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**RUSSIA:
ARMS CONTROL, DISARMAMENT AND
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY**

IMEMO SUPPLEMENT
TO THE RUSSIAN EDITION
OF THE SIPRI YEARBOOK 2016

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PREFACE

The Primakov National Research Institute of World Economy and International Relations presents its Special Supplement *Russia: Arms Control, Disarmament and International Security* to the Russian edition of the SIPRI Yearbook 2016. In this edition, the Institute's leading experts analyze a number of the past year's key events and trends in arms control and international security.

Although the Ukrainian crisis has become less acute and, to a certain degree, latent, the situation in ensuring security, arms limitation and arms control has deteriorated increasingly. After the New START Treaty was concluded in Prague in 2010, no progress has been made in this area, and so far, nothing has suggested that either this treaty will be extended or that any agreements on further reductions will be concluded.

In the current situation, no quick progress can virtually be made unless the leaders of the United States and Russia engage in constructive dialogue. The state of this dialogue has allowed no optimism as to the possibility of either quick progress in arms limitation and reduction, or of advances in other spheres of arms control. We believe that it is absolutely essential that this book should remind of the recent positive experience of cooperation between the United States and Russia in the nuclear sphere, as it remains an important factor contributing to the two powers' collaboration in the future.

Increasing strain has been put on the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. Both Washington and Moscow have been accusing each other of infringing this vital instrument. One of the key articles of the IMEMO's Special Supplement is closely examining the critical situation around the INF Treaty and the ways to overcome it.

The situation along Russia's western border which is also a line of contact between Russia and NATO, has grown extremely tense. The increasing number and scale of maneuvers, including in the border area, and unprecedented, since the Cold War times, direct military standoff cause a dangerous buildup of tension.

Defence efforts in Europe have developed following new patterns. After President Donald Trump came to power, the likelihood of defence cooperation between the US and the rest of NATO members has diminished. Due to this, and a number of other factors, the efforts to shape a more independent defence capability of the European Union, gained momentum.

The increasing scale and geographical scope of external threats to Russia and the CIS countries, including an unprecedented growth of terrorist activity, require constant focus on the readiness of the security structures of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation. This is also true of political and military cooperation between Russia and the CIS countries.

Certainly, in the current situation one cannot leave the political and military situation in Syria and Iraq aside. The outcome of the fight against terrorism in this part of the world, and the cooperation of the leading countries in this area will to a large extent determine the future of international security.

This book was achieved through the collective effort of many people. I would like to express special gratitude to Academician Alexey Arbatov, Sergey Oznobishchev, and Marianna Yevtodyeva for their work to compile this edition. I would also like to thank Tatiana Anichkina for her work on the English edition of the Supplement. Special thanks go to the authors and contributors of the Supplement – Nadezhda Arbatova, Pavel Gudev, Anatoly Diakov, Stanislav Ivanov, Alexander Nikitin, Sergey Tselitsky, Vadim Vladimirov, and Sergey Zavriev.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the Swiss Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport for the many years' support of this project.

Academician Alexander Dynkin,
President of the Primakov National
Research Institute of World Economy
and International Relations,
Russian Academy of Sciences,
July 2017

ACRONYMS

AF	– armed forces
AME	– armaments and military equipment
ASEAN	– Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BMD	– ballistic missile defence
BRICS	– Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa
CACO	– Central-Asian Cooperation Organisation
CBM	– confidence- and security-building measure
CFE	– 1990 Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe
CFSP	– Common Foreign and Security Policy
CIS	– Commonwealth of Independent States
CPF	– Collective Peacekeeping Force
CRDF	– Collective Rapid Deployment Force
CRRF	– Collective Rapid Reaction Force
CSDP	– Common Security and Defence Policy
CSTO	– Collective Security Treaty Organisation
CTBT	– 1996 Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
CTRP	– Cooperative Threat Reduction Programme
DIC	– defence-industrial complex
DPR	– Donetsk People’s Republic
EDA	– European Defence Agency
EEAS	– European External Action Service
EAEU	– Eurasian Economic Union
EEZ	– Exclusive Economic Zone
ELWR	– experimental light water reactor
EPAA	– European Phased Adaptive Approach
EUMS	– EU military staff
FC	– Federation Council of the Russian Federation
FTP	– federal target programme
GBI	– Ground Based Interceptor
GLCM	– ground launched cruise missile
GSS	– Global Security Strategy
HEU	– highly enriched uranium

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IAEA	– International Atomic Energy Agency
ICAO	– International Civil Aviation Organisation
ICBM	– intercontinental ballistic missile
INF Treaty	– 1987 Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles
IRBM	– intermediate range ballistic missile
IRI	– Islamic Republic of Iran
IS	– Islamic State
JCPOA	– Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
LEU	– low-enriched uranium
LPR	– Luhansk People’s Republic
MIRV	– multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicle
MOX	– mixed oxide (fuel)
MPCC	– military planning and conduct capability
NATO	– North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
New START	– 2010 Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms
NFC	– nuclear fuel cycle
NIS	– Newly Independent States
NPP	– nuclear power plant
NPT	– 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NRC	– NATO-Russia Council
NRF	– NATO Response Force
NRRF	– NATO Rapid Reaction Force
OIC	– Organisation of Islamic Cooperation
OSCE	– Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
P&S	– pooling and sharing
PCA	– Permanent Court of Arbitration
PESCO	– Permanent Structured Cooperation
PMDA	– Plutonium Management Disposition Agreement
SAM	– surface-to-air missile systems
SCO	– Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
SCS	– South China Sea
SD	– State Duma of the Russian Federation

SHAPE	– Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe
SLBM	– submarine-launched ballistic missile
SMM	– OSCE Special Monitoring Mission
SNF	– spent nuclear fuel
START	– Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
TLE	– treaty-limited equipment
UAV	– unmanned aerial vehicle
UF6	– uranium hexafluoride
UN	– United Nations
UNCLOS	– United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNSC	– United Nations Security Council
VJTF	– Very High Readiness Joint Task Force
WMD	– weapons of mass destruction

PART I. ANALYSES, FORECASTS, DISCUSSIONS

1. Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty: thirty years later
2. Russia-NATO relations: transformation of stagnation
3. European Union on the way to strategic autonomy
4. CSTO: the evolution of security functions and structures

1. INTERMEDIATE-RANGE NUCLEAR FORCES TREATY: THIRTY YEARS LATER¹

Alexey ARBATOV

The situation around the Treaty between the United States and the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics (and Russia as its successor state) on the Elimination of their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty) signed in 1987 is one of the most dramatic manifestations of the current deep crisis of global nuclear arms control.

For some years Moscow and Washington have been accusing one another of violating this fundamental treaty. At the same time, their perception of this Treaty differs greatly. The United States has never challenged the value of this agreement despite the fact that it has never been a priority for the US. Indeed, as the missiles prohibited under the Treaty cannot reach the United States territory, the Treaty eliminates threats to the United States' European and Asian allies rather than ensures the security of the United States itself.

In Russia, by contrast, over the past decade the value of the INF Treaty was both questioned by the leadership² and expressly denied by

¹ The data in this volume is as of 15 July 2017.

² Speech and the Following Discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy, President of Russia, 10 Feb. 2007, <<http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24034>>. See also: Litovkin, D., Adequate Iskander, *Izvestiya*, 21 Feb. 2007, <<http://izvestia.ru/news/321928>> [in Russian].

the majority of its political elite, strategic experts' community³, and electronic and print media. It is indicative that the latest version of the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation issued in 2016 does not even mention the INF Treaty among the arms control agreements to which Russia is committed⁴.

The Administration of Donald Trump which was expected by some people in Moscow to make steps towards improving relations with Russia, so far has made no significant steps in this area. Even worse, after the new leadership came to power its members once again accused Russia of violating the INF Treaty in the same harsh manner. Moscow did not leave the favour unanswered and declared in March 2017 that the United States has committed a 'grave violation' of the Treaty⁵.

Domino effect

Unless the parties make steps to revitalise the INF Treaty in the near future, the Treaty will most likely be denounced by either Washington or Moscow under the pretext that the other party has violated it. In addition to directly undermining European security (which is discussed below), this could provoke a 'chain reaction' and the collapse of the nuclear arms control system in general. For over half

³ See, e.g.: Shirokorad, A., To return and to turn back are not the same, *Nezavisimoye voyennoye obozreniye*, 12-18 July 2013, <http://nvo.ng.ru/armament/2013-07-12/6_rockets.html> [in Russian]; Karaganov, S., On a new nuclear world, *Rossiia v globalnoy politike*, 4 Apr. 2017, <http://www.globalaffairs.ru/number/O-novom-yadernom-mire-18644> [in Russian].

⁴ Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation approved by President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin on 30 November 2016. Para. 27. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, <http://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/official_documents/-/asset_publisher/CptICk_B6BZ29/content/id/2542248> [in Russian].

⁵ Comment by the MFA of Russia on the US Department of State's Annual Report on Adherence to and Compliance with Arms Control, Nonproliferation, and Disarmament Agreements and Commitments, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 29 Apr. 2017, <http://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2740264> [in Russian].

a century since the 1963 Partial Test Ban Treaty was signed, this system was shaped through hard work and dedication of national leaders and policy-makers, diplomats and military, academics and engineers, public figures and associations of many countries across the world. The INF Treaty signed thirty years ago served as a cornerstone and a starting point of the process of real nuclear disarmament.

If the Treaty collapses, the New START (signed in 2010) and subsequently the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT⁶) of 1996 would probably also head to the dustbin of history. That would be followed by a de-facto, if not de-jure, collapse of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT, 1968).

The world would face a new offensive nuclear arms race, and it will be supplemented by competition in offensive and defensive strategic non-nuclear arms, and the development of space weapons and cyber warfare. What is more, this multi-channel arms race would become multilateral and involve, in addition to the United States and Russia, China, NATO countries, India and Pakistan, Israel and North Korea. The proliferation of nuclear weapons that would be inevitable in this case, would take place mainly in the vicinity of Russia's borders (Iran, Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and Japan).

As the United States and Russia have completely ceased their cooperation in ensuring safety and security of nuclear materials in recent years, terrorists would sooner or later but inevitably gain access to nuclear weapons.

Predictable as they are, the mentioned threats appear to disturb Russia very little. Apparently, the new United States Republican Administration is neither worried about that, as it has ambitious plans of upgrading the United States' nuclear arsenal, missile defence and long-range high-precision non-nuclear weapons.

⁶ This Treaty was signed, is de-facto observed and its implementation is verified, yet it has not entered into force so far due to the fact that the United States and a number of other states are still to ratify it.

Motives for withdrawing from the Treaty

The INF Treaty was agreed after five years of difficult and interrupted negotiations, and has unlimited duration. It envisaged an unprecedented regime of monitoring of the testing, production, deployment, transportation and elimination of the addressed nuclear weapons. The Treaty was implemented as scheduled, yet twenty years after it was signed, in 2006-2007 Russian political and military leadership and experts started talking about Russia's possible withdrawing from the Treaty. At that point Russia did not make this step, but after a few years' pause, in 2013 the issue was raised again at high level and has been actively discussed ever since.

Indeed, the Treaty does provide for the right to withdraw from it if a party decides that 'extraordinary events related to the subject matter of this Treaty have jeopardised its supreme interests' and gives notice of its decision to the other Party six months prior to withdrawal. However, strange as it may seem, Russia's position on such important matter as identifying these 'extraordinary events' has been plainly inconsistent.

First and foremost, the Treaty has been criticised for having eliminated over two times more Soviet missiles than American ones (1836 and 859, respectively) and about three times more Soviet nuclear warheads on such delivery vehicles. This ratio still causes indignation of many Russian experts, both military and civilian. Yet strategically the USSR gained qualitative advantage, as the Treaty has essentially eliminated the element of the US strategic nuclear threat for it. As for the United States, the Treaty eliminated no threats for its territory.

What is more, the United States' Pershing II missiles had short flight time (6-7 minutes) and were able to destroy highly protected underground command posts of the USSR leadership. It was for this reason why Moscow insisted on the elimination of all American missiles, rather than limiting their quantity. As a result, the Soviet Union had to consent to the elimination of all of its arms of the matching class on a global scale (an option dubbed 'double global zero'). Despite the previous assurances of the Soviet Ministry of

Defence that the two countries had parity, the USSR had much more weapons of this class than the United States did.

Another issue was raised by President Vladimir Putin in his remarks in Munich in 2007. He referred to the development of intermediate-range missiles by a number of third countries, while only the United States and Russia were prohibited to possess this class of weapons⁷. This was also repeatedly mentioned by the then Minister of Defence Sergey Ivanov who after 2012 raised the issue of Russia's withdrawal from the Treaty as a head of the Presidential Administration. In other words, they apparently viewed the United States and Russia as sort of 'fellows in misery' although no intermediate-range missiles posed threat to the United States' territory.

However, in 2007 then Head of the General Staff Yuri Baluyevski cited the US plans to deploy missile defence in Poland and the Czech Republic by 2012 as a motive for possible Russia's withdrawal from the INF Treaty⁸. This implied that Russia needed intermediate-range missiles as a weapon against the United States and NATO rather than as a means of deterring third countries.

After that Obama administration came to power and in 2009 repealed its Republican predecessors' programme to replace it with the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) for deploying missile defence. In 2013, President Obama cancelled Phase Four of this programme that concerned Russia most⁹.

Nevertheless, Moscow found this concession insufficient. The necessity to counter the United States' missile defence is still cited as one of the reasons for Russia to acquire intermediate-range missiles and withdraw from the INF Treaty. In particular, options involving the deployment of Iskander (NATO name – SS-26 Stone) ground-based

⁷ Speech and the Following Discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy...

⁸ See: Safranchuk, I., Confusion of military and diplomatic azimuths, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 26 Feb. 2007, <http://www.ng.ru/politics/2007-02-26/3_kartblansh.html> [in Russian]; and Litovkin, D., Adequate Iskander...

⁹ Phase Four envisaged the deployment of the advanced modification of SM-3 Block IIB missiles with increased velocity and range capability on ships and land bases in Eastern Europe, which could, in theory, intercept some of Russian intercontinental missiles.

tactical missile systems carrying cruise missiles with an increased range capability (in excess of 500 km) were discussed¹⁰.

Finally, withdrawing from the INF Treaty is suggested as a response by those who argue that the United States has technically breached the Treaty using partially similar missiles as targets when testing missile defence systems¹¹.

Thus, such a serious step is substantiated by a number of reasons completely unrelated to one another. Each of them is examined below.

Threat posed by third countries

At present, there are seven states that possess intermediate-range ground-launched ballistic missiles (the INF Treaty defines them as missiles with a range of 1,000-5,500 km). Those are China, India, Israel, DPRK, Pakistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia. The United Kingdom and France have no missiles of this type. The Treaty also prohibits tactical missiles (with a range of 500 to 1,000 km) which make part of the arsenals of the following countries (in addition to the seven countries mentioned above): Egypt, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Turkey, South Korea. Earlier this list had also included Brazil, Argentina, South Africa and Iraq¹². Geographically, Russian territory is located within the reach of intermediate-range missiles of all the seven countries possessing such missiles (with China, India, Israel and Pakistan possessing nuclear weapons to arm such missiles), and for some of

¹⁰ Kotenok, Yu., Russia will perforate the missile defence system, *Utro.ru*, 4 June 2007, <<https://www.utro.ru/articles/2007/06/04/652965.shtml>> [in Russian]; Myasnikov, V., Full steam backwards, *Nezavisimoye voyennoye obozreniye*, 23. Nov. 2007, <http://nvo.ng.ru/forces/2007-11-23/3_nazad.html> [in Russian].

¹¹ Vildanov, M., Better sweep your own porch clean first..., *Nezavisimoye voyennoye obozreniye*, 19-25 July 2013, <http://nvo.ng.ru/concepts/2013-07-19/1_rsvn_snv.html> [in Russian].

¹² See: Mizin, V., Missiles and missile technologies. In *Nuclear Arms after the Cold War*, ed. by A. Arbatov, V. Dvorkin (Moscow: Moscow Carnegie Moscow Centre, Rosspen, 2006), pp. 274-277 [in Russian].

them (China and DPRK) even shorter-range missiles would be enough to destroy targets in the areas along the national borders of Russia.

In 2007 in the United Nations, Russia and the United States co-sponsored an initiative to universalise the INF Treaty through the accession to it of the third countries possessing intermediate-range missiles. Expectably, this proposal was not accepted by the states concerned. At that moment, the share of that countries in the global stockpile of nuclear warheads stood at about 4%, and in case their intermediate-range missiles were eliminated, this share would decrease to 3%¹³. Moreover they would lose major parts of their nuclear capability while the strategic and tactical nuclear missile capabilities of the two superpowers (that is, their missiles with ranges of up to 500 km and in excess of 5500 km) would remain intact, not to mention the latter two countries' heavy bombers. Today the situation has not changed much; the aggregate share of the seven countries in global nuclear arsenal (including the UK and France that have no intermediate-range missiles) does not exceed 10%¹⁴.

As the initiative put forward at the UN failed, Russia's acquisition of intermediate-range missiles (and the withdrawal from the INF Treaty) could seem a logical response to the mentioned threat. Nevertheless, however simple and attractive this mechanistic approach may seem, it can hardly stand up to the test of thorough strategic analysis.

To begin with, the states that possess this class of weapons do not actually target Russia. China is Russia's strategic partner, and unlike the United States is not mentioned in any official documents as a potential threat to Russia and a subject for its deterrence strategy. This is even truer of India that intends its missiles as a means of deterring PRC and Pakistan, and by no means Russia. Pakistan's missiles are targeted exclusively against India, while Israel's ones are aimed against

¹³ Kile, S.N., Fedchenko, V., Kristensen, H.M., World Nuclear Forces, 2006. In *SIPRI Yearbook 2006: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 639-668.

¹⁴ See: Kile, Sh.N., Kristensen, H.M., World Nuclear Forces. In *SIPRI Yearbook 2016: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 610.

Iran and Israel's adversaries in Arab states. The DPRK attempts to use its missiles to threaten the United States' military bases and the US allies such as South Korea and Japan. Saudi Arabia and Iran so far possess no nuclear weapons, but aim their missiles against each other and Israel.

It is often said that political intentions may change (this mostly refers to China, and sometimes to Pakistan, Iran and DPRK as well), but missiles remain. This is true, however it can hardly be expected that the mentioned countries become allied to the United States and start threatening Russia. Hence, Russia's deterrent against the United States is more than enough to deter all the third countries separately and jointly.

Calls for Russia to enter competition with all such countries in intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles is a misconception, and a very expensive one. The weapons that Russia has today would be enough to negate possible threats posed by the third countries. These weapons include intercontinental and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (ICBMs and SLBMs) the range of which can be diminished to intermediate scale, medium and heavy bombers carrying both nuclear and conventional bombs and cruise missiles. Russia can also use tactical attack aircraft armed with nuclear bombs, ground-based tactical missile systems, and tactical missiles on ships and submarines armed with both nuclear and conventional warheads, against some of the countries that are located closest to it.

At present, Russia has a total of 520 strategic missiles and bombers and over 2,000 nuclear warheads (based on the number of warheads that the bombers can actually carry¹⁵) almost all of which can be targeted (or re-targeted) at objects in Eurasia. The data on Russia's non-strategic nuclear weapons (medium-range aircraft, and tactical aircraft and missiles) is classified, yet the majority of unofficial assessments agree on a number of 2,000 nuclear warheads¹⁶, most of

¹⁵ Each heavy bomber of the two powers can carry up to 16 nuclear-armed cruise missiles or bombs, yet under the 2010 New START Treaty each of them is counted as one delivery vehicle and one warhead.

¹⁶ Diakov, A., Miasnikov, E., Kadyshchev, T., *Non-Strategic Nuclear Weapons: Problems of the Control and Reduction* (Dolgoprudny, 2004) [in Russian]; Sivkov,

which can also be used against the targets in the vicinity of Russia's borders.

In general, the nuclear forces of the Russian Federation are 4 to 5 times stronger in terms of quantity of warheads (not to mention the quality of weapon systems) than the nuclear forces of the other seven states possessing nuclear weapons (with the exception of the United States). If all this power is not enough to deter the third countries, the deployment of additional intermediate-range missiles through withdrawing from the INF Treaty would not make things better.

Responding to missile defence

Due to both the number of planned interceptors and their range, velocity and other specifications the deployment of missile defence under the European Phased Adaptive Approach would hardly affect Russia's strategic nuclear deterrent. Those who argue that the SM-3 missiles pose threat¹⁷ to Russia, for some reason overlook the fact that this missile has never been tested to intercept ballistic missiles at the boost stage of their flight, and that BMD tracking systems and sensors¹⁸ were not designed to perform such tasks. This threat is even lesser after the cancellation of Phase Four of the EPAA envisaging the deployment of SM-3 Block IIB interceptors in Poland and on ships in northern seas. No missile defence system – which is the critical element of defence – would ever be deployed without extensive flight testing. All impartial assessments have demonstrated that the European missile defence cannot intercept Russian ICBMs either at boost stage of their flight or

V., Disarmed and extremely dangerous, *Voyenno-promyshlennyy kur'yer*, 22-28 Mar. 2017, <<http://vpk-news.ru/articles/35718>> [in Russian].

¹⁷ US Missile Defence System disbalances deterrent forces, Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, 26 Apr. 2017, <http://eng.mil.ru/en/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12120786@egNews>.

¹⁸ In particular, the infra-red seeker of the kinetic warhead of the SM-3 missile can detect a nuclear warhead with low thermal emission in cold outer space at a distance of 200 km, but not the blast of the boost stage of ballistic missiles.

later. Indeed, President Putin also said that new Russian missiles can penetrate any United States' missile defence¹⁹.

If Russia withdraws from the 1987 INF Treaty and develops new intermediate-range missiles, those could in theory become a target for the United States' interceptors in Europe, yet in this case everything will depend on the ratio of the missiles numbers and their technical specifications. So far, Russia has nothing for NATO to intercept with its missile defence systems based in Romania and Poland deployed or to be deployed in 2016-2018 under Phase Three of EPAA. Therefore, withdrawal from the INF Treaty which would enable Russia to acquire new intermediate-range missiles does not correlate with the perceived threat posed by the US/NATO European Missile Defence.

As is often the case, the reasoning against the INF Treaty is extremely difficult to refute precisely due to its groundlessness. Russia's political elite and government institutions are obsessed with the idea that this agreement disadvantages Russia, and it is not easy to prove it wrong using rational strategic analysis. Paradoxical as it may seem, it is not considerations of common security and reducing the threat of war through disarmament agreements, but the logic of confrontation with the United States and NATO that presently buttresses the INF Treaty most. To be precise, it is the fear of the latter gaining military advantage if the Treaty is denounced.

Although the INF Treaty is extensively criticised, in the current geopolitical realities it is much more important for Russia's security than it was thirty years ago. Proposals to denounce the INF Treaty and acquire intermediate-range missiles aimed against the United States and NATO are founded on the belief that their intentions threaten Russia. Yet such strategic logic implies that Russia should expect a response on their part. Responding to the deployment of Russian missiles currently prohibited by the Treaty the United States would renew the deployment of its intermediate-range missiles, and instead of placing them in the Western Europe would do so in Poland, the Baltic States and Romania from where they could reach beyond the Ural Mountains. The US could

¹⁹ Speech at the opening ceremony of the ARMY-2015 International Military-Technical Forum, President of Russia, 16 June 2015, <<http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/49712>>.

resume Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missile (GLCM) programmes and develop advanced intermediate-range missile systems which would make Moscow enhance the survivability of its nuclear forces and their command information systems at enormous cost. The completion of this task would be complicated due to the poor state of Russia's economy: economic stagnation, reduction of the federal budget, including the expenses on national defence.

Russia's withdrawal from the INF Treaty would unify NATO again, including on issues of increasing military expenses and coordinating the development of their offensive and defensive arms, including the considerable expansion of the missiles defence system.

Having withdrawn from the INF Treaty Moscow would be perceived at all fora as the main opponent of the idea of nuclear disarmament. Indeed, the international community remembers and perceives the 1987 INF Treaty as a landmark and a token of the conclusive stage of the Cold War and transition to real nuclear disarmament. Hence, its renunciation would be understood as the revival of confrontation and arms race between the two great powers.

This would further undermine the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as such step would be considered direct breach of obligations on nuclear disarmament under its Article VI. The way the participants in the forthcoming 2020 NPT Review Conference would react to this development is easy to imagine.

The third nuclear-weapon states are most likely to regard such step of Russia's as a threat to their security and target part of their nuclear missiles at Russia in the context of expanding multilateral arms race. They would more strenuously oppose Russia's proposals to join nuclear disarmament process.

Ways to revive the Treaty

Rather than exchanging fruitless accusations, the parties should develop additional verification measures in order to eliminate mutual suspicions. Obviously, this could be done only if Russia recognises that

the Treaty is essential for its security and gives up all ideologically-motivated and improvident visions of this instrument.

Moscow accuses Washington of using Hera ballistic missiles analogous to intermediate-range ballistic missiles for the testing of missile defence systems. Russia also considers as breach of the Treaty the United States' Predator and Reaper combat unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) with a range capability in excess of 500 km.

Yet what concerns Russia most, is the United States' missile defence bases deployed in Romania in 2016 and to be deployed in Poland in 2017 and allegedly equipped with the Mk-41 launchers installed on the US ships and capable of launching both Standard 3 interceptors and Tomahawk cruise missiles with a range of up to 2500 km. Russia cannot ensure, judging by outward appearance, that such launchers cannot be used for launching Tomahawk missiles and that such missiles cannot be secretly placed in the launchers instead of the Standard 3 interceptors which would turn sea-launched cruise missiles to GLCMs prohibited under the Treaty. Indeed, the INF Treaty bans long-range cruise missile launchers, as well as the missiles themselves (Article IV, para. 1, Article V, and VI). This was the 'grave violation' on the part of the United States that Russia referred to in its official statement in 2017²⁰.

The United States, in their turn, level accusations at Russia for testing and allegedly deploying the R-500 (SS-X-8 according to the NATO classification) and a new type of ground-launched cruise missile on mobile Iskander-M launchers with an alleged range in excess of 500 km, which is prohibited under the INF Treaty. Before that, it had raised the issue of the Rubezh ICBM (SS-27 Mod 3) that had been tested and deployed as intermediate-range missiles, according to the United States.

With good will of the parties this compliance issues could be resolved relatively easily through the establishment of task force of experts that would elaborate additional verification procedures. This option would also imply partial restoration of the Special Verification

²⁰ Comment by the MFA of Russia on the US Department of State's Annual Report on Adherence to and Compliance with Arms Control, Nonproliferation, and Disarmament Agreements and Commitments...

Commission initially designed precisely for that purpose; this Commission would adapt the verification mechanism established by the Treaty to the rapid development of military technologies that could not be anticipated thirty years ago.

As for Russia's concerns, the Treaty does allow the parties to use intermediate-range missiles as targets during the testing of missile defence systems (Article VII). To alleviate these concerns, relevant provisions should merely be specified as applied to the missiles that both parties use as targets while testing their defence systems, and quotas could be established for the quantity of such missiles and the number of their launches.

The definition of GLCMs contained in the Treaty can indeed be applied to long-range UAVs: 'an unmanned, self-propelled vehicle that sustains flight through the use of aerodynamic lift over most of its flight path... that is a weapon-delivery vehicle' (Article II). It is clear, however, that UAVs are controlled from the ground and return to the base; in this respect they are analogous to combat aircraft, rather than to cruise missiles – autonomously guided expendable weapon. Such systems are actively developed by the United States, Russia, and other countries, and can hardly be prohibited. In this case one should rather opt for amending the relevant article of the INF Treaty in order to eliminate the conflict between the legal norm and the new advanced equipment that the states will by no means forgo.

The issue of missile defence bases in Romania and Poland is more complicated, yet there are still ways of resolving it. For one, the parties could agree on externally observable technical differences of launchers that would make the placement of the Tomahawk cruise missiles in them impossible (as they are different from the Standard 3 interceptors in weight and size). As another possibility, the parties could agree on the right of Russia to conduct certain number of short-notice on-site inspections in order to ascertain that the launchers contain interceptors, and not GLCMs. Apparently, this would require the consent of the missiles defence basing countries, which could hardly be attained without active pressure of Washington, since such inspection would give Moscow certain control over the European missile defence.

The United States' accusations levelled at Russia are also a major, yet surmountable obstacle. Whatever the real range variations of the Rubezh ICBM, there are no formal grounds for objecting to such missiles. They are intercontinental ballistic missiles and are counted and limited under the New START, rather than under the INF Treaty which defines the range capability of a missile as 'the maximum range to which it has been tested' (Article VII).

Furthermore, similarly to inspections of missile defence bases in Romania and Poland, the parties could agree on equivalent verification procedures for the bases of Iskander missile launchers. Long-range cruise missiles have larger fuel tanks as compared to the missiles with a range below 500 km, and that could be controlled in order to confirm Russia's declarations related to the range of these weapons. Should this prove impossible for technical reasons, the experts could agree on other options.

Obviously, the controversies related to compliance with the INF Treaty are not merely technical issues. The major obstacles are of a political nature, including the current confrontational relations between the two states, domestic belligerence and specific problems related to the mentioned issues.

Almost nobody in the United States acknowledges that the deployment by the US of the missile defence in Eastern Europe breaches the Treaty. Also there is a desire to use the compliance issues in a political campaign to discredit the leadership of Vladimir Putin, rather than to resolve the problem in a mutually acceptable way. The degree to which the new US administration is interested in the nuclear arms control as a whole and the INF Treaty in particular, has at best been uncertain so far.

In Russia, the proposed options would be fiercely resisted by the opponents of the INF Treaty and of the nuclear arms control in general. Instead of reviving the Treaty those would prefer to get rid of it by the hands of the United States or by decision of Moscow. An even fiercer opposition will be offered to any options involving either the inspections of or any technical limitations on Iskander missile launchers. The deployment of missile defence bases in Romania and Poland would be used as much as possible to undermine the INF Treaty

arguing that even if the Treaty is formally preserved the United States would be able to secretly deploy the prohibited offensive weapons (nuclear-armed) on the missile defence bases, while Russia will have no right to openly ‘adequately respond’. A campaign to this end is already gaining momentum²¹.

* * *

Disarmament treaties are extremely hard to achieve and easy to break. However, if the current leaders of the two nuclear superpowers look at historical experience, they would see that withdrawing from treaties in this sphere has never strengthened the security of any state, but has always undermined it. The collapse of the INF Treaty and subsequently of the whole nuclear arms control system would cause chaos to the detriment of the security of both superpowers and the world at large.

After the change of government in Washington in 2016, only Russia – should it take the lead – will be able to ensure that the situation around the INF Treaty develops in a constructive way. This Treaty is pivotal both in itself and as a key component of the nuclear arms control system, and hence should be moved to the top of the bilateral US-Russian relations agenda and placed above the issues of Ukraine, Syria and other matters, however important those might be.

This is especially relevant taking in consideration that these issues would necessitate a lengthy and difficult dialogue, while saving the INF Treaty could be achieved relatively quickly if the two powers’ leaders have the necessary political will. Such positive breakthrough would also facilitate advances in other spheres of preventing a new Cold War and next cycles of arms race.

²¹ US Missile Defence System disbalances deterrent forces...

2. RUSSIA-NATO RELATIONS: TRANSFORMATION OF STAGNATION

Sergey OZNOBISHCHEV, Marianna YEVTODYEVA

Last year hopes for progress to regulate the Ukrainian crisis have failed. This factor continues to be the main negative factor in the relations between Russia and the West (among other things resulting in the lack of interaction between Russia and NATO) including relations in the security sphere. The latter remain mostly confrontational without noticeable trends to improvement. At the same time, the crisis has played a significant role in the build-up of military capabilities in both Russia and the Alliance countries.

Russia and NATO: declarations and reality

After the end of the Cold War NATO-Russia relations began to improve while the military potential of the Alliance in Europe steadily reduced. The number of the American forces in Europe dropped by more than 80% – from 450,000 in the early 1990s to 64,000 in 2013 (just before the Ukrainian crisis). At the same time Great Britain declared withdrawal of its 20,000 military contingent from the continent¹ – plans that were called into question due to the Ukrainian

¹ Army Basing Plan. House of Commons Debates, 5 Mar. 2013, <https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmhansrd/cm130305/debtext/130305-0002.htm#130305-0002.htm_spmi0>; The financial crisis drives British troops from Germany

crisis. Even ascendance of the Baltic states to NATO resulted in rather symbolical military measures – four NATO fighters started to patrol the air space of these countries.

