

***Graeme P. Herd and Jennifer D. P. Moroney (eds.):
Security Dynamics in the Former Soviet Bloc.***

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US foreign policy veteran Lawrence Eagleburger once noted that the bi-polarity of the Cold War era would be missed due to its perceived simplification of the international system. The West often thought of the East bloc, and particularly the USSR, as a monolithic whole, often referred to merely as "Russia".

This book, "Security dynamics in the former Soviet bloc", gives a glimpse into the rapid transitions and changes in the recent past in the former USSR territories, and compares the different paths the newly-independent states took. The editors, Graeme P. Herd of the George C. Marshal Center for Security Studies, and Jennifer D. P. Moroney of Defence Forecasts Inc International, USA, have divided the book by three main regions: the Baltic region, the Slavic core of the USSR and an outer rim including Moldova, the Caucasus and Central Asia. They have asked a number of scholars familiar with the region to contribute articles on developments in the different states/regions. The emphasis, as the title says, is on security and issues such as civilian control over the military, conflicts and their resolution, the involvement of international organisations, and relations with neighbouring countries and the West.

To make Western audiences better understand how and why the republics of the former Soviet Union developed in different ways, Herd and Mooney's book offers a good insight. The introduction sets the scene, describing the hopes for a "third wave" of democratisation and economic liberalism, which would spread throughout the former communist bloc at the end of the Cold War. This is contrasted with the opposite views that the transitions and introductions of democracy bore risks of instability and fears that could be compounded by extremists and increasing social tensions. After this foreword, part I outlines the different developments in the former republics of the USSR.

The following part examines the Baltic region. Adam Grissom, a RAND expert on military issues, describes the motives behind the energetic drive for independence, and the desire to join NATO and the EU. The motives of the Baltic states (Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia) were their trauma of being abandoned by the international community in the 1930's and their vulnerability vis-à-vis their giant neighbour, Russia. The aims of this region were safeguarding national independence by receiving recognition of their state sovereignty, and later by seeking European sponsorship to integrate with Western security and economic structures. The EU's and NATO's conditions for entry positively shaped reforms, and helped stabilise the Baltic economies and democracies. However, although the transitions were painful, the states have yet to reach NATO standards. Another problem is that with EU and NATO memberships, the Baltic States might lose interest in further regional co-operation, leaving the region "more exposed than it needs to be to such challenges as Russian military vulnerability and instability in Kaliningrad" (p. 29). Even

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though he incorrectly cites the Baltic's annexation by Russia as being in the 19th century (it was the 18th), Grissom's arguments are coherent and well-applied. As a point of critique, it would have also been very interesting to consider how much (if at all) the Baltic states could try to influence other former USSR regions, and states like Ukraine and Belarus. Unfortunately, none of the authors spend any time discussing the prospects of the Baltic states becoming a role model for others.

Following this analysis, Mel Huang examines inter-Baltic cooperation. People tend to see the region as one unity due to geography and shared history, yet regardless of differences in language, religion, and other social factors, there is reciprocal attraction between Estonia and Finland due to ethnic ties, and another between Lithuania and Poland, so some regional politicians show little interest in Baltic unity. In the defence sector, a joint battalion (BALTBAT) was created, but soon became "a giant PR-tool" (p. 38). The results of other efforts were mixed due to limited financial resources. In addition, other defence co-operation tools like BALTRON, BALTNET and BALTDEFCOL are discussed. On the question of whether NATO entry would undermine Baltic military co-operation, Huang sees little reason for this, noting positive events such as the attempted restructuring of BALTBAT for modern peacekeeping missions, and efforts to co-ordinate defence procurement. The chapter provides a clear, balanced analysis of inter-regional co-operation and the difficulties facing it.

Huang's chapter is followed by one from Ingmar Oldberg, associated research director at the Swedish Defence Research Institute, examining Russian policy towards the Baltic states. Many Russian pressure tactics (mostly economic) backfired and damaged Russian commercial interests, while increasing Baltic determination to become more Western-orientated. A further problem was the presence of large Russian minorities in the Baltic region. Given these issues, mutual trust between the Baltic states and Russia has been stunted. Russian policy was often incoherent and unpredictable, and sometimes contradictory, reflecting differing Russian styles and domestic turbulence, such as tensions between the Russian government and businesses, as well as attempts to redefine its global position throughout the 1990s. Oldberg cites the example of oil exports through the harbour of Ventspils, Latvia. Russia is unhappy about the NATO enlargement, and worries about the future status of Kaliningrad and loss of trade due to the Baltic accessions to the EU. Putin's pragmatic foreign policy allowed Russia to accept the Baltic memberships, although tensions remain. Oldberg's excellent descriptive style facilitates an understanding of this complex topic, which he covers comprehensively, making it easy to grasp the difficulties between Russia and the Baltic states.

