EUROPEAN SECURITY AND RUSSIA'S SPHERE OF INFLUENCE IN THE POST – COLD WAR ERA

Dr. S. Krishnan



**“NATO Expansion, East European Security and
Russia’s Sphere of Influence in the Post – Cold War
Era”**

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Foreword

NATO's decision to open its doors to new members after the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union was one of the most momentous—and controversial—choices in recent history. It was rooted in efforts by the North Atlantic Alliance to revise its missions for a new era of challenges and to respond to Eastern European desires to join the “institutional West.” More generally, NATO's enlargement grew from the process of an overall reshaping of the “architecture” of institutions and mechanisms binding North America and Europe for the post Cold War world. The causes and consequences of these decisions have been the subject of intense scrutiny and fierce debate

The principle behind an Alliance is simple: states lacking the strength to cope with a powerful adversary on their own have a better chance of doing so when acting together. Yet historically, alliances are often tentative and temporary. This is why the North Atlantic Alliance, established by the Washington Treaty of April 1949, is quite unique. It has not only outlived the conflict that brought it into being, but it has managed to acquire new members. NATO is now a familiar part of the strategic landscape and, until recently, its existence has remained unquestioned, with neither its present value nor future durability under threat.

Why has the NATO alliance lasted as long as it has? First, the alliance was based on common values, as well as a shared threat. In 1949, the Soviet Union represented a different form of totalitarianism to Nazi Germany, which though illiberal and anti-democratic, was opposed to free markets. NATO also contained undemocratic states at times—Portugal until the mid-1970s and the military regime in Greece from 1967 to 1974—but they were treated as outliers and eventually became democracies. The second factor in the alliance's longevity is that its strategy was essentially deterrent. Since the conflict that brought it into being was ideological as well as geopolitical, it could not be resolved by political concessions. Yet it was also too dangerous to attempt to resolve by war, a fact that became progressively truer as both sides built up their nuclear arsenals. The foundational conflict therefore remained in place for forty years.

The third factor is that the deterrent effect of an alliance depends as much on its cohesion as the armed forces at its disposal. NATO only became a military organization in 1950. In 1949, the formation of an alliance was supposed to be a deterrent in itself. The European democracies believed that they had suffered badly in two world wars while waiting for the United States to join the fight. All the belligerents might have been spared much grief if the Germans had known for sure in 1914 and 1939 that should they opt for war, they would face the full weight of American power. With the Washington Treaty, there would be no doubt about the US commitment to defeating aggression. The corollary to that commitment was that without the alliance there would be no deterrent. During the Cold War a great effort was therefore put into keeping the alliance together, enduring tensions related to burden-sharing, strategy, and nuclear weapons, as well as differences over how seriously to take the Cold War outside of Europe. American presidents were irritated by the lack of support for their world-

wide efforts to contain communist advances, while European governments were wary of being drawn into unnecessary conflict.

These three factors—shared values, a preference for deterrence over appeasement or conquest, member states overcoming differences to stick together, and the dominant power and leadership of the United States—were all in place as the Cold War came to an end. Having in effect ‘won’ the Cold War, there was no incentive for the alliance to disband. It could now guard against a resurgent Russian threat, while looking beyond its traditional missions. As one of the core institutions of the West, there was a clamor from the post-communist states of Central and Eastern Europe to join. These issues of expanding ambition and growing membership would continue to dominate NATO debates.

The Kremlin has sought to establish an exclusive Russian sphere of influence in the nations lying between Russia and the EU, from Georgia in 2008 to Ukraine in 2014 and Belarus in 2020. It has extended its control by means of military intervention, territorial annexation, economic pressure and covert activities. Moscow seeks to justify this behavior by referring to an alleged threat from NATO and the Alliance’s eastward enlargement. In the rhetoric of the Kremlin, NATO expansion is the main source for Moscow’s stand-off with the West.

NATO initially adopted a more flexible approach to work with former members of the Warsaw Pact, and the ‘Partnership for Peace’ allowed for close relations short of full membership; however, countries that were still wary of Moscow wanted a full alliance commitment. Thus the expansion of NATO membership led to a growing anxiety in Russia, especially when it appeared that Georgia and Ukraine might join. This was part of the backdrop to Russia’s conflict with Ukraine, which reached a head with the annexation of Crimea in March 2014 and active support of separatists in Eastern Ukraine. The Russian campaign of menace and intimidation, designed to discourage NATO countries from supporting Ukraine, helped NATO regain its old sense of purpose. Nonetheless, in an expanded NATO, there were tensions between those concerned about an assertive Russia and those worried about instability to the South, notably in North Africa. These tensions placed a greater premium on US leadership.

