Geopolitical Role of Regional Inter-State Organizations

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Global context must inevitably involve not only correlation of forces and interests of major world powers, but as well coordination of interests and actions of major international organizations. Regional inter-state organizations recognized (under credentials of the UN Charter Chapter VIII) as regional collective security providers are of special importance for the effectiveness and “harmony” within the “Global Concert” to be shaped.

Regional Inter-State Organizations (RIOs) at Eurasian Geopolitical Context

Europe boasts the highest density of multilateral international interaction mechanisms in the world. The key regional structures are the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe (CE), the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Added to the number of European multilateral interaction mechanisms should be the bodies that have sprung up on the territory of the former Soviet Union. We are talking first of all about the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). The strict focus of these structures first and foremost on the post-Soviet international political space determines their specific character and importance in the context of ensuring European security.

In the system of multilateral cooperation in Europe a certain role is played by the United Nations (UN) and numerous structures aimed at the development of sub-regional cooperation.

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Number of Participating States</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OSCE</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Includes the United States and Canada, Caucasus states (3) and Central Asian states (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Council of Europe</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Includes Caucasus states (3)</td>
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<td>European Union</td>
<td>27 (28)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Includes the United States and Canada</td>
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<td>CIS</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Includes Caucasus states (2) and Central Asian states (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSTO</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Includes Caucasus states (1) and Central Asian states (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Nations</td>
<td>193 (including 45 from Europe)</td>
<td>Out of the five permanent Security Council members four are from the Euro-Atlantic area</td>
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The following trends in the development of geopolitics in Europe are worth mentioning.

First, the expansion of the Council of Europe, the EU and NATO. These structures are gradually taking on an almost pan-European dimension, if not by membership, then by area of operation and proclaimed responsibility.

Second, the growing interaction between EU/NATO states and non-EU/NATO states, with CIS countries occupying the top of the list of the latter. The EU is the biggest trading partner for most of them. It offers CIS and Transcaucasian countries prospective association and closer cooperation, including establishing a free-trade zone in exchange for harmonizing economic regulation, technical standards and the basic principles of the political system. The EU maintains direct political dialogue with Central Asian countries with the aim of expanding economic, energy, and financial cooperation, cementing the rule of law and respect of human rights, and interacting to meet new security challenges and threats.

NATO develops differentiated partnerships with most CIS countries on the basis of the principle of keeping the door open for their eventual membership.

Third, the “division of labor” among European regional organizations. In the 1990s, the idea of transforming the OSCE into an umbrella organization and establishing an “executive committee” vested with powers identical to those of the UN Security Council was mooted. It was suggested that the OSCE take on conflict settlement functions or delegate them to other organizations (NATO, EU, CIS). But such an approach failed to garner the necessary support.

A new practice of interaction took shape during the settlement of conflicts in the former Yugoslavia (Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1995, Kosovo in 1999). Under UN political guidance, the NATO alliance performed the tasks of providing security, while the OSCE took charge of forming democratic institutions (including justice and police bodies), holding elections, establishing the rule of law and the supremacy of human rights. The European Union, backed by specialist international organizations, was responsible for economic reconstruction.

Fourth, a functional shift in the activities of Euro-Atlantic structures. The OSCE holds a comprehensive (though not exclusive) mandate to discuss security issues, economic and humanitarian cooperation, crisis management and conflict settlement. NATO was originally devised as a collective defense organization, the EU as a body of economic integration, and the Council of Europe as a guardian of democracy and human rights standards. However, over recent years a certain shift in the functional areas of activity of the above-mentioned structures has been apparent.

As it scales down its military activity and potential in Europe, NATO is starting to become involved in the settlement of crises outside Europe. The European Union is stepping up its security functions, taking part in the management of crises in Europe and beyond, helping respond to the new challenges and threats, etc. As the OSCE and NATO tone down their activity in South-East Europe, the EU is stepping in to take their place.

This results in higher potential interchangeability of the activities performed by the European multilateral structures. The situation, accentuated by the high density of such structures in the
region, gives rise to a certain competition between them. At the same time, when a crisis erupts it becomes possible to assign different roles to the OSCE, the EU, NATO and the UN in order to cater to the different stakeholders’ tastes.

