

International Security Regimes, Conflict Resolution and Peace Support Operations in the CIS

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As new challenges to international and national security emerge, which require more concerted international efforts and methods of politics and diplomacy to tackle, the role of the preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution becomes even more evident. It primarily deals with international peace support operations, conducted under the aegis of the United Nations and/or international organizations (arrangements), including the CIS.

In this context, multilateral security mechanisms at the post-Soviet territories, able to effectively interact on the basis of the Common Security principles, become extremely important. Common Security is an outside projection of the internal conflict resolution ethics, generated by democratic societies.

The current history knows amalgamated (integrated) security communities, characterized by the presence of a common decision-making mechanism and centralization (NATO, Warsaw Pact countries, etc.) and pluralistic security communities, wherein multilateral negotiations substitute for formal integration. Whereas in the years of the Cold War and bipolar confrontation the former arrangement was realized quite fully, pluralistic security communities are just in the initial phase now both on the regional and sub-regional levels and still need to be conceptualized.

International regimes proved to become one of the most effective modes of international interaction in the field of security and preventive diplomacy. International regimes can be defined as a set of defined or presumed principles, norms, rules and deci-

sion-making procedures, which reflect agreed position of actor states concerning a particular sphere of international relations.

There is the perception that international regimes include all kind of interactions within the international system. Such a broad interpretation could be argued by the fact that the system of international relations by definition consists of independent sovereign states which, simply put together, cannot be viewed as a regime. On the other hand, regimes could not be reduced to international institutions with formal rules and structure. More reasonably, international regime does exist if relations of actor states are regulated in a certain way and/or not based on independent decision-making.

International regimes could also be defined as decentralized institutions, which means not an absence of sanctions for violating norms and rules of a regime, but a necessity of consensus on sanctions implementation, which could be less strict, comparing to a collective security system. Regimes are necessary not for centralized implementation of agreed decisions, but rather for an atmosphere of confidence and predictability in international relations, conducive to international cooperation and coordination of national interests. International regimes set up standards of behavior, which could help to estimate intentions and reputation of a partner and to exchange information, thus increasing mutual predictability of behavior on international arena.

Principles, norms and rules of an international regime are closely inter-linked, which is a basic criterion for its legitimacy and viability. It helps to distinct between a correction of rules within the regime and a change of the regime per se. In common, principles, norms, rules and procedures regulate behavior of the participants of a regime, though it is not being automatically enforced with the help of hierarchical Law.

International regimes are built not so much for the purpose of implementing approved decisions but in order to create an atmosphere of predictability in international relations so as to furnish proper conditions for the states concerned in their decision making on protection and promotion of their national interests with an eye to other countries' interests as well, and

for forging ties of mutually beneficial cooperation with one another.

International regimes set certain behavior standards which help the states assess mutual intentions and reputation, and contribute to parity information exchanges, thus increasing the predictability of international behavior.

While admitting that international stability can be ensured by an asymmetrical distribution of composite national power, the author maintains that conceptualization of international regimes is possible only on the basis of interpreting interaction and mutual influence of national interests within the framework of international law and international institutions in respect of a concrete region (sub-region) and a concrete area of international relations.

The issues of predictability, trust and equal information exchanges come to the fore in building international security regimes. Meanwhile, international regimes are not completely synonymous with reciprocity; rather, they strengthen and institutionalize it.¹ Norms and regulations existing within a regime fix a common understanding of reciprocity agreed upon in this or that area of international relations, and thus forbid diversion from these norms.

The structure and functioning of international security regimes rest upon the balance of power and interests of the states concerned. For the actor states of an international system (and prospective participants in international regimes) protection and promotion of national security interests represents an unconditional top-priority issue and a starting point in pursuing day-to-day policies.

International security regimes could be most effectively utilized for regional and sub-regional conflict resolution, and for the purposes of international peace support operations.

In the CIS all major models of regional security regimes are represented: the Common Security regimes, Collective Security regimes and Cooperative Security regimes. Although all of them

¹ "Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate." Ed. David A. Baldwin, New York, 1993, p. 140.

share a number of common features, each is distinguished by clear specifics of its own. Notably, collective security regimes proved to become really workable.

Yet the collective security systems both as an abstract model and a range of different variants of its practical realization, including the Collective Security Organization of the CIS, is not fault-free either. For instance, the so-called problem of collective action, i.e. setting up collective security systems, especially in peace, may tempt many states to take advantage of their membership without shouldering appropriate costs thereof (both literally and figuratively).

Obviously, response to aggression within a collective security system is inevitably delayed. Although the theory of collective security envisages diplomacy of preemptive measures to prevent an imminent conflict, there is no exact mechanism of military response to an aggressive act within a system.

In contrast to military alliances whose members have a distinct common enemy, with plans for armed forces mobilization and deployment already worked out, etc., members of a collective security system need more time to coordinate their efforts to repulse aggression.

Placing a special emphasis on joint action to counter aggression diminishes the significance of individual response, which is probably less effective but more rapid. The advantages of collective action are in greater power, though at the expense of flexibility. In this respect the efficiency of military alliances can be placed somewhere in-between.