Some important bilateral agreements were concluded. 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act on Mutual Relations presumed that two sides would ‘strive to cooperate to the broadest possible degree’ in 19 areas. Besides, and that is quite important, at the high official level a mutual *intention* was expressed ‘to develop, on the basis of common interest, reciprocity and transparency a strong, stable and enduring partnership’².

The *intention* ‘to work as equal partners’ within the NATO-Russia Council was officially declared by the two sides in another important joint document – the Declaration by Heads of State and Government of NATO Member States and the Russian Federation ‘NATO-Russia Relations: A New Quality’³. Both documents reflected the will of the parties to build up the relationship in the stated framework which has been repeatedly confirmed in subsequent declarations and actions.

However even with undoubted achievements of NATO-Russia cooperation, the factor of the Alliance’s enlargement to the east as an integral part of its policy continued to render very negative, even destructive, impact on the NATO-Russia relations.

At the same time for more than 20-years of NATO’s enlargement policy, Brussels has not tried to initiate a dialogue with Russia on possible reviewing of this policy in response to Moscow’s concerns. All this time those have been met with two main arguments: ‘the NATO enlargement is an expansion of democracy’ and ‘the NATO

after 70 years of stay, *Regnum*, 5 Mar. 2013, <<https://regnum.ru/news/polit/1632727.html>> [in Russian]. Initially, according to Army Basing Plan, the British contingent deployed in Germany was planned to withdraw by 2020.

² Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation, Paris, 27 May 1997, NATO, <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_25468.htm>.

³ NATO-Russia Relations: A New Quality. Declaration by Heads of State and Government of NATO Member States and the Russian Federation, Rome, 28 May 2002, NATO, <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_19572.htm>.

enlargement poses no threat to Russia'. Nonetheless, these arguments have never been accepted by Russian political and expert elite.

Persistent policy of enlargement has resulted in the Alliance's actual choice for establishing declarative, but not practical partnership with Moscow. The NATO leadership has pursued the frequently reiterated formula of the NATO bureaucracy that any country that 'knocks at a door' can become a member of the Alliance. But contrary to this formula quite specific hints made by the top Russian officials about a possibility of Russia's joining the Alliance were ignored.

The prospect of admission of Georgia and Ukraine to NATO announced at official meetings of the Alliance, along with the increasing deficiency of interaction with Russia on a number of important problems (including European missile defence) have predetermined a serious crisis in the NATO-Russia relations. In particular, the Ukraine's anticipated joining NATO became one of the reasons of the Ukrainian crisis that led to the fracturing of the Russia-West relations.

It caused the interaction between Moscow and Brussels to roll back almost to a Cold War 'zero' level. Cooperation has been frozen, as well as the work and communication within the NATO-Russia Council. As a result today Moscow perceives NATO and its actions as a direct military threat to Russia.

The conclusion made by Valery Gerasimov, Chief of General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, at the V Moscow Conference on International Security on 27 April 2016 was very symptomatic. He noted that 'Europe gradually turns from the most stable and calm from the military point of view region into a zone of increased tension and confrontation'. Gerasimov characterised it as a result of several factors among which 'deterioration in Russia-NATO relationship' that 'is in the lowest point of development since the end of the Cold War' was on the first place⁴.

⁴ Speech of the Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces General of the Army Valery Gerasimov, V Moscow Conference on International Security, 27-28 Apr. 2016, Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, <<http://eng.mil.ru/en/mcis/mcis2016.htm>>.

The problem of deployment of missile defence in Europe became another consequence of the deterioration of relations between Russia and the West. The US and NATO officials announced from the start that limited missile defence system will be deployed in Europe in order to defend against missile launches of the ‘third countries’ (meaning, first of all, Iran). Russia did not accept such argumentation at its face value. On the contrary, Moscow accused the US of deliberate weakening the Russian retaliatory strike potential and undermining strategic stability.

Today, in view of absence of the mutually acceptable solution of this issue, Moscow’s accusations against Washington have further increased including those related to the deployment of ballistic missile defence systems in other regions, for example, in South Korea – ‘under a pretext’ (according to Russia) of protection against North Korean missiles. Thus, at a briefing at the VI Moscow Conference on International Security Lieutenant General Victor Poznikhir, Deputy Chief of the General Operational Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, said that ‘deployment of the global missile defence’ not only ‘destroys traditional system of the international security’, but also ‘shows that the United States seek to get strategic advantage due to devaluation of potential of deterrence of Russia and China’. Moreover, high Russian officials speculated that the US intended to use nuclear weapons first. As a prominent military expert noticed, ‘existence of a global missile defence system lowers a threshold to use nuclear weapons as it creates an ‘illusion’ of impunity for sudden use of strategic offensive arms under ‘an umbrella’ of missile defence’⁵.

The European missile defence issue is also related to the Moscow’s accusations regarding the US violations of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty) signed in 1987. As the comment of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs stressed, ‘the US deployed a land-based Aegis Ashore missile defence system at its military base in Romania and plan to place another one at a similar base in Poland. The system includes a vertical

⁵ US Missile Defence System disbalances deterrent forces, Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, 26 Apr. 2017, <http://eng.mil.ru/en/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12120786@egNews>.

launching system, similar to the universal Mk-41 VLS, capable of launching Tomahawk medium-range missiles. This is undeniably a grave violation under the INF Treaty⁶.

Both sides have accumulated a number of accusations of the INF Treaty violation. Their analysis is beyond the subject of this chapter, but it should be noted that under ‘normal’ political circumstances these accusations multiplying from year to year could be settled through the Special Control Commission established according to the Article XIII of the Treaty. However such simple decisions are impossible when both sides pursued quite the opposite political goals striving not to resolve contradictions, but to use them as a platform for promoting accusations against the other party.

Over the years NATO member countries participated in a dialogue with Russia on conventional arms control in Europe which today is in a deadlock. It is a result of gradual deterioration of relations between Russia and the West which started even before the Ukrainian crisis though the latter one contributed considerably.

In 2007, Russia ‘suspended’, and in 2015 ‘completely suspended’ its participation in the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty) disengaged from the work of the CFE Joint Consultative Group. The reason which forced Moscow to take this step was the reluctance of the Western partners to ratify the Agreement on Adaptation signed in 1999 at the OSCE summit in Istanbul. In justification of these actions the West put forward claims regarding the implementation of the bilateral Russian-Georgian and Russian-Moldavian agreements signed at the same summit.

However, despite the formal interruption of the process of conventional arms control in Europe there was no raise in numbers of the treaty-limited equipment (TLE). Quite the opposite: over five years (from 2011 to 2016) the number of total TLE by categories in the NATO countries did not increase, as it could be expected in view of

⁶ Comment by the MFA of Russia on the US Department of State’s Annual Report on Adherence to and Compliance with Arms Control, Nonproliferation, and Disarmament Agreements and Commitments, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 29 Apr. 2017, <http://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2740264>.

revival of ‘the Russian threat’ narrative, but on the contrary significantly reduced. The number of tanks (at the disposal of the NATO member countries as a whole) was reduced by 17%, armored combat vehicles – 7.5%, artillery systems – 7%, combat aircraft – 20.5%, combat helicopters – 23.2%⁷.

It is also necessary to notice that today neither NATO countries, nor Russia have reached the arms ceilings specified in the CFE. Russia has filled its quota up to 63% on armored vehicles, and up to 44% – on combat aircraft⁸. NATO countries demonstrate the same trend – as of 1 January 2016, the overall ceilings of the members of the Alliance were filled up to 46% on armored vehicles and up to 44% – on combat aircraft.

This situation shows that, first of all, the parties are not undergoing a preparation for serious military confrontation, much less military activities. And, secondly, it shows that the logic of ‘self-restraint’, embedded in the Agreement on Adaptation which is affected by many factors including economic ones, is still alive.

The conclusion is that, despite the statements that the conventional arms control is dead, one can see a reverse situation. The very ideology of the process is alive, so the process can be reanimated. The problem is not the lack of technical solutions, but the lack of political will and readiness for dialogue that in their time made the CFE

⁷ Calculations are based on Vehicle and Aircraft Holdings within the scope of the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty 2016, Ministry of Defence of the Great Britain, 25 Feb. 2016, <https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/502574/Vehicle_Aircraft_Holdings_within_the_scope_of_the_Conventional_Armed_Forces_in_Europe_Treaty_2016.pdf>.

⁸ Calculations are based on Vehicle and Aircraft Holdings within the scope of the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty 2016... Data on Russia is as of 2011. In December 2011, the Russian Federation stopped to provide short summarised information on TLE which it voluntarily submitted to other state parties of the CFE since December 2007. See also: Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty). Conventional Arms Control in Europe (Statement), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 6 July 2017, <http://www.mid.ru/web/guest/obychnye-vooruzeniya/asset_publisher/MLJdOT56NKIk/content/id/1137833> [in Russian].

Treaty promptly advance from separate outlines of 1989 to the 1990 final document.

The dialogue in the sphere of security and arms control, as history testifies, is always a reciprocal matter. Therefore, for example, a separate dialogue between Russia and the West on such issues (of the West's primary interest) as reduction of the tactical nuclear weapons and/or strengthening confidence-building measures in Europe is impossible if there is no parallel dialogue on issues of Russia's concern.

It should be noted that with all the ambiguity of decisions made at the recent NATO summits and other Alliance's decisions all of them demonstrate that Brussels has so far managed to react rather restrained in response to the Ukrainian crisis. Under the circumstances at the latest summits in Wales (September 2014) and Warsaw (July 2016) NATO member countries found a compromise between growing concerns of the states bordering on Russia and unwillingness of the Alliance to further escalate tensions, and thus kept the door open to returning to cooperation with Russia.

The decision to strengthen the NATO Response Force (NRF) – up to 40,000 personnel – represents a significant increase in comparison to its initial size of 13,000⁹, alongside with increased readiness of NRF. The Alliance has also created a Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) capable of deploying within two to three days. NATO has adopted a VJTF rotation plan through 2022¹⁰.

The most intensely discussed in Russia decision was the deployment of additional military units in four countries bordering on Russia – in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland. Four battalion-sized battle groups will be deployed in these countries on a rotational basis and will conduct joint missions with national forces¹¹. In spite of the

⁹ Defence Ministers decide to bolster the NATO Response Force, reinforce collective defence, NATO, 24 Jun. 2015, <http://www.nato.int/cps/ru/natohq/news_120993.htm?selectedLocale=en>.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Warsaw Summit Communiqué issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Warsaw 8-9 July 2016,

fact, that many politicians and experts present this step as rather large-scale, one can see in it an element of restraint.

To begin with, NATO officials constantly emphasise their commitment to provisions of the 1997 Russia-NATO Founding Act, namely that security should not be ensured ‘by additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces’¹². In this regard they always stress that the above forces will be deployed on a temporary and rotational basis, and are rather small in number.

Moreover, there is a certain understanding, that the total number of personnel in three Baltic countries should not exceed the brigade level; this was formerly suggested to the Russian side as one of quantitative restrictions within the Founding Act, but was not provided in writing. However though in reality implementation of this restriction is declared at the ‘operating level’, it has rather conditional character.

Second, despite unprecedented tensions in relations with Russia, the provisions on nuclear weapons in NATO documents have not changed to become more threatening towards Moscow.

Third, in analyzing NATO summits it is important to assess not only decisions that made their way to official documents, but also decisions that were not adopted. Thus, the desire of Poland to have a heavy NATO division deployed on its territory on a constant basis was not approved, neither were calls of Baltic politicians to have permanent sizeable NATO presence. Romania’s suggestion that NATO should deploy a fleet in the Black Sea did not receive support at the Warsaw summit either.

Instead, according to the decisions of that summit, the deployment of two multinational NATO units in Poland – a framework brigade in Zagan (based on a US armored brigade of about 3,500) and one battalion under the US command in the northeast of the country near Suwalki – started in January 2017. Early 2017 witnessed the deployment of the above forward-based NATO forces – a 1,000-strong

NATO, <http://www.nato.int/cps/ru/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm?selectedLocale=en>.

¹² Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation...

battalion in each of the Baltic state¹³. Another multinational framework brigade will be established at the initiative of Romania¹⁴. As for the Alliance's presence in the Black Sea, it intends to strengthen 'land and sea components' by conducting exercises and collecting information on a situation in the region¹⁵.

Fourth, Jens Stoltenberg, NATO Secretary General, said that the formula of relations with Russia had to be based on the principle of 'defence and dialogue'¹⁶ which did not exclude practical cooperation. At the same time the high level of mistrust that emerged as a result of the Ukrainian crisis will serve, in particular during the current political cycle, as a barrier on the way to establish a partnership.

The deadlock in promoting parties' interests in the southeast of Ukraine, Donald Trump's ascending to the White House and associated hopes for changes in the US policy towards Russia have begun to exert noticeable impact on the character of political rhetoric. Both Western and Russian politicians have begun to demonstrate more and more clearly their aspiration to resolve security problems on the basis of compromise, cooperation and to return to already tested and proved forms of solving problems of European security.

Sergey Shoigu, Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation, also called for it; he mentioned that the Russia-NATO Founding Act signed 20 years ago made one think of how to revive its key principle – that 'NATO and Russia do not consider each other as adversaries' striving 'overcoming the vestiges of earlier confrontation and

¹³ Gnauck, G., US forces in Poland: Here to stay, *Deutsche Welle*, 13 Jan. 2017, <<http://www.dw.com/en/us-forces-in-poland-here-to-stay/a-37130731>>.

¹⁴ Warsaw Summit Communiqué issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Warsaw 8-9 July 2016...

¹⁵ As NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg stated, the NATO does not intend to violate the provisions of the 1936 Montreux Convention Regarding the Regime of the Straits according to which the non-Black Sea states' warships (of no more than 30,000 tonnes) cannot stay in the Black Sea longer than for 21 days. See: NATO Council in Brussels: from dialogue with Moscow to hub in Naples, *TASS*, 17 Feb. 2017, <<http://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/4029537>> [in Russian].

¹⁶ See, for example: Jens Stoltenberg: NATO alliance needs strong defence and dialogue with Russia, *Radio Svoboda*, 20 Jun. 2016, <<http://www.svoboda.org/a/27810028.html>> [in Russian].

competition'¹⁷. In this regard Sergey Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, confirmed Moscow's view 'that it is vital to establish a zone of equal and indivisible security from Vancouver to Vladivostok, as formalised by the decisions of OSCE summits and those of the Russia-NATO Council'¹⁸.

NATO-Russia relations and evolution of European security

In 2016 and early 2017 there were no noticeable improvements in process of strengthening European security or at least effective steps in this direction. The NATO-Russia relations were developing the same way.

At the initiative of the president of Finland Sauli Niinistö, Russia and NATO countries started a dialogue on obligatory turning on transponders on board of the military aircraft flying over the Baltic Sea. The Russian Ministry of Defence stated in August 2016 its readiness to cooperate in order to prevent incidents at sea and in air on the basis of bilateral agreements in this area and to consult with the defence ministries of the Baltic States, Poland, Sweden and Finland on elimination of concerns related to military activities in the border areas. However, in the end these negotiation process came to an impasse¹⁹, except for the transponders issue on which preliminary agreements

¹⁷ Speech of the Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation General of the Army Sergey Shoigu at the opening ceremony of the VI Moscow Conference on International Security, Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, 26-27 Apr. 2017, <<http://eng.mil.ru/en/mcis/news/more.htm?id=12120678@cmsArticle>>.

¹⁸ Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's remarks at the Sixth Moscow Conference on International Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 26 Apr. 2017, <http://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2737799>.

¹⁹ Zarembo, I., Latvian Ministry of Defence: Russia rejected a confidence-building measures agreement, *Sputnik News*, 14 Mar. 2017, <<https://ru.sputniknewslv.com/Latvia/20170314/4164931/Latvija-Minoborony-bezopasnost-soglashenie-otkaz-RF.html>> [in Russian].

were reached within a project group under the auspices of International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO)²⁰.

Meanwhile the danger of a direct military collision has not disappeared, but has only increased, especially due to implementation of decisions of the NATO Warsaw summit on deployment of four above mentioned battlegroups in a 'forward area' of the Alliance (the Baltic states and Poland) in close proximity to the Russian border.

The state parties have not been able to reach progress on additional confidence-building measures in the Baltic region, in particular in the format suggested by Latvia – additional visits and inspections in border areas (1+1 from each country per year) which could be formalised in a bilateral Russian-Latvian agreement²¹. Moscow turned down the Riga's initiative in line with the general logic of refusing more military transparency and confidence-building measures to which the Russian government has been adhering since the adoption of the 2011 Vienna Document²².

At the same time, Russian concerns have intensified in connection both with the proposed raise in financial obligations of the Alliance members (defence spending in all European NATO members is to increase to 2% of GDP) and with more active re-armament of some Eastern European countries. For instance, Poland and the Baltic states contracted large arms purchases in 2015-2016²³.

One-day 'blitz' NATO summit held in Brussels on 26 May 2017 could hardly sort out the relations between the new US leadership and the other NATO members. However, even that short meeting

²⁰ Grushko: the Russian Federation and NATO failed to reach an agreement on transponder flights over the Baltic, *TASS*, 7 Feb. 2017, <<http://tass.ru/politika/4004297>> [in Russian].

²¹ Zarembo, I., Latvian Ministry of Defence: Russia rejected a confidence-building measures agreement ...

²² *SIPRI Yearbook 2012: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 449-450.

²³ In particular, Lithuania bought L-39ZA training and strike aircraft, short-range AD systems (two batteries of NASAMS-2 surface-to-air missile systems), and about 170 M577 command track army vehicles, while Poland bought 70 JASSM-ER air-to-ground precision cruise missiles. Warsaw also plans to update its military aircraft fleet by purchasing several dozen F-16 and, possibly, F-35 fighters.

marked the beginning of noticeable transformation of the very foundation of these relations. First of all, it affected military expenditures and the formation of NATO budget, which – upon demand of the new US president – significantly increased the share of other members of the Alliance.

For the first time Washington exerted direct pressure in order to make all NATO countries allocate 2% of GDP for military needs, thus alleviating the burden of the US European defence expenditures. At the moment this obligation taken by the NATO countries in 2014 at the Wales summit is fulfilled by only five countries. Moreover, according to the NATO Secretary General, ‘President Trump expressed that for him 2% is a minimum’²⁴. Such position of the White House made the German Chancellor Angela Merkel state following the NATO and the G7 summits that Europeans have to learn to be more self-reliant²⁵.

Further deepening of the obvious disagreements between Europe and the US has undoubtedly formed a new context for the NATO-Russia relations. In the very near future the Russian policymakers may for the first time have an opportunity to test whether decreasing Europe’s dependence on the USA – put as a goal by the Soviet diplomacy a long time ago – can be beneficial for Russia.

Until recently the European security system based on the 1975 Helsinki principles and the system of arms control treaties seemed to have been established. However, lately it turned out that narrow understanding of national interests by national elites and certain politicians, arbitrary interpretation of international law and other factors considered to be of secondary importance in a ‘civilised Europe’ had blown up the Helsinki process. Undoubtedly, the crisis erupted in the Russia-West relations demands creation of improved and more effective European security system capable of preventing crises.

²⁴ Press conference by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg following the meeting of NATO Heads of State and/or Government in Brussels, 25 May 2017, NATO, <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_144098.htm>.

²⁵ Merkel: Europe can no longer rely on US and Britain, *Deutsche Welle*, 28 May 2017, <<http://www.dw.com/en/merkel-europe-can-no-longer-rely-on-us-and-britain/a-39018097>>.

The Ukrainian crisis among other things raised the profile of OSCE and its leading position in collective political decision-making on the European continent can be further solidified. It would promote better 'political balance' on the continent as it would allow to reduce the significance of currently prevailing military-political decisions made within the framework of NATO. At the same time at least partial departure from the 'NATO-centric' system of European security which prevails today would also contribute to mitigating deep contradictions between Russia and the West in security sphere.

Many politicians and experts both in Russia and abroad expected the Ukrainian crisis to start a new stage of strengthening European security and breath a new life in the process of arms reduction and limitation both on the European continent and globally. However, such expectations have not been realised.

Moreover, the future of these two essential and interconnected processes has proved to be – more than ever – uncertain. Trump's presidency that was originally regarded by some Russian politicians as all but 'victory of Russia' has actually contributed to this uncertainty.

The apparent conclusion is that the Ukrainian crisis has revealed once again systemic differences between Russia's and the West's approaches to fundamental norms of political relations, international law, and use of force. These differences are so deep that to overcome them will require extraordinary efforts and considerably more time than many politicians and experts believe.

In these circumstances the main task is to stabilise the present very volatile situation and to take urgent and effective measures to prevent it from developing in a negative direction. It is impossible to do without establishing political dialogue and practical cooperation.

In the present situation the most urgent measure is to alleviate excessive and constant tension at the Russia-NATO dividing line. Resumption of constructive interaction between the US and Russian leaders could become a serious stimulus for that end. However, in any case restoration of good working relations between Moscow and Brussels is needed. An important condition for achieving this goal is to prevent actions by both parties which can cause new problems and contradictions.

Primarily, the mechanism of bilateral dialogue between Russia and the Alliance members within the NATO-Russia Council has to be restored and enhanced. The Council meetings should convene on a regular basis, and concentrate on practical settlement of both ongoing and future dangerous situations. It is necessary to abandon the practice when a number of areas of collaboration declared by the Council existed mainly for political goals. Obviously, in the future bilateral ‘spheres of consultations and cooperation’ should have a verified and practically-oriented focus preferably including end goals and their deadlines.

In 2016 (after a two-year freeze of military cooperation) three meetings of the NATO-Russia Council took place but their effectiveness was relatively low. Besides, in March 2017 the Chairman of the NATO Military Committee and the Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces resumed phone communication, and that was, certainly, a positive but barely sufficient step to overcome tension and building partnership on military issues.

As one of the most important and urgent initiatives for stabilizing the situation on the dividing line Russia and NATO should take measures against dangerous activities including close approaches of warships and military aircraft that became all but regular. For this purpose Russia and the USA should reaffirm their commitment to the 1989 Agreement between the Governments of the USSR and the USA on the Prevention of Dangerous Military Activities and to the 1972 Agreement between the Governments of the USSR and the USA on the Prevention of Incidents on and over the High Seas.

A brief binding statement on readiness of the parties to take all necessary measures for prevention of such incidents could be the first step in this direction. The next step can be the development and adoption by Russia and NATO of the agreement built upon the above statement.

An additional measure to ease tensions in NATO-Russia relationship can be elaboration and substantiation (with specific limits on deployment time, the number of weapons, and personnel) of the obligation taken by the North Atlantic Alliance according to the 1997

NATO-Russia Founding Act that its security cannot be ensured ‘by additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces’²⁶.

Meanwhile the situation teeters on the brink grounded in non-legally binding understanding that the total number of temporarily deployed NATO contingents at the Russian borders should not exceed a brigade level. But without clearly documented parameters such understanding cannot sufficiently stabilise bilateral military-political relations between Moscow and Brussels.

Since the beginning of the Ukrainian crisis tensions on the border between Russia and the NATO countries have been steadily increasing. Frequency and scale of military exercises have grown, and Russia continues to conduct large-scale snap ‘inspections of combat readiness’ (which are perceived in NATO countries as unannounced military maneuvers). NATO summits and other high-level meetings often discuss prospects of further strengthening and enhancing Alliance’ military structures. Until recently it was hard to find any public statement of Russian political and military officials that did not raise the issue of ‘unprecedented’ increase of NATO activity at the Russian border.

Even if the ongoing military confrontation and heated political rhetoric do not on a number of indicators meet the definition of a cold war, the current situation is not less but more dangerous than it was in the midst of that period. And it all occurs in circumstances when negotiations on arms control are at the deadlock, and many effective mechanisms created during the Cold War for prevention of crises and their escalation have been forgotten. The parties have no will or ability to resolve dangerous situations on a long-term and stable basis even in the areas where they have accumulated enough experience of effective agreements.

In these conditions the primary goal should be to decrease mutual tension on the NATO-Russia dividing lines. Practical arrangements should be directed at reducing the intensity of exercises, avoiding maneuvers near the border and large-scale unannounced

²⁶ Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation...

exercises, as well as at creating a special area with smaller troop presence and restricted military activity along the border. In this respect it would be enough to promptly draft agreements that would formalise a number of the key confidence-building measures²⁷.

There is a need for improvement and increasing efficiency of confidence-building and transparency measures. It can be done, for instance, in form of statements (mutual obligations) on preventing actions which can be regarded as security threats by the other party (including a list of such possible actions) and on extending the list of transparency measures (exchanging information including on the purposes of maneuvers, presence of observers, maneuvers near borders). In the course of such joint work that could be supported by both Russia and the NATO countries it would be possible to agree on specific restrictions of military activities (on limited presence and reduction of armed forces across the border, the number and scale of maneuvers). It is advisable to formalise such arrangements as legally binding obligations.

First of all, these arrangements should apply to border areas. In case they work this experience can be used to strengthen and modernise the whole system of confidence-building measures between Russia and the West.

Similar process could be initiated within the ‘revitalised’ NATO–Russia Council or the framework of a special dialogue between military and diplomatic representatives of the parties. To move this process further the parties can consider lowering the threshold of military exercises notification according to the 2011 Vienna Document and wider confidence- and security-building measures²⁸.

²⁷ For more details about proposals on urgent measures to ease tensions between Russia and NATO see: Arbatov, A., *Beyond the Nuclear Threshold: Russia, NATO, and Nuclear First Use*, European Leadership Network, Apr. 2017, <<http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/medialibrary/2017/04/21/94c24315/Beyond%20the%20Nuclear%20Threshold.pdf>>; Oznobishchev, S., *Russia and NATO: From the Ukrainian Crisis to the Renewed Interaction*. In *Russia: arms control, disarmament and international security* (Moscow: IMEMO, 2016), pp. 58-72.

²⁸ At the same time, however, one should take into account that Russia refuses to undertake ‘unilateral steps’ aimed at increasing transparency of the armed forces and couples the revision of the Vienna Document with renewal of negotiating process on

In parallel, Russia and NATO can start reviving conventional arms control which has been pushed to the periphery of almost paralyzed process of arms reduction and limitation. However, as indicates the nature of the current political dialogue, a considerable progress is only possible after the Ukrainian crisis is resolved.

To help this purpose, OSCE can intensify its practice of holding regular seminars on military doctrines that begun in 1990. Such seminars can force the member countries not just to present national military doctrines as declarations but also to explain their relevance in relation to the development of the military-political situation as well as their provisions, language, objectives, and further evolution. Within the framework of such rather open dialogues countries can reach understanding on unvarnished security realities – for example, on important boundaries which are perceived by the other side as a ‘red lines’ in terms of security threats.

It is also necessary to avoid actions which can be negatively perceived by other party (regardless of its understanding of suggested reasoning). For more than 20 years Western countries has been following the opposite path pushing forward its policy of NATO’s enlargement to the east contrary to objections and the growing concerns of the Russian side. Practice of similar unilateral decisions has to be decisively stopped to avoid even more destructive crises of the NATO-Russia relations in the future.

* * *

The Russian view on the development of the Ukrainian crisis has not attracted many supporters among Western politicians. As noted

conventional arms control. See: Interview of the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs A. Meshkov to Interfax news agency, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 8 June 2016, <http://www.mid.ru/web/guest/nota-bene/-/asset_publisher/dx7DsH1WAM6w/content/id/2305696> [in Russian]; MFA stated that containment of the Russian Federation prevents strengthening of confidence-building measures in Europe, *RIA Novosti*, 29 Apr. 2017, <<https://ria.ru/politics/20170429/1493384087.html>> [in Russian].

above, the hopes for a new US administration and a new US Congress to change the previous political course have also failed. As a result, Russia cannot win back West's trust, while Moscow itself becomes increasingly concerned and suspicious about the 'the true goals' of US and NATO military build-up.

Among increased tensions when the prospects of return to constructive interaction between Russia and the West are vague, not only preparation for but even suggestion or discussion of such major ideas as convening of a new conference on security and cooperation in Europe seem unrealistic. Instead within the current political cycle the parties should focus on a persistent work to decrease tension and minimise damage caused by the Ukrainian crisis. The main task here appears to be preservation of as many elements as possible of the arms control and non-proliferation regimes at the European and global level. It would also be relevant to restore basic interaction on the most challenging security threats and risks, including establishing mechanisms to prevent military incidents, terrorism acts, WMD proliferation, etc.

In the given circumstances it is hard to foresee quick improvement of the NATO-Russia relations. There is a need for a serious push at a high political level to promote a more dynamic and positive bilateral dialogue.

3. EUROPEAN UNION ON THE WAY TO STRATEGIC AUTONOMY

Nadezhda ARBATOVA

The idea of common defence policy and a common defence capability of the European Union is not new, it dates back to more than 60 years ago. All this time discussions between the so-called Europeanists and Atlanticists have continued with varied intensity. However, this idea took its final shape after the end of the bipolar world. Its development was influenced by two major factors: a crisis of Euro-Atlantic relations and the increase in challenges to the security of the European Union.

Why is it imperative for the EU to build its own defence capability

After the Cold War was over, the need to eliminate the threat of a global conflict boosted European integration in the areas of foreign and security policy, and common European defence. This was largely due to the policy of the United States, who had suddenly found themselves to be the only global superpower with new global missions that virtually excluded Europe from the list of priorities of the US

foreign policy, and assumed the role of ‘programming leadership’¹ during the presidency of George W. Bush.

In the context of allied relations within NATO the growing gap in the defence spendings of the US and the its European allies emerged as the main problem aggravated by the economic crisis. The United States’ political establishment had repeatedly warned its allies that in order to keep NATO ready to respond to the whole range of crises from terrorism to cyber-attacks, European NATO members should maintain the level of defence expenditures to make Europe the strong partner America needs. As former United States Ambassador to NATO Kurt Volker said, ‘for many Americans, working with Europe is seen as process-oriented and time-consuming, without delivering real results’².

The hopes cherished by many European Atlanticists that with Barack Obama’s coming to power that strained relations would once again become ‘Clinton-style’ and change for the better, never came true. During Barack Obama’s presidency Europe was not put back on the list of the United States’ foreign policy top priorities, as the US, concerned over China’s growing military might, opted for reshaping its foreign policy strategy and refocusing its resources on the Asia-Pacific.

The victory of Donald Trump, political outsider, nationalist and to a certain extent isolationist, in the 2016 United States presidential elections became another reason for the EU to concern over its future security. The NATO Summit of 25 May 2017 in Brussels came as another disappointment for the United States’ European allies, as their expectations that President Donald Trump would officially reiterate the US commitments to comply with Article 5 of the 1949 North-Atlantic Treaty were not fulfilled. ‘He [President Trump] has stated several times that he’s – he’s committed to NATO and there’s no way you can be committed to NATO without being committed to Article 5 because

¹ Troitsky, M., The Concept of ‘Programming Leadership’ in the US Euro-Atlantic Strategy, *Pro et Contra*, No. 4, 2002, pp. 86-103 [in Russian].

² Volker, K., The ‘Obama effect’ has been to lay bare deep transatlantic tensions, *Europe’s World*, 1 Feb. 2010, <<http://europesworld.org/2010/02/01/the-obama-effect-has-been-to-lay-bare-deep-transatlantic-tensions/#.WVN857jcowA>>.

NATO is about Article 5, collective defence, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said³.

This was also mentioned by many European experts: ‘... until now the one thing that has secured European defence since the formation of NATO has been the total certainty that whichever President is elected to the White House the US will come to the aid of another member of the pact. Yet after the unexpected election of Donald Trump against all previous ideas of the predictability of American leaders, and with the inevitable departure of the United Kingdom, old beliefs concerning the role of NATO in European security might be subjected to revision’⁴.

In other words, whatever changes there may be in the rhetoric of the US President, the Trump factor in the US-EU relations will inevitably drive the EU to invest more and with increasing efficiency in its own defence capability.