In general, it appears appropriate to set and resolve the tasks of upgrading the European security architecture while taking account of the following:

- It is legitimate to raise the issue of how effective the existing multilateral organizations are in Europe, and of their broader interaction in the interests of strengthening European security.

- Russia is interested that the CSTO features on the list of the main protagonists of the “European concert” of multilateral structures. To achieve this, it is necessary to at least make efforts towards increasing the viability of this organization.

- It is important to bear in mind that the overwhelming majority of European countries do not see any need in performing a profound change or a extensive makeover of the existing mechanism of multilateral cooperation, considering it, if not utterly efficient, at least adequate. With further expansion of the EU and NATO and their closer cooperation with CIS countries on the cards, the potential number of supporters of the “coalition for change” may shrink.

- Promoting the idea of a brand-new organization that would take charge of guaranteeing European security from scratch appears equally problematic. The international political landscape of the continent is overloaded with various multilateral structures. Without serious reform, adding a new – and important – one to their number could only increase the clutter. Especially as the newcomer would require its “own field” assigned to it and a delimitation of the competences with other bodies already in place on the European continent.

- The difficulties that the existing regional organizations experience in responding to crises in Europe stem not so much from an institutional deficit as from a lack of enthusiasm from the participating countries to seek compromise.

- Another problem lies with the key member-countries not being sufficiently prepared to expand the field of independent action by the regional organizations or to allow them more autonomy.

**Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS): Glass Half-Full or Half-Empty?**

Formed in 1991, immediately at the days of collapse of the Soviet Union, by now the CIS already accomplished its main function: to provide relatively peaceful “divorce” of the 15 former Republics and division of the infrastructure of the former USSR into 15 new independent states.

There are a number of reasons underpinning the continuing importance of the CIS for Russia. However, fully-fledged and effective participation of this structure in the resolution of problems related to ensuring European security as well as its involvement in the process of upgrading the pan-European architecture appears problematic.

There are at least two main reasons for this. Firstly, a limited viability of the CIS, which results in its vague positioning in the European international political space.
Secondly, the unmistakably dominant role of Russia in the Commonwealth prompts some of its members to exercise caution in entrusting the structure with any meaningful authority and powers, and external counterparts to refuse to consider it as a "powerful" figure in the international arena because in their view it would be tantamount to agreeing to Russian domination in the organization.

Still, in a number of aspects CIS-related activities correlate with the problems of European security. For instance, the Council of the Heads of State may focus its attention on it, and the issues of security and military cooperation can be tackled in a more detailed way by the Council of Defense Ministers, which to all appearances is so far concerning itself with relatively peripheral issues. In the field of "soft security" (cooperation on such issues as drug trafficking and the fight against trans-border crime) the CIS continues to play a role, even though it is facing competition from the CSTO and GUAM.

The biggest joint project by the CIS countries in the military field is cooperation in setting up the Unified Air Defense System. Still, Ukraine favors bilateral cooperation, while its prospective NATO membership adds to the uncertainty of its position in the project. Accordingly, the logic of moving the system under the auspices of the CSTO as a more compact and homogeneous body becomes more convincing.

Early expectations of a rather important role to be played by the CIS in the settlement of conflicts on the territory of its member states have proved futile. The only peacekeeping mission ever to take place under the auspices of the CIS (and also approved by the UN Security Council) has been dispatched to Abkhazia.

The role of the CIS in the process of upgrading the architecture of European security has to be defined with caution and realism.

- An artificial reanimation of this structure is problematic, which limits its capabilities in impacting the tasks of European security.

- It is worth outlining the presence of the CIS (even in the most general terms) in the documents, decisions and mechanisms aimed at strengthening security over the former Soviet space (excluding the Baltic States). In particular, it may turn out to be politically worthwhile to counterbalance the involvement in the region of other multilateral structures (most importantly, the EU and NATO).

