



Regional Security Governance in Post-Soviet Eurasia

The History and Effectiveness
of the Collective Security
Treaty Organization

Igor Davidzon

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ACRONYMS

AShM	Anti-Ship Missile
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CDM	Council of Defense Ministers
CES	Common Economic Space
CFAM	Council of Foreign Affairs Ministers
CFE	Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CRDF	Collective Rapid Deployment Forces
CRRF	Collective Rapid Reaction Forces
CSC	Collective Security Council
CSSC	Committee of Secretaries of Security Councils
CST	Collective Security Treaty
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization
CU	Customs Union
DPR	Donetsk People's Republic
EAEU	Eurasian Economic Union
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EEC	Eurasian Economic Commission
EU	European Union
EurAsEC	Eurasian Economic Community
EW	Electronic Warfare
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GLCM	Ground-Launched Cruise Missiles
GUAM	Organization for Democracy and Economic Development
HQ	Headquarters

IFV	Infantry Fighting Vehicles
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPR	Islamic Renaissance Party
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
JAF	Joint Armed Forces
JF	Joint Staff
JGF- CR	Joint Group of Forces of Caucasus Region
JGF- EER	Joint Group of Forces of East European Region
KFOR	Kosovo Force
LPR	Luhansk People's Republic
MP	Military Police
MR	Motor Rifle
MRL	Multiple Rocket Launchers
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NBC	Nuclear, Biological, Chemical
NRC	NATO-Russia Council
NRC	NATO-Russia Council
NWOTC	North-Western operational tactical command
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSCE	Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe
PA	Parliamentary Assembly
PARP	Planning and Review Process
PC	Permanent Council
PF	Peacekeeping Forces
PfP	Partnership for Peace
PKK	Kurdistan Workers Party
PYD	Democratic Union Party
RDII	Rational Design of International Institution
RF	Russian Federation
RSC	Regional Security Complex
RSFSR	Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic
SAM	Surface-to-Air Missile
SAP	State Armament Program
SART	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SF	Special Forces
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SRBM	Short-Range Ballistic Missile
SRF	Strategic Rocket Forces
SSBN	Nuclear-Powered Ballistic-Missile Submarines
SSM	Surface-to-Surface Missile
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WOTC	Western Operational-Tactical Command
WPO	Warsaw Pact Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

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“The Major Geopolitical Disaster” as the Prerequisite for the Post-soviet Regional Security Governance

On April 25, 2005, during his annual statement to the Federal Assembly (the upper house of the Russian parliament), President Vladimir Putin defined the collapse of the Soviet Union as “a major geopolitical disaster of the century.” (Annual Address to the Federal Assembly, 2005). This statement by the Russian President about 15 years ago was, to a large extent, resented in the West. Thus, for instance, the former President of the European Council, Donald Tusk at the conference in Batumi, Georgia, called in turn the collapse of the Soviet empire a “blessing” event for all peoples of Eastern and Central Europe (Dzekish, 2019). Nevertheless, regardless of the political connotation of Putin’s statement, it is clear that the disintegration of the Soviet Union was a “watershed,” that forced the former Soviet republics to redefine their relations with the countries of the world, in general and among themselves, in particular.

During the Soviet period, all 15 republics were part of a single large state, conducting all areas of activity subject to the regulations of the central government in Moscow. As of the mid-1980s the political-economic situation in the Soviet Union began to deteriorate. Internal unrest within the ruling Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) against “Perestroika” promoted by the first and last Soviet President, Mikhail Gorbachev, culminated in the failed coup attempt by the Party’s hard-liners on August 19–21, 1991. Against this background on December 8, 1991 at the meeting in the Belarusian Belovezhskaya

Pushcha National Park, Boris Yeltsin, Leonid Kravchuk and Stanislav Shushkevich, the leaders of Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian republics respectively, signed the Belovezha Accords, which declared *de-jure* the dissolution of the Soviet Union. While many of the new countries did not have a tradition of independent statehood, they had from the very beginning of their independence to take care of all aspects of the countries' activities (Golub & Golub, 2018). Consequently, after the declaration of independence, the former Soviet republics were required to reshape their relations among themselves in all areas: economics, trade, security, etc.