As the Euro-Atlantic relations are facing the crisis, the EU leadership is increasingly concerned over growing instability and conflicts – both active and frozen – conducive to terrorism, in the areas adjacent to the EU: in the CIS (primarily the conflict in Ukraine), the Balkans, and the Eastern Mediterranean. No doubt, the outstanding issues and differences culminated in the conflict in Ukraine. It should be noted that the root causes of both the 2008 Caucasus crisis and the Ukraine conflict go far beyond the events that formally triggered them. A detailed analysis of these causes and reasons is beyond the scope of this chapter⁵. One should only stress that both conflicts are caused by fundamental differences between Russia and the West as to the institutional framework of a post-bipolar architecture of European security and their competition for the CIS area.

³ Trump harshly criticised after NATO summit. A victory for Putin, *InoSMI*. 29 May 2017, <<http://inosmi.ru/politic/20170529/239455424.html>> [in Russian].

⁴ Shestakov, E., No money for NATO, *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, 15 Nov. 2016, <<https://rg.ru/2016/11/15/pochemu-evrosoiuz-vnov-ne-dogovorilsia-o-sozdanii-evropejskoj-armii.html>> [in Russian].

⁵ *The EU-Russia Relations and the Ukraine Crisis*, ed. by N. Arbatova (Moscow: IMEMO RAN, 2014), pp. 6-24 [in Russian]; Arbatova, N.K., Dynkin, A.A., World order after Ukraine, *Survival*, Issue 1, Vol. 58, 2016, pp. 71-90.

The Western Balkans continue to be Europe's weakest link with the instability in Bosnia and Herzegovina (an artificial state formation where deep divisions remain between Bosnian Muslims, Serbs and Croats), and Macedonia. In other words, with increasing instability and the presence of both active and dormant conflicts creating breeding ground for international terrorism (including for that brought to Europe by the flow of immigrants) in the adjacent regions, both the EU member states and Brussels grew to realise that it is the EU who is to take ownership for its security.

The withdrawal from the EU of the United Kingdom that paralysed the development of European defence, opens new opportunities in this sphere. In general, the EU policy-makers and leading experts believe that without the United Kingdom, the EU will finally be able to step up its integration in a number of key areas, primarily, in the sphere of security. There is a number of matters in which the United Kingdom was hindering progress in recent years.

Global Security Strategy: EU foreign and defence policy revised

EU security strategy provides conceptual framework for the development of European foreign policy and defence integration. At the European Council Summit of 28 June 2016, a new Global Security Strategy (GSS) for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy 'Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe'⁶ was presented, which became a landmark in the evolution of the EU foreign and defence policy. It came as a second document of the kind after the 2003 European Security Strategy 'A Secure Europe in a Better World' was adopted. The scope of the GSS goes beyond security issues in the narrow sense of the word. Basically, the Global Security Strategy Global Security Strategy is a programme document for the development of integration processes in European Union's foreign and security policy. High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs

⁶ Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy, European Union, June 2016, <http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf>.

and Security Policy Federica Mogherini noted, ‘Only the European Union can mix and match trade policies, environment policies, aid, development but also some sort of security work’⁷.

Basically, the GSS is a programme document for the development of integration in European Union’s foreign and security policy. The Strategy demonstrates profound understanding of the difficult situation in which the EU has found itself in the last few years. The new Strategy is expected to provide a framework for a common vision of the foreign policy of all member states, whose interests in the international arena diverge greatly at the moment. With European Union facing a multi-faceted crisis (financial, migration, and the one related to Brexit), the Global Strategy is to send an important message to the international community on the role that the EU intends to assume in the world. This document adequately reflects the threats to security, challenges to further development and the very existence of the European Union, and sets forth the fundamental principles of the EU security.

Those fundamental principles include the security of the European Union; state and societal resilience to its East and South, an integrated approach to conflicts, cooperative regional orders and individual approach, global governance for the 21st century and the strengthening of the UN. It also stresses that the independence and territorial integrity of states, the inviolability of borders and the peaceful settlement of disputes are key elements of the European security order, and that this applies to all states, both within and beyond the EU’s borders. In other words, it reaffirms commitment to the Helsinki principles that have been de-facto subjected to considerable revision after the end of bi-polar world order.

The Global Security Strategy is distinct in a number of ways from the 2003 Security Strategy ‘A Secure Europe in a Better World’.

First, unlike the previous Strategy, aimed at strengthening regional and international security through peacekeeping, the new Strategy proclaims ‘common interests and principles’ and prioritises

⁷ Speech by Federica Mogherini at the public seminar ‘EU as a Global Actor’, European Union, 10 Oct. 2016, <https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/malawi/11588/speech-by-federica-mogherini-at-the-public-seminar-eu-as-a-global-actor_en>.

security guarantees, placing the security of the EU citizens and territory on top of the list. The first priority of the EU foreign policy is that ‘the EU Global Strategy starts at home’⁸. Thus, the EU pursues an approach prioritizing EU’s own security and views its relations with states outside it from this perspective. As the document focuses on ensuring peace and guaranteeing security for the citizens and territory of the European Union, one can conclude that the EU cannot and will not guarantee the security of the non-EU Eastern European countries, including Ukraine. At the same time, the Strategy notes that the EU will certainly continue to prevent and settle conflicts, especially in the neighbouring areas with the view to minimise threats to its citizens.

Second, it has left behind the traditional rhetoric of promoting democracy, and the idea of a single European neighbourhood space (virtually, only Georgia has been cited as a positive example of EU achievements in the East Europe). Two conceptual innovations have been introduced to replace the previous reforming and liberal role of the EU in the world; those are the concept of resilience as a principle governing EU’s relations with the neighbouring states, and focus on individual approach to these countries. Virtually, these new provisions imply that the European Neighbourhood Policy vis a vis both the countries of the Arab Spring and the Eastern Partnership has failed. If in the former case the EU leadership overestimated democratic revolution potential of the Arab Spring, in the latter case, it ignored the diversity of the Eastern partners and suggested a single plan of reforms to countries whose level of internal development and foreign policy priorities diverge widely (Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus)⁹.

In other words, instead of the European Neighbourhood Policy, the EU will focus on enhancing the resilience and applying ‘principled pragmatism’ in its relations with third countries. The resilience (which the Global Security Strategy mentions 40 times) is to mean ‘the ability

⁸ Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy..., pp. 18-22.

⁹ *European Union at Crossroads: Outstanding Issues and New Challenges (Political Aspects)*, ed. by N. Arbatova, A. Kokeyev (Moscow: IMEMO RAN, 2016), pp. 29-31 [in Russian].

of states and societies [to the EU's East and South] to reform'. EU's individual approach to the neighbouring countries will be based precisely on this.

Third, the Strategy stresses the necessity to strengthen EU's defence capability, as only a strong and united European Union can respond to the current threats. The document underlines that the principle of pooling and sharing of all countries' resources should be applied to all the defence spendings. To sum up, the Strategy reaffirms the commitment to building on the 2011 Ghent Initiative of the EU Defence Ministers that laid foundation for the new integration project dubbed Pooling and Sharing (P&S) and aimed at efficient use of the EU countries' defence capabilities based on role specification. According to the Global Security Strategy, the EU should contribute to: (a) responding to external conflicts and crises; (b) building up the partners' capabilities and (c) protecting of the Union and its citizens. The proposed level of EU's ambition determines the goals that the EU and its member states intend to attain, including through the Common Security and Defence Policy and making use of the whole potential of the EU Treaty. The European Union will continue to cooperate with its partners, primarily the United Nations and NATO based on these strategic security and defence priorities and respecting the autonomy of decision-making processes in the EU¹⁰.

As soon as it was published, the Global Security Strategy brought about heated discussions within the EU experts' community, concerned first and foremost, over whether it was realistic. Agreeing on a common vision of the EU foreign policy is an extremely complicated task, including as it involves the elaboration of a truly common foreign and security policy when the scepticism about the European Union is growing. The document had been prepared before the referendum in the United Kingdom was held. Hence, the main question that arose after the Strategy was published, was the question of how the Strategy was to be implemented after the withdrawal from the European Union of the State that was EU's backbone in all matters concerning the Common

¹⁰ Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, Council of the European Union, 14 Nov. 2016, p. 2, <https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eugs_implementation_plan_st14392.en16.pdf>.

Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), and the relevant priorities and approaches.

Many analysts noted that the Strategy contains no real assessment of the timeframe for attaining the ‘strategic autonomy’, that is EU’s own defence capability, neither it provides a direct and honest answer to the question of the future expansion of the EU which is still declared as a key task.

A number of experts note that in the section on Russia (‘The European Security Order’) ‘Russia has been rightfully accused of violating international law and destabilising Ukraine, and those actions (‘illegal annexation of Crimea and destabilization in the east of Ukraine’) are considered to challenge the European security order’¹¹. At the same time, the critics of the Strategy have stated that the agreed language of this section of the document should have been satisfactory for everyone, and was prompted by political stance of Brussels, that does not necessarily coincide with the interests of Ukraine. Moreover, the critics often said that under the Strategy, the EU would engage Russia to discuss disagreements and cooperate if and when their interests overlapped. However the very concept of this selective partnership lacks proper definition, as neither Brussels, nor Moscow have any clear idea as to what particularly should be on the list of areas of such cooperation.

Some experts believe that this is a sort of idealist appeal in which some key threats and challenges are listed correctly, but the possibility of which to influence the modernization of the European security order are limited due to the absence of the relevant coercive mechanism. Hence, it would be a mistake to view this document as a comprehensive tool to address all threats currently facing the European Union. Rather than reflecting what the EU’s policy is, this Strategy reflects what the EU’s policy should be.

Although the EU Global Strategy is severely criticised and accused of idealism, it is an example of just the opposite. The European Union is revising the groundwork of its foreign and security policy trying to make it more pragmatical, making the shared national interests

¹¹ Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe..., p. 33.

rather than high principles its cornerstone. The Strategy prioritises the security of the EU's own space and its own citizens as the main such interest for all the EU countries, whether Eurooptimist, or Eurosceptics.

Treaty framework of the security and defence policy and practical steps towards its implementation

The evolution of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy as its essential component has passed through some stages due to the evolution of the very integration institutions¹². The CSDP in its current state is aimed at stage-by-stage formation of a common EU defence policy, the expansion of its civilian and military crisis management and conflict prevention capabilities; it was approved in the Treaty of Lisbon (Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community) that entered into force on 1 December 2009.

The Lisbon Treaty confirmed the possibility of transforming the CSDP in common defence, and contained a provision obliging member states to take joint action to respond to an aggression against one of them. It expanded the Petersberg tasks to include the following: joint disarmament operations; humanitarian and rescue operations; provision of military advice and aid; conflict prevention and peacekeeping; tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking and post-conflict stabilization; and fight against terrorism.

It was decided that both CFSP and CSDP should remain intergovernmental, at the same time, a Permanent Structured

¹² There are few landmarks in the evolution of the EU's common defence. Basically, it dates back to the time when the very European integration began. In terms of establishing a legal framework, in addition to the Treaty of Lisbon, one should also note the Treaty on European Union, or the Treaty of Maastricht (concluded on 27 February 1992 and entered into force on 1 November 1993) and the Treaty Amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties Establishing the European Communities and Certain Related Acts, or the Treaty of Amsterdam (concluded on 2 October 1997 in Amsterdam).

Cooperation (PESCO) between individual member states in military sphere was envisaged. Under the Treaty of Lisbon, two members are enough to establish a permanent structured cooperation.

In particular, the Treaty of Lisbon stated that those member states ‘whose military capabilities fulfilled higher criteria and which had made more binding commitments to one another in this area with a view to the most demanding missions should establish permanent structured cooperation’¹³. Thus, PESCO has opened the way to establishing a more stable political and military avant-garde in the military sphere in the form of flexible alliance that does not require participation of all or the majority of the EU member states.

After the Treaty of Lisbon was adopted, there has been a true renaissance of the EU countries’ bilateral and multilateral defence initiatives that basically have been examples of permanent structured cooperation, although none of them was recognised as such officially:

- the 2010 UK-France Defence Co-operation Treaty;
- the cooperation of the Visegrad Four (V4) of 2011 – the Visegrad Battlegroup;
- the Weimar Triangle (Germany, France and Poland) of 2011 – the Weimar Battlegroup (by 2013).

However, the so-called Ghent Initiative of the EU Council of September 2010 came as a true novelty, as it engaged all EU countries in the military cooperation. The Ghent Initiative was preceded by two Directives of 2008 and 2009 on the liberalization of the EU markets of military products and facilitating member states’ access to each other’s markets. The participants in the EU Defence Ministerial in Ghent in 2010 decided that while defence budgets were cut everywhere due to economic crisis, all member states should step up cooperation to build up their military capability, in particular in pooling and sharing military resources. They suggested that in this context, each country’s military capability should be systematically assessed and military spheres in which cooperation with other member states could develop, should be identified. They specially stressed the roles of the European Defence

¹³ Article 42(5) of the Treaty on European Union as amended by the Treaty of Lisbon.

Agency (EDA) in determining the spheres of military cooperation and the establishment of relevant expert groups.

Basically, the Ghent Initiative laid the foundation for the new integration project dubbed Pooling and Sharing (P&S) and representing the European equivalent of NATO's Smart Defence and aimed at efficient use of EU states' military capabilities based on specific roles assigned to states. The concept envisaged more cost-effective use of military capability, the pooling of the EU countries' military resources and their subsequent sharing, including:

- joint procurement of arms and military equipment, and joint use of research and development facilities (for example, of the A400M transport aviation aircraft);
- joint use, through partial or full integration, of the structures of armed forces (for example, the military training infrastructure) and the establishment of joint units and troops;
- role specialization (for example, Germany provides maritime surveillance for the North Sea, thus relieving the Netherlands of this task)¹⁴.

Certainly, the implementation of P&S is a lengthy process that encounters many obstacles varying from economic and logistical to military and technical and operational ones. It was noted, in particular, that the project will require a high degree of trust among its participants, their readiness to sacrifice their national sovereignty in the most sensitive sphere, national security. There were discussions on whether the EDA that coordinates the P&S projects would cope with that role or whether new structures would be necessary. It was also often said that there was a risk of duplication with NATO's Smart Defence.

What is more, military experts expressed fears that the role specialization could in the long run reduce European countries' strategic flexibility in peacekeeping operations in the formats not limited to the EU and NATO. There have also been questions related to

¹⁴ Mölling, C., Pooling and Sharing in the EU and NATO, *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik*, 18 June 2012, <<https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publication/europes-defence-pooling-sharing/>>.

the role specialization of Germany who opposed military operations similar to the campaign in Libya.

However, despite all complications and uncertainty, the Ghent Initiative marked a stable trend – and the one that has virtually no alternative – towards the development of European defence capability and eventually European defence union. Although both the Smart Defence, and the Pooling and Sharing are intended to supplement each other and to serve as NATO's European pillar, there is a fundamental contradiction between them.

Almost immediately after the Ghent Summit, the issue of establishing a permanent structure, a conference on building up the EU military capability, was raised. That was followed by other, more direct proposals to set up a permanent European Council on defence affairs¹⁵, or even a Defence Union. In particular, the Future of Europe document said, 'Our defence policy should have more ambitious goals which go beyond 'pooling and sharing''¹⁶. The establishment of the European pillar would imply that political decision on when and where the Europeans should use their military capability, would be made within the European Union, which in its turn would require that a structure similar to the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), should be set up. In other words, this does not mean that the allies are deliberately divided, but that there are objective centrifuge effects, both at the global and at the national level that draw the United States and Europe apart in terms of ensuring European security.

The adoption of the Global Security Strategy has given a new impetus to the development of the EU defence-related component. To implement the Global Security Strategy, a package of measures was adopted that consists of three major pillars. The first one included new political goals and ambitions for Europeans to take more responsibility for their own security and defence. The second one incorporated new financial tools to help Member States and the European defence industry to develop defence capabilities (European Defence Action

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ See: Crisis consolidation: 'The future of Europe' in a new world order – the results of a 'brainstorming', 20 Sep. 2012, <<https://regnum.ru/news/1572990.html#ixzz2LoHqNDID>> [in Russian].

Plan). The third one encompassed a set of concrete actions as follow up to the EU-NATO Joint Declaration which identified areas of cooperation. Together the three elements constitute a comprehensive package to boost security of the Union and its citizens.

By the Bratislava EU leaders' meeting (16 September 2016) the ministers of defence of France and Germany had prepared a joint set of proposals to strengthen European defence policy. The document envisaged establishing a European defence headquarters, a common surveillance system and sharing logistics and military medical resources. The Franco-German plan relied on the de-facto EU-led integration of defence structures and assets (including calling for the establishment of permanent EU Headquarters for CSDP for sharing military assets). It also envisages the revitalisation of EU Battlegroups, the activation of some clauses of the Lisbon Treaty, and the use of EU funds to finance military research¹⁷.

On 14 November 2016 the Council adopted conclusions on implementing the EU global strategy in the area of security and defence. These conclusions determine the level of ambition which sets out the main goals which the EU and its Member States will aim to achieve in the area of security and defence. It focuses on three priorities: enabling the European Union to respond more comprehensively, rapidly and effectively to crises, in particular in its neighbourhood; helping to make its partners stronger when it comes to their security and defence; and strengthening the European Union's capacity to protect European citizens, by working more closely together on security. To fulfil these goals, Ministers also agreed to a range of actions to strengthen civilian and military capabilities, as well as EU security and defence structures and tools¹⁸.

The European Defence Action Plan was adopted by the European Commission on 30 November 2016. It comprises a European

¹⁷ Bratislava: Defence and Security cooperation in Europe and the Franco-German plan, Defencematters.org, 16 Sep. 2016, <<http://defencematters.org/news/1114/1114/>>.

¹⁸ EU Security and Defence package, European Union, 15 Dec. 2016, <https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/16693/EU%20Security%20and%20Defence%20package>.

Defence Fund and other actions to help Member States boost research and spend more efficiently on joint defence capabilities, thus fostering a competitive and innovative defence industrial base and contributing to enhance European citizens' security¹⁹.

The Council of the European Union and Foreign Ministers of NATO adopted on 6 December 2016 a common set of proposals for EU-NATO cooperation. This follows from the Joint Declaration signed by EU leaders and the NATO Secretary General in July 2016. The set of actions comprises 42 concrete proposals for implementation in several areas of cooperation²⁰. As NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has stated, the Joint Declaration of NATO and the European Union will provide them with the framework for working more closely together also in assisting partner countries, including in the Western Balkans, in becoming more resilient against any kind of outside interference²¹.

On 8 June, the Council adopted the decision establishing of the military planning and conduct capability (MPCC) within the EU military staff (EUMS) to ensure its capability to conduct operations outside the EU area of responsibility. The terms of reference of the EUMS, which is part of the European External Action Service (EEAS), were also been amended and approved²². 'The establishment of the MPCC is a very important operational decision to strengthen European defence. It will contribute to make the non-executive European missions more effective and to improve the training of soldiers of partner countries, to guarantee peace and security. This is important not just for our partners, but also for the European Union's security', said High Representative Federica Mogherini²³. The decision to establish MPCC virtually amounts to establishing a permanent headquarters for

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ NATO and the EU agreed to counter Russia in the Western Balkans together, *Interfax*, 6 Dec. 2016, <<http://www.interfax.ru/world/540180>> [in Russian].

²² EU Defence Cooperation: Council Establishes a Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC), European Council, 8 July 2017, <<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/06/08-military-mpcc-planning-conduct-capability/>>.

²³ Ibid.

conducting EU overseas missions in accordance with the Franco-German initiative.

At the same time, security and defence continue to be controversial issues for the European Union. This can be accounted for by the traditionally important role of the EU member states' national sovereignty in this most sensitive sphere of European integration, the new EU members' fear of losing strategic ties with the United States, the countries' divergence in their perceptions of threats, and some countries' wider interpretation of security (and defence) capabilities. Of all the practical issues, the issue of the European Army is the one that pains EU's Eurosceptics most. As a result, the EU leadership makes every effort to avoid this term replacing it with a more neutral one – multinational corps. To be precise, European states should set up permanent multinational units with special multinational headquarters, such as Army Corps and Air Force. For this purpose each participant contributes national battalions or combat aircraft, yet all support functions may be performed through the combination of the unit (permanent multinational units) and specialization (the division of responsibilities between the participating countries). As former UK Permanent Representative to NATO Sir Adam Thomson notes, 'What is needed is a serious commitment on both sides of the Atlantic to 'unlock' the European assets now locked into NATO's integrated military structure, and to create a genuine European defence and operational pillar as the basis for strategic autonomy. This would mean a major European investment in the sort of enabling capabilities on which Europe is so comfortably dependent on the US. Rather than Europeans just responding to pressure from President Trump on 2%, autonomy might be a goal that actually mobilises further burden-sharing',²⁴.

²⁴ Thomson, A., Security Autonomy for Europe?, European Leadership Network, 7 Apr. 2017, <http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/security-autonomy-for-Europe_4657.html?mc_cid=8d20c478fb&mc_eid=39fa389d84>.

* * *

Today, security is the sphere of European integration where the parties demonstrate great willingness to find a compromise and make certain progress. Terrorist attacks, instability in the Middle East, deteriorating relations with Russia, and the election of Donald Trump as US President all serve as powerful incentives in this area. European leaders are increasingly willing to recognise that their citizens' security can only be ensured through intra-European cooperation. In other words, the European Union has been re-thinking its security threats and its approaches to ensuring its security, which is reflected in its Global Security Strategy and its implementation roadmap. Getting rid of this 'Maginot complex' (rigid positional defence with reliance on the United States) becomes the main task of the European Union's strategic community.

It should be recognised that NATO no longer exists the way it traditionally was. The relations among the allies may evolve towards a EU-US functional partnership, in which the EU will assume the role of ensuring security in its neighbouring areas, while the US will be responsible for global security. EU's strategic autonomy is a reality; it will come true despite all inevitable contradictions and even temporary departures from this course.

4. CSTO: THE EVOLUTION OF SECURITY FUNCTIONS AND STRUCTURES

Alexander NIKITIN

Taking stocks before the CSTO's 15th anniversary

The Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) established in 2002-2003 on the basis of the 1992 Collective Security Treaty and comprising, as of today, six states — Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan – is at the moment the major political and military alliance in the territory of the former Soviet Union. 2017 will mark the 25th anniversary of the Collective Security Treaty and the 15th anniversary of the CSTO. Those are good occasions to take stock of what has been done and assess future prospects.

In a decade and a half after its foundation, the CSTO has managed to become a full-fledged regional intergovernmental defence and international security organisation under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. It has formed a system of regular political bodies comprising the Council on Collective Security in the format of summit of heads of state, the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Council of Ministers of Defence, Committee of Secretaries of the Security Councils, a Moscow-based permanent international Secretariat (responsible for operational political governance), and the Joint Staff (a military command body). The

CSTO has become a forum for continuous cooperation among six former Soviet states' in both political and military spheres. Indeed, it has an operational foreign policy coordination mechanism, and in most cases the member states present consolidated joint positions at the United Nations, the Organisation for Security and Co-Operation in Europe and other international fora.

The CSTO positions itself as a new type of a *multi-role security organisation* intended first and foremost for 'comprehensively ensuring collective security'¹. This implies primarily that the organisation has combined two 'clusters' of functions, and has been pursuing, for all the 15 years of its history, two interlinked yet divergent tracks intertwining and competing at the same time. The first one, that has been highlighted in the CSTO's doctrines from the start, is CSTO's focus on addressing 'new threats and challenges' (terrorism, extremism, illegal cross-border migration, spread of narcotic drugs, cyber threats, the threat of internal social destabilization, etc.). Focusing on new threats the Organisation intended to demonstrate that it was fundamentally different from the Warsaw Pact dissolved in early 1990s, to avoid military standoff with NATO, and build cooperation with other international organisations. To address the new challenges, the CSTO member states have conducted annual anti-drug operation Kanal that the United Nations has considered the most effective operation to counter the flow of drugs from Afghanistan. The SCTO has also established the Collective Peacekeeping Force comprising 3,600 troops, and negotiations are underway to involve these forces in the UN peace operations. The CSTO has established bodies to respond to natural and manmade emergencies (in 2016, the establishment of the CSTO Anti-Crisis Centre was completed) and has been developing information security cooperation and conducting operations to counter illegal migration from the third countries.

¹ Collective Security Strategy 2025 of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation, 14 Oct. 2016, p. 1., Collective Security Treaty Organisation, <http://odkb-csto.org/documents/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=8382> [in Russian].

The second track includes restoring the six (and at some stages, seven²) member states' collective armed forces and massive military infrastructure intended for defending the territory and countering traditional external threats (those of the 'old type'). As the role of the military factor in the international relations has been increasing over the second decade of this century, this second track aimed at establishing a defensive military alliance has been expanding, partly stripping track one ('soft security') of resources and attention, and virtually changing the Organisation's focus.

The CSTO has, therefore, combined the characteristics of a traditional military alliance and those of a poly-functional international security organisation. It has built infrastructure to support different functions. Cooperation between the emergency ministries, anti-drug and anti-terrorist bodies, and the continuous Kanal, Nelegal and Proksi operations, and the establishment of the Collective Peacekeeping Force has strengthened the organisation's activities to counter 'new threats and challenges'.

At the same time, the restoration of 'horizontal military structures'³ is underway, including the formation of regional military groups (Russian-Armenian and Russian-Belarusian), the establishment of Collective Rapid Deployment Force⁴, and subsequently Collective Rapid Reaction Force⁵, Collective Air Force, of joint air defence and joint missile defence, the systems of collective protection of railways,

² Uzbekistan that was initially a party to the Collective Security Treaty between 1992 and 1999, rejoined the CSTO in 2006 as the seventh member state and then left it again in 2012.

³ 'Horizontal military structures' of the CSTO refer to the integration of the six states' armed forces' branches and services, building coordination between their artilleries, air forces, etc. within the common CSTO 'defensive area'.

⁴ Collective Rapid Deployment Force for the Central Asian Region was initially established in late 1990s (before the CSTO took shape) within the CIS and the Headquarters for the Coordination of Military Cooperation among CIS Member States. They are currently operated by the CSTO and conduct annual Rubezh exercises.

⁵ Collective Rapid Reaction Force was established by February 2009. Currently it has a strength of 22,500 military personnel and includes units contributed by all six countries of the CSTO. It conducts three series of annual military exercises: Vzaimodeystvie, Kobalt, and Grom.

the development of technical military cooperation and defence industries' cooperation has strengthened the component of the regional military alliance intended to ensure the defence of the territory of the member states. Unlike the 1990s and 2000s, when the CIS, and subsequently CSTO's forces were intended for countering threats from the south, rather than the west, since 2014, potential standoff with NATO and possible escalation of threats from the west has also come to the fore.

It is often said that the CIS countries integrate in it at varied speeds. Similarly, one can state that in the CSTO different agencies and ministries cooperate and integrate at varied speeds. Indeed, there have appeared over ten parallel tracks or 'strategies' of international and inter-agency collaboration that took shape at different times and have developed with varied intensity. In addition to the cooperation among the CSTO countries' ministries of defence and foreign affairs which served as a foundation, there appeared distinct frameworks for the collaboration of the six countries' emergency ministries, police and anti-drug agencies, anti-terrorist structures, and agencies tasked with combating cyber-threats, etc. At different times the countries agreed upon and formalised CSTO's border cooperation strategy, anti-terrorist strategy, anti-drug strategy, etc.

At the same time, unlike the European Union, where common foreign policy and security service (in fact, an international ministry with relatively extensive supra-state powers) emerged over time, in the CSTO the majority of countries make special emphasis on preventing the many organisation's structures from acquiring supra-state powers that can prevail over their sovereignty. Thus, cooperative format prevails over integration. Strictly speaking, the Organisation's collective forces of all types (Collective Rapid Deployment Force, Collective Rapid Reaction Force, Collective Peacekeeping Force, Collective Air Force, etc.) remain more of a 'set of building blocks', the components of which are assembled as necessary for exercises or joint actions, while retaining their national affiliation. Indeed, they are not united on any permanent basis, and after their mission is completed return to their bases in the national territories. Specialised collective forces have never been assembled in their full strength, they are neither

stationed, nor trained together, and only 10 to 50 percent of each collective force are pulled together for a short time for regular (usually annual) exercises⁶.

In 2016-early 2017 a number of important events in the development of the CSTO took place.

April 2016 saw a notable deterioration of political and military situation in the area of the Karabakh conflict in the South Caucasus: there were some military clashes between the armed forces of Azerbaijan and the armed forces of Armenia and the unrecognised Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh. As Armenia is a member of the CSTO, this exacerbation became some sort of a test for the CSTO members' political solidarity, which was demonstrated at the annual official CSTO Summit in Yerevan (Armenia) on 14 October 2016. There also were two informal CSTO summits, held on 26 December 2016 and 14 April 2017. On 19-20 May 2016, a session of the CSTO Parliamentary Assembly took place in St. Petersburg.

At the initiative and insistence of Armenia who assumed presidency in the CSTO (in rotation) in 2015-2016, the participants in the Yerevan Summit in October 2016 approved the CSTO Collective Security Strategy 2025 which it had taken almost five years to elaborate⁷. They approved a total of over 20 documents, including the decision to establish the CSTO Crisis Response Centre (established by April 2017), and the Regulation on establishing a single list of organisations deemed to be terrorist. Heads of state adopted a decision on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the protection of state borders of the CSTO member states, and on the issue of establishing a global missile defence system⁸. They also modified the Organisation's governance

⁶ In 2013-2016 the exercise Vzaimodeystvie of the Collective Rapid Reaction Force involved about 1,700 troops, that is one tenth of its strength of 22.5 military personnel, while the exercise Nerushimoe Bratstvo of the Collective Peacekeeping Force involved almost half of the 3,600 military personnel and officers of special units contributed to the Peacekeeping Force.

⁷ Collective Security Strategy 2025 of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation...

⁸ Declaration of the Heads of State of the CSTO on the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict, On Protecting the State Borders of the CSTO Member States, On the Effect on International Security and Stability of Unilateral Actions to Deploy Global Missile

structure and decided that the position of the CSTO Secretary General would be assumed by representatives of the member states in rotation for the term of two years. However, as the President of Kazakhstan was absent from the summit of October 2016, and the President of Belarus, from the summit of December 2016, it was impossible for the leaders to formally unilaterally approve this decision, and the introduction of the new rotation system was postponed till April 2017⁹.

In 2016 and the first half of 2017 the CSTO conducted a number of large-scale military exercises in different countries and regions. Those included the exercise of Collective Rapid Deployment Force Vzaimodeystvie (16-18 August 2016, Pskov Oblast, Russia), the exercise of Collective Peacekeeping Force Nerushimoe Bratstvo 2016 (23-27 August 2016, Belarus), the exercise of the Collective Rapid Deployment Force for the Central Asian Region Rubezh 2016 (4-7 October 2016, Kyrgyzstan), Kobalt 2016 anti-terrorist exercise (26-28 May 2016, Armenia), and reconnaissance units' exercise Poisk (22 April 2016, Tajikistan). Besides, a number of activities were conducted within the framework of continuous operations Kanal (anti-drug operation), Nelegal (combating illegal trans-border migration), and PROKSI (countering cyber-threats).

The system of permanent operations and military exercises

Having compared the military exercises of different types conducted by the CSTO in 2016 to the exercises of the previous five years, one can note five tracks of the development of the Organisation's military infrastructure.

Defence System, On Emergency Response by the CSTO Member States, Collective Security Treaty Organisation, <www.odkb-csto.org/documents> [in Russian].

⁹ In 2003-2016 Russia's representative Nikolai Bordyuzha (who had earlier been Commander of the Border Troops of the Russian Federation and Russia's Permanent Representative to NATO) was the CSTO's continuous Secretary General, in October 2016-April 2017, Valery Semerikov was acting Secretary General, and on 1 May 2017 Colonel General Yuri Khachaturov representing Armenia was appointed Secretary General of the CSTO.