The story of NATO opening its doors to new members and new missions—the story told in these pages—involved much, much more than the immediate future of the countries in question. It involved the future security of the United States; the future of an undivided Europe; the future of Russia and the character of NATO’s relationship with it. While it is impossible to prove a counterfactual, it is clear to me that the world would be far more dangerous, and Europe far less prosperous and stable, had NATO not helped in erasing the continent’s old, artificial divisions. That makes this a story worth telling.

This is why NATO’s future appears fragile, and this is why Dr. S.Krishnan’s book is so timely and vital. He has a unique perspective on the history of the alliance, having been following it closely through his career. When I first got to know him, when he was pursuing his Ph.D in Maharaja Sayajirao University, Vadodra, since 20010, I had interaction about his thesis. He was stepping into the area of being ‘NATO-watchers’. This is a role he still plays

and it's why he writes with such authority, knowledge, and lucidity. Dr. Krishnan is uniquely aware of the past challenges overcome, the disagreements calmed, and the problems the alliance faces in a tense international environment. This book is not only an essential history of the alliance in the context of global developments, but it is also a compelling description of the value of NATO as an instrument of diplomacy, crisis management, and defense. NATO serves a purpose simply by existing, for in doing so it precludes other forms of destabilizing, competitive alliance formation in Europe and offers a forum in which all security issues can be addressed. Its durability and familiarity is part of its strength. If NATO did not exist now, it would be desirable to create it—but extremely hard to do so.



HE Lionel Bouwen Kingimea
President of the Republic of Nauru

Acknowledgement

Pursuing a book is a both painful and enjoyable experience. It's just like climbing a high peak, step by step, accompanied with bitterness, hardships, frustration, encouragement and trust and with so many people's kind help. When I found myself at the top enjoying the beautiful scenery, I realized that it was, in fact, teamwork that got me there. It's true that "Life is what happens" when you are completing your book. *The experience is both internally challenging and rewarding.*

I would like to express my gratitude to all those who gave me the opportunity to complete my book. I am deeply indebted to my supervisor Dr. Aruna Awasthi from the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara whose stimulating suggestions and encouragement helped me throughout during research for and writing of the book. Needless to say, I was greatly benefited from all my teachers of the Department of History, Maharaja Sayajirao University – including Prof R.J. Shah, Prof G.A. Pandor, Dr. Rajkumar Hans and Dr. Iftikhar Ahmed.

At personal level, I would like to thank my wonderful parents – Late Prof (Dr) VS Mani and Late Dr (Mrs) Vathsala Mani, who could have waited patiently for the completion of my book before they passed away. They have been my strongest pillar of support. Their unwavering support and encouragement have been my guiding light. Their belief in me, even during moments of doubt, has helped me overcome obstacles and reach for the stars. They have taught me to dream big and have instilled in me the confidence to pursue my passions. Their accomplishments and perseverance have always inspired me to strive for excellence.

Preface

Though NATO was created through the signing of the Washington Treaty in 1949, the Treaty paved the way for the Alliance's adaptation to the constantly changing dynamic of international security. It provided built-in flexibility and scope for tackling new problems and applying solutions to them that reflect the changing environment.

When suddenly, it found in the early 1990s the Soviet threats ceased to exist, the Atlantic alliance went on a search to redefine itself. And its new role in the "New World Order" dominated by only one super power. And a search for a new enemy too? This triggered a strategic re-evaluation of NATO's purpose, nature and tasks. The process has been two-pronged: one, search for military and security threats to the United States and its allies, and two, the problem of expansion of NATO to Eastern Europe, by admitting the former 'enemy' entities (looking for alliance with former republics of USSR).

By the time NATO could calmly sit down and reassess the world situation, wars flared up even by the middle of 1990. The Alliance defined a new strategic concept, embarked on intensive partnerships with other countries, including former adversaries and embraced new member countries, joined US in its war with Iraq, and then in Yugoslavia, which exploded at the death of Tito. In addition, and for the first time, NATO undertook peacekeeping tasks in areas of conflict outside the Alliance, opening the way for a lead role in multinational crisis-management operations and extensive cooperative arrangements with other organisations.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Should the North Atlantic Treaty Organization continue to expand? An alliance of just twelve countries when it was created in 1949, NATO grew to sixteen members by the end of the Cold War, and has added another thirteen countries since then. This extremely successful security organization protected Europe in the Cold War, came to America's defence after the 9/11 attacks, and then deployed a major mission to Afghanistan that continues to this day, among numerous other achievements. It has also helped new member states avoid conflict with each other, as with Greece and Turkey during much of the Cold War, and then consolidate democratic rule and civilian control of the armed forces during the period of post Cold War expansion. It has also become a controversial organization in recent decades, with Russia increasingly objecting to its eastward growth. Great controversy and uncertainty now exist over whether it should someday expand to include not just the Baltic states, which joined in 2004, but other post Soviet republics, as well, notably Ukraine and Georgia.