- On some specific aspects ("soft security", the Unified Air Defense System) the CIS may be considered as a reserve structure in case if CSTO for any reasons will go out of the game.

The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) as a New Type of Geopolitical Actor in Eurasia

Important sub-regional inter-state actor is the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), consisting of six states of the Eurasia (Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Tajikistan), while Uzbekistan after entering into organization twice finally withdrew from it in 2012.

The CSTO may be defined as a developing multifunction security structure of a new type. Throughout the current decade it has been fine-tuned to combine two major functions: countering traditional external military threats (creation of a military union, unification and
merger of the military infrastructures of the seven participating states) on the one hand, and countering new threats and challenges on the other.

The specific character of the CSTO as far as its membership is concerned is in the existence of three de facto autonomous segments, united by Russia's uncontested core role in the organization. Belarus, Armenia and the Central Asian countries face different external threats creating serious objective difficulties in fostering horizontal ties between them and limiting the possibility of developing military and political cooperation within the CSTO framework in general. Russia emerges as the main integrating force on the territory of the CSTO as the only country capable of providing real assistance in ensuring the security of its partners in each of the three above-mentioned territorial segments.

For them, cooperation with Russia is an important but not the only foreign policy priority; they are also looking for ways to counter external and internal threats (as well as to strengthen their own positions in relation to Russia) in other fields. Other problems inside the CSTO are the disagreements among the Central Asian countries (struggle for influence, an increasing water deficit, etc.).

In 2009, the members agreed to set up Collective Forces for Operative Reaction (CFOR) - in contrast to earlier such attempts, not on a regional but on a common basis. All member states have agreed to contribute military contingents (Russia - a division and a brigade, Kazakhstan - a brigade, the rest - one battalion each). The total strength of the CFOR is planned at about 16,000. The CSTO is also planning to set up a joint air defense system and a joint threat identification system for chemical and biological warfare. Military and technical cooperation has been actively promoted. A system of joint training of military personnel has taken shape.

As far as countering "new threats" is concerned the CSTO approved set of documents regulating the issues of joint peacekeeping; significant efforts are being undertaken to promote counterterrorist activities (information exchange, joint exercises, etc.). One of the key elements of the CSTO’s work is the fight against drug trafficking.

The CSTO, in the context of Russian efforts to upgrade the European security architecture, may become one of its elements due to a number of current and prospective factors: it is the only multilateral structure in the post-Soviet area capable of conducting military operations; in this capacity it can be used independently or as a partner (counterpart) of the EU, NATO or the OSCE; its role may turn out to be outstanding in efforts to stop drug trafficking from Afghanistan to Europe; supporting US and NATO efforts in Afghanistan could become a step of paramount importance for increased international political exposure of the CSTO; more generally - a focus by the organization on certain "new threats" (drug trafficking, terrorism) could be interpreted as a move away from the traditionalistic approaches to providing security.

Russia is interested in promoting the CSTO as an element of the new system of European security. At the same time it is important to identify the circumstances that work against it and make efforts to at least alleviate them. Among them are, for instance, the notions that are widespread in the West that the CSTO is first and foremost a "Russian tool" and that by strengthening security and fighting terrorism the organization understands a perpetuation of the existing "undemocratic regimes". To that effect efforts should be made to achieve greater CSTO transparency, broader informational support, and interaction with non-governmental organizations.

The possibility of implementation and the effectiveness of the following measures to heighten the significance of the CSTO in the eyes of its participating countries and external counterparties
should be considered: regularly briefing the leadership of the CSTO states on the development or
the outcome of certain bilateral negotiations (on nuclear disarmament, for instance); conducting
consultations on the issues of global politics; and advance notification of important diplomatic or
military steps or initiatives.

It is imperative to think about strengthening the real character of military functions, which will
 promote interest in the CSTO as a partner from NATO and the EU. In that sense the success of
the CFOR project and convincingly presented information to that effect could be very
significant. Another line of efforts could be making this particular organization responsible for
effective support of the logistics of NATO's air operations in Afghanistan or organizing military
cargo transit through Central Asian states to Afghanistan by land.