Exercise Vzaimodeystvie of the Collective Rapid Reaction Force has been conducted annually for eight years. The exercise Vzaimodeystvie 2016 of the Collective Rapid Reaction Force hosted by the Pskov Oblast (Russia) on 16-18 August 2016, involved the localization of a hypothetical border conflict. According to its scenario, the countries of a hypothetical Western military alliance formed troops that were called ‘peacekeeping’ and invaded the territory of an adjacent CSTO member state without the UN sanction. Their purpose was to use peacekeeping operation as a pretext to annex its border territories in which illegal armed formations were acting and where social instability emerged as a result¹⁰. During the exercise, military personnel and military equipment were dropped from Il-76 aircraft; the KA-52, Mi-28, MI-24 combat helicopters, Su-34 fighter-bomber, and unmanned aerial vehicles were used. The exercise included a new element, as the strategic command of Russia’s Western Military District was trained to command the whole group of the Collective Rapid Reaction Force.

Exercise Kobalt exercise for the formations of special task forces. The first exercise of the Kobalt series involving the formations of special task forces making part of the Collective Rapid Reaction Forces took place in 2010 (Kadamovsky training area in the Rostov Oblast of Russia) to be followed by Kobalt 2013 exercise (Rostov Oblast of Russia, the scenario included destruction of a camouflaged base of fighters) and finally by Kobalt 2016 exercise (Bagramyan training area in Armenia, with the scenario envisaging arrest of terrorist groups, blocking the channels of illicit supplies of arms, explosives and drugs). This series of exercises was distinct, as it featured the formation of special task forces (mainly those of the internal security troops, National Guards, and the troops of the Ministries of the Interior of the CSTO members). The combined troops of the formations of special task forces account for approximately 3,000 personnel in a large Collective Rapid Reaction Force (with a total strength of up to 22,500 troops). These forces incorporate Special Rapid Response Teams, special militia and police units, special units of internal security

¹⁰ The exercise scenario involving a hypothetical direct military standoff between the forces of CSTO and NATO is published on the CSTO website at: <http://odkb-csto.org/training/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=6928&SECTION_ID=93> [in Russian].

forces of the CSTO member states. The Kobalt 2016 exercise took place on 26-28 May 2016 and involved over 500 members of special units and armed forces (special rapid response team Rys and special militia unit Zubr from Russia, Main Directorate for Combating Organised Crime of the Police of Armenia, the units of the National Guard of Kazakhstan, the Ministry of the Interior of Kyrgyzstan, the police of Tajikistan, and internal security troops of the Republic of Belarus), over 20 pieces of special and armoured military equipment, four combat and military heavy-transport helicopters¹¹. The 2016 exercise is notable as the units of special task forces (of which most report to the Ministries of the Interior) were to cooperate with the troops of the Collective Rapid Response Force reporting to the Ministries of Defence.

Grom exercise is a joint exercise of anti-drug agencies and services, internal security troops and the bodies of the Ministries of the Interior, special services of the formations of special task forces of the Collective Rapid Reaction Forces. The recent exercise (the first exercise of the series was conducted in 2013) involved blocking the most vulnerable parts of the border located in remote high-altitude areas, in particular the border between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in the Osh region of Kyrgyzstan, where the northern route of drug trafficking from Afghanistan passes.

The Rubezh exercises of Collective Rapid Reaction Force for the Central Asian Region date back to the pre-CSTO late 1990s when the Collective Rapid Reaction Force had been established within the CIS. This force was initially shaped at the time when the CIS was preparing to counter a potential threat posed by possible advance of the Taliban forces that had seized power in Kabul, further to Central Asia. After the 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States the international coalition began its operation in Afghanistan, and the Collective Rapid Reaction Force need not intervene. It was not yet completed at that time, but rather than dissolved, it was subsequently handed over to the

¹¹ See: Collective Security Treaty Organisation, 26 May 2016, <http://www.odkb-csto.org/training/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=6426&SECTION_ID=95> [in Russian]; and CSTO Institute – Armenian National Office, 25 May 2016, <www.odkb-armenia.am/index.php/ru/novosti/718> [in Russian].

CSTO. The Collective Rapid Deployment Force is distinct from the Collective Rapid Reaction Force established later, as it has a limited area of application (Central Asia), smaller scale and a different list of military units contributed to it by the CSTO countries.

The Rubezh 2016 exercise took place in Kyrgyzstan, at the Edelweis training centre on 4-7 October 2016. As its scenario demonstrates, the priority was assigned to countering the threat from the south, primarily the threat posed by the terrorist from the territory of Afghanistan. It envisaged special activities to detect, neutralise and eliminate illegal armed formations, including at a specially protected facility, the evacuation of civilians in case of possible seizure of their settlements by terrorists, addressing the consequences of a terrorist attack against a facility presenting chemical hazard, organizing a filtration point, and refugee reception point. As distinct from other exercises, this one featured the use of unmanned aerial vehicles, strategic, operational and tactical, and reconnaissance aircraft, such as ETu-95MS, Tu-22m3, Su-24mr, Su-25, and Mi-24 helicopters (this was the first exercise to involve the components of Collective Air Force currently formed within the CSTO). It is notable that the Collective Rapid Deployment Force is a stand-by force by nature. The Rubezh 2016 exercise involved over 1,000 members of these formations, including the members of some countries' Emergency Ministries, as well as the State Committee for National Security and the Ministry of the Interior of Kyrgyzstan.

Nerushimoye Bratstvo exercise of the Collective Peacekeeping Force. The Collective Peacekeeping Force was established in 2007-2012 in accordance with the doctrines adopted in 2007 (which subsequently been amended in 2009 and 2015). The Collective Peacekeeping Force is distinct, as it is to act primarily as a neutral disengagement force in peacekeeping operations, it can use certain non-lethal weapons, and it is to cooperate with the forces of non-CSTO countries. The scenario of the Nerushimoye Bratstvo-2016 exercise conducted in Belarus on 23-27 August 2016 envisaged precisely the training of the force to take part in a hypothetical UN-mandated peacekeeping operation in a non-CSTO country. This scenario included a new component: receiving and accommodating a large number of

refugees from the zone of conflict. During the exercise, the regional delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) conducted training activities to improve cooperation between the UN and the CSTO. Furthermore, the participants examined the issue of adjusting the UN Security Council (UNSC) mandate for a peacekeeping operation to the CSTO practice. Although initially the Collective Peacekeeping Force was established to perform peacekeeping functions in the territory of the CSTO member States, at present the Secretariats of the CSTO and the UN consider the possibility of using its troops in UN-mandated operations in third countries outside the CSTO area.

Operation Kanal is the best internationally known series of practical activities carried out by the CSTO. It is also appreciated by the United Nations. Operation Kanal is a continuous anti-drug operation that also periodically includes sub-regional components (Kanal-Dolina in Kazakhstan, Kanal-Far East, etc.). Throughout the operation's history of ten years, over 340 tonnes of drugs and narcotic substances were seized, and many drug transportation and delivery channels that had CSTO countries and Europe as destination, were blocked.

Operation Nelegal. Since 2014 this operation has also been carried out as a continuous operation to combat illegal migration. According to the data on combating illegal trans-border migration, on the average every year, 97,046 violations of the member states' migration laws are discovered, 11,940 illegal migrants are deported or returned to their countries of origin, 104 attempts at trafficking in human beings are prevented, 3,206 criminal cases are initiated, including on drug trafficking and illegal export and import of arms.

Operation PROKSI is to counter criminal activities online and prevent cyber-threats. It has been conducted annually since 2013, and in 2014 it was accorded a status of a continuous operation¹². In its course, over 4,000 websites with signs of criminal activities, including in the sphere of illicit drug trafficking were detected in the information

¹² Decision by the CSTO Council on Collective Security of 23 December 2014 On the Statute of the Continuous Operation of the CSTO Member States to Combat Crimes in the Field of Information Technologies (Operation PROKSI).

space of the CSTO member states, and technical operational and investigative activities were conducted in relation to that cases. The activities of over 2300 information resources was suspended, and over 1,100 criminal proceedings were instigated based on the data obtained¹³, including to combat illegal drug trafficking. The CSTO Secretary General has stated that the CSTO has established and successfully operated a Centre to Combat Incidents in Cyber-Space, and that as the developments of 2016 showed, as many as 70 percent of the youth from the CSTO countries recruited by terrorist organisations was recruited using the information networks.

The first exercise of a new type, *the Poisk exercise involving forces and resources of reconnaissance of the CSTO members' armed forces* were conducted in 2016. The exercise that took place on 20-22 April 2016 at the Magob training centre of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Lyaur training ground of the 201st military base of the armed forces of Russia, involved over 1,500 military personnel, and the combat, operational and tactical, transport, and unmanned aviation crews¹⁴. Furthermore, the Strelets technical reconnaissance, command and control and communication systems were used. The exercise scenario envisaged reconnaissance activities and improving interoperability of reconnaissance units of various CSTO member states while localizing an armed conflict. They used electronic reconnaissance equipment, simulated the search and seizure of the leader of illegal armed formations, and the destruction of illegal armed formations' camp and freeing of hostages.

The issues of internal unity and common policy within the CSTO

Having considered the gradual and consistent way the CSTO's military and technical infrastructure has developed, its many series of

¹³ See CSTO Institute – Armenian National Office, 15 May 2014, <www.odkb-armenia.am/index.php/ru/novosti/598> [in Russian].

¹⁴ See Collective Security Treaty Organisation, 22 Apr. 2016, <http://www.odkb-csto.org/training/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=6109&SECTION_ID=213> [in Russian].

military exercises of all types, and the tracks of the technical and military cooperation within it, one cannot but come to a conclusion that the Organisation's military component has developed more rapidly and in a more consistent manner than the political one. Many of its collective military 'instruments' have already been completed, yet there is a lack of political unanimity in assessing the threats and political crises of the last twenty years, and one can never be certain that the member states will be able to reach consensus while deciding on the use of the available military instruments. Certainly, the CSTO member states converge in their general assessments of the international environment, however, the details of their approaches may differ greatly.

2016 saw another exacerbation of differences between the Organisation's members. At the CSTO Summit in Yerevan, President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan criticised other CSTO countries for the absence of a consolidated position on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and their lack of support during the April clashes with Azerbaijani troops at the borders of the unrecognised Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, Armenia, and the Nakhichevan region of Azerbaijan. The President of Armenia censured the CSTO countries, in particular Russia and Belarus, for selling weapons to Azerbaijan. He also noted that other CSTO members supported Azerbaijan-sponsored documents in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The declaration on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict adopted in Yerevan was extremely short and unspecific, as the parties only supported calls to de-escalation of the conflict adopted at the Vienna and St. Petersburg summits¹⁵.

Internal differences were also manifest at the informal CSTO summit of 26 December 2016 in Bishkek. President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko refused to take part in the summit citing outstanding economic differences with one of the member states as a reason. He referred to his trade and economic contradictions with Russia, relating to supplies of natural gas, that have no direct bearing on international security, yet it is indicative that supporting collective

¹⁵ Statement of Heads of State of the CSTO Members on the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict, Collective Security Treaty Organisation, 14 Oct. 2016, <http://odkb-csto.org/documents/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=8380> [in Russian].

documents of the CSTO was used as an instrument of indirect pressure against Russia. Before that, President Lukashenko had criticised certain CSTO countries for developing ties with NATO without coordinating their positions with others in advance. During Uzbekistan's presidency in the Organisation, on some occasions the leadership of this country had differences with heads of state of other CSTO members. By the time Uzbekistan left the CSTO in 2012, it had failed to agree and sign 66 documents on which other members had reached consensus.

The CSTO was criticised by foreign politicians and experts (as well as those representing the CSTO member states) for several reasons. First, they maintain that the CSTO is not a truly six-party organisation, but, rather, is an arrangement where Russia, as a leading power that is stronger in economic and military terms, pursues parallel tracks of cooperation with other members. Armenian analyst Tigran Khachatryan debating with the Armenian National Office of the CSTO Institute has expressly said that 'the CSTO is an alliance of each of its members with Russia, rather than an alliance with each other... It is Russia that unites all of them, and today this factor causes problems within the CSTO. On the one hand, there are times when Russia does not support its allies and embarrasses its allies making unilateral decisions (as was the case with Ukraine). On the other hand, the rest of the CSTO members also lack willingness to support Russia',¹⁶.

Second, it is often noted that the Organisation's political component is lagging behind its military one, and that heads of state of its members often fail to reach consensus on certain issues related to its development and the policy of member states (while there is consensus on the development path in general). According to the US analyst Thomas Grove, 'the Moscow-led organisation has suffered from internal bickering and the perception it is only a political tool of Moscow',¹⁷.

Third, and last, the Organisation has been criticised on the grounds that in the 15 years since their establishment its forces have

¹⁶ Khachatryan, T., The lesson of Armenia for the CSTO and Russia, *InoSMI*, 31 Dec. 2015, <<http://inosmi.ru/politic/20151231/234958061.html>> (In Russian).

¹⁷ Grove, T., Russian-led Security Organisation Warns on Growing Threat of Islamist Violence in Tajikistan, *The Wall Street Journal*, 27 Apr. 2016.

never been used (except for the exercises), and that the Organisation has failed to act as the main mediator or to initiate settlement in a number of international or internationalised conflicts in its zone of responsibility. However, it should be noted that NATO had not used its troops in a real combat operation until the conflict in former Yugoslavia in mid 1990s, that is four and half decades after the organisation had been established. At that time, that was cited as a proof of effectiveness of the organisation's policy of deterring real and potential adversaries.

It should be noted that in addition to its direct security functions, the CSTO has a function not envisaged in the strategic concept, the function of restoring and maintaining social connectivity (people-to-people contacts) of relatively large groups of people (the military, experts, politicians, government officials) of different countries of the former Soviet Union. This function is performed through the cooperation of hundreds and thousands of participants in military exercises, the elaboration of joint documents, and the conduct of meetings and collective activities provided for by the Organisation's Statute in different CSTO countries on the basis of rotation. It takes on additional importance as different CSTO member states (Slavonic, South Caucasian, and Central Asian countries) have different civilizational identity. At some point (immediately after the CSTO took institutional shape in 2002), a possibility was discussed, although not too actively, to assign the CSTO, in addition to special functions, wider functions pertaining to restoring the connectivity among the six peoples. The issue was discussed, whether the CSTO is in a position to serve as a catalyst of cooperation between six countries' societies, rather than merely the six countries' ministries. Perhaps it is the expansion of the CSTO's social connectivity functions that will be able to help amend periodic failure of the CSTO members' leader to reach political unity.

Peacekeeping functions and cooperation with the UN

In 2016-2017 the potential of CSTO's peacekeeping has been significantly increased, while its principles have been much better defined. CSTO was given an observer status at the UN General Assembly in 2004 and spent the time between 2004 and 2007 in a heated debate over its own doctrine package which it subsequently approved. In 2012 the CSTO Secretariat and the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations signed a Memorandum of Cooperation. It was not until 2016-2017, though, that it came to practical cooperation with the UN on issues related to preparing the involvement of CSTO's peacekeeping forces in future operations under the UN mandates outside the zone of the Organisation's direct responsibility. In 2016-2017 the SCTO Secretariat actively engaged with the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations on the issues related to specific modalities of potentially enforcing UN operations with CSTO contingents (such as the composition, equipment and training of such contingents). As the CSTO's Collective Security Strategy 2025 envisages the possibility of engaging UN contingents in operations under the UN mandate outside the zone of UN's direct responsibility, CSTO's participation in the operations of the UN could mean a new era for the Organisation.

Compared to the peacekeeping activities of either the UN or the EU, the current role of the CSTO in the conflict settlement across the NIS (Newly Independent States) area can be described as rather passive. Naturally, there have been consultations and exchange of opinion between the leaders of CSTO member states, both at the CSTO summits and through the Secretariat. Yet at times it has been hard to reach a consensus in terms of approaches to conflict settlement. While the Organisation has sought leadership in soft security (addressing such threats as drug trafficking, migration, etc.), it refused to publicly react to the Kyrgyz revolutions of 2005 and 2010 (though unofficial talks were held between the leaders of member states as well as between the CSTO General Secretary and Kyrgyz leaders). Neither did it officially react to the developments in Andijan, or to the friction between Uzbekistan and its neighbours. Only in the wake of the developments of 2010 did the CSTO react to the situation by revising its mechanism

of consultations and decision-making related to crisis response so that the members could reach a joint position faster. In spring 2016 such a dialogue was intensified in view of the most recent escalation of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict which made a joint response a necessity. The CSTO summit in October 2016 adopted a joint declaration by the member states on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict calling for a peaceful resolution to the problem. However, the Armenian president openly criticised the ‘inarticulate’ position of some of the CSTO members who actually sided with Azerbaijan, rather than with Armenia, in their position on the conflict.

In 2016 the CSTO reported some staff turnover in its Collective Peacekeeping Force (CPF) which has a strength of 3,600 military personnel from 6 countries. In addition to making basic decisions on the necessity of collective participation in the peacekeeping effort whenever there is a conflict in the territory of a member state, CSTO’s policy in relation to conflict resolution provides for the creation of a crisis intervention instrument – the CSTO CPF. The doctrine implies that the CSTO Collective Force may be used in the territory of a CSTO member – by decision of the member states, or, in any conflict area of the world – by request (under the mandate) from the UN. Notably, having signed the Memorandum of Understanding with the CSTO, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations is seriously examining the possibility of practically involving CPF contingent and using CSTO’s military resources in the operations of the United Nations. The UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and heads of DPKO’s units visited Moscow a number of times between 2014 and 2016, where they held talks with CSTO Secretary General and his deputies. The Secretariat and Joint Staff of the CSTO have a large Working Group on Peacekeeping that is currently examining the legal and practical aspects of engaging CSTO in operations in the conflict-affected regions.

While it is often accused of inaction and inertia by its foreign partners and even by some of the member states, the CSTO is interested in being engaged in actual operations. However, politically, there are still doubts as to whether the CSTO is ready to expand its responsibility area, both in terms of doctrine and real action, and to send its

contingents (even if it has to start with smaller ones) to participate in UN's operations in the Middle East or Africa. On the one hand, it may be easier for the presidents of the CSTO member states to agree to use CSTO's military force and demonstrate its effectiveness on other continents far away than to use it in their own territory in conflicts such as the Kyrgyz revolutions or inter-ethnic clashes between Tajiks, Kyrgyz and Uzbeks. However, on the other hand, the domestic public opinion and the balance of political power in some of the CSTO's countries may be quite unprepared for the idea of having to support the globalization of the Organisation's role and its entrance into big-time politics.

The Agreement on Peacekeeping Activities and the Regulations on the Collective Peacekeeping Force would be quite irrelevant unless the CSTO focused on active mediation in conflict settlement and began – just as NATO and the EU do – to provide its peacekeepers to the UN missions. Here it may be noted that the NATO has taken over, under the UN mandate, the coordination of several peacekeeping missions in Europe and Asia (including certain tasks in Afghanistan and Iraq), and the EU's brand new fledgling combat groups have been charged with the operations in Congo, Macedonia, Bosnia and Kosovo. CSTO might obtain a mandate from the UN for post-conflict reconstruction along the Tajik-Afghan border (similar to the NATO's 2003-2014 UN mandate for post-conflict rehabilitation in Afghanistan); such a mandate may be based on Chapter VI of the UN Charter. Acting at least under one UN mandate in one conflict-affected region (which is in any case within the CSTO's area of responsibility) would boost the international legitimacy and recognition of the CSTO.

Broadly speaking, there has to be a meaningful and reasonable position on CSTO's evolution in terms of its engagement in the international peacekeeping effort. So far, CSTO has failed to build its most-expected component – a system of conflict resolution in the post-Soviet space. The doctrinal limitations prevent its peacekeeping force from participating in conflict resolution in ways that go beyond 'classic' peacekeeping (facilitating the implementation of a peace treaty that has already been negotiated by the conflicting states) – something there is almost no call for in the modern world. At the same time, a

crisis response system targeting a wide range of new threats and challenges is being developed by CSTO. Though the collective force of Collective Rapid Reaction Force, Collective Rapid Deployment Force and Collective Peacekeeping Force cannot be referred to as fully functional, they may well be used as building blocks for a new macro-regional security system.

The current geopolitical landscape is characterised by a competition of crisis response instruments – EU’s crisis response force, NATO Response Force and CSTO’s Collective Rapid Reaction Force and Collective Peacekeeping Force. The lack of cooperation between them is ultimately self-defeating. Therefore, the top priority in terms of reshaping the regional security architecture is to ensure coordination of the activities, functions, applicability and interoperability of Europe’s competing crisis response mechanisms.

The global conflict resolution practice has displayed a trend towards increased role of regional international organisations and scope of their engagement alongside the UN (and more often than not they have acted in UN’s place or on its behalf) in various operations in conflict-affected regions. The trend towards the expansion and redistribution of responsibility areas of regional organisations has also swept the post-Soviet space.

CSTO in the system of international intergovernmental organisations

The Collective Defence Strategy up to 2025 adopted at the CSTO summit in 2016 outlines the path for the Organisation’s future development and includes a number of recurring points, as well as several new ones. The strategy defines the key concepts, such as ‘CSTO’s responsibility area’, collective security ‘forces’ and ‘resources’, as well as ‘crisis’ and ‘emergency’. Though the Organisation’s responsibility area has been traditionally limited to the territory of its member states (including internal waters, territorial seas

and the air space over them¹⁸), the document further refers to ‘prospective use of CSTO’s peacekeeping forces under the UNSC mandate’, i.e. to their potential activities outside the territories of member states. What this means is that the concept of the Organisation’s responsibility area is being redefined (and is becoming more global).

Among a dozen of factors that have affected or may affect the security of CSTO members, new threats and challenges (terrorism, extremism, illegal trafficking in drugs, intensified ethnic and sectarian intolerance and xenophobia) are currently ranked at the bottom of the list, while quite ‘traditional’ factors, such as the use of military force by third parties, buildup of the existing military contingents and deployment of new ones in the cross-border regions of CSTO member states have clearly made their way to the top of the list.

The Strategy defines the Organisation’s *strategic goal* as ‘ensuring collective security by consolidating the effort and resources of CSTO member states on the basis of strategic partnership’¹⁹. It prioritises the development of internal and external political cooperation. The second highest priority is improving the capability of ensuring collective defence against military threats. The third highest priority are the various forms of countering transnational threats and challenges, which includes improving the anti-terrorist component, cooperating in the sphere of policing borders, shaping a secure information space, etc. In addition to the member states establishing joint forces and contingents, the Strategy lists other forms of improving collective security, including commitment to the policy of controlling nuclear and conventional arms, to the rational sufficiency principle in terms of developing one’s military capabilities, as well as enhancing the confidence building measures in the military sphere.

¹⁸ Collective Security Strategy 2025 of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation..., Section 1.

¹⁹ Collective Security Strategy 2025 of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation..., Section 4.

Special attention is given to relatively new functions of shaping the crisis response system²⁰ and creating the potential for the CSTO to take over certain peacekeeping operations²¹. Another task set by the Strategy is to create a CSTO crisis response centre, and, where required, national crisis response centres and humanitarian response centres. The available peacekeeping potential is supposed to be prepared for a new function – ‘to accomplish tasks in the context of potential engagement of CSTO’s peacekeeping forces under the UNSC mandate’. It is proposed that a collective response system is created to ‘counter the modern mixed forms of influencing the CSTO member states aimed at disrupting their state systems, destabilizing domestic political situation or causing a regime change’²².

The priorities set by Strategy 2025 clearly imply that there is a need to rethink the role of CSTO both in the region and globally. It is evident that some of CSTO’s functions overlap with those of other organisations in the post-Soviet space (CIS, SCO, Eurasian Economic Union – EAEU). However, the cooperation between these structures has not been systematic. None of these organisations has managed to gain a role of the main mediator and actor in the resolution of protracted conflicts in the NIS area, or use its mechanisms and procedures in the throes of acute security crises (the Georgian-Ossetian and the Abkhaz-Georgian conflicts in Southern Caucasus, the developments in Andijan and Batken, the Kyrgyz coups and other outbreaks of violence in Central Asia, the so-called colour revolutions in some of the Newly Independent States, military activities in Eastern Ukraine, Nagorno-Karabakh, etc.).

Rather than focus on the cooperation with the organisations in the post-Soviet space, the CSTO has its attention on international organisations, including the United Nations, the OSCE and the International Committee of the Red Cross. Such cooperation mainly

²⁰ Collective Security Strategy 2025 of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation..., Section 6.2.

²¹ Collective Security Strategy 2025 of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation..., Section 6.3.

²² Collective Security Strategy 2025 of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation..., Section 6.6.

consists in coordinating the positions to be voiced by the delegations of the CSTO member states at the sessions of the OSCE and UN, as well as in signing agreements on cooperation by the secretariats. Having signed cooperation agreements with CSTO, both the UN, and the OSCE have failed to agree on any practical delineation of responsibilities, or to give the CSTO a mandate to act on behalf of the global or Eurasian community of nations.

Establishing relations between CSTO and NATO has been another thorny issue in the sphere of international relations. The North Atlantic Alliance has refused to recognise the CSTO as a fully-fledged regional organisation, instead, it would rather cooperate with each CSTO member individually under its Partnership for Peace programme. The CSTO and the North Atlantic Alliance share a whole range of interests in terms of ensuring regional security. In particular, the issues related to conflict settlement in Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq could be an evident common ground for cooperation. However, the relations between the two parties would not work, which can equally be attributable to the ideology-based approach of the Western powers and to the leaders of Central Asian states being reluctant to pursue a policy aimed at preserving the internal political balance in certain Islamic states.

When creating its joint military systems and coalition forces, CSTO has taken into account the experience of the international combat groups created by the European Union in the recent years. Another model for the CSTO was the Helsinki Force Catalogue compiled by the EU in the 2000s. At the time, it was stated in the Catalogue that the EU countries may collectively deploy a total of close to 100,000 personnel, up to 500 aircraft and over 100 combat ships that can be converted for joint use. However, when a coalition force was created by the EU, a classic mistake became obvious: the countries have declared many forces that were neither interoperable (which means they could not work together), nor mobile enough to be quickly moved to joint operations areas. The CSTO has a similar problem: not nearly all of the military contingents assigned by the six member states are actually compatible and suitable for collective use.

CSTO has quite actively developed its cooperation with the OSCE which is easily the only international organisation focusing on security, except the United Nations. CSTO Secretary General had a number of meetings with his OSCE counterpart and was a speaker at the OCSE Forum, and CSTO's declarations on the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe – OSCE's main brainchild in the sphere of security – were adopted at a certain point. The CSTO has developed its cooperation with the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre based in Vienna that has compiled a unique database on conflicts, including in the territory of the Newly Independent States, and now plays a key role systemizing the results of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine. However, it should be understood that the CSTO is developing a dialogue with the least powerful actor of Europe's three largest security organisations (NATO, EU and OSCE).

CSTO needs a dialogue with the European Union. The similarity between the security concepts of CSTO and EU (a focus on addressing 'new threats') is rather high. There has been a number of international forums that hosted both EU foreign and defence policy leaders, and representatives of the CSTO Secretariat. The policy of the EU towards the political-military organisations of the newly independent states lacks the habitual reserve that the NATO has for CSTO. At a certain point, Russia and the European Union adopted the concept of the 'four common spaces', one of which was a common security space. It is time to raise the point of developing the concept of a common EU-CSTO security space.

The EU is as good as joined in the mediating effort on the resolution of the conflict between Moldova and Transnistria, as well as of a number of conflicts in the Caucasus. It has deployed the Border Assistance Mission to monitor the situation on the Ukraine-Moldova border in Transnistria, and two civilian operations of the EU in Georgia aimed at promoting the reform of the country's law enforcement system. The EU has not given up on the idea of a stability pact for South Caucasus, moreover, it has even come up with the idea of a stability pact for Central Asia (similar to the existing Balkan Stability Pact that has been quite successful). This means that the CSTO will

soon have to border on, have contacts with and cooperate with the EU in the sphere of security, peacekeeping and conflict settlement.

On the initiative of Central Asian states members of the CSTO, the Organisation has established cooperation with the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC, formerly Organisation of the Islamic Conference). The OIC has played an increasingly important role in the context of the developments in Afghanistan and the situation around Iraq and Iran. It also has much influence in Pakistan, South Caucasus (Azerbaijan) and Turkey.

As to the cooperation between CSTO and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), it may well be said that in the 15 years they have worked together²³ the two organisations have quite managed to divide the responsibility areas and powers. Having started with resolving border issues, the SCO soon changed its speciality from security problems to issues related to political dialogue, economic and humanitarian cooperation. However, where the responsibility areas and functions of CSTO and SCO still overlap, there are still challenges to deal with, such as fighting terrorism, extremism, drug trafficking, illegal migration, or promoting stability in Afghanistan.

The strategies of the two organisations set similar tasks in the sphere of arms control, countering drug trafficking and cyberthreats. The fundamental documents of both CSTO and SCO express support to certain initiatives declared by Russia, China and Central Asian states, such as Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space (a joint project of Russia and China), a ban on nuclear weapons deployment outside national territories, strengthening the WMD non-proliferation regime, etc.

The conflict in Syria has affected the atmosphere in the CSTO. The experts believe that more than 10,000 people from the CIS states have been recruited by the Islamic State (a terrorist group banned in Russia), including 4,000 people from Central Asian States and up to

²³ The SCO was established in 2000-2001 on the basis of the system of negotiations on the borders drawn between China and Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan in 1996-2000. The Organisation includes six countries: China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and is headquartered in Beijing (China).

6,000 people from Russia itself²⁴. However, the Organisation failed to come up with an agreed position on collectively supporting Russia's military operation against Daesh in Syria, due to the reluctance of Central Asian states with a strong Islamic factor to take sides in third party conflicts in the Islamic world.

The outlook for CSTO

We are witnessing the geostrategic rearrangement of the post-Soviet space. The old integrative models, such as the CIS or the Central-Asian Cooperation Organisation (CACO) are either in decline or disbanded, the EAEC is transforming into EAEU. Such models as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the Community of Democratic Choice, as well as the Ukrainian and Georgian initiatives for cooperation with the NATO, extend far beyond the post-Soviet space.

Regional organisations have played an increased military role. In a short historical period both the EU and NATO have developed and field-tested new crisis response instruments – the NATO Response Force and the EU Rapid Reaction Force (tactical military groups). Simultaneously, though quite independently, the CSTO also came up with a crisis response instrument, starting with the Collective Rapid Deployment Force (CRDF) intended for use in the Central Asian collective security region, followed by Collective Rapid Reaction Force (CRRF) and later by the Collective Peacekeeping Force. In some regions – primarily in Central Asia and in the Caucasus – the mechanisms of the EU, NATO and CSTO may be used in cooperation with one another, whereas, if used independently, it may result in a loss of balance, or lead to unexpected events that may trigger future conflicts.

The EU and NATO have almost thrown away every self-restriction they had against operating in the post-Soviet space. These

²⁴ According to the data presented at the briefing of acting CSTO Secretary General on 29 April 2017.

European structures, just as other extra-regional actors (the US, China, Iran, Turkey, et al.), are becoming increasingly involved in conflict resolution, macroeconomic projects and political balances in the post-Soviet space.

Though the matters related to overall security architecture in this part of the world are dealt with under the leadership of Russia, as it is the most important actor in the post-Soviet space and owns the key elements of the post-Soviet military architecture, the West has found it impossible to resolve or even discuss defence and security issues with Moscow alone. A number of very important matters in the sphere of security has been taken over by the CSTO that, despite being dominated by Russia, still has multilateral agreement procedures and mechanisms in place.

The two main ‘anti-CIS’ and ‘anti-Moscow’ interstate entities (GUAM and the Community of Democratic Choice) are still in their infancy, and they most evidently lack the international security dimension. Having announced its plans on building a peacekeeping force, GUAM eventually had to admit that it is unable to do it at this point. While Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova share a goal of ‘freeing themselves from Moscow’s grip’, they have too few common economic interests and very different political agendas to form a lasting alliance. Though all of them build their contemporary strategies around enhancing their connections outside the post-Soviet space, each of the countries tends to act out of its own, rather than collective, interests.

The lack of a meaningful dialogue (as opposed to a purely tokenistic one) between NATO and CSTO may prove to be a big mistake, politically – primarily on the part of Brussels. It is vitally important not to let the relations between the NATO and the CSTO boil down to the logic of tacit rivalry and a ‘zero-sum game’, where gaining power by one of the parties is viewed as ‘squeezing the other party out’. The historical task is to minimise the potentially destabilizing consequences of the new demarcation lines already drawn in Northeast Eurasia, previously known as the post-Soviet space.