The ultimate goal of this book is to examine the topic of the regional security governance in post-Soviet Eurasia, embedded in the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO, ODKB- Organizatsiya Dogovora o Kollektivnoy Bezopasnosti in Russian)—a military alliance, assembling currently six post-Soviet countries: the Russian Federation (RF), Belarus, Armenia, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan (From the Treaty to the Organization). It should be noted, that notwithstanding the fact that there are many definitions of regional governance (as well as regional security governance), they mostly share similar approach to the concept referring to such terms as rules, order, authority (Schimmelfennig, 2006; Söderbaum, 2004; Nolte, 2016). Based on the definition of Kacowicz and Press-Barnathan (2016: 299), I define regional security governance as *the development and dynamics of security arrangement in a given region, institutionalized through regional organization that share understandings, rules and practices in the security realm* (See also Kirchner & Dominguez, 2011: Chapter 1; Adler & Greve, 2009). Accordingly, CSTO is regarded as an institutionalized regional security arrangement. Such regional security institution consists of members sharing understandings, rules and practices facilitating cooperation in the security realm. Our choice to focus in the research on a military alliance such as CSTO is derived from the fact, that it is a single security institution in the post-Soviet Eurasian region in the realm of regional security governance. Furthermore, alliances could be regarded as one of the central forms of international cooperation and as an expression of states' policy preferences (Lai & Reiter, 2000: 203). Therefore, examining such military alliance as CSTO allows us to explore the security policy interests and preferences of the six post-Soviet republics, which shape, to a large extent, the pattern of the institutionalized international cooperation.

In order to address the topic of regional security governance in post-Soviet Eurasia expressed via the military alliance, we examine the

following questions: What are the reasons and drivers of the establishment of the post-Soviet Eurasian security governance? What are the features of institutional design of the security institution? What are the military capabilities of the CSTO-members? What are the features of the cooperation pattern adopted by the member-states within CSTO and what is the alliance effectiveness? What is the effect of the alliance on the member-states security?

In contrast to most of the existing researches, which referred mostly to political (the Commonwealth of Independent States, CIS) (Obydenkova & Libman, 2019; Czerewacz-Filipowicz & Konopelko, 2017; Kubicek, 2009; Kobrinskaya, 2007) or economic (the Eurasian Economic Union, EAEU) (Vinokurov, 2018; Libman, 2020; Tar, 2016; Dragneva, 2018) realms of regional governance in post-Soviet Eurasia, the security realm embedded in CSTO drew less scholarly attention (with some exemptions: Golub & Golub, 2018; Wietz, 2014; Bescotti, 2018). Therefore, our study introduces the first attempt to tackle the gap of the insufficient research attention assigned to the study of regional governance in post-Soviet Eurasia. Moreover, beyond the book's contribution to scholarly literature on security regional governance in post-Soviet Eurasia, the importance of examining CSTO is particularly significant given the tensions between Russia and the West and the concerns of the new Cold War outbreak in the world (World Must Avoid a New Cold War, 2019). Could such military alliance as CSTO be a reliable power tool of Russia in the new, post-Cold War wave of Russia-West confrontation?

The Cold War connotation raises the question of whether CSTO could be regarded as the post-Soviet Eurasian version of existing since decades Western military alliance, the North-Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)? After all, at their core both organizations are military alliances meant to provide security to their respective member-states. To some extent the successful transatlantic cooperation among most of the European countries, the United States (US), Canada and Turkey could be regarded as almost ideal type of cooperation within the framework of a military alliance. If so, could we similarly conceptualize them? In a broader sense, could the Western military alliance, which drew significant scholarly attention (Deutsch, et al. 2015; Risse-Kappen, 1996; Koschut, 2011; Peters, 2000) be a benchmark for analysis of security organizations out of the transatlantic area?