The advantages of collective security systems stem not only from the fact that they are more efficient in fighting aggression, but also from the fact that they strengthen international cooperation and trust, thus making aggression less likely.

Russia and its partners within the Commonwealth of Independent States which signed a Collective Security Treaty in 1992 have fully experienced all merits and demerits of a collective security system. The Treaty stood the test and moved into the new century, upgraded and reinforced.

It would be quite in place here to recall that in 1993 the Council of the Heads of State of the CIS resolved to carry out the first peacekeeping operation by the CIS in Tajikistan and prescribed Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Uzbekistan to provide their military forces for the purpose. However, the Kazakhstan parliament did not ratify the resolution and, as a result, peacekeeping forces of only three countries were stationed in Tajikistan, with the Russian 201st Motorized Infantry Division as the chief task force. The total strength of the troops made up 7,000 men instead of 16,000 provided for in the resolution of the Council of the Heads of State of the CIS.

In 1995–1996 Kyrgyzstan unilaterally withdrew its peacekeeping battalion from Tajikistan attributing the decision to lack of funds to support it. Uzbekistan came next in 1998.² Thus the absence of an effective coordination mechanism led to a collapse of the idea of a multilateral peacekeeping operation, triggering a storm of criticism in the West in respect of Russia's "unilateral interference" in Tajikistan's internal affairs.

The Bishkek summit of the Collective Security Council in October 2000 gave fresh impetus to military integration within the framework of the Treaty. The summit passed a resolution on elaborating regulations and a plan for creating collective armed forces of the Treaty member states.

Thus the Collective Security Council evolves as an effective instrument of ensuring security of its members: the principles of building regional security subsystems in Central Asia, the European part of the CIS and in the Caucasus are taking body and form; the legal basis is being improved and mechanisms of creating allied rapid deployment forces laid down.

One of the most promising directions in the activities of the Collective Security Council is creating a consultation mechanism on the problems of peacekeeping activities and forming collective rapid deployment peacekeeping forces. The Treaty (now Organization) Member States seem to have drawn a lesson from the dubious experience of their prior peacekeeping activities in Central Asia.

² Krasnaya Zvezda, March 23, 1999.

Yet the collective action problem confronts not only the Collective Security Treaty Organization of the CIS, but also the UN and regional organizations (arrangements), which are authorized to conduct international peace support operations.

Collective retaliation of an aggression could diminish unilateral retaliation, which could be less powerful but more rapid. Multilateral response is less flexible but more powerful. Comparing to these two, effectiveness of military alliances lies somewhere in-between. Automatic reaction to an aggression within a collective security system could even provoke escalation of a conflict, due to common perception that each violation of peace means violation of stability and international security.

There is also a status quo problem. Strict adherence to status quo ante within a collective security system could complicate conflict resolution, because both participants and mediators to a conflict often argue on who should be labeled as aggressor.

The necessity to urgently response to crisis and/or conflict situation often tempts for unilateral military interference, because the mechanism of multilateral consultations and coordination of national security interests of international actors concerned, still does not exist. This is proved by the debates on vital international security issues at the UN Security Council.

As Walter Slocombe puts it, "In the end, all decisions to use military force are unilateral, in the sense of being made by nation states, but those decisions must, for reasons of both prudence and principle, be made in the light of the opinions and interests of others so as to gain their support". Such an approach could be described as «unilateral if necessary, but multilateral if possible».³

Unfortunately, necessity and feasibility are rarely harmonized in the international relations. The debates on Iraq have split the UN Security Council, the EU and NATO, and put under question the very ability of the leading powers to co-operate in the fields of crisis management and regional conflict resolution.

The part of the problem is the imperfect nature of the norms and principles of International Law, as they do not provide for

³ Walter B. Slocombe, Force, Pre-emption and Legitimacy, Survival, vol. 45, no 1, Spring 2003, p. 119.

mechanisms of adequate and timely international interference in the conflict resolution, and of the use of force, if appropriate.

Of course, the reformation of the International law and of the UN Security Council could make unilateral preventive and pre-emptive measures and the use of force less probable. But the process of this reformation per se would require a lengthy process of consultation and co-ordination, with no guarantee of a mutually agreed positive result.

This is even more true in view of the fact that the global norms, principles and laws are in the process of formation, and are of theoretical, rather than of practical nature.⁴ It will take time if even the agreed norms, rules and principles can be transformed into policy co-ordination and joint decision making procedures.

An agreement on reasonable and transparent criteria of imminent threat could create a legal basis for collective action under the aegis of the UN and ad hoc international coalitions.⁵

The agreed criteria of imminent threat should correspond to a selective application of various instruments of interference and pressure, ranging from preventive diplomacy actions and sanctions to pre-emptive strikes. One should distinct between prevention and pre-emption, keeping in mind that the latter are purely military measures, while prevention presumes the use of force as a last resort only.⁶

International debates on Iraq have made evident another burning issue of the global community — the problem of leadership. Although balance of interests and policy co-ordination are of primary importance, an adequate crisis management requires the effective leadership. A leading power and/or coalition of powers should always take a lead in a crisis management effort, in terms of political responsibility, as well as financing, logistics, etc.