Thus, it can be said that three interstate projects in the post-Soviet space appear most intensive: CSTO, in the sphere of defence and security, EAEU, in the sphere of economics, and SCO in the sphere

of politics and diplomacy. Therefore, one of the first items on the agenda will be to explore new forms of active cooperation between CSTO and UN, OCSE, NATO, EU, SCO, EAEU to enable the organisations' joint participation in the processes related to collective security.

PART II. EXPERT INSIGHTS

5. Conflict in Ukraine: in search for ways to break the deadlock
6. Military-political situation in Syria and Iraq
7. Nuclear cooperation between Russia and USA
8. China's policy and the international law of the sea
9. Biosecurity in the modern world
10. Military-political relations between Russia and CIS countries

5. CONFLICT IN UKRAINE: IN SEARCH FOR WAYS TO BREAK THE DEADLOCK

Nadezhda ARBATOVA

The Minsk II agreement is a document that is fundamental for the settlement of the conflict in Ukraine and around Ukraine. Its implementation is a necessary prerequisite for the resolution of the Ukraine crisis, that has proven to be the most severe clash between Russia and the West since the end of the Cold War. Unless this conflict is settled, one can hardly expect that the interaction between Russia and the United States and their allies on the whole range of issues from economy to arms control, be thawed.

It is widely known that all tracks of the Minsk II process have been deadlocked, including the observation of the ceasefire, the blame for the violation of which the sides are putting on each other. The deadlock in the Minsk process has brought about reciprocal economic and political sanctions imposed by Russia and the EU/NATO, the escalation of military exercises, increased danger of military incidents at sea and in the air, the build-up of the military presence on both sides of common borders, and a new nuclear and high-precision conventional arms race.

Meanwhile there is a real common enemy to be confronted, the international terrorist front. To fight against it unprecedented joint efforts of the civilised world are necessary, and those are paralysed by the confrontation between Russia and the West around Ukraine and in the former USSR space in general.

The reasons for the stagnation of the Minsk II process

First and foremost, the stagnation is caused by the very text of the document that was elaborated in truly extraordinary circumstances. It does neither establish any deadline for the return of control over the Ukrainian-Russian border to Kiev, nor make it conditional on the completion of political steps to change the constitutional status of the Ukraine's eastern parts. Moscow, Donbas and Luhansk accuse Kiev of failing to comply with Minsk II political provisions (amending the Constitution of Ukraine, adopting laws on special status of the two regions, the special order of elections in these regions, and on amnesty).

Ukraine and the West, on their part, allege that Russian forces and military equipment are present in the Ukrainian territory and take part in the conflict. Moscow has categorically denied that, although it has acknowledged the presence of Russian volunteers and members of its armed forces who are on leave. Their status is highly ambiguous. President Vladimir Putin characterised them as 'all those who were following their heart and were fulfilling their duty by voluntarily taking part in hostilities, including in south-east Ukraine'¹. It is not quite clear what are the grounds for 'fulfilling the duty' of those who fight there other than volunteers. What is more, it is obvious that they are 'fulfilling their duty' there not merely with their bare hands, but with heavy weapons and military equipment and are abundantly supplied with munitions and supported by professional commanders, as they have regularly brought Ukrainian army in classic 'pockets' (as in Ilovaisk and Debaltseve). There was also another definition of them given by President Putin as he acknowledged that there were 'people there who dealt with certain matters, including in the military area, but that did not mean that regular Russian troops were present there'².

As opposed to volunteers, maintaining regular troops in Ukrainian territory would require transborder logistical support and the

¹ News Conference of Vladimir Putin, President of Russia, 18 Dec. 2014, <<http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47250>>.

² Vladimir Putin's Annual News Conference, President of Russia, 17 Dec. 2015, <<http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50971>>.

rotation of personnel, this issue could be resolved by transferring the control over all border crossing points on the border between Russia and the two unrecognised republics to Ukrainian border guards, or at least to the OSCE observers. Yet under Minsk II, Ukraine will only be given control over the border after it has complied with political provisions. Meanwhile, such compliance cannot be yet achieved due to Ukraine's internal political upheaval and a massive campaign against 'Russian military threat' (which, in fact, is cited as an excuse for the stagnation of reforms to boost economy and combat corruption). In this context Moscow fears that should Russian volunteers be withdrawn, Kiev would be tempted to address the Donbas issue by force.

The second reason has to do with political situation both in Russia and in Ukraine. There is strong opposition to the implementation of the Minsk II agreement in both countries. However, such opposition in Russia and Ukraine differ greatly.

The Russian one comprises mostly anti-Westerners and neo-imperialists (that often openly position themselves as such³) who understand that the implementation of Minsk II would be followed by the lifting of sanctions and the resumption of Russia's cooperation with the EU, NATO and the United States on the most pressing issues of world politics and economy and even (Heaven forbid) Russia's return to the European development pattern. These communities try to put pressure on President Putin. What is more, part of Russia's elite fears that after Minsk II has been implemented, Russia will be left with no credible assurances as to Ukraine's future NATO membership. Indeed, the issue of economic and political and military association of the CIS countries in a post-bipolar European security architecture has been the main bone of contention in the relations between Russia and the West. This community regards maintaining military tension in Donbas and the presence of major Russian attack forces in the vicinity of Ukraine's borders as a means of putting pressure on Ukraine and maintaining social and political instability within it. Together with the outstanding issue of Ukraine's state border, this should serve a credible guarantee

³ Prokhanov: Crimea is Russia, All-Russian Social Organisation 'Rodina – Congress of Russian Communities', 15 Mar. 2017, <<http://kro-rodina.ru/all-news/684-prokhanov-krym-eto-i-est-rossiya>> [in Russian].

against Ukraine's accession to the EU and NATO, although no one in the West has raised this matter.

In Ukraine, things are more complicated. Ukrainian opponents to Minsk II implementation can be sub-divided into three groups. The first one can be described as anti-Poroshenko actors who are opposed to the President and realise that the implementation of the agreement would contribute to the strengthening of his positions both in foreign and domestic policy. The second group would like to revenge themselves on Russia for having Crimea. They do not want the sanctions against Russia to be lifted as a result of implementation of the Minsk II in the hope that economic situation in Russia will further deteriorate making President Putin resign eventually.

The implementation of the Minsk agreements by Ukraine was deadlocked for the last six months, as Ukraine's president was unable to have the parliament amend the Constitution. The parliament itself has been far from unanimous on the issue of advantages and disadvantages of such amendments. Some of its members stand ready to support the amendments as required by the Minsk agreements. At the same time, there are many MPs who oppose such changes. As their main reason, the latter cite the interlinkage of the matters of territorial and constitutional order and ways to resolve the conflict. In addition, many members of the Verkhovna Rada share the opinion that having introduced the amendments applying to Donbas, they would set an appealing precedent for other regions⁴. In the situation in which the President and the parliament found themselves while discussing the special status of Donbas, some political actors have put forward a suggestion that a new Constitution should be adopted. Elaborating a new Constitution can prove an appealing option, as the current unitary state model is ineffective, it makes it virtually impossible to settle the conflict in Donbas and makes it increasingly difficult to check the regions' desire to expand their powers. Nevertheless, the unitary state is to be preserved in most of the versions of the new Constitution discussed today, which brings the country back to 1996⁵.

⁴ Zhiltsov, S., Kiev cannot comply with the Minsk agreements, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 28 Mar. 2016, <http://www.ng.ru/dipkurer/2016-03-28/11_kiev.html> [in Russian].

⁵ Ibid.

Engaging the United States in the peace process

In October 2016, the Normandy Four leaders supported engaging the United States in the peaceful settlement, which was achieved with the arrival of Donald Trump's administration. However, at that point the new Secretary of State Rex Tillerson stated that the United States did not want to have themselves 'handcuffed to Minsk' in the elaboration of which they had not taken part, and presented his own plan that involved parallel negotiation tracks and conclusion of a treaty on Ukraine guaranteed by the United States and Russia⁶.

It does not matter who would contribute to establishing peace in Ukraine, the United States or the Normandy Four. It is the result that matters. Yet the plan proposed by the Trump administration raises serious doubts in terms of its feasibility. Firstly, this refers to the ability of President Trump himself to fulfil his design despite domestic opposition to everything he does. Secondly, and most importantly, a new treaty would inevitably have to tackle the issue of Ukraine's borders and territorial integrity, including the issue of Crimea. Neither Kiev, nor Moscow will be willing to sacrifice Crimea to secure Donald Trump's huge foreign policy success, therefore, no treaty in this format can be achieved. The advantage of the Minsk process is that it leaves the issue of Crimea outside the scope of negotiations. The collapse of this process will inevitably bring about an escalation of conflict with unpredictable effects.

During the meeting of the United States' and Russia's presidents on the margins of the G-20 Summit in Hamburg on 8 July 2017, the United States adjusted its position. At his press conference on the outcome of the two Presidents' talks Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov said that the US and Russia intended to establish a parallel US-Russia communication line to facilitate the implementation of Minsk II.

State Secretary Rex Tillerson, in his turn, stated at a press conference after the meeting with President of Ukraine Petro

⁶ Tillerson has assumed that Ukraine and Russia can find ways of settlement on Donbass out of Minsk, *Actual News*, May 2017, <<http://mail.paperus.info/articles/tillerson-has-4864>>.

Poroshenko in Kiev on 9 July, where he went after the G-20 Summit, 'I think it is important to be very clear on what our goals are, the United States' goals are, with respect to the situation here. And first and foremost, it is to restore Ukraine's territorial sovereignty and integrity... We are disappointed by the lack of progress under the Minsk agreement, and that is why we are appointing a special representative to put additional emphasis. We will be coordinating carefully with the Normandy members'.⁷ Former United States' Ambassador to NATO Kurt Volker who is known for his tough position towards Russia, was appointed special representative for Ukraine negotiations. Now, as commentators believe, Volker will have to use a blend of toughness and diplomatic skills to help resolve the Ukraine problem⁸.

Ways to facilitate Minsk II implementation in practice

As of today, the Minsk process has no real alternative, which is recognised by all the Normandy Four leaders. At the same time, it should be acknowledged that the process will not break the deadlock either by itself, or through mere pious intentions. Minsk II needs auxiliary mechanisms to be implemented. Recently, there have emerged some new initiatives to strengthen the Normandy Four to which the credit for the initial agreement must go. These include establishing a bilateral communications line between the presidents of Russia and Ukraine, the Geneva format involving Poland and the United States, engaging the OSCE Secretary-General in the Normandy Four, the so-called Mariupol format in which representatives of Ukraine and Donbas can take part, etc.

However, the experience of past years leaves no space for doubt that Minsk II cannot be implemented without a peace-keeping

⁷ Tillerson: US disappointed with the lack of progress on Minsk, *RIA Novosti-Ukraine*, 9 July 2017, <<http://rian.com.ua/politics/20170709/1025678774.html>> [in Russian].

⁸ Mills, C., Can Kurt Volker Solve the Ukraine Crisis?, *The National Interest*, 10 July 2017, <<http://www.nationalinterest.org/feature/can-kurt-volker-solve-the-ukraine-crisis-21489>>.

operation. It should be noted specially that the idea of a peacekeeping mission in Ukrainian conflict was discredited from the very start as Kiev proposed to deploy a Kosovo-style OSCE police mission in the south-east of the country. Neither Donbas, nor Russia would accept this option. It is a full-scale UN Security Council (UNSC) mandated peacekeeping operation to disengage the conflicting parties that is necessary.

In the course of his ‘Direct Line’ on 14 April 2016, President Putin made an unexpected important statement. Commenting on the situation in Ukraine and the course of implementation of the Minsk agreements, he said, ‘We are willing to promote the process in every possible way. I proceed from the assumption that there will be no active fighting anymore. On the contrary, when I spoke to President Pyotr Poroshenko recently, he suggested – it was really his suggestion – that OSCE presence should be increased, particularly, that armed OSCE officers should be present along the demarcation line, to have the ceasefire fully observed. I think this is the right thing to do, and we support it. Now, we should work with our Western partners for the OSCE to pass this decision, increase its staff substantially and, if necessary, authorise its officers to bear firearms’⁹.

The proposal by President Poroshenko to deploy ‘armed OSCE officers along the demarcation line’ mentioned by President Putin could give an impetus to untangling the web of contradictions accumulated during the last few years. However, this proposal requires further elaboration. The armed OSCE observers would at best be able to repel small armed gangs. They would not be able to either guarantee a lasting observance of ceasefire and the withdrawal of heavy weapons and military equipment, or prevent the renewed hostilities. What is more, the OSCE has no experience of deploying armed observers, not to mention conducting real peacemaking operations, although such operations, if authorised by the UNSC, are provided for in its documents.

⁹ Direct Line with Vladimir Putin. Direct Line with Vladimir Putin was broadcast live on Channel One, Rossiya-1 and Rossiya-24 TV channels, and Mayak, Vesti FM and Radio Rossii radio stations, 14 Apr. 2016, President of Russia, <<http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/51716>>.

The lasting cessation of hostilities in the south-east of Ukraine as a first yet necessary condition set forth by the Minsk agreements, requires a full-scale UNSC-mandated peacemaking operation involving military personnel provided by the OSCE participating states and equipped by armoured vehicles, artillery, helicopters and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). Two conditions should be observed. First, this operation cannot be conducted under the command of either NATO or the European Union and should only be led by a special staff of either the UNSC or the OSCE. Second, the multinational personnel should not be deployed throughout the territory of the Donetsk and the Luhansk republics, but occupy a corridor between the two lines of ceasefire established under Minsk I and Minsk II arrangements (from which the conflicting parties should withdraw heavy weapons). This multinational troops should by all means include Russian component, otherwise Donetsk and Luhansk would oppose to the operation pointing out that NATO peacekeepers failed to prevent anti-Serb massacre in Kosovo. As soon as this condition has been observed, the control over the border between these two regions and Russia can be transferred to the OSCE observers, and subsequently, after the political provisions of Minsk II are complied with, to Ukrainian border guards. Cargo and people to support Russian peacekeepers will then legally cross this border. After that, Russia and the West could start mutual lifting of economic sanctions related to the armed conflict in Donbas.

It would be appropriate to remind here, that this idea has not emerged just now. The group of Russian and the US experts pulled together by Carnegie New York and the Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO) twice discussed the settlement of the conflict in Ukraine on the Boistö island near Helsinki with the assistance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland. The first meeting that took place in August 2014, produced a document containing some proposals to be discussed by high-level representatives of the United States and Russia. Nine points put forward in the document were subsequently incorporated in the Minsk Protocol¹⁰

¹⁰ Its full title is Protocol on the Results of Consultations of the Trilateral Contact Group with Respect to the Joint Steps Aimed at the Implementation of the Peace Plan

known as Minsk I and providing for 12 steps to restoring peace in the south-east of Ukraine.

After the second US-Russian Boistö meeting in November 2014, Russian representatives issued a concept of additional measures¹¹ to restore peace in Ukraine. The new document suggested, first and foremost, that a UN multilateral peacekeeping force that would include Russian military component, should be established and deployed in the zone of conflict with the view to disengaging the conflicting parties and ensuring rigid adherence to the ceasefire regime. It should be noted that out of the nine points of the Minsk II agreement, six were derived from the Russian Boistö plan. However, at that time the idea of a peacekeeping operation was rejected by both Ukraine and the West, and mustered little support in Russia.

Indeed, a peacekeeping operation is a large-scale event that requires considerable political will of all the parties, significant expenditures and major organisational effort. Nevertheless, it appears that unless such operation is commenced, there is a risk of inevitable stagnation marred with waves of violence and constant threat of renewed hostilities. Nothing but a lasting peace can pave the way to the implementation of the Minsk Agreements and the resolution of a wider set of issues pertaining to the future of Ukraine and its relations with Russia, NATO and the European Union, and the relations between Moscow and the West.

However, today there is still a strong opposition to such peaceful settlement in Russia, Ukraine, European Union and the United States. The majority of the ones opposing it are those to whom improvement of the relations between Russia and the West would be unwelcome. The deployment of a peacekeeping operation in the buffer zone is most often resisted on the grounds that it would freeze the conflict.

of President of Ukraine P. Poroshenko, and the Initiatives of President of Russia V. Putin.

¹¹ Dynkin, A., Trubnikov, V., Arbatov, A., Voitovsky, F., Many of the provisions of our plan proved useful. The Boistö Group experts are working on the next part of the roadmap for Ukraine, *Kommersant*, 1 Dec. 2014, <<http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2623317>> [in Russian].

It appears that frozen conflicts should not be feared, if those have been ‘frozen’ correctly in accordance with the UN mandate and through a multilateral effort. Such frozen conflicts (of which Cyprus can be cited as a good example) are preferable to latent conflicts that appear to have been resolved, yet remain unresolved and can suddenly erupt again. The conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina that can break out at any time, can be named as one of those latent conflicts.

One should also mention other reasons to oppose a peacekeeping operation. Some parts of the political community in Russia would not be happy if the threat of resumed hostilities is eliminated and the line of contact shifts to the west. They also reject the deployment of any foreign military personnel, other than Russian in the area of the former Soviet Union. Many people in Ukraine oppose the legalization of extraterritorial enclaves and the presence of Russian military personnel through a peacekeeping mission, and the implicit recognition of the secession of Crimea (for which no such mission was suggested). Such motives are shared by some people in the West, too. Furthermore, some oppose a peaceful settlement through compromise and a peacekeeping operation which would imply that Russian leadership is no longer to be ‘punished’ for its actions in Crimea and Donbas in 2014-2015. The latter motive can be clearly traced in the policy pursued by the US establishment and would exclude any arrangements and cooperation with President Putin’s administration. This in part can account for a hysterical campaign against Moscow’s alleged interference in the 2016 presidential elections in the United States.

Those are formidable obstacles that demonstrate how deep the Russia-Ukraine and Russia-West division is. However, there is only one alternative to the implementation of the Minsk Agreements that is impossible without a peacekeeping mission. It is a new war that will eventually bring about a direct military clash between Russia and NATO with catastrophic consequences, something that they somehow had managed to avoid throughout the forty years of the Cold War. Weighed against this possibility, all the arguments against a peacekeeping mission in Donbas appear short-sighted and insignificant.

Certainly, establishing peace is but a first necessary step on the way to political stabilization in Ukraine, which is also envisaged by Minsk II. As the experience of a peacekeeping operation in Bosnia has demonstrated, the civilian dimension of the settlement is as important as the military one is. That is where other initiatives, in particular the Mariupol format at the local authorities level as part of the reintegration policy, come into play. One could also use the experience of the 1971 Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin that established the rules of transit in the territory of the German Democratic Republic between the Western Berlin and the Federal Republic of Germany, to ensure transit through the territory of Ukraine.

Today, many policy-makers and experts complain of the lack of trust in the relations between Russia and the West. The settlement of the conflict in Ukraine may lay the foundation for the restoration of trust that does not appear out of the blue but is gained when addressing problems together. The past two years must have made it clear to anyone who genuinely wishes that the conflict be resolved that this cannot be achieved if one cuts corners. It is only through decisive and consistent efforts of all the parties concerned that one can resolve this conflict that has been the largest and most dangerous conflict between Russia and the West since the Cold War ended, and that has already been drawing them into another cold war. It is high time to do that, before a new cold war gains traction for decades to come.

6. MILITARY-POLITICAL SITUATION IN SYRIA AND IRAQ

Stanislav IVANOV

Despite specificities that are unique for armed conflicts in Syria and Iraq, the developments in these countries have enough in common to analyze them side by side and to draw possible conclusions on their future perspectives. Both Syria and Iraq are engaged in protracted civil wars which from the outset acquired a pronounced confessional (Sunnis against Shiites) character. The interference in these conflicts of foreign states and the 'Islamist International' (jihadist volunteers and mercenaries from around the world) further complicated the situation in these countries and the region as a whole.

Simplified representation of the warring parties in these countries is as follows: in Syria the ruling Arab-Alawite minority (close to the Shiite branch of Islam)¹ is at war with the Arab-Sunni armed opposition, while in Iraq the ruling Arab Shiite majority fight the Arab Sunni minority. In both countries active radical Islamist groups such as the Islamic State, Jabhat al-Nusra, Muslim Brotherhood and dozens of other smaller groups took advantage of the weakening of the central government. Jihadist militants were able to establish control over

¹ Alevism is more than a sect within Shia Islam, it is an independent religion with some doctrinal aspects at variance with traditional Islam interpretation. For this reason, even Iran – a prominent centre of Shiite Islam – for a long time did not recognise the Alawites as belonging to its belief system. Tehran recognised Alawites as Muslims and Shiite only in 1973 for political reasons – to establish relations with a new Syrian regime leading by Alawite Hafez Assad.

significant areas of Syria and Iraq, over their borders and major cities (Mosul, Rakka), and even create a pseudo-state of 'Islamic Caliphate'².

A common feature of the present Syria and Iraq is the fact that the Kurdish ethnic minority (10-12% of the Syrian population and 15-17% of Iraqi population) has preserved neutrality in inter-Arab civil wars, has been able to self-organise and successfully protect their territories from Islamist militants.

The fight among internal and external forces for power, territory and resources in Syria and Iraq has become violent and involves the use of aircraft, armored vehicles and artillery, as well as mass executions, large-scale terrorist attacks resulting in deaths not only among participants of the conflict but also among civilians, including women, children and the elderly. These civil wars and terrorism have claimed hundreds of thousands of lives, forced millions of people to leave their homes, turned cities with a millennia-long history and architectural monuments of world significance into ruins. It should be noted that terror as a means of intimidation and a method of warfare is used not only by established terrorist groups, but also by all parties without exception. The situation is complicated by the fact that in these conflicts there are no front lines. Syria and Iraq are divided into a number of hostile enclaves, fights are underway in cities and densely populated rural areas, opposition fighters and Islamists constantly maneuver, move around usually at night in armored vehicles and cars, use skillful disguise, observe radio silence, hide behind civilians holding them as human shields with military facilities located in residential areas, schools, mosques and other civilian buildings. As a result, international coalitions' air strikes inadvertently target residential areas and positions of government troops³, while the air forces of Syria and Iraq hit humanitarian convoys and civilians.

² Ivanov, S., The Islamic State and other radical Islamist organisations: main trends. In *Russia: arms control, disarmament and international security. IMEMO supplement to the Russian edition of the SIPRI Yearbook 2015* (Moscow: IMEMO, 2016), pp. 913-920.

³ Ivanov, S., Criminal negligence or intentional provocation by Washington?, *RiaTaza*, 22 Sep. 2016, <<http://riataza.com/2016/09/22/prestupnaya-halatnost-ili-namerennaya-provokatsiya-vashingtona/>> [in Russian].

External forces take an active part in both armed conflicts. In Syria, Damascus is supported by Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, Lebanese Shiite Hezbollah fighters, mercenaries and Shiite volunteers from Iraq, Yemen, Pakistan and Afghanistan. The total number of foreign forces is comparable with the number of Syrian armed forces (about 80,000). Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Jordan, and Lebanese Sunni Arabs provide support and assistance to the Sunni armed opposition forces.

In Iraq, the central government backs Iran, while the Iraqi Sunni Arabs are assisted by the Gulf monarchies and Turkey. Russian air forces conduct missile and bomb strikes in support of Syrian government troops fighting against radical Islamist groups, while the coalition of the US and their allies backs Iraqi armed forces against the Islamic State in Iraq (mainly in the direction of Mosul) and without coordination with Damascus act against militants of the Islamic State (IS) and Jabhat al-Nusra in Syria, in the areas around Raqqa and Dayr al-Zawr.

In 2012-2014, the threat to Damascus and Baghdad and the whole world community posed by radical Islamist groups in Syria and Iraq were clearly underestimated. Islamic State militants were able to defeat several divisions of the Iraqi regular army, to oust Syrian troops, seize modern heavy weapons and military equipment, as well as gold and foreign currency bank reserves, occupy large areas of Syria and Iraq, establish trade of oil and oil products, museum artifacts, and other goods in the world market. Ballistic missiles, radioactive materials, components and technologies for production of chemical and biological weapons fell into terrorists' hands. Tens of thousands of volunteer jihadists and mercenaries from all over the world went to the 'Islamic Caliphate'. Turkey become for a transit corridor and a transfer base: terrorists received shipments of arms, ammunition, equipment and medicines through the Turkish border⁴. Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his allies in the Persian Gulf monarchies hoped to use the Islamists to

⁴ Ivanov, S., Turkey's foreign policy and regional crises. In *Security and Arms Control 2015-2016. International Cooperation in Fighting against Global Threats*, ed. by A. Arbatov, N. Bubnova (Moscow: IMEMO, Political Encyclopedia, 2016), pp. 207-225 [in Russian].

overthrow undesirable regimes in Damascus and Baghdad and then bring to power friendly Arab-Sunni regimes in these countries.

Military-political conflict in Syria and possible scenarios for its resolution

Turkey in fact considers Bashar al-Assad's regime and the leading Kurdish political and military force in Syria – Democratic Union Party – terrorists. While Turkey has joined the common front against radical Islamist groups, one cannot exclude that various Turkish non-governmental organisations and special services will provide further support for Islamists in Syria and Iraq. Turkey's ruling Islamist Justice and Development Party and numerous Turkish Islamist groups remain ideologically closer to the extreme Sunni branches of Islam (Salafi, Wahhabi) and consider Iran, as well as pro-Iranian Shiite groups and sects similar to Syrian Alawites, as their main opponents in the region. Turkey, as most Arab countries, does not believe the Alawites⁵ to be Muslims and for this reason insists on resignation of al-Assad. It is unlikely that Ankara will abandon this strategic line and its lasting alliance with its Arab Sunni partners in the region (Riyadh, Doha, Amman). The restoration of Turkey's relations with Israel also implies strengthening of the Turkish-Israeli alliance against Iran and the regimes in Damascus and Baghdad.

The turning point in the situation in Syria was a ceasefire (truce) agreement reached between the Syrian government and armed opposition with the mediation of Russia, Turkey and Iran, which entered into force on 30 December 2016. This agreement did not cover the territories controlled by IS and the Jabhat al-Nusra. In total, the parties signed three important documents. The first one was on a ceasefire on the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic between the Syrian government and armed opposition, the second one – on a set of measures to monitor the ceasefire, and the third one was the statement

⁵ From 1922 to 1936, a French mandate territory in present-day Syria was called 'Alawite State' with a population of just 278,000 of which 176,000 were Alawites.

of willingness to start peace negotiations on the settlement of the Syrian conflict⁶.

Ankara and Tehran, along with Moscow, acted as intermediaries in organizing inter-Syrian negotiations in Astana (Kazakhstan). Time will tell how effective these meetings were and whether it will be possible to maintain the ceasefire regime for a long time and put the situation in Syria back on a peaceful track. According to experts, very serious contradictions remain between Damascus and the opposition, as well as between Turkey and Iran on Syrian settlement. So far there is no mutual understanding on this issue between the West and Russia either. The US Navy missile attack on Syrian Shayrat airbase on 7 April 2017 further complicated the already strained US-Russian relations.

In general, regional actors and middlemen from among the world powers still remain on different sides in the Syrian conflict. Ankara considers its main objective to overthrow al-Assad's regime, and Tehran intends to fight to the last to keep him in power as the leader of the pro-Iranian Alawite clan. The above ceasefire agreement has not yet been supported by Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Jordan, and many groups of the external and internal Syrian opposition. One can expect these countries and groups to sabotage the peace talks in Astana and Geneva, attempt to undermine the agreements already signed, use the truce as an excuse to regroup and to provide opposition and Islamists with new arms and ammunition. It is possible that representatives of the United States, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia will collude with jihadists and try to expand the areas controlled by opposition through armed groups redeploying or fighters switching to 'moderate' opposition. It has already been the case in Syria where jihadist militants shave their beards and change the names of their terrorist groups, and black flags – to green ones⁷.

Years of the Syrian civil war have left 500,000 people dead, over 1 mln disabled, and 8 mln in refugee camps in Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, the European Union, while several more

⁶ Signed a ceasefire agreement in Syria – Putin, *Russkaya vesna*, 29 Dec. 2016, <<http://rusvesna.su/news/1483011168>> [in Russian].

⁷ Ivanov, S., Turkey's foreign policy and regional crises...

millions of Syrians have been displaced within their own country. Given that in early 2011 the population of Syria amounted to 22.5 mln people, today, according to international experts, it is only 10-12 mln Syrians⁸.

The government troops have also diminished significantly. The size of the Syrian army at the beginning of the armed conflict was about 320,000, while to date it slightly exceeds 80,000⁹. While the army has been affected by the losses in killed and wounded, a significant number of the military, mostly Sunni Arabs, also deserted or defected to the opposition. As a consequence, the Syrian armed forces find it hard not only to conduct offensive military operations, but even to hold on the controlled territories (for example, the repeated surrender of Palmyra to the Islamic State)¹⁰. Damascus managed to establish contact with some of the local self-defence units, and about 60,000 militia now protect civilian areas from armed opposition groups and Islamists. As it was mentioned above, the Syrian armed forces received significant assistance in fight against terrorist groups from the Russian armed forces, 8,000-10,000 fighters from Lebanese Shiite Hezbollah group, Iranian soldiers of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, and Shiite volunteers from Iraq, Yemen, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. The Russian Aerospace Forces act selectively and launch missile attacks only against confirmed locations of officially recognised terrorist groups. The ceasefire established in late 2016 significantly reduced the number and combat strength of the Russian military group in Syria¹¹.

⁸ These are estimates, as since 2014 the United Nations has no longer been counting military casualties in Syria due to the lack of official data and information from other sources vary greatly. For example, the number of Syrians killed is between 200,000 and 500,000.

⁹ Dergachev, V., Vinokurov, A., Matenaya, E., Who fights in Syria?, *Gazeta.Ru*, 1 Oct. 2015, <https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2015/09/30_a_7788269.shtml> [in Russian].

¹⁰ Ex-head of the Russian General Staff stated the reasons for Palmyra's surrender, *RIA Novosti*, 20 Jan. 2017, <<https://ria.ru/syria/20170120/1486150936.html>> [in Russian].

¹¹ Putin agreed to reduce Russia's military presence in Syria, *RBK*, 29 Dec. 2016, <<http://www.rbc.ru/politics/29/12/2016/5864f29a9a7947b1c7d955ad>> [in Russian].

Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and a number of other Arab states openly support the armed opposition, and through the special services, non-governmental organisations and Wahhabi foundations assist radical Islamist groups which include not only local Arabs, but tens of thousands of mercenaries and jihadist volunteers from all over the world. Turkey, although it has declared its intention to fight terrorism in Syria, without the permission of the Syrian authorities on 24 August 2016 invaded northern regions of the country and occupied a bridgehead (up to 100 km wide and 50 km deep) between the border towns of Jarabulus and Azaz. Damascus regarded these actions by Turkey as a gross violation of international law and open act of aggression. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence of Russia also recommended that in the future Ankara coordinate such actions with the Syrian government¹².

Turkey plans to move some of the Syrian refugee camps and training centres for armed opposition from its territory to the occupied area in Syria. Pro-Turkish units of the Free Syrian Army are expected to perform police duties in this area. It is no mere chance that 1,500 Syrian opposition fighters trained by American and Turkish instructors crossed the border between the two countries as a part of mechanised columns of the Turkish armed forces. The pro-Turkish armed groups in this region amount in total to more than 5,000, and the command of the Turkish armed forces intends to increase this number by pushing radical Islamists to switch to the 'moderate' opposition¹³.

By early 2016, Washington succeeded in creating in the north of Syria a new military group – the 'Democratic Alliance' – consisted of the units of the Free Syrian Army, Christian Assyrians, and

¹² During a working visit to Ankara, the Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces Army General Vladimir Gerasimov told his Turkish counterpart that the actions of Turkish armed forces in Syria were illegitimate, warning that if Ankara prolonged its Euphrates Shield operation and expanded its area, it would face military and political risks. See: The head of the General Staff at the negotiations in Ankara called the operation in Syria illegal, *RBK*, 16 Sep. 2016, <<http://www.rbc.ru/politics/16/09/2016/57dc32b79a794799172ac0eb>> [in Russian].

¹³ Erdogan explained the operation in Syria by the need to 'overthrow Assad', *RBC*, 29 Nov. 2016, <<http://www.rbc.ru/politics/29/11/2016/583dbd919a7947332ead3735>> [in Russian].