Pursuant to Acharya and Johnston (2007: 13; see also Katzenstein, 1997), such Eurocentric approach might lead, however, “to the conclusion that weigh heavily in the directions of the failures and limitations” of non-Western versions of regional cooperation.” Accordingly, NATO could not be regarded as “one-size-fits-all” model to examine regional security governance in other parts of the world. By examining the post-Soviet Eurasian security institution through the “lens” of the transatlantic cooperation of mostly democratic countries, one can conclude, that CSTO, which cooperation pattern is different, represents an example of a “failed” regional integration process. The perception of NATO as an almost ideal model for examining integration projects in other regions, ignores the fact that the post-Soviet Eurasian security governance has its own special and different characteristics. As noted by Yurgens (2011):

The processes occurring in the post-Soviet space often do not fit into the existing Western theoretical constructs, “standing out” of the patterns identified by the example of Western regional processes.

Hence, in order to examine such case study of the non-Western security regional governance, one should assume that the alliance’s institutional design, the adopted pattern of cooperation and consequently its effectiveness, reflects interests and preferences of the respective members. In different regional organizations we should address different interests and needs of members (Nikitina, 2011). Moreover, such interests and preferences are derived from different historical and political backgrounds. The Western security regional governance embedded in NATO, which was established upon the end of the World War II to confront the Soviet threat, stresses the importance of common value-base (such as democracy and freedom) of the allies striving to a closer regional security cooperation. The post-Soviet Eurasian model of regional security governance, as reflected by CSTO, however, lacks any ideational basis and is characterized by political diversity, in which CSTO represents rather different, heterogeneous autocratic regimes, which gained their independence relatively not a long time ago and are sensible to their sovereignty. The sensibility affects the states’ readiness to deepen the participation in the regional security integration process. Such difference highlights a distinct characteristic of the post-Soviet Eurasian security governance. As Obyenkova and Libman (2019: 125), referring to economic regional institutions, remarkably noted:

...while in the existing literature on regionalism the focus is on how countries manage to become more closely interconnected and integrated over time, in Eurasia we observed the opposite process: countries originally highly integrated had to maintain a certain level of economic tie, at the same time developing their own national economies.

Accordingly, our study appears to differ from the scholarly literature, which over the years suffered from the so-called Eurocentrism trend expressed via the focus on NATO (Acharya, 2016) and tries to further contribute to the study of non-Western military alliances.

Furthermore, some previous studies of CSTO treated this organization, mostly, through the prism of Russian interests (de Haas, 2010: 40; See also Aris, 2014; Frost, 2009; Makienko, 2020). There is no doubt, that Russia is the most dominant member of the alliance, which possess the most significant economic, conventional and unconventional military capabilities. As the most influential and powerful force, Russia provides a significant part of CSTO's military personal. Moscow is also the principal weapon systems supplier to its CSTO allies. Other researches referred to CSTO as a component in the set of tools of Russian foreign policy. In this context CSTO is perceived as a tool for power projection by Russia and "as an instrument for tying member-states closer to each other" (Klein, 2019: 29; Gorenburg, 2020; Flikke, 2009), thus striving to strengthen the Russian influence on the countries in the post-Soviet region. As Keaney (2017) noted:

The CSTO most closely resembles a project to spread and deepen Russian influence, continue building upon preexisting dependencies on Russia, and prevent the entrance of other powers.

Such Russian policy was already evident in 1990's of the previous century. As stipulated in the Decree of the President of RF dated September 14, 1995, No. 940 (Official Internet Resource of the President of Russia, 1995):

The CIS incorporates our main life interests in the field of economics, defense, security, protection of rights Russians, the provision of which is the basis of the national security.

The Presidential Decree also included the goal:

To encourage intention of the Collective Security Treaty member states to unite in a defense alliance based on a community of interests and military-political goals.

Indeed, as we will demonstrate below, Moscow perceives, *inter alia*, the organization as an important tool of its foreign policy regarding the “near abroad”—a term referring to the former Soviet republics. Nevertheless, by referring to CSTO through the prism of Russian interests or as the instrument of the Russian foreign policy towards the “near abroad,” which serves Russian projection power goals, one pays less attention to the fact that also other CSTO members have their own important incentives to be members of the alliance, not least as a tool to acquire material benefits. Furthermore, smaller states can sometimes have a significant influence within alliance (Wallace, 2008: 229). Although we cannot ignore the goals and interests that Russia pursue in the alliance, adopting such narrow view on the security institution impairs, however, our understanding of CSTO, which institutional design features, cooperation pattern and not less important effectiveness thereof are also influenced by goals and interests of other, smaller members of the alliance. Therefore, our research contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the post-Soviet Eurasian military alliance.