This history sets the context for an extremely important issue in U.S. foreign policy today. If the Trump administration is serious about its worthy goal of improving U.S. relations with Russia, how exactly can it do so? After all, Mr. Trump's two immediate predecessors had similar hopes for a better rapport with Putin; both failed. President Trump himself is already using far tougher words toward Russia than he did as a candidate, and his national security team is generally hawkish toward the Putin regime in Moscow. Russia's meddling in America's 2016 elections further mars the situation.

Vladimir Putin and many of those around him are hard edged autocrats, and there will likely be no easy way to put U.S. Russian relations fully back on track as long as they are in power. But it may be possible to reduce the risks of rivalry and war by focusing on what may be, in Putin's mind, the fundamental cause of the problem:- NATO expansion. We do not owe the Russian strongman any apologies for the enlargement of the twenty-nine member North Atlantic Treaty Organization to date. Nor should we abandon democratic friends like Ukraine and Georgia to Russian domination. However, there is likely a better way to help them than the current U.S. led approach.

At present, we have, arguably, created the worst of all worlds. At its 2008 summit, NATO promised eventual membership to Ukraine and Georgia, but it did so without offering any specificity as to when or how that might happen. For now, these two countries, as well as other eastern European neutral states, get no protection from NATO. Knowing of our eventual interest in bringing these nations into an alliance that he sees as adversarial, Vladimir Putin has every incentive to keep them weak and unstable so they will not become eligible for NATO membership. Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko has been considering a domestic referendum on possible NATO membership; these further fuel the flames. We have inadvertently built a type of NATO membership doomsday machine that raises the likelihood of conflict in Europe.

It is time that Western nations seek to negotiate a new security architecture for those neutral countries in Eastern Europe today. The core concept would be one of permanent neutrality at least in the formal sense of ruling out membership in a mutual defence alliance, most notably NATO.....

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Meet the Author



Dr.S.Krishnan is an Associate Professor in Seedling School of Law and Governance, Jaipur National University, Jaipur, Rajasthan. He had worked as an Assistant Professor in History in Apex Professional University, Pasighat, Arunachal Pradesh. He has over 8 years teaching experience. He had also worked as a Journalist for about 8 years in esteemed newspapers like Indian Express and Daily News Analysis, online news portals and a magazine in Gujarat. And he worked as a Liaison Officer in Indian Society of International Law, New Delhi in 2013. He did BA (Hons) History from Motilal Nehru College, Delhi University, Delhi, MA (History) and Ph.D (International Relations) from Maharaja Sayajirao University, Vadodara. He had science stream in 11th and 12th from Chiranjeev Bharti School, Palam Vihar from 1999 to 2001. **The writer has 110 articles (50 National + 60 International) in the journals of repute and 481 Journalist Reports and 5 edited books. He has participated and presented papers in international conferences. He has also participated in seminars, workshops and Faculty Development Programmes. He received the “Golden Social Scientist of the Year 2020” (For Research) in Guwahati on 23rd February 2020, “Young Researcher Award” in 2021 and Best Teacher Award on 22nd April, 2022. He likes teaching subjects like History, International Relations, Media Law and Ethics, Forensic Science and Law, Sociology and Law, Law and Society, Access to Justice, Medical Jurisprudence.**

Dr.Krishnan has been in various committees such Moot Court Committee (which conducted Prof (Dr) VS Mani Memorial International Law Moot Court Competition since 2016), Examination Committee, Research and Publication Committee, Guest Lecture Committee, Doctoral Committee, Gender Sensitisation and Committee Against Sexual Harassment, Literary and Debate Committee, Alumni Committee, Committee for Curriculum Development and Value Added Course, Paper Presentation Committee, Media and Photography Committee. Dr.Krishnan is the Editor-in-Chief of Journal on International Human Rights & Practices and Editor-in-Chief of Journal on Socio-Legal and Political Affairs. He is also the Editor for International Journal of Social Science and Education Research and International Journal of Sociology and Political Science. He is the member for the Editorial Board of Journalism and Law Quarterly, VIT Press International Journal of Journalism and Mass Communication, VIT Press International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities and Editorial Member in VIT Press International Journal of Indian History.