Kurds¹⁴. With the support of the US air force and special forces in late December 2015, this alliance freed a strategically important dam and the Tishreen hydropower plant on the Euphrates River which supplied electricity to the city and the province of Aleppo. These forces are also expected to participate in the liberation of Raqqa – the so-called capital of IS. For rear and fire support the United States has established a network of military bases and deployed several thousand troops in northern Syria¹⁵.

The Kurdish ethnic minority occupies a special place in the Syrian conflict. With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the creation of Syria (1921-1926), they turned out to be, as it were, outcasts and a ‘second class’ people in their historical homeland. The central authorities in Damascus for a long time conducted a policy of assimilation, forced deportations and relocations towards this part of the population, prohibited communication, education and media in the Kurdish language, deprived several hundred thousand Kurds of Syrian citizenship, etc. Before the start of the civil war in Syria, there were up to 3 mln of them (about 12% of the country’s population) most of whom lived in three bordering areas with Turkey. There were also Kurdish communities (blocks) in Aleppo, Damascus, and other large cities of the country.

Most of the Kurdish political and public organisations were banned or had to work semi-legally. Naturally, the Kurds took an active part in the events of the Arab Spring: they organised demonstrations and protest rallies against the government. However, as the political struggle escalated into an armed conflict, the Kurds chose to take a neutral position in the civil war and evade active military support to either side. Already in 2012, government troops, security forces and national officials were forced to leave Kurdish enclaves to concentrate

¹⁴ US Special Forces in northern Syria will organise an alliance of ground forces against IS, *EurAsia Daily*, 24 Nov. 2015, <<https://eadaily.com/ru/news/2015/11/24/specnaz-ssha-na-severe-sirii-stanet-organizatorom-alyansa-nazemnyh-sil-protiv-ig>> [in Russian].

¹⁵ The US has created a new military base in West Kurdistan, *RiaTaza*, 22 Jan. 2017, <<http://riataza.com/2017/01/22/ssha-sozdali-novuyu-voennuyu-bazu-v-zapadnom-kurdistan/>> [in Russian].

their severely weakened resources on the defence of the capital and areas of dense residence of Alawite Arabs. In a relatively short time Kurds managed to create self-government bodies and self-defence units which clashed with jihadists who were increasingly gaining strength.

At the moment, Kurds control 800 out of 900 km of the Syrian-Turkish border. The August 2016 invasion of the Turkish troops to northern Syria prevented them from seizing the remaining 100 km of the border from jihadists and connecting the Kurdish cantons of Kobani and Afrin. Nevertheless, by early 2016, the Kurds created an autonomous (federal) district in northern Syria called 'Rojava' (West Kurdistan). Along with the Kurds all ethnic groups populating these territories (Arabs, Assyrians, Armenians, and others) are represented in the district's self-government bodies and self-defence units. The leaders of Rojava emphasised that they were not nationalists or separatists seeking to create an independent state, but were ready to cooperate and interact with any authorities in Damascus under condition that the legitimate rights and freedoms of all ethnic and confessional groups of the country's population would be included in the new constitution. It is obvious that the Syrian Kurds would be satisfied with the status of the Iraqi Kurds¹⁶ who were able to build and constitutionally consolidate a Kurdish autonomous region as a subject of a new post-Saddam Iraq federation.

At this stage, the Syrian Kurds would like to become a party at the peace talks on the settlement of the conflict as well as to participate in the discussion on the future organisation of the state. However, today neither the government of al-Assad, nor the opposition leaders want to see a Kurdish delegation at the negotiating table or provide any guarantees that the new constitution will protect the rights of Kurds and other minorities.

The governments of Iran and Turkey who fear the growth of national self-consciousness among their Kurdish minorities also oppose

¹⁶ Iraqi Kurdistan which consists of three northern provinces (Dohuk, Erbil, Sulaymaniyah) has a constituent entity of the federation with the very extensive rights and powers. Iraqi Kurds are represented in Iraqi central legislative and executive bodies in proportion to their numbers, the president of the country Fouad Massoum is a Kurd.

any form of autonomy of the Syrian Kurds and the federalization of the country. While Tehran operates mainly through official Damascus, Ankara directly interferes in the internal affairs of the neighboring state, carries out missile and bomb strikes, artillery shelling and conducts ground military operations in the Kurdish enclave in the north of Syria¹⁷.

Israel and the United States treat sovereign Syria in an equally uncereemonious manner. Tel Aviv carries missile strikes on weapons and ammunition storages and convoys of vehicles which allegedly belong to Hezbollah. US Navy ships in the Mediterranean Sea on the night of 7 April 2017 fired 59 Tomahawk missiles at the Shayrat air base in the Syrian province of Homs. The US used unsubstantiated accusations of Damask using chemical weapons to justify the strike.

Under the circumstances the following *scenarios of the Syrian crisis are possible*.

1. The parties to the conflict will observe the ceasefire, start peace talks, form a transitional coalition government, draft a new constitution, and the re-establish a single Syrian state. In this case, one cannot exclude federalization of Syria where ethnic and religious groups and enclaves may be granted the status of a cultural autonomy or federative entity, and the key posts in the legislative and executive branches of power could be distributed proportionally between the major population groups (Sunnis, Alawites, Kurds). Here the Lebanese model can serve as an example. This scenario can increase the effectiveness of the fight against the Islamic State and Jabhat al-Nusra and united Syrians with the support of the international coalitions can liberate the country from the major terrorist groups by the end of 2017.

2. While maintaining the ceasefire between government forces and the opposition, parties to the conflict will not be able to agree on the formation of a transitional government and the principles of the new constitution. The question of President al-Assad staying in power may become a stumbling block. To stop the internecine civil war the parties could temporarily agree to the de facto disintegration of the country

¹⁷ Turkish army launches artillery and air strikes against northern Syria, *Voyennoye obozreniye*, 21 Nov. 2016, <<https://topwar.ru/104089-tureckaya-armiya-nanosit-artilleriyskie-i-aviaudary-po-severu-sirii.html>> [in Russian].

into several enclaves (Alawite-Shiite, Sunni, Kurdish, Christian, Turcoman, and others). In this case, Syria would need help from the international organisations (UN, League of Arab States) and the mediating countries (Russia, Turkey, Iran, the USA, and others). Disputes over the borders of enclaves especially those with mixed population will inevitably arise, and rebuilding infrastructure of the country, its economy, agriculture, foreign relations, etc. will also become an issue. In this case the liberation of Syria from major terrorist groups will be more difficult.

3. The parties will fail to agree on a peaceful settlement of the conflict, the ceasefire will be broken, and the civil war in Syria will continue. This scenario is highly undesirable, but quite probable. The antagonism between the warring parties and between their foreign sponsors (Iran vs Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Jordan) runs very high and those willing to wage war until final victory are numerous. In this case, the country faces a possible humanitarian catastrophe and one should expect a new flow of refugees to neighboring countries and Europe.

The situation in Iraq and the prospects for its development

Comparing to the ongoing Syrian crisis, events in Iraq long had remained in the background and attracted attention again only after the start of the military operation to liberate Mosul, the second most important city in the country, from the IS terrorists. Mosul, a city with the population of 2 mln people in northern Iraq, rich with oil fields and water resources (Tigris River) and strategically important in terms of communication, was captured by a few thousand jihadist fighters in the summer of 2014. The government troops numbering more than 30,000 did not offer serious resistance and fled in panic leaving warehouses and military camps with heavy weapons. The main reason was the hostile relations between the Arab-Sunni population of the country and Shia Arabs in power in Baghdad. Hastily put together a new Iraqi army consisted mainly of Shia recruits, and the population of Mosul and the

surrounding areas were mainly Sunni Arabs who rebelled and was supported by IS militants.

The origins of modern Shiite-Sunni conflict in Iraq go back to 2003. The campaign of 'de-baathification',¹⁸ launched by the central Iraqi authorities shortly after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein affected the interests of hundreds of thousands of Sunni Arabs. Not only supporters of Saddam Hussein and Baas party officials were executed and imprisoned, but wider sections of the Sunni population underwent prosecutions. A wave of mass repressions and purges, judicial and extra-judicial killings, bombing of Sunni mosques, punitive actions by Shi'ite 'death squads' led to mass migration of Sunnis to neighboring countries, while numerous former military, police, security services and Baas party members were forced to become illegal, create a clandestine military-political groups, and start armed resistance to the American occupation forces and the central government. Even those Sunni Arabs who were trying to cooperate with the new authorities were subjected to pressure and forced to leave their posts and parliamentary seats. For example, in 2009 the respected Sunni leader, Iraqi Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi¹⁹ was forced into exile in Saudi Arabia and sentenced in absentia to death.

The result of this policy was that by the summer of 2014 eight Sunni provinces, including Nineveh with the administrative centre of Mosul, rebelled and supported IS militants invading the country from Syria. Most of the government troops from among Sunni Arabs deserted or defected to the jihadists, while the local population met insurgents as liberators from Shiite authorities, and regular army's Shiite recruits simply fled or surrendered.

As a result, over two years Mosul remained under the control of IS militants who proclaimed the occupied territories of Iraq and Syria the 'Islamic Caliphate'. However, their attempts to continue the

¹⁸ 'De-baathification' is a broad campaign launched by the new Iraqi authorities involving repressions and purges of the state apparatus and security agencies in order to get rid of former members of the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party.

¹⁹ Tariq Al-Hashim, Iraq's Vice-President: 'Iran sows seeds of interfaith strife', *EuroNews*, 25 Apr. 2012, <<http://ru.euronews.com/2012/04/25/tariq-al-hashimi-iraqi-vice-president-iran-is-behind-sectarian-strife>> [in Russian].

offensive in northern Iraq and to occupy Iraqi Kurdistan failed. Kurdish Peshmerga brigade supported by the Western coalition air force not only defended the strategically important city of Kirkuk and surrounding areas of Iraqi Kurdistan, but later managed to dislodge Islamists from the city of Sinjar and other areas populated mainly by Kurds.

For a long time Baghdad with its allies in Tehran and Washington was developing a plan for the liberation of Mosul but the offense was constantly postponed. The main reason was lack of unity between the internal and external forces working to uproot Islamists from the region. The newly formed units of the Iraqi army did not possess the necessary skills and warfare experience, and the morale of the recruits did not meet the fierceness of the upcoming battles against militarily well prepared and ideologically motivated jihad ('holy war' against infidels) zealots.

Only by mid-October 2016 with the help of Iranian and American instructors the Iraqi government managed to set up eight mechanised infantry brigades with support and reinforcement units of the overall number up to 40,000. They were joined by Shiite political-military groups such as Hashd al-Shaabi and Badr Brigade (about 7,000-8,000). These non-governmental militias were supported by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and the Iranian army special forces.

The second largest (18,000-20,000) contingent included Kurdish Peshmerga brigade ('Peshmerga' is translated from Kurdish as 'those who face death') with support and reinforcement units which characterised by combat experience, high morale, and coordination. By late October 2016 they managed to free dozens of settlements on the approaches to Mosul and took control of all the commanding heights to the north and east of the city. Peshmerga units are supported by advisers, trainers and special forces of the US and other Western countries.

The third element of the offensive was the unit (up to 5,000) of Sunni Arabs and Turkomans trained by Turkish instructors at the Bashiqa military base 12 miles north-east of Mosul. Ground troops

with artillery and armored vehicles, as well as the Turkish air force provided the unit with logistical and fire support during the offensive.

The total number of ground forces advancing on Mosul amounted to 80,000 men²⁰ with the US-led international coalition air force providing air support. The Qayyarah (60 km south of Mosul) and Makhmour (Iraqi Kurdistan) airbases played the role of logistics centres and jump airfields. The Qayyarah airbase hosted US military and transport aircraft as well as about 1,000 US special forces and military advisers, a large number of tanks, armored personnel carriers, self-propelled guns, rocket-propelled artillery systems, and operational-tactical missile systems. Iraqi armed forces and Peshmerga fighters underwent accelerated training with these types of weapons and military equipment before being deployed to the areas of warfare. To support the assault the air forces of the US, France, Great Britain, Denmark, Germany, UAE, Turkey, Iraq, Australia, and Canada carried out missile and bomb strikes. Coalition combat aircraft based at airfields in Iraq, Turkey, UAE, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Israel. US and French aircraft carriers operated out of the Persian Gulf²¹.

On 17 October 2016 Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi announced an offensive on Mosul which was a sixth one over a year and a half. Historically the area had been populated by the Kurds but during the rule of Saddam Hussein, due to forced relocation and deportation, displaced Sunni Arabs became predominant population of the city with Kurds in the second place and a number of other minorities (Shiite Arabs, Turkomans, Armenians, Assyrians, Chaldeans, etc.). During the reign of the 'Islamic caliphate' Kurds and other ethnic groups were forced to flee into Iraqi Kurdistan – some of them died or were enslaved by the Islamists.

²⁰ Sharkovskii, A., Coalition storms Mosul, *Nezavisimoye voyennoye obozreniye*, 21 Oct. 2016, <http://nvo.ng.ru/nvo/2016-10-21/1_923_mosul.html> [in Russian].

²¹ Ivanov, S., Stanislav Ivanov: The situation in northern Iraq in connection with the assault of Mosul, *Oruzhiye Rossii*, 31 Oct. 2016, <<http://www.arms-expo.ru/analytics/voiny-i-konflikty/stanislav-ivanov-situatsiya-na-severe-iraka-v-svyazi-so-shturmom-mosula/>> [in Russian].

Baghdad would want to keep the province of Nineveh under its administrative control but Sunni Arabs and Kurds oppose the idea. Taking advantage of the weakness of the central government, accusing it of Shiite sectarianism, corruption, and betrayal of the interests of the local population the local leaders have proposed a referendum on the future status of the region after the liberation of Nineveh and the return of refugees. The Iraqi constitution allows for creation of federal entities out of provinces similar to Iraqi Kurdistan, and the local authorities intend to take advantage of it. Baghdad may form a new federal district where the Sunni Arabs and Kurds will be in control of the government. Ankara supports this idea as it believes the province to be historically a part of the Turkish territory. Being allies with Iraqi Kurdistan and Nineveh Ankara cannot only control the whole northern Iraq but also prevent the unification of the Iraqi and Syrian Kurds.

External regional centres of power have also got involved in the dispute over this issue. Baghdad strongly opposes to further participation of the Turkish armed forces in the offensive on Mosul. Radical Shiite militias and Tehran demand from the central Iraqi authorities to remove all the Turkish troops from the country. Ankara, in turn, insists on removing Shiite militias and Iranian troops from the offensive operation as Shiites have allegedly used punitive measures against civilian Sunni population in areas previously freed from Islamists in the so-called Sunni Triangle²². Under pressure from Baghdad Erdogan has declared withdrawal of the troops from Nineveh province.

The US administration seems to hold a neutral position in this Turkish-Iranian dispute, officially calling for maintaining the balance of forces around Iraq, but in fact clearly preferring interacting with the Turkish military – its NATO partners. The offensive on Mosul was intended to mark the beginning of a vigorous fight of Washington and its allies against the forces of international terrorism in the form of radical Islamist groups. The joint staff of the US-led international

²² In July 2016, the UN accused Hashd al-Shaabi Shiite militia brigade of killings of at least 50 and kidnapping 900 Sunni Arabs during a punitive military operation in Fallujah. See: Ivanov, S., The situation in Iraq in connection with the assault of Mosul, *Zarubezhnoye voyennoye obozreniye*, No 11, 2016, pp. 37-40 [in Russian].

coalition is located at the Qayyarah airbase which is an operations centre run by US and British military advisers and headed by the US Lieutenant General Steven Townsend²³.

Regarding the developments around Mosul and in Iraq in general, the following scenario has long been under consideration: possible collusion of the Turkish authorities or other intermediaries (Saudi Arabia, Qatar) with IS leaders or even bribing the latter in order to make jihadist guerrillas leave Mosul through special corridors to other parts of Iraq or Syria (Raqqa, Palmyra, and Deir ez-Zor). Such an option would suit well the US and its allies, as it would strengthen position of the central government in Baghdad and at the same time increase pressure on the regime of al-Assad in Syria. The Saudis and Qataris are believed to have attempted to bribe the leaders of the former Baathist groups who joined IS and Sunni tribe elders to provoke an uprising inside the caliphate, but to no avail. Jihadists executed not only those suspected of treason but also civilians who were trying to leave the city without permission or did not follow orders to create a 'human shield' on its outskirts. Thus, the offensive forces had to conduct long and fierce battles for the city. The Caliphate has been preparing for its defence for over two years: it has constructed various engineering structures, fences, tunnels, trenches, ditches (some of them are filled with oil and set on fire to cover the militants' actions from strikes from both the ground and air), mined roads, bridges, buildings, the approaches to the city, and so on. Practice shows that the IS militants, as a rule, pull away from a large city only after fierce resistance when they cannot defend it any longer.

It is possible that by early 2017 IS militants already regrouped, some of them could have left Mosul, but the rest continued their armed resistance. The militants carry out assaults and even attacks against other settlements (Kirkuk)²⁴, and acts of sabotage on roads, actively use suicide bombers to blow up convoys of armored vehicles and cars. The

²³ American general allocated two years to defeat the Islamic State, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 26 Dec. 2016, <<http://www.ng.ru/news/567042.html>> [in Russian].

²⁴ Russian Ministry of Defence: Islamic State's attack on Kirkuk in Iraq is a diversion, *News Front*, 22 Oct. 2016, <<http://news-front.info/2016/10/22/minoborony-rf-ataka-igil-na-kirkuk-v-irake-otvlekayushhij-manevr/>> [in Russian].

surplus of small arms and ammunition are distributed to local Sunni tribes, police, and other trustworthy, in view of the Islamists, citizens. In general in Mosul there is no shortage of arms and ammunition which were seized in 2014.

The number of IS militants in Mosul is estimated at 15,000-20,000. Despite the apparent superiority in manpower, weaponry, and air support, the offensive party is struggling. A well-fortified city with 1 mln population with a total surface of over 620 km² and a total perimeter of 50 km cannot be liberated in a short time. As was noted above, the battle for the city has become protracted and it will take considerable time to fully free it from IS militants. The latter use heavy artillery, armored vehicles, a large amount of explosives. Food and water are also available in Mosul in sufficient quantity. In addition, there are external transport corridors on the western outskirts of the city that allow terrorists to freely communicate with their bases in Iraq and Syria.

In late March 2017 the command of the operation for the liberation of Mosul had to suspend the advance of Iraqi troops. The participants of the offensive and their foreign sponsors (Iran, USA, Turkey) had serious disagreements over the tactics of fighting. Pro-government Shiite commanders and their advisors from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps insisted on continuing the operation despite military casualties and the massive loss among the local population, while Kurds and Sunni military considered more important to avoid further needless loss of life and destruction of residential areas.

Experts estimate that more than 600,000 civilians are left in the areas controlled by IS. They are used by militants as a 'human shield', while some locals, for whatever reasons, fight on the side of the jihadists. The use of air force, artillery and armored vehicles by the Western coalition is problematic, since it leads to the destruction of residential areas and urban infrastructure and entail more undue victims.

It is becoming increasingly clear that the freeing Mosul from IS militants will not solve the problem of the ongoing civil war in Iraq. The population of the eight Sunni provinces rebelled in the summer of

2014 prefers the rule of the 'Islamic Caliphate' to the 'mired in corruption, sectarian pro-Iranian government in Baghdad'. Some believe that freeing of Mosul will not radically improve the military and political situation in Iraq and will, perhaps, exacerbate it. The leaders of the offensive already have disputes over who will control Mosul and Nineveh, what will be its administrative subordination, whether it will become a federal entity (Iraqi Kurdistan) or remain under the direct control of Baghdad.

Generally, Iraq experiences a crisis of authority and trust in the central government. The country is split into three enclaves: Shiite, Sunni and Kurdish. The ruling Arab-Shiite coalition has its own problems. Authoritative Shiite religious leader Muqtada al-Sadr now and then leads his supporters to protests against the government of Haydar al-Abadi, breaks into the government quarter ('green zone'), captures the parliament building, and calls for the resignation of the government. To change the situation Baghdad could meet some of protests' demands: fire corrupt officials, normalise relations with all ethnic and religious groups, primarily with Sunni Arabs and Kurds, re-elect the parliament, and create a genuine coalition government. But Iran exerting a strong influence on the current government in Baghdad does not allow this. Iranian ayatollahs want a Shiite Iraq as a springboard to spread their ideology and influence in the region (over Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and other Arab countries).

However, there is little doubt that sooner or later IS fighters will be forced out of Mosul and eventually from Iraq. It is unlikely that this success will lead to defeating of the radical Islam ideology, or the end of the civil war in the country and the region. Much will depend on the following statements and actions of Baghdad and its ability to make decisions independently, not giving in the pressure from Tehran or Washington.

The civil war between the Sunnis and Shiites in Iraq can end only after a fundamental change in domestic and foreign policies of the Iraqi authorities. The first steps to end the prolong inter-Arab struggle can be creating a coalition of legislative and executive powers in Iraq with the active participation of Sunni Arabs, inviting the latter to serve

in the army, work in the government, security agencies and restoring their positions in business. No less important condition for the normalization of the situation in Iraq is Baghdad's ability to establish relationships with external allies of Sunni Arabs – Ankara, Riyadh, Doha, Amman and other Arab capitals. History shows that the one-sided loyalty of the central Iraqi authorities to Tehran largely provokes further escalation of violence in the country. The leaders of the regional Sunni states are suspicious about Shiite Iran strengthening its position in Iraq and the Arab East as a whole and try to limit its influence by supporting the resistance of the Arab-Sunni anti-government groups. Unless Baghdad distances itself from Tehran and becomes equidistant from the regional centres of power, the civil war in the country will continue. At the same time one cannot exclude disintegration of the Arab part of Iraq into two enclaves: the Shiite south and Sunni centre and the north-west.

In such a scenario, it would be very difficult for Iraq to retain Iraqi Kurdistan. The fact is that from the outset the Kurdish minority (17% of the population) took its rightful place in the new post-Saddam Iraqi state by legislatively securing the autonomous status of the four northern provinces of Iraq as a single entity of the federation with most extensive rights. President of Iraqi Kurdistan Massoud Barzani has long played the role of a link and mediator in conflicts and disputes between Arabs, Shiites and Sunnis helping to overcome governmental crises in the country.

However, more recently there has been growing dissatisfaction within the Kurdish region with the actions of the pro-Iranian Shiite lobby in Baghdad. Iraqi Kurds are not only used in the ground fight against IS but also drawn into a large-scale Shiite-Sunni confrontation²⁵.

So far only Israel explicitly supported establishment of an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq, while Turkey has adopted a 'wait and see' attitude. In addition, the relations between Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan has recently become those of strong allies. Moreover,

²⁵ Prime Minister of Kurdistan predicted that Iraq would split into three parts, *Vesti.Ru*, 16 June 2016, <<http://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id=2765835>> [in Russian].

Barzani is mediating a peaceful settlement of the Kurdish issue in Turkey²⁶.

While Washington has not yet decided on the independence of Iraqi Kurdistan, Tehran strongly opposes the idea. It does not hide its concerns about the potential increase in autonomist or separatist sentiments either among Iranian or Syrian Kurds in the wake of the success of their Iraqi counterparts. Iranian leaders also believe that an independent Kurdistan could become a foothold for the United States and Israel in the region. Most Arab countries also oppose to the idea of its independence as they think that the whole territory of the state belongs to the Arab ummah (community).

There is no unanimity in the Iraqi Kurdistan either. While the major Kurdistan Democratic Party led by Barzani unreservedly supports the idea of a referendum, the opposition parties based in Sulaymaniyah province (PUK and 'Gorran') are divided. Some of the parties' officials are closely linked to the Baghdad Shiites, others are supported by Iran. Yet if Barzani is able to enlist the support of the regional parliament and hold the referendum, the vast majority of the population are expected to vote for the independence of the region.

* * *

In general, the military-political situation in Syria and in Iraq continues to be complex and difficult to predict. The relative weakening in military terms of the largest terrorist Islamist groups is not yet accompanied by the cessation of confrontation between the central government and the opposition. Damascus and Baghdad have no control over large areas of their countries. The fact that external players maintain their influence in the region and foreign military forces continue their presence in these countries does not contribute to the stabilization of the overall situation. Only joint efforts of the global

²⁶ Karabanov, K., Barzani will raise the issue of resuming peace talks between PKK and Turkey, *RiaTaza*, 22 Aug. 2016, <<http://riataza.com/2016/08/22/barzani-podnimet-vopros-o-vozobnovlenii-mirnyih-peregovorov-mezhdu-rpk-i-turtsiey/>> [in Russian].

community can stop the armed conflict. The key to the normalization of the situation in Syria and Iraq is the convergence of views on the settlement of those conflicts among the UN Security Council permanent members, on the one hand, and Iran and the Gulf states, on the other.

7. NUCLEAR COOPERATION BETWEEN RUSSIA AND USA

Anatoly DIAKOV

In the period of 1992-2014, Russia and the United States actively and effectively cooperated on nuclear issues and achieved progress primarily in the area of nuclear security. In this regard it is worth mentioning the Cooperative Threat Reduction programme (CTRP)¹ that provided the legal foundation for a broad spectrum of successfully implemented projects, including the ones on modernization of nuclear facilities of the Russian Defence Ministry and Rosatom enterprises, implementation of security measures for the transportation of nuclear munitions, decommissioning of Russian industrial reactors in Seversk and Zheleznogorsk, improvement of systems for accounting, control and physical protection of nuclear materials. A number of projects within the frame of CTRP were related to nuclear energy and fundamental research. As part of lab-to-lab programme, Russian and US nuclear scientists and engineers studied the methods of transparent dismantling of nuclear warheads and control of weapons-grade nuclear materials.

¹ The goal of the Cooperative Threat Reduction Programme was to prevent nuclear risks caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union. Under this programme which was implemented from December 1991 to June 2013, the United States provided technical and financial assistance to Russia and other states of the former USSR in the destruction of strategic offensive weapons, transportation and storage of fissile materials, and elimination of chemical weapons.

Work on the mentioned programmes and agreements was carried out for many years. In addition to solving a large number of specific problems to reduce nuclear risks and laying the groundwork for future, it helped to accumulate extensive and unique experience both on political and legal issues and on practical cooperation among nuclear laboratories, enterprises of nuclear complex, and experts of the two countries in the field of nuclear applied and fundamental research. One of the most important results of the cooperation was the establishment of personal contacts and mutual understanding between Russian and American specialists².

After 2014, due to the differences over Ukrainian crisis the collaboration between Russia and the United States almost on all nuclear issues was virtually terminated. In March 2014, the US suspended cooperation in the bilateral Nuclear Energy and Nuclear Security Working Group under the US-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission (Poneman-Kirienko working group) overseeing nuclear security programmes. Then in April 2014, the US suspended work under the inter-governmental Agreement on Cooperation in Nuclear- and Energy-Related Scientific Research and Development of 16 September 2013.

In retaliation, the Russian side terminated bilateral cooperation carried out within the framework of the intergovernmental Protocol to the Framework Agreement on a Multilateral Nuclear Environmental Programme in the Russian Federation signed on 14 June 2013 (2013 MNEPR Protocol). It was the Protocol that determined the list of cooperative areas in the field of nuclear security, including accounting, control and physical protection of nuclear materials³.

² On these and other outcomes of the joint efforts of Russia and the United States on various projects implemented under the Cooperative Threat Reduction Programme see *Doomed to Cooperate*, ed. by S.S. Hecker (Bathtub Row Press, 2016).

³ In accordance with the Protocol, the parties agreed to cooperate in the following areas: a) nuclear material physical protection, control and accounting; b) security regulation relating to nuclear material physical protection, control and accounting; c) customs control of nuclear and other radioactive material; d) identification, recovery, storage, securing and dispositioning of high-risk radioactive sources; e) consolidation of nuclear material, including irradiated and unirradiated uranium enriched to 20% or more in the isotope U-235 (HEU), and conversion of excess HEU

Finally, in early October 2016, in accordance with a presidential decree Moscow suspended the intergovernmental Agreement concerning the management and disposition of plutonium designated as no longer required for defence purposes (PMDA) as well as the protocols to this agreement⁴.

US-Russian PMDA: background and preparation for implementation

In April 1996, at the Moscow Summit on Nuclear Security⁵ the Russian President Boris Eltsin declared that as part of the process of bilateral nuclear disarmament Russia would withdraw of 500 tonnes of highly enriched uranium (HEU)⁶ and about 50 tonnes of weapon grade plutonium from its military programme. For its part, the United States

to low-enriched uranium (LEU); f) conversion of Russian Federation HEU-fueled research reactors to operate with LEU fuel, and development of new LEU fuel technologies to enable future HEU to LEU reactor conversions; g) dismantlement, transportation, defueling and safe storage of nuclear submarines, including transportation and safe storage of reactor compartments and associated materials, aimed at ensuring the security of highly enriched spent nuclear fuel. See: Protocol between the government of the USA and the government of the Russian Federation to the framework agreement on a multilateral nuclear environmental programme in the Russian Federation, 14 June 2013, US Department of State, <<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/215429.pdf>>.

⁴ The Agreement between the government of the USA and the government of the Russian Federation concerning the management and disposition of plutonium designated as no longer required for defence purposes and related cooperation was signed on 29 August 2000; the amended version came into force in July 2011.

⁵ Diakov, A.S., Rybachenkov, V.I., Disposal of surplus weapons-grade plutonium: a new turn of events, Centre for Arms Control, Energy and Environmental Studies, 28 Dec. 2013, <<https://www.armscontrol.ru/pubs/disposition-of-excess-weapon-grade-plutonium-new-developments-ru.pdf>> [in Russian].

⁶ Uranium is considered highly enriched when the concentration of uranium isotope U-235 exceeds 10%.

declared that its excess would amount to 365 tonnes of HEU and about 61.5 tonnes of plutonium⁷.

The withdrawal of huge amounts of weapon grade nuclear materials raised the question of their disposition. Taking into account the obligations of the US and Russia under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty the management of excess weapon grade nuclear materials should meet the following basic criteria:

- make materials unusable in nuclear weapons thereby guaranteeing irreversibility of nuclear arms reductions;
- exclude the risks of theft and trafficking of materials;
- contribute to the creation of a monitored regime of nuclear weapons and nuclear materials destruction;
- be economically sound.

It should be noted that in the 1990s the elimination of risk of possible theft and smuggling of weapon grade nuclear materials was one of the strongest incentives for their rapid disposition.

The disposition of excess HEU does not constitute a technical problem and is economically justified. The HEU weapon components are converted into oxide and – after purification – to uranium hexafluoride (UF₆). The UF₆ is then diluted by 1.5% enriched UF₆ to 4-5% U-235 and the resulting material is used for the production of nuclear fuel for civil reactors.

Weapon grade plutonium disposition is more complicated from a technical point of view and, what is particularly important, requires substantial financial resources⁸. The 1996 international experts meeting held in Paris chose two preferable plutonium disposition methods which met the requirements of the so called ‘spent fuel’ standard:

- immobilization of plutonium mixed with high-level radioactive waste;
- fabrication of mixed oxide (MOX) fuel and its irradiation in civil nuclear reactors.

⁷ Disposition of plutonium in Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, International Panel on Fissile Materials, 24 Sep. 2016, <http://fissilematerials.org/blog/2016/09/disposition_of_plutonium_.html>.

⁸ Plutonium is considered weapon grade when the concentration of isotope Pu-239 exceeds 90%.

Introducing such a standard was motivated by the fact that most plutonium produced in the world is contained in spent nuclear fuel which has a high radiation protection. Both of the chosen methods ensure protection from theft due to the high radiation level. But immobilization does not guarantee full irreversibility since mixing plutonium with radioactive waste does not change its isotopic composition and does not exclude in principle the possibility of plutonium extraction from the mixture. The MOX fuel variant looks more attractive from the irreversibility point of view since irradiation of fuel in the reactor changes the isotopic composition of plutonium, which makes it practically unusable for nuclear weapons.

In accordance with the US-Russian agreement of 24 July 1998, a Joint Steering Committee was created with the purpose of coordinating scientific and technical work related to the disposition of excess weapon grade plutonium. To evaluate the overall costs of plutonium disposition in Russia a joint working group was established.

