

Abstract

This particular work deals with the process of expansion by the North Atlantic Alliance in view of the theory of balance of power and the relationship between Russia and NATO.

The author of the work draws on assumption that NATO's expansions, that have followed the end of the cold war, strengthen NATO's might, to which Russia must react to counter the growing power of the potential adversary. This work is divided into two main thematic parts. The first part regards the three waves of the expansion which followed the breakup of the Soviet Union (1999, 2004, and 2009); therein, the author analyzes NATO's strengthening on the military, political and geopolitical levels. The second part of the work is devoted to unveiling of Russia's potential counterbalancing steps. The Russian attempt to counterbalance the NATO's moves, of course, has also been analyzed within three frames – military, political and geopolitical. The analysis of the counterbalancing by Russia, as well as the strengthening of NATO is presented within the frame defined by five year periods.

To facilitate the theoretical view, the power counterbalancing analyses has been divided into, so called, "Hard balancing" and "Soft balancing". Because the end of the bipolar conflict contributed to substantial changes in international political environment the classic concept of "Hard balancing" of power, which clarifies the behaviour of actors during the cold war or, during the 18th and 19th centuries, it may not be satisfactory to understand the current processes of international relationships. The author reaches a conclusion that, it may be possible to notice the existence of a causative relation between the strengthening of NATO, which is, among other reasons, caused by the expansion itself and, individual steps that Russia has done and taken and, which we may see as the result of Russia's effort to counterbalance growing potential might of the North Atlantic Alliance.