**CSTO and NATO: Just Neighbors or Geopolitical Rivals?**

With regard to the functional nature of CSTO as geopolitical entity, we should note that
two major Western integrative institutions are of a similar nature – the NATO and the European
Union. Both have to varying degrees combined political integration and military integration (or, if speaking on broader terms, security integration), which in principle makes possible their
linking-up and also, sometime in the future, coordination of functions with CSTO.

Interaction with NATO is one of the most problematic areas of the international political
dimension of CSTO’s activities.

For the perspective of international law, CSTO can be categorized as the same type of
organization as NATO: a regional multi-state security organization with authorities
 corresponding to those indicated in Chapter 8 of the United Nations Charter. Both organizations
are recognized as such by the UN.

In contrast to NATO, CSTO already has a legal framework for developing cooperation
with the North Atlantic Alliance. CSTO’s Council on Collective Security adopted a decision on
the key areas of dialogue and cooperation with NATO.

But a reciprocal move on NATO’s part did not follow. The following year one
particular issue was highlighted in the general cooperation agenda – combating narcotics
trafficking. But this proposal for cooperation also went unanswered.

The North Atlantic Alliance is still in no hurry to establish institutionalized relations,
preferring rather to work separately with CSTO members within the framework of the Russia-
NATO Council, Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) and Partnership for Peace program
(PfP).

CSTO is not mentioned in NATO’s new Strategy Concept. But it does indicate that
Euro-Atlantic security “is best assured through a wide network of partner relationships with
countries and organizations around the globe.” At the same time, the specific list of international
organizations for partnership is limited to the United Nations and European Union, with
reference to enhanced cooperation within the context of the Mediterranean Dialogue and the
Istanbul Cooperation Initiative. However, this document does pay particular attention to
opportunities for enhancing cooperation with Russia.

At the same time, the Strategic Concept speaks of the importance of the Euro-Atlantic
Partnership Council and Partnership for Peace program, which include all member states of
CSTO. However, it seems important that partnerships are to be enhanced through “flexible
formats” across and beyond existing frameworks for cooperation. So it seems that there is a
conceptual basis for establishing relations between NATO and CSTO.

However, in contrast to Russia-NATO relations, along the CSTO-NATO track we see
neither perceptible debates nor purposeful exchanges of opinions, not to mention constructive
and specific proposals, perhaps with the exception of the Afghan issue.

With this in mind, we should note that both organizations with their respective
fundamental documents have the opportunity to develop flexible forms of interaction. Considering the existing hindrances to relationship building, perhaps is would be prudent to
develop cooperation through specific programs and focus areas as a starting point on the path toward possible institutionally formalized cooperation.

The need to launch discussions arises out of the various possible scenarios for the development of the international situation. Of concern are the most pressing difficult issues which must be addresses according to priority, including those which skeptics say are preventing the two organizations from establishing cooperative relations.

Among these arguments that provide grounds for experts’ most pessimistic or skeptical assessments of cooperation prospects, we should pay close attention to the following.

1) NATO’s readiness for cooperation will signal the organization’s possible support of integration processes in the CIS, with Russia playing the leading role, and recognition of Russia’s right to have its own special interests in this area.

Even within the framework of such an assessment, constructive scenarios of cooperation between the two organizations are limited to resolution of the situation in and around Afghanistan. And even here, there are suspicions that the US and its allies in NATO want to drag Russia and CSTO into the war in that country and thus split up both the burden and responsibility. But, as speculation goes, even if such a scenario plays out, it would have to be under the auspices of the United Nations, which would require a UN Security Council resolution. And under such circumstances the signing of a cooperation agreement directly between CSTO and NATO is unlikely.

2) NATO has proven uncompromising in its preference to develop direct relations with the member states of CSTO rather than with the organization itself, and this has been confirmed by the alliance’s approach in recent decades.

3) Cold War stereotypes continue to hold sway. At NATO it is a commonly held belief that CSTO was created by Russia with the aim of offsetting the alliance. Furthermore, Brussels, according to skeptics, continues on a course aimed at maintaining its ‘military and political monopoly.’ The alliance does not intend to support the idea of coalitional political and military multi-polarity, particularly in Eurasia.