From the very beginning the Russia's strategy to weapon plutonium excess management was based on two premises:

- plutonium is a valuable energy resource. In the context of the closed fuel cycle concept adopted in Russia this means that priority in the plutonium disposition should be given to its use as a fuel for civil nuclear reactors;
- since plutonium disposal has to be subsidised, to accelerate the beginning of the programme of its disposition the US and other Western countries should provide full funding for the whole Russian disposition programme.

The Joint Steering Committee worked out the PMDA agreement, which was signed on 29 August 2000. In accordance with the Agreement each of the sides pledged to dispose 34 tonnes of its excess weapon grade plutonium by converting it into MOX fuel and subsequent irradiating in civil nuclear reactors⁹. The Agreement provided for synchronization of plutonium disposition by the sides

⁹ According to the Agreement, out of 34 tonnes of weapons-grade plutonium surplus the US pledged to convert only 27 tonnes to MOX fuel. The remaining 7 tonnes consisting of plutonium dioxide and plutonium in wastes were intended to be disposed through immobilization.

(start of the process, its pace, etc.). Article IX stated that the beginning of disposition by each side was conditioned on the availability of appropriate financing with the Russian programme requiring financial assistance by the USA. At the time of signing the Agreement the cost of the Russian programme was estimated at about \$1.8 bln¹⁰. The implementation of the Agreement was expected to start in the second half of 2009 and the disposition programmes to finalise in 2025. For MOX fuel irradiation Russia planned to use a BN-600 fast reactor and four VVER-1000 light water reactors at the Balakovo NPP, while the US – light water reactors.

However, from the very beginning the practical implementation of the Agreement ran into serious difficulties. They include different approaches of the parties to the issues of civil liability and financing of the utilization programme. With the signing in September 2006 of the Protocol ensuring equality of the parties in all aspects related to the implementation of the Agreement, the problem of civil liability was resolved, but the issue of financing the Russian programme turned out to be more complicated.

As a result of negotiations on sources and mechanisms of financing, the total multi-donor package pledged by the United States and other G8 countries amounted to about \$850 mln by the end of 2005. At the same time, the estimation of the total cost of the Russian disposition programme by that time had increased from \$1.8 to 4 bln. In April 2007 the US notified Russia that the amount of the donor's contribution of \$850 mln was final. Under those circumstances financing of the programme from the Russian budget was considered inexpedient, since the utilization of plutonium by using MOX fuel in light water reactors did not correspond to the country's long-term strategy for nuclear power development. The lack of external assistance led in fact to denunciation of the Agreement.

In view of the fact that repudiation to implement the Agreement could adversely affect both the US-Russian relations and Russia's relations with other countries, Rosatom initiated a review of a

¹⁰ Cost Estimates for the Disposition of Weapon-Grade Plutonium Withdrawn from Russian Nuclear Military Programmes, 2nd report of the joint US-Russia working group on cost analysis and economics in plutonium disposition, Mar. 2001.

plutonium disposition scenario in a way that would fit Russian nuclear energy development plans and would be acceptable for both parties. As a result of the consultations held in 2007, the US agreed with the Russian proposals on the implementation of the Russian programme for the disposal of excess plutonium. In November 2007 the US Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman and the head of the Russian Federal Atomic Energy Agency Sergey Kirienko signed a joint statement on a new plan for the disposition of 34 tonnes of excess plutonium.

According to this document, the utilization of Russian weapon-grade plutonium should be carried out by using it in the production of MOX fuel with subsequent irradiation in BN-600 fast neutron reactor at Beloyarskaya Nuclear Power Plant (NPP), and in BN-800 reactor which at the moment of signing the statement was under construction at the same NPP.

During the follow-up consultations, the United States and Russia agreed on changes to the 2000 PMDA Agreement. The amended Agreement reflecting a new interpretation of the relevant technical issues and other changes necessary for continuing cooperation was signed in 2010 and entered into force in July 2011.

The modified Agreement envisaged parallel implementation of national programmes. Each of the parties undertook to proceed with the disposal of 34 tonnes of excess weapons-grade plutonium (25 tonnes in metal form and 9 tonnes in the form of dioxide) in 2018 and complete the process in 15 years. Both sides expected to use the same method of utilization, namely by using all 34 tonnes of plutonium for MOX fuel production and its subsequent irradiation in power reactors (in light water reactors for the USA, and in fast neutron reactors for the Russian Federation).

Problems with the PMDA implementation

Russia successfully fulfilled its obligations on preparation for the implementation of the Agreement. The construction of a BN-800 fast neutron reactor with sodium coolant was completed in 2014 with its physical startup undertaken on 27 June 2014. In December 2015 BN-800 was connected to the power grid, and on 17 August 2016 the reactor started operating at full capacity. The total cost of its

construction amounted to 145,65 bln rubles¹¹. The plant for the industrial production of MOX fuel for the BN-800 reactor was put into operation at the Mining and Chemical Combine in Zheleznogorsk (Krasnoyarsk Region) at the end of 2014. The design capacity of the plant was 400 fuel assemblies per year, which fully corresponded to the needs of the BN-800 reactor. Its construction totalled 9.3 bln rubles¹². At the initial stage of operation, the core of the BN-800 reactor was loaded with fuel from highly enriched uranium and MOX fuel. The reactor is expected to start using the full load of MOX fuel in 2018¹³.

The circumstances of the implementation of the Agreement in the United States were different. The increased cost of construction of a MOX fuel production plant at Savannah River Nuclear Centre (South Carolina) from \$4.8 to \$7.7 bln and the delay in its commissioning from 2016 to 2019 initiated discussion on alternative methods of plutonium disposition¹⁴. The US Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz created an expert group to conduct an assessment of alternative, less costly methods for plutonium utilization. Simultaneously, the cost of the construction of the MOX fuel plant was significantly reduced.

The expert group presented its finding in April 2014¹⁵. After having considered about 30 alternatives the group focused on four following alternative options for plutonium disposition:

- irradiation of MOX fuel in one or two fast neutron sodium cooled reactors;

¹¹ Total construction cost of BN-800 power unit is estimated at 145.6 bln rubles, *Nuclear.ru*, 19 Jan. 2016, <<http://nuclear.ru/news/98147/>> [in Russian].

¹² Mining and Chemical Combine held ceremony of launching industrial production of MOX fuel, *Nuclear.ru*, 28 Sep. 2015, <<http://nuclear.ru/news/97157/>> [in Russian].

¹³ Beloyarsk NPP: BN-800 will be fully transferred to MOX-fuel by 2019, *Nuclear.ru*, 13 Mar. 2016, <<http://nuclear.ru/news/98563/>> [in Russian].

¹⁴ Horner, D., US revisits plutonium disposition plan, *Arms Control Today*, May 2013, <http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2013_05/US-Revisits-Plutonium-Disposition-Plan>.

¹⁵ US Department of Energy, Report of the Plutonium Disposition Working Group: Analysis of Surplus Weapon-Grade Plutonium Disposition Options, Apr. 2014, <<http://nnsa.energy.gov/aboutus/ourprograms/dnn/fmd/plutonium/pudispositionoptions>>.

- immobilization of plutonium with high-level long lived radioactive waste;
- mixing plutonium with inert materials and storing the mixed forms at the Department of Energy's Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico;
- immobilization and placement of the immobilization forms in boreholes three to five kilometers deep, which should complicate unauthorised access to the sensitive materials.

According to preliminary estimates, the third option promised significant cost savings, since it did not involve such costly technological operations as purification of plutonium and manufacture of MOX-fuel assemblies which were necessary for plutonium utilization by means of irradiating MOX fuel.

It should be noted that Article III of the Agreement allowed the parties to discuss other methods of excess military plutonium disposition. However, all but the first alternative options considered by the US contradicted the provision of the Agreement which determined irradiation in power reactors as the method of utilization. Besides the last two options did not correspond to the so-called 'spent fuel standard' recommended by the US National Academies of Science as the one to make the disposed weapons plutonium inaccessible for military purposes¹⁶.

As could be expected, the US departure from one of the principal provisions of the Agreement and choice in favor of mixing plutonium with inert materials as a disposition method was opposed by the Russian side¹⁷. Russian experts always argued that irreversible withdrawal of weapons-grade plutonium from the weapons programme required degradation of its isotopic composition which was what happened when plutonium was irradiated in reactors. The other approaches proposed by the US could not exclude a possibility of

¹⁶ Management and Disposition of Excess Weapons Plutonium (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1994).

¹⁷ Russia informed the US that it would refuse consent to change the method of plutonium disposition different from the one agreed in the Agreement. See: Russia is ready to resume agreement on plutonium if US changes its course, *AtomInfo.Ru*, 30 Apr. 2017, <<http://atominfo.ru/newsp/w0726.htm>> [in Russian].

deliberate or unauthorised extraction of weapons-grade plutonium from its storage place and reuse for weapons purposes. In an effort to alleviate concerns of the expert community that the steps taken by the US administration abrogated the US-Russian PMDA Agreement, Deputy Secretary of Energy Daniel Poneman said in an interview that the US did not refuse to dispose the excess weapons-grade plutonium, but would prefer to do it in the most efficient way both financially and technologically and that he had already informed his Russian counterparts about it¹⁸.

It is important to note that degradation of the isotope composition of weapons-grade plutonium is possible in the mixing option if the weapons-grade plutonium is blended with reactor-grade plutonium which has the concentration of Pu-239 at about 60% – much less than the concentration of the same isotope in weapons-grade plutonium. Therefore, there was a possibility that parties would discuss the blending option. However, due to political disagreements caused by the Ukrainian conflict, in October 2016 Russia suspended its participation in the PMDA Agreement by a presidential decree¹⁹. However the latter reaffirmed that plutonium covered by the Agreement would not be used for nuclear weapons purposes.

The Russian government further explained the reason for the suspension of the PMDA Agreement. According to the presidential spokesman Dmitry Peskov, Russia did not intend to unilaterally implement the provisions of the Agreement²⁰: ‘For quite a while Russia fulfilled it on its own, but now, as the president’s decree says, bearing in mind the tensions overall and so on the Russian side does not

¹⁸ Horner, D., Op. cit.

¹⁹ Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 511 of 03.10.2016, On the suspension of the implementation of the Agreement between the government of the USA and the government of the Russian Federation concerning the management and disposition of plutonium designated as no longer required for defence purposes and related cooperation and protocols to this Agreement, Official Internet portal of legal information, 3 Oct. 2016, <<http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001201610030004>> [in Russian].

²⁰ Peskov explained the suspension of the agreement with the US on disposition of plutonium, *Lenta.ru*, 3 Oct. 2016, <<https://lenta.ru/news/2016/10/03/pauzaplutoniya/>> [in Russian].

consider possible the continuation of this situation'²¹. The spokesman explained that the way the US implemented the Agreement did not comply with its provisions as Washington retained significant 'upload potential' of nuclear weapons.

The consequences of the PMDA suspension

The suspension, and de facto termination, of the implementation of the PMDA Agreement raised the issue of assessing its negative consequences for nuclear disarmament process and non-proliferation regime.

The Russia's Federal Target Programme (FTP) 'Nuclear power technologies of new generation for the period of 2010-2015 and with outlook to 2020'²² envisages the use of fast neutron reactors with mixed uranium-plutonium fuel as a key step towards a closed nuclear fuel cycle. The utilization of weapons-grade plutonium is built into this programme. The BN-800 reactor has already started using MOX fuel.

Since 2000 the United States has been implementing a programme for the disposal of plutonium waste by mixing it with inert materials²³. In 2000-2015 it disposed about 6 tonnes of weapons-grade plutonium waste from the total declared amount of plutonium excess. There are plans to dispose 6 tonnes more in the next decade. The utilization is taken place at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant located near Carlsbad (New Mexico).

As mentioned above, the main objective for excess weapons nuclear material disposition at the time of signing the Agreement was to eliminate the risks of possible theft and illicit trafficking as there

²¹ Russia cannot unilaterally fulfil plutonium disposition deal with US any longer, *Sputnik News*, 3 Oct. 2016, <<https://sputniknews.com/world/201610031045946595-deal-russia-us-kremlin/>>.

²² The FTP 'Nuclear power technologies of new generation for the period of 2010-2015 and with outlook to 2020' was adopted by the Decision No. 50 of the Government of the Russian Federation of 3 Feb. 2010, <<http://fcp.economy.gov.ru/cgi-bin/cis/fcp.cgi/Fcp/ViewFcp/View/2010/298/>> [in Russian].

²³ Disposition of plutonium in Waste Isolation Pilot Plant...

were concerns of insufficient physical protection of these materials in Russia. However, at present, the situation with the safety of the Russian weapons-grade nuclear materials has changed dramatically. Modern big capacity storages equipped with advanced physical protection systems have been constructed at the Mayak NPP near Ozyorsk (Chelyabinsk Region) and Mining and Chemical Combine. A modern state system of accounting and control of nuclear materials has been set up. Training of the maintenance staff has been brought in line with modern standards. All these measures have significantly diminished risks of theft and illegal trafficking of nuclear materials in Russia.

The need to make the process of nuclear disarmament irreversible was an additional motivation for excess nuclear materials disposition. It is worth noting however that as a result of reductions of the last two decades the number of nuclear weapons has been reduced manifold and therefore the declared excess quantities of weapon grade plutonium cannot contribute to the reversibility of this process. Each side's maximum possible number of nuclear warheads is limited by the loading capacity of its delivery systems. It does not make much sense to have warheads exceeding this capacity.

In accordance with the New Start Treaty the number of deployed carriers in possession of each side should not exceed 700 by 2018. Given the maximum loading capacity of its delivery means, the US does not need more than 4,000 nuclear warheads. According to expert's assessments, 20 tonnes of plutonium are sufficient to maintain such nuclear arsenal. Even after deduction of the declared 34 tonnes of excess plutonium, the US and Russian nuclear arsenals still have each more than 50 tonnes of plutonium – enough to produce about 12,500 warheads. It is obvious that disposition of declared quantities of excess plutonium is not a determining factor for irreversibility of nuclear arms reductions and strategic stability and rather has a symbolic character.

However, the absence of regime of inspections and control of the plutonium disposition process is a negative consequence of the suspension of the Agreement. In accordance with Article VII of the Agreement, the parties had to conclude agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to allow it to put control

measures in place with respect to the disposal programmes of each party.

The IAEA control over the weapons-grade plutonium disposition would provide convincing assurances to the international community that Russia and the US fulfil their obligations under the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which would undoubtedly contribute to strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime. At the same time, it would facilitate the development of the methodology and practice of implementing international control regime while involving other nuclear countries in the process of nuclear arms reductions and utilization of nuclear materials.

The need for the US-Russian nuclear cooperation

The above analysis of the implementation of the PMDA Agreement shows that the US rejection the previously agreed method of disposal through irradiation nevertheless allowed the parties to maintain the Agreement. As already noted, it provided for the possibility of discussing other recycling methods, and the United States was ready to negotiate on this issue with Russia. But political disagreements between Moscow and Washington suspended both the joint implementation of the Agreement and the overwhelming share of nuclear cooperation between the countries.

However, nuclear cooperation between Russia and the United States which collectively possess more than 90% of the world's nuclear weapons and weapons-grade nuclear materials and have accumulated unique experience in counteracting nuclear threats, is vitally important. Without cooperation between the two countries the nonproliferation regime and efforts to prevent non-nuclear states and terrorist organisations from acquiring nuclear weapons are unlikely to be effective.

Recently Russia and the United States have to fight Islamic terrorist organisations such as Islamic States (IS) and Al-Qaeda who have openly declared their intention to acquire nuclear and radiological

weapons. According to the reputable studies, to date there is no reliable evidence that IS is making concerted efforts to obtain nuclear weapons²⁴. However, given their apocalyptic rhetoric and the use of mass terror to achieve their goals, there is no doubt that IS would welcome such a powerful weapon as nuclear. It will be possible if IS gets ahold of materials essential to build nuclear weapons – HEU and weapons grade plutonium. Therefore, nuclear terrorism presents a real, serious and growing threat to national and international security²⁵.

The United States and Russia which together own 94% of the world's weapons-grade nuclear materials, bear a special responsibility in preventing nuclear terrorism. To assure the world community that they make every effort to prevent nuclear materials falling into terrorists' hands, they need to closely and effectively cooperate on nuclear security issues.

It is important to note that Russian and US governmental and legislative bodies, nuclear laboratories, defence agencies, and experts have accumulated vast and unique experience in reducing nuclear danger. It has been a result of a 20 year long joint work on the implementation of the CTRP, which would be impossible if nuclear communities in Russia and the US did not understand the seriousness of the nuclear threats that appeared in the early 1990s and the need for measures to eliminate them. Their joint work for two decades has generated mutual respect and trust which allowed them to address highly sensitive issues without compromising countries' national security.

²⁴ Bunn, M., Malin, M.B., Roth, N., Tobey, W.H., Preventing Nuclear Terrorism: Continuous Improvement or Dangerous Decline? Belfer Centre for Science and International Affairs, Mar. 2016, <http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/publication/26400/preventing_nuclear_terrorism.html>.

²⁵ Speech by the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov at the Nuclear security Summit, The Hague, 24 Mar. 2014, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, <http://www.mid.ru/en/web/guest/obsie-voprosy-mezdunarodnoj-bezopasnosti-i-kontrola-nad-vooruzheniami/-/asset_publisher/6sN03cZTYZOC/content/id/69130>; Nuclear Security Summit 2016 Communique, 1 Apr. 2016, <<http://static1.squarespace.com/static/568be36505f8e2af8023adf7/t/56fef01a2eeb810fd917abb9/1459548186895/Communique%C3%A9.pdf>>.

Leading Russian and US experts repeatedly and clearly expressed their support for continuing cooperation between the two countries on nuclear issues. In early June 2013 Moscow hosted US-Russian scientific conference on various projects within the framework of CTRP. The final document signed by former leaders of nuclear laboratories of the United States and Russia – Sig Hecker, Radi Ilkaev and Evgeni Aurorin – noted that Moscow and Washington should continue mutually beneficial cooperation. Among possible areas of cooperation the document listed:

- global nuclear non-proliferation and the elimination of global threats, including non-proliferation of nuclear technology;
- scientific and technical aspects of nuclear anti-terrorism;
- fundamental and applied scientific research in areas of mutual benefit;
- accounting, control, and protection of nuclear materials;
- transferring expertise acquired through cooperation to a new generation of academics and directors of Russian and US institutes and national labs;
- extending expertise and good practices to cooperation with third countries on global security and nuclear non-proliferation issues.

Four years after the conference, Russian and American experts are still convinced of the need to continue working together to prevent nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism, despite the differences in their perception of the Ukrainian conflict and its impact on US-Russian relations²⁶.

The final document of the 2013 conference also noted that in the future US-Russian nuclear cooperation should be based on a symmetrical and mutually beneficial approach and real partnership with regard to the changes happened in the world over the past 20 years. The conference participants stressed the new format of cooperation due to the fact that the collaboration between the two countries under the

²⁶ Hecker, S.S., Davis, P.E., Why the US should keep cooperating with Russia on nuclear security, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 29 May 2014, <<http://thebulletin.org/why-us-should-keep-cooperating-russia-nuclear-security7207>>.

CTRP, being broad and effective, was not based on the principles of real partnership²⁷.

The idea about the new format of cooperation was later endorsed by US Senators Sam Nunn and Richard Lugar (sponsors of the CTRP) who noted that the underlying principle of bilateral cooperation ‘should be reciprocity and mutual interest’, and that each country should invest its own financial and technical resources to the programme²⁸.

It should be noted that when Washington talks about cooperation with Moscow in the nuclear field, it usually means safety measures at the Russian nuclear complex. This is due to the concerns expressed by majority of American experts regarding physical security of Russian nuclear weapons and reliability of physical protection systems installed at the storage sites. Thus, for the US nuclear cooperation with Russia is equal to accounting and physical protection of nuclear materials. Moscow is more interested in scientific cooperation in the field of research and development of civil nuclear power, while safety issues no longer attract special interest of Russian experts. However, despite the differences, there is a serious potential for further development of such cooperation on the basis of mutual benefit and equality.

Prospective projects in the field of nuclear research and nuclear power

A recently published study conducted under the auspices of US-based Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) and Russian Centre for Energy and Security Studies proposed more than fifty possible joint Russian-American projects that use scientific and technological capabilities of

²⁷ The US almost single-handedly financed programme’s, although Russia spent considerable funds on their implementation. The financial assistance provided by the United States was linked to Russia’s agreement to grant the US the right to inspect Russian nuclear facilities where specific projects were carried out. This agreement allowed the US to visit Russian nuclear plants and thereby keep abreast of the Russian nuclear complex.

²⁸ Nunn, S. Lugar, R., The United States and Russia must repair their partnership on nuclear security, *Washington Post*, 23 Jan. 2015, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-united-states-and-russia-must-repair-their-partnership-on-nuclear-security/2015/01/23/555b9a60-a271-11e4-903f-9f2faf7cd9fe_story.html>.

the two countries in order to meet mutual interests²⁹. The projects listed below are only a small part of a much longer list of projects.

The Russian Federation has adopted a number of Federal Target Programmes to develop innovative nuclear power. The FTP ‘Nuclear power technologies of new generation for the period of 2010-2015 and with outlook to 2020’³⁰ provides for the development of reactors on fast neutrons with lead, sodium, and lead-bismuth coolants. The total amount of funds allocated for the implementation of this FTP was 128.3 bln rubles, including the federal budget funds of 110.4 bln rubles.

Under the umbrella of this FTP, Rosatom’s project ‘Proryv’ (‘Breakthrough’) was aimed at the development and construction of a BREST-300 lead coolant reactor with an on-site fuel cycle. According to its designers of the project, it would allow not only to close the nuclear fuel cycle, but also to solve the problem of radioactive waste management and support sustainable nuclear non-proliferation regime.

In early October 2015, the US Westinghouse Electric Co. was reported in collaboration with the US Department of Energy to develop fifth generation nuclear power systems based on a lead coolant fast-neutron reactor³¹. The research and development of a lead coolant fast neutron reactor requires addressing many scientific and technical problems. Given that technologies of reactors with lead coolant have not yet been developed, it seems that cooperation between US and Russian scientists can be useful and effective at least in a number of areas. The Idaho National Laboratory and Moscow-based High-tech Research Institute of Inorganic Materials (VNIINM) which conduct research in the chemistry of actinides and metallurgy are also developing advanced fuel cycles and nuclear fuels. The two laboratories, each with its own unique experience and approach, could

²⁹ Pathway to Cooperation: A Menu of Potential the US–Russian Cooperative Projects in the Nuclear Sphere, NTI and Centre for Energy and Security Studies, Feb. 2017, <http://www.nti.org/media/documents/Pathways_to_Cooperation_FINAL.pdf>.

³⁰ See note 22.

³¹ Litvak, A., Westinghouse, again, looks for the next-generation of nuclear reactors, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 1 Dec. 2015, <<http://powersource.post-gazette.com/power-source/companies/2015/12/01/Westinghouse-again-looks-for-the-next-generation-of-nuclear-reactors/stories/201512010005>>.

conduct joint experimental research aimed at identifying nuclear fuel compositions with a high and varying content of actinides. Improving characteristics of fuel material (strength, thermal conductivity, integrity of the alloy) with high content of actinides, as well as researching methods of processing and fractionating fuel materials could also be an area of common interest.

Cooperation between the Russian Research Institute of Atomic Reactors (NIIAR) in Dimitrovgrad and the Idaho National Laboratory and Oak Ridge National Laboratory could be another joint project. In previous years US and Russians scientists already used NIIAR's Bor-60 reactor with a fairly wide spectrum of neutrons for irradiation of various American samples for the purpose of conducting comparative studies. In 2015, NIIAR began constructing MBIR – multipurpose sodium-cooled fast neutron research reactor which should be completed in 2020. The reactor with a thermal power of 150 MW can be used in the following research areas:

- radiation tests of advanced fuels, absorbing and constructional materials for nuclear reactors of various types, including innovative nuclear and thermonuclear installations, under conditions of intense neutron radiation with a flux density up to $\sim 5 \times 10^{15} \text{ cm}^{-2} \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$;
- reactor's tests of fuel rods, fuel assemblies, pellets, and other elements of the core with perspective types of coolant, as well as fuel behaviour in non-stationary and emergency operation modes;
- resource testing of new designs of elements of the core, equipment of the reactor control, monitoring and diagnostic tools;
- carrying out complex calculation and experimental studies in order to obtain the necessary information for the development and verification of computers simulation codes;
- research of the closed nuclear fuel cycle problems and the utilization of minor actinides;
- fundamental scientific research.

The unique technical characteristics of MBIR will allow continuous irradiation of samples by neutrons in a wide range of energies – capabilities that the United States does possess. Russia intends to organise an international research centre around the reactor

and a number of countries (France, Japan, South Korea) have already expressed interest to join the project³².

The Oak Ridge National Laboratory has the Neutron Spallation Facility for neutron studies. The facility is designed to irradiate samples with powerful neutron pulses with a duration of several microseconds. The joint use of both MBIR and Neutron Spallation Facility could provide an opportunity to improve the understanding of radiation damage in reactor materials and help developing more efficient and sustainable materials for innovative nuclear power.

Prospective projects in the field of nuclear safety

In the field of nuclear safety, the US national laboratories and Rosatom enterprises could continue their work to improve technical means of prevention and detection of nuclear materials theft.

The current technical means of customs control over the legal supply of nuclear and radioactive materials used in most countries do not provide objective and complete information on the quantity and type of materials placed and crossing the border in transport containers. The lack of objective controls creates opportunities for illegal transportation of nuclear and radioactive materials in closed containers under the cover of legal activity.

In order to close this gap Russian experts have developed technology and equipment that allow custom officials not only to detect the presence of nuclear and radioactive materials in a transport container, but also to determine the type of the material and its quantity. The technology is based on the registration of the γ -spectrum and the properties of transport containers. During a customs check the γ -spectrum is registered near the surface of the container ensuring radiation safety. Then, one can use the properties of a particular container obtained earlier and available in the database, to determine the type and weight of the material placed inside (for radioactive materials – activity, for uranium – the percentage U235). This technique makes it possible to reliably control legal supplies. A joint US-Russian project could test the methodology proposed by Russian

³² MBIR и IRC, *AtomInfo.Ru*, 9 Sep. 2016, <<http://atominfo.ru/newsn/u0538.htm>> [in Russian].

scientists, improve it, and develop necessary equipment. The introduction of this methodology at the borders of third countries would allow to obtain objective and complete information on the quantity and type of materials crossing the border during legal transportation.

Another project could be cooperation of the US and Russian nuclear centres to develop and test methods of nuclear archeology. The progress towards total elimination of nuclear weapons at a certain stage will require sufficiently reliable knowledge of the quantity of weapons-useable nuclear materials produced by the nuclear weapons states. It is well known that accounting for the amount of these materials produced, their use and remaining stocks, even if these data are recorded by the owner of the material using all available historical data, lack certainty. Consequently, it will be necessary to verify data on past production of nuclear materials, which in turn requires development and testing of methodology and equipment to be used for sampling at factories producing fissile materials and performing quantitative measurements in order to determine the amount of materials produced in the past, and for comparing the results with the declared data. Such methods and tools are called 'nuclear archeology'.

An example of nuclear archeology is estimation of the amount of plutonium produced in the graphite production reactors by measuring the isotopes ratios in the metallic samples from core structural components and graphite. The method called a 'graphite isotope-ratio method' is based on measuring isotopic signatures due to neutron irradiation of impurities in reactor graphite which allows to estimate neutron fluence in the graphite masonry of the reactor and cumulative plutonium production³³. The accuracy of the method was demonstrated by the Pacific National Nuclear Laboratory which in 1995-1996 conducted measurements for a graphite-moderated gas-cooled reactor in the UK. The proposed methodology used in a blind experiment predicted production of 3,63 tonnes while actual production declared by the operator was 3,633 tonnes.

³³ McNeece, J.P., Reid, B.D., Wood, T.W., The Graphite Isotope Ratio Method (GIRM): A Plutonium Production Verification Tool, International Atomic Energy Agency, Jan. 1999, <http://www.iaea.org/inis/collection/NCLCollectionStore/_Public/41/016/41016984.pdf>.

The relevance of the joint US-Russian project on nuclear archeology also depends on the fact that currently Russia is implementing a programme of decommissioning production reactors. The traditional method of decommissioning, so called 'on-site disposal', involves pumping clay mortars and concrete into the reactor core which prevents from taking samples from core structural components and graphite. The EI-2 reactor has already been decommissioned using this method.

A joint project could be aimed at determining an optimal way of gathering the most representative samples from various elements of the reactor core, as well as determining the necessary information on the reactor operating records (the amount and type of fuel, cooling water throughput including inlet and outlet operating temperatures, burn-up of the discharged fuel, etc.) which could provide data on the amount of produced plutonium with a minimal error.

* * *

History shows that when Russia and the United States work together, there is a possibility of solving fairly complex problems. Recent examples include 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action settling the Iranian nuclear problem and the destruction of chemical weapons in Syria. Closing off the bilateral dialogue on nuclear issues negatively affects international security. Washington and Moscow must restore their cooperation in order to ensure that no state or extremist group will be able to acquire nuclear, radiological or other types of weapons of mass destruction. Collaborative efforts in this area should not be held hostage to certain political disputes and disagreements.

Reviving cooperation between the United States and Russia on nuclear safety and security will only be possible if it meets the interests of both countries and does not require any of them to make concessions on principal issues. The resumption of joint work on specific projects, where the interests of the two countries coincide, could probably be the most practical and efficient first step to restore the bilateral cooperation.

8. CHINA'S POLICY AND THE INTERNATIONAL LAW OF THE SEA

Pavel GUDEV

In the summer of 2016 the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), an international arbitral tribunal located in The Hague, issued an award in a dispute initiated by the Republic of the Philippines against the People's Republic of China. The Manila's lawsuit was challenging the Chinese's claims to extend its sovereignty and jurisdiction over a number of groups of island features and water areas of the South China Sea (SCS), based on the application of historic titles to them within the so-called 'nine-dash line'.

From the outset, Beijing did not recognise the jurisdiction of the international arbitral tribunal in this case. China has been insisting that any issues not related to the interpretation and application of the norms and provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982 but relevant to the issues of state sovereignty are beyond the competence of the International Court or arbitral tribunal. China has been trying for many years to follow this approach aimed at resolving all controversial issues in the SCS region on a bilateral basis without recourse to international judicial instances.

Nevertheless, within the framework of the 1982 Convention, the absence of the other party to the dispute and its failure to submit its arguments are not an obstacle to arbitration proceedings. As a result, the PCA did not consider the arguments of the PRC as plausible and issued an award recognizing the claims of the Celestial Empire in the

region of the SCS as completely illegitimate. That was the ultimate victory of the Philippines, a practical example of how a much less powerful state sues and wins against a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

However, the award did not change the policy of China which continued to consider the water of the SCS as an area of its priority rights to project power and to control of marine activities of other states. The problem of ensuring a regional security in the area of the SCS for Beijing is still much more important than compliance with international, particularly maritime, law.

In this respect, China seems to be moving along the path that two Cold War superpowers – the USSR and US – once travelled. It means that as the PRC is undergoing the transformation from a regional power into a country with interests at the highest global level, it is showing more interest in universal rules of behaviour which apply to the oceans as well. It seems premature to say that China has already completed this journey as evidenced by a number of facts below.

China and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea

China is a full party to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982 (UNCLOS). Beijing ratified it on 7 July 1996. In addition, the PRC acceded to two additional agreements to the Convention: the 1994 Agreement relating to the implementation of Part XI of the Convention, and the 1995 Agreement for the implementation of the Provisions of the Convention that relate to the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks (PRC signed but not ratified it).

Nevertheless, China not only pursues the approach of wider interpretation of certain norms of the 1982 Convention but also directly violates a number of its key provisions. National legislation of many countries also contains norms directly contradicting the provisions of the Convention, but only Beijing allows itself to flout in practice the requirements of the 1982 Convention on this scale in the adjacent waters.