It happened so during the anti-terrorist operation in Afghanistan, and during the operation of the US-British coalition

⁴ Michael J. Mazarr, Acting Like a Leader, *Survival*, vol. 44, no 4, Winter 2002-03, p. 109.

⁵ Robert S. Litwak, The New Calculus of Pre-Emption, *Survival*, vol. 44, no 4, Winter 2002-03, p. 73.

⁶ Robert S. Litwak, The New Calculus of Pre-Emption, p. 54.

in Iraq. George Bush Administration has been especially severely criticized on Iraq, as the US unilateralism there has been viewed as a principal refuse from coalition building in the international security area.

Regional and trans-regional security regimes would contribute to the creation of new mechanisms of the International Law, to effectively combine the peacekeeping efforts of the UN and of regional organizations (arrangements), including the CIS. New international regimes and arrangements emerge on the post-Soviet space, which include elements of Collective Security and Co-operative Security systems. They tend to integrate and mutually reinforce each other.

After the logic of competition was replaced by that of co-operation, Russia and the United States were involved in active co-operation in the course of the anti-terrorist operation in Afghanistan. As agreed with Russia, Central Asian states, Russia's partners and allies in the Collective Security Organization and in the Shanghai Co-operation Organization, provided technical and logistic support for the US troops and the forces of the international coalition during the operation in Afghanistan. This joint decision was made after the consultations within the Collective Security Council of the Collective Security Treaty (now Organization).

As it was stressed by President Putin in his State of the Nation Address, "It was not a problem at all for our State, which has been dealing with the threat of international terrorism for quite a while, to support the effort to destroy the hotbed of terrorism. These actions have really contributed to strengthening of security on the southern borders of our States, and to seriously improving the security situation in many other countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States".⁷

Effective conflict resolution would not be possible without establishing of viable international coalitions of those willing and able to join them, even if they differ in terms of goals and scale of

⁷ России надо быть сильной и конкурентоспособной, Послание Президента РФ В. В. Путина Федеральному Собранию Российской Федерации, Российская газета, 19 апреля 2002 г.

activities. In many cases, cross-border co-operation, involving non-government actors, is not less important than state-to-state co-operation.

Such coalitions should not be limited to narrowly defined tasks and timetables. These coalitions could only be effective if those actors who are long-term allies and who are willing and able to work together join them. Long-term alliances are no less important for the coalitions as a strictly defined mission. You can not force anybody to multilateral actions — now, as well as during the Cold War period.⁸

The NATO-Russia Council could become an effective mechanism of trans-regional security co-operation. The Council was set up as a body for consultations, consensus building, joint decision making and joint actions of Russia and NATO Member States.

As is stated in the Declaration of Rome, adopted at the NATO/Russia Summit on May 28, 2002, "The members of the NATO-Russia Council, acting in their national capacities and in a manner consistent with their respective collective commitments and obligations, will take joint decisions and will bear equal responsibility, individually and jointly, for their implementation. Each member may raise in the NATO-Russia Council issues related to the implementation of joint decisions".⁹

The Declaration of Rome provides for various mechanisms of consultation and co-operation, including the following ones:

- The Council meetings at the level of Head of States and governments, Foreign and Defense Ministers, Ambassadors, etc.;
- Meetings of the Preparatory Committee, at the level of the NATO Political Committee, with Russian representation at the appropriate level;
- Sessions of committees or working groups for individual subjects or areas of cooperation on an ad hoc or permanent basis, as appropriate;

⁸ Francois Heisbourg, *How the West Could Be Won*, in: *One Year After: A Grand Strategy for the West?*, p.152.

⁹ Declaration of Heads of States and Governments of the Russian Federation and NATO Member States, <http://www.nato.int>.

- Meetings of military representatives and Chiefs of General Staff;
- Meetings of defense experts.

Unlike the Russia-NATO Permanent Joint Council, which was a mere consultation body, the Russia-NATO Council provides for joint decision making and joint action, as it is built in the NATO political/military working machine at all levels.

The Russia-NATO Council competencies include:

- Struggle against terrorism;
- Crisis Management;
- Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD);
- Arms Control and Confidence-Building Measures;
- Theatre Missile Defense (TMD);
- Search and Rescue at Sea;
- Military-to-Military Cooperation and Defense Reform;
- Civil Emergencies;
- New Threats and Challenges.¹⁰

In this context, one can not exclude NATO-Russia co-operation in the field of peacekeeping, including joint peace support operations.

Political/diplomatic mechanisms of interaction, as described, create a basis for legitimate, in terms of International Law, trans-regional security co-operation of the key subjects of preventive diplomacy, conflict resolution and international peacekeeping.

¹⁰ Declaration of Heads of States and Governments of the Russian Federation and NATO Member States.