

## **Abstract**

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**Keywords:** Russian Academy of Sciences; Russian foreign policy; NATO; ISKRAN; IMEMO; MGIMO; Epistemic communities; Yeltsin; Primakov; Kozyrev.

Extant scholarship has recognised that academics from the Soviet Academy of Sciences influenced policy during the Soviet period, particularly but not exclusively in the Gorbachev period. However, there has been little empirical research on this phenomenon for post-Soviet Russia. This thesis therefore examines the foreign policy role of academics in the Yeltsin period between 1993 and 1997, using the NATO expansion issue as a case study.

When NATO expansion came onto the Western political agenda in late 1993, most Russian academics were opposed to expansion but they were also opposed to a confrontational response. Meanwhile, statements from Russian officials were far more inflammatory, warning of dire consequences and military countermeasures. Some academics advocated a Russia-NATO agreement as early as 1994, well before Russian officials began to discuss that possibility and decided to pursue that policy in 1996, culminating in the *Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation, and Security Between NATO and the Russian Federation* in May 1997.

Utilising qualitative methods, the thesis concludes that senior academics from traditionally influential (now Russian) Academy of Sciences institutes (and other government and independent institutes to a lesser extent) made significant contributions to policy selection, formulation, and support. Academics, therefore, remained an important part of the Russian foreign policy elite in this case, even though they were not part of the formal (constitutional) policy making process.

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