The third part deals with the core of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) – a loose organisation of the former Soviet republics, minus the three Baltic States. When the USSR dissolved, Russian foreign policy was Western-orientated, but, following an identity crises and economic deterioration, this shifted to an anti-Western stance aiming at balancing US domination by co-operation with China and India, and by restructuring the CIS. Putin's foreign policy can be seen as a combination of the two trends: At-

lanticism and Slavicism. The author of this part, Rosaria Puglisi, research fellow at the University of Leeds, calls this pragmatic nationalism with a post-colonial approach towards the CIS. Economics played an important role in developing this attitude by providing Russian capital and industry with new markets, while shielding them from foreign competition. Although there is increased cooperation between the different Russian elites, foreign policy still contains many contradictions, sometimes embodying the clash between big business interests and the state. This chapter gives a good summary of the main trends in Russian foreign policy and its conclusions are still valid, as current events have proven.

LTC Frank Morgese, US Army, writes about border security between NATO and EU states, and Ukraine and Russia, an issue that remains sensitive for many in the West. NATO's eastern frontier is less of an issue, since NATO is concerned with "hard" security, while international attention has shifted to 'soft' cross-border issues such as immigration and the drugs trade. The Finish-Russian border is examined as an example of future Schengen border relations. Yet this border is relatively easy to maintain due to geography and history, so the lack of difficulty can hardly be repeated at the new eastern frontiers following the Polish adoption of the Schengen rules in October 2007. The question remains as to how states with Schengen borders will relate to their neighbours, and whether the borders could become a new curtain dividing the continent. Morgese's arguments are convincing, and help the reader comprehend the nature of future problems, especially between Poland and Ukraine. The West can certainly expect difficulties at the outpost of the EU border.

This analysis leads to a chapter from Victor Chudowsky from the University of Connecticut, which tackles the difficulties of Russian-Ukrainian relations by examining disputes like the Black Sea Fleet and the status of the Crimea. Ukraine, like the Baltic states, sought to secure its independence and to counter Russian neo-colonialism by moving Westwards. According to Chudowsky, it was mainly American support that secured Ukraine's integrity and helped shift Russian attitudes from imperialism to pragmatism, even though Ukraine is aware that its geography, its history and its economic weakness dictate good easterly relations. Chudowsky's points are valid, but his conclusion that the USA should expand this policy to all CIS-states neglects their diversity.

Belarus, north of Ukraine, is a sort of Soviet Museum, as Clelia Rontoyanni, research fellow at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, explains. Its president acts like a power-hungry communist, viewing NATO's expansion with suspicion, and moving towards closer cooperation with Russia, particularly in defence matters. Ironically, the EU is seen as a model for the union between Russia and Belarus. Yet this project faces difficulties, the most important being that dictators do not dilute their power-bases. Rontoyanni's topic takes in the scope of the Belarusian government, but could have further analysed the Belarusian opposition to see whether there are sufficiently developed alternatives.

The final part examines the situation on the periphery of the CIS. Trevor Waters, analyst at Jane's Intelligence Review, capably describes the developments in Europe's poorest state, Moldova. In the Moldovan conflict national-

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ity is less important; Waters attributes the conflict more to a clash of ideologies between those wanting a return to the USSR, and those trying to create a modern state. The importance of Russia's influence in dividing the state is examined. With the electoral victory of the Communists, Moldova moved further towards Russia, while "Moscow will continue to pursue the policy of equivocation and prevarication" (p. 149). Water's points are well-considered and logical, and portray the underlying knowledge of the author. This chapter is particularly interesting, as it contradicts the common view describing the state's problem in ethnic terms.

Another outer rim of the ex-USSR is the South Caucasus, "A quagmire in which ideology, natural resources, historic feuds and nationalism clash" according to authors Tamara Pataria and David Darchiashvili, both leading experts at the Caucasian Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development in Georgia. The Southern Caucasian states are weak, and have problems with minorities. War broke out between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Russia tried to restore its influence using similar methods to those used in Moldova. Recent initiatives towards regional co-operation made by Georgia and Azerbaijan are orientated more towards the West, while Armenia moved closer to Russia. In their conclusion, the authors are somewhat optimistic, although they offer no concrete ideas on how to improve the situation. Prospects look poor, and power struggles between the two blocs of Russia, Iran and Armenia against Georgia, Azerbaijdhan, Turkey and the USA seem likely.

Finally, Jennifer Moroney examines an area long neglected by the West, but brought to American attention in the course of the War on Terror. Central Asia, with rich oil and gas resources, serves as a springboard to places like Afghanistan. Central Asian states seek Western aid to consolidate themselves and overcome Russian dominance. The main dilemma for the West is that while it seeks regional stability for geopolitical security, it also wants to promote democracy and socio-economic reforms. Currently the Central Asian states are brutal dictatorships, showing scant interest in democracy. The West, and in particular the US, has so far opted for stability but, as the author explains, these states are in desperate need of reforms to ease social tension. Moroney shows detailed knowledge of this region, and calls for greater Western involvement. Her points are valid and well explained, but her arguments are somewhat over-optimistic with regards to Western capabilities. Other factors that should have been examined further include Russia's and China's interests, as well as those of Iran, Turkey and other mid-sized powers.

In conclusion, this book is a good resource for explaining how and why the republics of the former USSR developed in different ways. This is in particular true for Western audiences which have interests in understanding this complex and vast territory, but are not experts in the area. The only notable omission is the failure by the authors, writing in 2003, to cover the possible impacts of 9/11 and the "war on terror" on their respective regions and states. Nonetheless the book is easy to read, the chapters are well structured, encompassing a comprehensive and coherent analysis, and giving the reader a valuable insight.

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