We argue, that after the dissolution of the Soviet empire, the new geopolitical reality forced the new countries to establish regional security governance as a functional solution to the new security challenges, that confront the now independent sovereign countries. While the Baltic republics, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia wanted to disengage from their Soviet past, reduce ties with Moscow and devoted the efforts to join the Western regional projects, the European Union (EU) and NATO, other former Soviet republics strived to maintain the security relationship that developed during the Soviet era, in general and with Russia, in particular but now as the independent political entities. As former President of Kazakhstan and one of the initiators of the Collective Security Treaty, Nursultan Nazarbayev (2017) noted:

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the CSTO was created as a collective security treaty. The organization had nothing to do with ideological confrontations, with political ones, as during the Cold War—the Warsaw Pact, NATO, and so on. We were far from such desires, we wanted the chaos that arose after the collapse of the USSR to collectively

hold together so that states would develop independently, independence, territorial integrity are strengthened, and we fight against all threats.

Therefore, in view of the new post-Soviet geopolitical reality, the establishment of CSTO and the cooperation pattern of the members within the military alliance was derived from Moscow’s desire to preserve its influence in the post-Soviet area and the need to maintain security ties with former Soviet republics on the one hand and other CSTO members’ need to maintain security ties with Russia, as a dominant actor in the region, on the other hand. Nevertheless, whereas Russia, as an actor striving to reach regional hegemony, would be probably interested to deepen the integration and the allies’ dependencies on it, which could potentially influence their national foreign and security policies, other CSTO member-states seem not to share such interest. While other CSTO member-states are interested to maintain certain level of security ties, mainly with Russia, they strive to preserve political sovereignty in the field of security and foreign relations based on the independent multi-vector policies.

Accordingly, as will be discussed in detail below, to conceptualize such specific form of “holding-together” cooperation within the military alliance, we will implement the rational choice theory of institutionalism, which stresses the importance of preferences and interests of member-states as a factor influencing features of and cooperation pattern within a military alliance. Thus, CSTO is regarded as an institutional arrangement, reflecting the diverse preferences and interests of the member-states, which are sensitive to their independence.

THE BOOK’S STRUCTURE

The first two chapters of the book are devoted to the theoretical and historical discussion. In Chapter 2, we review the existing literature on the theoretical approaches to countries’ military cooperation patterns and alliances. Subsequently, we present the theoretical framework of our analysis of the post-Soviet Eurasian security institution. In Chapter 3, we discuss the diverse notions of Eurasia and briefly review the regional security organizations acting in the Eurasian region in its broader notion. Further to the definition of the boundaries of the post-Soviet Eurasia region, we review briefly the existing literature on the post-Soviet Eurasian regional governance, referring, mainly, to the history of the political and economic regional institutions.

The subsequent four chapters are devoted to the empirical analysis of CSTO. Chapter 4 will be devoted to discussion of reasons and main drivers of CSTO establishment by the post-Soviet republics and the main milestones in the history of the military alliance. In chapter 5, we descriptively review the main components of the institutional design of CSTO, based on the criteria elaborated by Koremenos, Lipson and Snidal (2001): *membership rules; scope; rights and obligations of the member-states; organization structure and control; centralization*. Chapter 6 will contain the review of the military capabilities of the CSTO member-states since the establishment of organization in 2002 and until 2020—size of the armies and defense budgets of CSTO members—to examine the states' objective capabilities to contribute to collective defense needs of the alliance. Structurally, the chapter will be divided into six sub-chapters, each devoted to the respective member-state.

Chapter 7 will examine the practical cooperation pattern with the alliance. We will refer to the effectiveness of the states, i.e., the CSTO members' ability to overcome internal disagreements and to cooperatively respond to the interests and needs of other allies. As part of the analysis, we will review the positions and conduct of the six member-states on important foreign and security issues as expressed, *inter alia*, in their readiness to allocate military resources and provide political support to the other alliance members' needs. Additionally, we will consider the effect of CSTO on security of the member-states. Chapter 8 will be devoted to the summary of the discussion and conclusions.

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