4) The ‘China factor’ and the cooperation of Russia and several other CSTO members participating in SCO are additional considerations. In this regard, particular emphasis is given to the possible negative of Beijing to the development of relations between CSTO and NATO. In any case, Chinese concerns will be an issue and relations between Moscow and Beijing may cool. Furthermore, in assessing the various options for cooperation between CSTO and NATO, the views of other SCO member states and observers not participating in CSTO must be taken into consideration.

5) CSTO is not without its own problems. The organization has certain internal contradictions, including its geographical scope, as well as the insufficiently clear and active positioning of the organization in such a way as to provide a big-picture understanding of its plans and objectives for NATO.

6) NATO’s adherence to a course aimed at developing bilateral relations with individual CSTO member states reinforces suspicions that certain states are engaged in a double game. The countries, meeting with NATO behind Russia’s back, are supposedly placing an emphasis on their readiness to cooperate with the alliance through the Partnership for Peace program. Furthermore, there is some opposition within the organization to building relations with NATO. An agreement between CSTO and NATO is viewed by the leadership of some countries as implying the transfer of certain functions to Russia, which plays a leading role in the organization, thus amounting to an infringement on their sovereignty in the realm of foreign affairs.

7) The plans of the US and NATO to expand their presence in the post-Soviet space, particularly in Central Asia, are not a good fit with the objective of building relations with CSTO on the whole. These plans can be realized through bilateral relations with individual member countries of CSTO, which in turn as an organization is quite negative about separate relations.
And such relations are a source of irritation that serves to reinforce within CSTO arguments against further development of relations with NATO.

8) CSTO continues to be perceived in the West as an organization which supports ‘authoritarian regimes’ and some of its member states are qualified as such.

9) The ‘Belarus factor’ is worth a separate mention. The critical attitude of the West toward the current leadership of Belarus presents an obstacle to cooperation with CSTO.

By all appearances, the recognition of the organization as an equal partner of NATO faces not only external but also internal obstacles. The latter arise not only from within the organization but also from the positions of a number of member countries, including Russia. At the same time, given the lack of progress in bilateral relations between the two security organizations, it is understandable that the silence in Brussels with regard to cooperation initiatives has resulted in the disappointment of the leadership of CSTO and Russia.

Experts’ efforts, including multidisciplinary efforts, should be activated. Such efforts could be based on three ‘platforms’ – 1) within Russia, 2) among experts of all CSTO member countries and 3) joint CSTO-NATO expert consultations.

Naturally, it would be problematic to launch a CSTO-NATO mechanism that greatly differs from the themes Russia-NATO engagement, which has already made some substantial progress, and it will require concerted and extensive efforts to achieve visible results. At the same time, it should be noted that a number of the problems that need to be resolved for the sake of developing relations between Russia and NATO are similar to the issues hindering CSTO-NATO cooperation. Proposals aimed at resolving these problems were put forward in INSOR’s report published last year – *Prospects for the Development of Russia-NATO Relations.*

Efforts made toward making this possible would be highly useful and not only with regard to the objective of launching a mechanism for interaction between CSTO and NATO. Also implied here is the study and discussion of a wide range of security issues which could be resolved through the cooperation of these two organizations. CSTO-NATO discussions could very well broaden and elevate the scope of interaction to something much greater than, for example, cooperation on the Afghan situation. It could encompass Euro-Atlantic security from Vancouver to Vladivostok, a European security treaty, etc.

It is quite clear that bilateral cooperation is not a goal in and of itself. It follows that more than just dialogue and talk is needed; the dialogue must be topical and serious, focused on areas of mutual interest and value.

This dialogue could touch upon assessments of the advantages of each organization in addressing various common threats. One of the advantages of CSTO in comparison with NATO is its mechanism for cooperation between various law-enforcement and special forces in the fight against terrorism. And in this area such cooperation is very expedient.

In terms of a step-by-step plan for the near future, we could consider the following. While working on CSTO’s doctrinal documents, it would be useful to explore the possibilities for aligning them with the new Strategic Concept of the North Atlantic alliance. We should not forget the experience of the NATO Expert Group which during the drafting of the new concept consulted with Russian colleagues. Likewise, CSTO-NATO dialogue could in part focus on the principles expressed in the doctrinal documents of CSTO and which wording NATO might consider problematic or, to the contrary, positive.

Much of value for experts’ efforts toward establishing CSTO-NATO dialogue can be found in the work of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC). Making use of these previous efforts would help optimize work and put the focus on the problems specifically concerning the relations of these two security organizations and the subsequent resolution of these problems.

For example, this concerns the issue of peacekeeping. Nearly a decade ago the NRC Peacekeeping Working Group agreed upon a document stipulating the ‘Political Aspects for a Generic Concept for Joint NATO-Russia Peacekeeping Operations.’

An important practical task is the provision of at least some level of operation compatibility of the Collective Rapid Reaction Force and the Peacekeeping Force of CSTO with
the NATO Response Force. An agenda needs to be drawn up to outline the steps necessary to achieve such operational compatibility between the two alliances.

It is possible to invite to trainings of CSTO’s combined arms task forces not only observers from NATO and NATO member states but also incorporate training scenarios involving joint operations with NATO forces. It would be appropriate for starters to invite a small group (perhaps a platoon of paratroopers) from the NATO Response Force to work on operational coordination.

If we look at the current cooperation development between Russia and the US and Russia and NATO for Afghanistan, we see that it touches four areas. Firstly, intensive consultations on the future of Afghanistan. Secondly, the northern transit corridor. Thirdly, narcotics trafficking countermeasures. And, fourthly, cooperation within the NATO-Russia Council is largely focused on two aspects: training of narcotics specialists in Russia and issues related to a trust fund for repairing and maintaining the Afghan helicopter fleet. It is clear that narcotics trafficking is a central issue of these consultations.

It seems that cooperation along the Russia-NATO and Russia-US tracks is not going to be sufficient to find comprehensive solutions. Sooner or later the need will arise to establish full-fledged relations with CSTO. This organization has serious experience as well as the potential to make an important contribution in this difficult area. It is no coincidence that NATO observers are paying close attention to Operation Canal, a CSTO anti-narcotics effort.

At the same time, judging by the declarations of US and NATO officials, they are not against consultations with CSTO on Afghanistan, including on the narcotics trafficking issue. Furthermore, Washington and Brussels (just as Russia) are in search of regional partners for solving the Afghanistan problem as well as practical areas for cooperation and new methods of interaction. But at the same time, the customary caveat is always made about the need of the US and NATO to “understand the practical meaning” of cooperation with CSTO and “clarify what can be achieved” through such cooperation.

In this regard, even accepting the skeptical viewpoint that such remarks mask the clear lack of a desire on the part of Brussels and Washington to establish cooperative relations with CSTO, it would be prudent to once again raise the issue of the possible opportunities for CSTO in regulating the situation in and around Afghanistan with specific rationale and proposals. And at the same time we should not make the appearances that we are engaging in this gratuitously; we should undertake this based on our own interests and concerns. Work in this area with an emphasis on the narcotics trafficking issue (at least for the short term) should be invigorated.

We should not lose sight of the fact that in recent years CSTO has become increasing engaged in the Afghanistan issue. Its structure has been incorporated into the CIS Antiterrorism Center. Operation Canal is ongoing and has been successful in seizing narcotics contraband. Russia and other CSTO member states have experience dating back to the Soviet era as well as analytical capacity that could be used by NATO. It should be noted that as the public attitude toward the West grows increasing negative in Afghanistan, there is a clear trend toward more positive perceptions of former Soviet states, including Russia.

The expected withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan in 2014 brings with it the difficult (and expensive) problem of strengthening the Tajik-Afghan and Uzbek-Afghan borders and continual patrolling by the Collective Rapid Response Force and Collective Operational Response Force north of the Afghan border. In fact, the training scenarios of these two military forces are largely built upon the hypothetical penetration by Taliban militants from the south.

A series of consultations and coordination meetings need to be held between CSTO and NATO and Russia and NATO on the gradual and agreed drawdown of NATO’s presence in Afghanistan and the increased engagement of other actors in helping regulate and stabilize the situation.

Forces from CSTO countries should not engage on Afghan soil, but following the potential withdrawal of the Western coalition many tasks will remain unfinished, and they can in part be handled by CSTO and from member-state territories in Central Asia (for example,
expanded retraining of Afghan police, repair and maintenance of the helicopter fleet, continued provision of the ‘northern transport route’ to support the missions of the United Nation, Red Cross and other organizations in Afghanistan, etc.).

The regional mechanisms and structures that have already been created, primarily within CSTO, are aimed at confronting the following challenges and threats: infiltration of extremists and armed groups from the territory of Afghanistan into Central Asian states, narcotics trafficking and illegal immigration. Military-technical cooperation has been established with Afghanistan and assistance is being provided through security forces training.

It should be recognized that given the current situation the withdrawal of the international coalition from Afghanistan will inevitably lead to the expansion of the Taliban, which will create a serious security problem for Central Asian countries as well as Russia. And Russia will find it extraordinarily difficult to deal with this threat without an international coalition component. Given such a situation, it is both necessary and possible to expand cooperation with NATO (both in the Russia-NATO format and the CSTO-NATO-SCO format) to carry out operations in Afghanistan. The present level of cooperation (transport corridor plus repairs on old Soviet helicopters) is a minimalist approach. Furthermore, with the exception of the direct participation of CSTO troops in military operations in Afghanistan (which should be avoided), all other forms of military cooperation with international forces in Afghanistan in the interest of stabilization can and should be undertaken: military logistics support, training (with trips to Russia and other CSTO countries as well as locally) of military and police personnel of the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior of Afghanistan, cooperation in the delivery and repair of arms and military equipment, provision of intelligence information, cooperation in air space control, cooperation in border protection, etc.

CSTO should be oriented toward new political tactics in such conflict regions as Afghanistan. CSTO’s military preparations to prevent Taliban incursions into member countries in Central Asia will not produce the desired result without economic aid and assistance in the post-conflict reconstruction of the northern provinces of Afghanistan in coordination with other international actors. The organization should prepare for a long-term program in the Afghanistan area in cooperation with the international forces and organizations which today make up the core of the coalition that is gradually being withdrawn from Afghanistan.

Conclusions

• United Nations Organization is more and more supplemented and even substituted in Eurasia by the spectrum of regional and sub-regional inter-state organizations. That is especially visible in international security area.

• Regional and sub-regional organizations do not constitute harmonious “Concert”, instead, they are subdivided into rivaling groups, same way as great powers were during the Cold War. At the same time, character of juxtaposing the interests of the regional actors is less sharp and more cooperatively oriented (at least in tendency) than the clash of great powers was.

• There are no chances that any one regional organization of universal representation (like OSCE for Europe or African Union for African continent) can concentrate all major functions and responsibilities and really become a full scale security provider for the continent. The same time, combination of several organizations sharing functions and geopolitical sub-regional responsibilities really can play a role of combined security provider of continental scale.

• The sub-division and juxtaposing between Western (EU, NATO, etc.) and non-Western (CIS, OSCE, SCO, etc.) regional organizations has been relatively clearly shaped, and new modus vivendi between these two groups is needed, if international community wants to avoid new dividing lines in Eurasia.
• Key dialogue should be set up between the NATO and CSTO, as far as clash of interests between these two political-military alliances may create serious threats to Eurasian security of a new type.

• Joint crises response mechanism should be elaborated with participation of both “great powers” and “great organizations”. Most great organizations (like OSCE, EU, NTO, CSTO, etc.) by now are definitely “bigger” than summation of politics of powers that constitute their membership. In other words, regional and sub-regional interstate organizations converted into new types of geopolitical actors with their own policy that actively participate in shaping of Eurasian geopolitics of the XXI century.