Among such violations are:

- restriction of the right of innocent passage for foreign military ships through the 12 nautical miles territorial sea;
- attempts to expand its security responsibilities within the 24-mile contiguous zone;
- non-recognition of freedom of navigation for foreign warships within the 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ);
- non-recognition of airspace over the EEZ as international one in order to limit the flights of the US reconnaissance aircraft (the introduction of the Air Defence Identification Zone in the East China Sea is an example¹);
- introduction of a strictly regulated system for carrying out marine scientific research within the Chinese EEZ, which goes beyond the scope of conventional regulations.

China's skepticism towards the norms of international maritime law is largely attributed to the number of reasons, often of a purely historical nature. For example, China initially (during the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea of 1973-1982) stressed the need to restrict the right of innocent passage through the territorial sea of foreign warships. But this approach did not meet the interests of the largest naval powers of the time – the USSR, US, as well as Britain and France. At the same time, the system of decision-making at the Conference based on a 'package deal' approach and consensus method made it possible to ignore the voices of minor actors.

Considering that Beijing as early as in the 1970s advocated that the innocent passage of military ships of third countries through the waters of its territorial sea should require at least a prior notice and, as a maximum, an authorization, it was not surprising that PRC reaffirmed that position during the ratification of the Convention in 1996. China made a corresponding statement, despite the fact that as early as 1989 the two greatest naval powers of the Cold War, the USSR and US after

¹ The formation of ADIZ is legitimate, but the identification procedure cannot be undergone by all aircraft, as Beijing wants, but only by those going to cross the national airspace border (it coincides with the outer boundary of the 12 nautical mile territorial sea).

a well-known incident off the coast of Crimea² issued a 'Uniform Interpretation of Rules of International Law Governing Innocent Passage' (Jackson Hole Agreement).

The USSR which had previously held a fundamentally different position agreed that 'all ships, including warships, regardless of cargo, armament, or means of propulsion enjoy the right of innocent passage through the territorial sea in accordance with international law, for which neither prior notification nor authorization is required'. The statement noted that during an innocent passage the ships had to comply with all the laws and regulations of the coastal state adopted in conformity with Articles 21, 22, 23 and 25 of the 1982 Convention, provided that such laws and regulations did not lead to deprivation or violation of the right of innocent passage.

Both sides also confirmed that 'a ship passing through the territorial sea that does not engage in any of ... activities [the exhaustive list of which is contained in Article 19(2)] is in innocent passage'³. This important statement confirmed that the list of activities in Article 19(2) of the Convention of 1982 was exhaustive. So that ships passing through the territorial sea and not undertaking any of the listed activities do not violate the right of innocent passage.

Both the USSR and the United States supported the need to bring the national legislation of all states to that understanding of the right of innocent passage enshrined in the 1982 Convention. However, Beijing ignored these suggestions, and the level of misunderstanding between the US and China in this area remains a potential source of conflict up until today.

The concept of internal historic waters

China tried to extend the status of internal historic waters to most of the South China Sea water area. Beijing proceeded on the

² The operation to dislodge the US Navy from Soviet territorial waters in the Black Sea on 12 February 1988 ('Black Sea Bumping Incident').

³ 1989 USA-USSR Joint Statement on the Uniform Interpretation of Rules of International Law Governing Innocent Passage.

assumption that since other states did not challenge the so-called 'nine-dash line', the waters within this line could be regarded as 'historic' ones.

The status of 'historic waters' makes it possible to extend to them a conventional regime either of inland waters or of the territorial sea, depending on the previous practice of usage of these areas by the coastal state. Considering that Beijing has been limiting different kinds of marine activity of other states within this 'nine dash line', we can assume that it has been regarding this sea area as internal historic waters.

This means that full sovereignty of the PRC should be extended over not only all the islands within this line, but also over the entire water area (which is 2.8 mln km² or about 80% of the entire area of the SCS), the living and non-living resources of the surface water, bottom, and subsoil. This is one of the most ambitious claims on the management of the spaces and resources of the World Ocean along with claims to the shelf and the water area around the coast of Antarctica.

The status of 'historic waters' requires an extensive evidence base from the PRC. It means that the coastal state has been consistently and clearly, for a long time demonstrating that it exercises its sovereignty over the maritime areas adjacent to its coast, and which it considers vital for its security and economic development. The lack of such practice or the controversial nature of its implementation are good reasons to disagree with such a claim.

China, indeed, pointed out that it had been traditionally stressing the special economic and defence significance of the SCS waters. However, this position was weak because for other states the SCS which is semi-enclosed in accordance with the Article 123 of the 1982 Convention is also of paramount importance. Moreover, other states also have their history of development and exploitation the spaces and resources of the SCS.

Realizing that this situation required enhancing of the evidence base, Chinese experts referred to historic titles. In particular, they stated that most islands of the SCS were discovered during the Han dynasty in the 2nd century BC; in the 3rd century AD, Chinese mission in

Cambodia mentioned the Paracel and the Spratly Islands; between the 10th and 14th centuries the South China Sea was traditionally regarded as the zone of Chinese national interests; between the 15th and 19th centuries these islands were recorded on the numerous Chinese maps; finally, Chinese fishermen had been traditionally fishing in these areas.

However, references to historic titles, even corroborated by maps and documents, could not establish a universal evidence base for Beijing. This was because the central government had been rather weak for many centuries, especially in the 19th and 20th centuries, and was not able to effectively control the water area of the South China Sea and the islands located there. That is why the reference to their historic status seemed quite speculative.

Moreover, while the 1982 Convention confirmed the existence of institution of historic waters, it did not supplement it by any developed legal norms or criteria on how to extend the status of historic waters on water areas. This move was believed to be deliberate: the participants of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea not only considered the difficulties of clear codification of the relevant customary norms of international maritime law relating to historic waters in case of difference of interests but also were motivated by the desire not to provoke a further increase in the number of claims. As a result, the 1982 Convention did not specify what factors created historic legal basis and according to what criteria the gulfs more than 24 miles wide could be defined as historic.

After the signing of the 1982 Convention, states started to expand the range of exceptions in order to classify bays as historic waters. While before in case of disagreement regarding the maximum width of the territorial sea, only the bays not more than 24 miles wide were recognised as historic, since 1982 almost all the claims have been related to bays with an entrance quite significantly exceeding 24 miles. Besides, historic rights began to be claimed not only with respect to bays, coves, bolsters, and estuaries but also to small seas of the gulf type. This expansion of the object of historic law was because some

seas of the gulf type are smaller than a number of bays declared historic⁴.

Since the international maritime law relating to historic waters has more customary norms than conventional ones, it is commonly believed that the status of historic waters can be applied to the seas of the gulf type and to the gulfs surrounded by one state, if:

- a coastal state has been exercising sovereignty over these waters for a long time;
- these waters are of particular economic, defensive and strategic importance for the country;
- most states tacitly accept them as historic waters of the given state.

Accordingly, the coastal states retain the right to extend the regime of inland sea waters to historic seas and bays. This possibility is enshrined in the position of the UN International Law Commission on the issue of qualifying historic bays as historic inland waters or bays with the status of the territorial sea. At the same time, in this document, the question of ‘whether the waters of the bay are internal waters or territorial sea would depend on what kind of sovereignty was exercised by the coastal states in the formative period of the historic title to the bay’⁵.

For example, the USSR traditionally treated the following bays as historic: the White Sea (entrance width – 84 nautical miles); Czech Bay (43 nautical miles); Baydaratskaya Bay (31 nautical miles); Penzhinskaya Bay (39 nautical miles), and Peter the Great Gulf (110 nautical miles). The White Sea, East Siberian Sea, Kara Sea, Laptev Sea, Okhotsk Sea and Chukchi Sea, as well as Riga and Kola gulfs, the Vilkitsky and Sannikov straits, were also included in the list of historic seas of the USSR. However, official claims on the status of internal historic waters were made only with respect to the White Sea

⁴ For example, the Hudson Bay area, declared the historic bay of Canada, is 580,000 km², and the area of the White Sea constituting the historic waters of the USSR is only 36,000 km².

⁵ §166 A/CN.4/SER.A/1962/Add.1, *Yearbook of the International Law Commission*, 1962 – Vol. II (New York: UN, 1964), p. 23.

and Peter the Great Gulf. In all other cases, they were included in the internal waters of the USSR by drawing straight baselines.

The fundamental difference between the approaches of the USSR and PRC is that the waters of the Arctic seas declared internal historic waters washed the shores of a single state, the Soviet Union, while the waters of the South China Sea on which Beijing tried to extend this status wash the coast of a number of countries (Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Brunei, etc.).

Although in international practice there are examples when the waters of more than one coastal state were regarded as historic waters⁶ or as historic bays⁷, in the case of the SCS it is absolutely impossible. Not only because all the regional states disagree with such claims of Beijing, but also due to the particular importance of this water area for economy and defence of all regional states, and not only of the PRC.

The problem of classification of island formations

The 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea contains a classification of the so-called 'island formations' (or 'island territories').

The first group consists of the islands identified with the land territory of the state and thus form around the same maritime zones – the 12 nautical mile territorial sea, the 200 nautical mile EEZ and the corresponding continental shelf. Article 121(1) of the 1982 Convention states 'an island is a naturally formed area of land, surrounded by water, which is above water at high tide'.

The second group of island formations includes rocks, which are endowed with an incomplete, limited set of rights. Article 121(3) says on this subject: 'rocks which cannot sustain human habitation or

⁶ For example, the Sea of Azov is the internal historic waters of the two states – Russia and Ukraine.

⁷ Gulf of Fonseca which waters wash the shores of Nicaragua, Honduras, and El Salvador; Gulf of Thailand in the eastern part of the Gulf of Siam between Cambodia and Vietnam; Gulf of Aqaba washing the shores of Israel, Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, etc.

economic life of their own shall have no exclusive economic zone or continental shelf', that is, only a 12 nautical mile territorial sea of the coastal state can be formed around them.

The third group includes islands that are not endowed with any rights to form maritime zones of sovereignty and jurisdiction around them. This include low-tide elevations, reefs and atolls.

The third group may conditionally include artificial islands. At the same time, 'artificial islands, installations and structures do not possess the status of islands. They have no territorial sea of their own, and their presence does not affect the delimitation of the territorial sea, the exclusive economic zone or the continental shelf' (Article 60(8)). Only safety zones can be established around them. Article 60(4-5) says in this respect: 'The coastal State may, where necessary, establish reasonable safety zones around such artificial islands, installations and structures in which it may take appropriate measures to ensure the safety both of navigation and of the artificial islands, installations and structures... Such zones shall be designed to ensure that they are reasonably related to the nature and function of the artificial islands, installations or structures, and shall not exceed a distance of 500 metres around them, measured from each point of their outer edge, except as authorised by generally accepted international standards or as recommended by the competent international organisation'.

Therefore, practically all the states of the SCS region have tried to prove by 'effective occupation' of certain rocks, reefs, banks and shoals their suitability for life and economic activities with the purpose of their legal qualification as fully-fledged islands. In recent years, the PRC has stepped up its policy of building artificial islands by pouring in soil mainly around low-tide elevations.

However, one of the problems is that the 1982 Convention does not contain an exhaustive classification of all possible island territories, which would allow resolving the contradictions over what can be considered a full-fledged island. It does not specify the rights of states with respect to atolls, shoals, spurs, underwater banks and submarine elevations, reefs (including drying and fringing reefs), nor does it make a clear distinction between the concepts of island chain – island –

islets – isles – islands and islets similar to the islands⁸.

Certain contradictions are brought about by the practice of judicial decisions which limited certain islands in rights with regard to waters (so-called diminishing effect), or on the contrary – equated rocks to islands, and allowed to form territorial sea around the low tide elevations.

For example, by the decision of the International Court of Justice regarding the delimitation between Romania and Ukraine in the Black Sea⁹, Serpents' Island was recognised as an island not a rock as the Romanian side claimed it to be. However, neither the EEZ nor continental shelf of Ukraine was extended to it, but only a 12-nautical mile territorial sea.

This decision did not go unnoticed in Beijing: the PRC notified the UN that not only a territorial sea, but also a 200-mile EEZ and the corresponding continental shelf can be formed around all the Spratly Islands which can be considered a kind of reproach for the decision regarding the Serpents' Island.

In this connection, the 2016 decision of the Hague PCA on the case brought by the Philippines against the PRC was essential.

First, it formalised that the status of the 'features' of the SCS could be determined solely based on their natural condition, i.e. excluding any modifications or excavations. The PRC practice of building islands was recognised as not changing their legal status. Moreover, it was indicated that this activity harmed the marine environment and its biodiversity.

Secondly, it was confirmed that the provision the 1982 Convention on sustaining a human habitation and economic life implied the complete independence of the 'islands' from outside resources. Accordingly, any attempt to supply (e.g. with fresh water) such 'features' from the mainland, the construction of infrastructures there for the purpose of legal classification as islands was declared illegitimate.

⁸ Tikhomin, K.V., Role of island territories on delimitation of maritime spaces, *Moscow Journal of International Law*, No. 3, 2008, pp. 151-171 [in Russian].

⁹ Maritime Delimitation in the Black Sea (Romania v. Ukraine), No. 2009/9, 3 Feb, 2009, <<http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/132/14985.pdf>>.

Finally, the PCA determined that none of the Spratly Islands, either individually or collectively, was capable of generating extended maritime zones, i.e. they were not islands. All the high-tide features of the Spratly Islands (including such larger ones as Itu Aba, Thitu, West York Island, Spratly Island, North-East Cay, South-West Cay) were classified as ‘rocks’ only capable of generating a territorial sea.

Scarborough Shoal, Gaven Reef, McKennan Reef, Johnson Reef, Cuarteron Reef, Fiery Cross Reef were qualified as features above water at high tide (high-tide features), which could generate a 12 nautical mile territorial sea.

Such ‘features’ as Mischief Reef, Second Thomas Shoal, Subi Reef, Hughes Reef were naturally submerged at high tide thus being low tide elevations generating no marine zones¹⁰.

The PCA decision led to strengthening of the US legal position, since the PRC could not state anymore that the US conducted illegal activity in the maritime areas adjacent to those ‘features’ considering that they were subject to its sovereignty (within the territorial sea) or jurisdiction (as in the case of the EEZ). In particular, in October 2015 the USS Lassen passed within 12 nautical miles off Subi Reef which had been occupied and transformed into an artificial island by the PRC. By the decision of the PCA, Subi Reef was a low tide elevation, which meant that all protests of the PRC against the passage of American ships next to it were unfounded.

International political consequences of the decision of The Hague Court of Arbitration

Article 298 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982 allows any state to declare its non-acceptance of one or more of the dispute settlement mechanisms prescribed by the Convention (International Court of Justice, International Tribunal for

¹⁰ The South China Sea Arbitration (The Republic of the Philippines v. The People’s Republic of China), Permanent Court of Arbitration, 12 July 2016, <<https://pcacases.com/web/sendAttach/1801>>.

the Law of the Sea, an arbitral tribunal, a special arbitral tribunal) regarding such issues as:

- disputes related to the delimitation of maritime boundaries;
- disputes related to historic titles;
- disputes concerning military activities;
- disputes concerning law-enforcement activities in regard to the exercise of sovereign rights or jurisdiction;
- disputes in respect of which the UN Security Council exercises the functions assigned to it in the present Charter.

The PRC, when ratifying the 1982 Convention, issued a declaration stating, ‘the Government of the People’s Republic of China does not accept any of the procedures ... with respect to all types of disputes referred to ... in ... Article 298 of the Convention’.

In response to a lawsuit filed by the Philippines against the People’s Republic of China at the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague on the status of the SCS islands, Beijing stressed that it did not recognise the jurisdiction of the arbitral tribunal and called for respect for the provisions of Article 298 of the Convention. China also stated that the most effective way of settling all sea disputes with neighboring countries was bilateral negotiations, while the Philippines’ activity only discredited and depreciated the essence of Article 298¹¹.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China in the official statement on the award of PCA said that this dispute directly concerned issues of sovereignty and maritime delimitation, and accordingly, it could not be considered by the arbitral tribunal under Article 298 of the Convention¹².

However, the tribunal concluded that Article 298 did not pose an obstacle to the consideration of this dispute. It provided the following arguments.

¹¹ Position Paper of the Government of the People’s Republic of China on the Matter of Jurisdiction in the South China Sea Arbitration Initiated by the Republic of the Philippines, 12 July 2014, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1217147.shtml>.

¹² Full text of statement of China’s Foreign Ministry on award of South China Sea Arbitration Initiated by the Republic of the Philippines, *Xinhua*, 12 July 2016, <http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-07/12/c_135507744.htm>.

First, the question of the possibility of establishing marine zones (the territorial sea, the exclusive economic zone, the continental shelf) prescribed by the Convention around certain 'island features' of the SCS could not be equated with the problems of maritime delimitation.

Secondly, the historic titles, listed in Article 298, could only be applied to bays and other sea areas located close to the shore, but not to the larger area of the SCS.

Thirdly, the reference to the provisions of Article 298 on 'disputes concerning law-enforcement activities in regard to the exercise of sovereign rights or jurisdiction' could not be applied as the Philippines' claim did not concern activities within the EEZ of the PRC.

Fourthly, since the leadership of the PRC had been repeatedly insisting on the non-military nature of any activity on the SCS islands, China could not use the provision of Article 298 on 'military activities' either.

About 20 states made statements under Article 298 of the Convention, among them: Australia, Belarus, Great Britain, Spain, Italy, Canada, Mexico, Portugal, Thailand, Ukraine, France, South Korea, and the Russian Federation.

The United States, although not a party to the Convention, also formulated its position in case it was ratified. Washington declared that it did not accept any of the procedures provided for in the Convention with respect to all categories of disputes referred to in Article 298. Also, the United States stressed that it was free to determine whether a particular activity could be classified as 'military activity' or 'military action'. At the same time, it stipulated that all types of reconnaissance missions at sea belonged to military activity which meant that conventional dispute settlement mechanisms could not be applied to them.

The decision of the international arbitration, disregarding Beijing's appeals to the provisions of Article 298, raised the question of the effectiveness of this Article and of its selective application given the US position on this issue. On the one hand, the logic of international arbitrators showed the gaps in the Beijing's argumentation

which were used by the PCA. On the other hand, apparently, the references to Article 298 were disregarded solely in order to justify the legality of considering the Philippine claim, as many APR states including the USA were interested in its successful outcome.

For the Russian Federation as a coastal state, the provisions of Article 298 of the 1982 Convention are an important argument for the protection of their national interests. Firstly because of its unresolved problems of delimitation of maritime spaces (in relations with Ukraine – the Black and Azov Seas), and its claims for historic waters in a number of water areas (Peter the Great Bay, a number of Arctic seas and straits, the Sea of Azov). The dilution of the provisions of this Article, its selective application set a dangerous precedent. It is in this spirit one should interpret Russia's support of China's position on the decision of the arbitral tribunal which has skillfully bypassed Beijing's appeals to the provisions of Article 298.

* * *

Obviously, most of China's violations (detailed list of them see at the beginning of this chapter) and expansive interpretation of the norms and provisions of international maritime law are aimed at ensuring its national security interests in the adjacent sea areas by means of reducing the US ability to conduct military naval operations and reconnaissance along the Chinese coastline.

The gradual transformation of China from a regional power into a state with ambitions throughout the world's oceans may lead to a change in Beijing's perception of certain norms and provisions of the 1982 Convention. In any case, the consistent build-up of the Chinese 'Blue Water Navy' capable of operating in different regions of the World Ocean will require from Beijing a more responsible treatment of the 1982 Convention.

This is because Article 60 'Termination or suspension of the operation of a treaty as a consequence of its breach' of the 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties enables a state not to comply with the norms of a treaty (in this case the UN Convention on the Law of the

Sea of 1982) in respect of the party that systematically violates or flouts these norms. Thus, China's tough policy on limiting the rights of other states in the adjacent sea areas may result in retaliation by these states and non-recognition of Beijing's rights within their territorial seas and the EEZ.

The growing interest of China in the use of the World Ocean space and resources is likely to be accompanied by awareness of the need to protect and preserve the universal character of the 1982 Convention and to prevent the erosion of its integrity by broad interpretation or direct violations. Accordingly, Beijing's interest in implementing the right of innocent passage of its navy ships through the territorial seas of other coastal states, as well as the unrestricted right of transit passage through international straits, and the freedom of navigation and overflights within the EEZ will require China to review its policy in the adjacent sea areas. In case of conclusion of the additional agreements to the 1982 Convention aimed at eliminating the so-called 'legal lacunae' concerning the status of historic waters and the classification of 'island territories', China may revise its policy on these issues.

Otherwise, the erosion of the treaty regime throughout the World Ocean does not meet the interests of Russia and other major naval powers. The danger is that Beijing's policy of consistent promotion of its claims at different levels will gain support: for example, Thailand that ratified the Convention in 2011 also insists on its right to limit naval activities of other countries within the EEZ. As a result, there is a possibility that growing number of states would deny certain norms of the Convention. That is why violations of the norms and provisions of international law of sea by Beijing should be restricted at the political and diplomatic levels including through the efforts of the entire international community.

9. BIOSECURITY IN THE MODERN WORLD

Sergey ZAVRIEV

Although biological terrorism can be considered a close and quite likely threat, it does not currently pose the danger of magnitude comparable to the use of nuclear weapons. The probability of using bacteriological and other biological weapons in the world is increasing with the growth of instability and spread of various biotechnologies throughout the world, including synthetic biology. Especially alarming is the possibility of using biological weapons by the states that directly or indirectly support terrorism.

The development of measures to prevent terrorism is a means to ensure the state security. Today, terror is not only violent actions aimed at suppressing opponents with threats and intimidation, or terrorist acts using explosives, murders of leading figures or civilians. Terrorism poses not only a very serious threat to the health and life of people but can also create environmental problems, and target agricultural crops, food, and animal feedstock.

Those activities refer to the concept of bioterrorism. Bioterrorism today is a broad concept related to the use of biological agents or toxins for the destruction of human, food (including agricultural), biological, and ecological resources. It can have far-reaching consequences. Terrorist acts of such kind can destabilise a population of a whole country or a large region due not only to disease or death of a large number of people, but also to a strong psychological

effect caused by the destruction of agricultural facilities and food stocks.

The problems and the main challenges of providing biosecurity in Russia and in the world have been reviewed and discussed before¹. They are debated constantly both at international meetings and in detailed Internet articles². It should be noted that all these obvious problems have never been discussed at the national or international level in terms of either new institutional arrangements for preventing biothreats, or new international initiatives, or within the legislative framework of the Russian Federation. The only notable thing is the Russian government's announcement that the country's first monitoring centre which will collect information on biological threats is scheduled to open in the summer of 2018³. According to preliminary estimates the project cost would amount to 2.2 bln rubles. In the United States, the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention⁴ and relevant agencies under the Ministry of Defence have long been involved in these issues.

Importantly, the head of Rospotrebnadzor (Russian Federal Service for Surveillance on Consumer Rights Protection and Human

¹ Arbatov, A., Zavriev, S., Kolesnikov, A., Pikayev, A., *Countering Bioterrorism: Political, technical and legal issues*, ed. by A. Arbatov (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2008) [in Russian]; Zavriev, S., Kolesnikov, A., Problems of bio-security and of counteracting terror, *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya*, No. 12, 2009, pp. 90-100 [in Russian]; Netesov, S.V., Zavriev, S.K., New international initiatives in biosecurity, *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya*, No. 3, 2013, pp. 39-44 [in Russian]; Zavriev, S., Kolesnikov, A., Risks and threats in biosecurity: problem analysis and search for optimal solutions in contemporary conditions, *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya*, No. 9, 2015, pp. 57-68 [in Russian].

² See, e.g.: Zhiganova, L.P., Bioterrorism and agroterrorism – real threat to the security of society, *Slovo*, <http://www.portal-slovo.ru/impressionism/36426.php?ELEMENT_ID=36426&SHOWALL_1=1> [in Russian]; Tikhonov, M., Bogoslovsky, M., Biological terrorism – a threat to the national security of the country, *Atomnyy god*, 5 Feb. 2016, <<http://www.proatom.ru/modules.php?name=News&file=print&sid=6546>> [in Russian].

³ For details on the establishment of the first monitoring centre for collecting information on biological threats in Russia see: Russia will create a centre for the study of biological weapons, *RT*, 13 Mar. 2015, <<http://russian.rt.com/article/79257>> [in Russian].

⁴ Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, <<https://www.cdc.gov/>>.

Wellbeing) Anna Popova considers bioterrorism an acute challenge and a real danger in today's world and believes that her agency must be always ready to counter this threat⁵. Recently the Secretary of the Russian Security Council Nikolai Patrushev said that extremists were trying to acquire weapons of mass destruction, in particular, biological weapons. Patrushev mentioned that the outbreak of Ebola fever could be the result of using high biotechnologies for goals directly or indirectly related to biological terrorism⁶. In his opinion, these technologies remain relatively accessible today.

When discussing the problems of biosecurity, it is important to emphasise the need for creating a legislative base for a clear and, if necessary, strict restriction of the right to access information related to the issues in questions especially to the methods and ways to commit unlawful acts. This is particularly true for the Internet where today one can find the location of laboratories studying especially dangerous infections, modes and channels of their proliferation and transmission etc. In order to ensure biosafety and prevent potential threats, it is necessary to severely curtail the access to information on institutions working with agents of especially dangerous infections that could cause massive loss of life or irreparable damage to agricultural and food sectors or lead to serious environmental problems.

There are real concerns that some types of biological weapons can become one of the most accessible 'tools' for creating instability and atmosphere of fear, chaos, and social tension. Much has been written about the threats directly related to poison population with especially dangerous pathogens, such as anthrax, Ebola, plague, etc. – this threat generally has been thoroughly analyzed⁷. Therefore, in this chapter the problems of biosecurity affecting the health and well-being

⁵ Popova urged to prepare for the threat of bioterrorism, Vesti.ru, 3 June 2016, <<http://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id=2761087>> [in Russian].

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Zavriev, S.K., Biological safety – analysis of problems of control and risks in modern conditions, *Disarmament and Security 2013-2014. Strategic Stability: Problems of Security in the Context of Restructuring International Relations*, ed. by A.G. Arbatov, N.I. Bubnova (Moscow: IMEMO RAS, 2014), pp. 195-206 [in Russian]; and Zavriev, S., Kolesnikov, A., Risks and threats in biosecurity: problem analysis and search for optimal solutions in contemporary conditions...

of the population are being reviewed and analyzed in a somewhat indirect way, with a focus on the environment, agricultural and food security.

Today the threat of agroterrorism is not particularly pronounced. This is primarily because terrorists seek for an immediate and if possible strong effect of a terroristic act, while an attack on agricultural targets of vegetal origin does not lead to an immediate result, except for physical destruction of the crop shortly before harvesting. It would be rather difficult for potential terrorists to outdo the huge losses the global agriculture suffers due to natural disasters as well as plant and animal disease.

One of the important aspects of ensuring biosecurity is the timely and effective detection of dangerous pathogens and toxins. Given the current level of effectiveness of fighting against potential biothreats, it would be appropriate for international cooperation in the area of biosecurity to focus on developing new methods for timely and rapid detection and identification of bioagents that will make it possible to identify pathogens and toxins and take adequate and timely countermeasures. These methods should be well coordinated through international cooperation as wind, insects, and birds that do not know state borders are among carriers of many dangerous pathogens.

Much has been accomplished in Russia to develop pathogen diagnostic tools. Techniques of rapid and highly sensitive detection of pathogens have been created and developed within the framework of the National System of Chemical and Biological Safety programme, and a number of other programmes. Significant results were achieved in improving detection of anthrax, botulinum toxin, and a number of other agents and pathogens – the level of efficiency in this area corresponds to the global level or surpasses it. Russia is developing new detection technologies, in particular based on the latest technological progress, such as the use of DNA aptamers and immuno-PCR.

In the field of diagnostics, efforts are concentrated on the combating atypical forms of infections. Atypical forms are so dangerous because it is extremely difficult to select an adequate therapy for the patients, and this can lead to high mortality. The development of

the next generation vaccines is less effective, but that is true not only for Russia, but for Western countries as well as the creation of mass vaccines especially against dangerous infections requires additional fundamental research.

The developers of new antibiotics face similar challenges. Most pathogens of especially dangerous infections are sensitive to the existing spectrum of antibiotics, and the main causes of mortality relate to intoxication. In other words, toxico-infections are the most dangerous bacterial diseases which has been fully supported by the analysis of the outbreaks of such diseases. There is no need at the moment to consider the outbreak of dangerous virus infections, whether natural or man-made, in Russia as a serious threat. As it is much more difficult to produce, preserve and distribute viruses than bacteria and toxins they produce. Moreover the means of counteracting the major endemic viral diseases in Russia (mainly tick-borne encephalitis) are well developed⁸.

Summing up the key aspects of biosecurity and combating bioterrorism discussed above, it is necessary to formulate the main and urgent global goals in this area:

- in the field of biosecurity and physical biosafety – the development of methods to maximise the security of premises where the work with especially dangerous pathogens is carried out and to ensure safe transportation of the pathogens;
- maximizing of sensitivity, specificity, and speed of technologies and methods for detection of dangerous toxins as well as pathogens affecting humans, animals, and plants;
- intensification of the exchange of modern strains of the most aggressive and dangerous pathogens between laboratories and countries in order to accelerate the development of new vaccines, diagnostics, antimicrobial and antiviral drugs;
- development of methods for automatization of the most dangerous procedures of working with infected laboratory animals;
- development of effective approaches for minimizing nosocomial infections;

⁸ Zavriev, S., Kolesnikov, A., Risks and threats in biosecurity: problem analysis and search for optimal solutions in contemporary conditions...

- development of modern methods to eradicate burial grounds of animal died from anthrax (the disease caused by the bacterium *Bacillus anthracis*);

- establishing a clear and controlled legislative framework for regulating problems of environmental protection, pollution of land, water and air space, food, etc.

- prohibition by international law of the free access to specific technologies (prototypes of ‘training aids’) which can help facilitate terrorist attacks of any kind.

In addition, it is worth mentioning again the main biosecurity challenges in Russia⁹. The most urgent national goals need to be addressed are:

- to bring the classification of pathogen hazard levels into accordance with the international one;

- to review, in accordance with modern international standards, the regulations for registration, storage, and transportation of pathogens, and to arrange production and certification of appropriate containers for transporting samples with bioagents;

- to bring the national biosafety guidelines for work with pathogens and their diagnostics in line with the new version of the WHO recommendations;

- to update the national legislative framework governing the control and accessibility of the potential findings of synthetic biology;

- to strengthen control over quarantine phytopathogens and other especially dangerous phytopathogens in Russia and constantly improve the legislative framework that regulates their monitoring;

- to develop in accordance with international norms and recommendations technical standards for design and construction of laboratories working with especially dangerous pathogens;

- to upgrade educational programmes in the field of biosecurity, biosafety, and bioethics in accordance with the latest recommendations of WHO and the United Nations.

It is important to emphasise once again the need for Russia to actively integrate into international cooperation on biosecurity issues. It

⁹ Netesov, S.V., Zavriev, S.K., New international initiatives in biosecurity...

is one of the few developed countries in the world that still does not have its own biosafety association and, consequently, is not a member of the International Federation of Biosafety Associations¹⁰, although there are no political or other objective reasons for such self-isolation. Russia should make efforts to integrate in this area with countries within the framework of the SCO and the CIS. The SCO declared biosafety as important issue, but, apparently, only formally. Once the biosafety control system starts working effectively, other countries are likely to follow it.

¹⁰ International Federation of Biosafety Associations,
<<http://www.internationalbiosafety.org/>>.

10. MILITARY-POLITICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN RUSSIA AND CIS COUNTRIES

Vadim VLADIMIROV, Marianna YEVTODYEVA

For a number of historical, economic, political and humanitarian reasons Russia continues to be the leading power in the former Soviet Union. The key to it is development of the military and political relations between Russia and the countries of the region, although such cooperation has witnessed ups and downs.

In general, Russia has been able to use its economic, political and military potential to retain its influence in the post-Soviet states which, for their part, continue to lean towards Russia in many areas of their politics and policy. External actors understand limits of their influence in this equation and generally do not try to greatly upset the status quo.

Western region

Belarus

Some controversy between Russia and Belarus in the military-political area in 2016 was a result of Minsk's desire to pursue a more independent political course and, in particular, of President Alexander Lukashenko's unwillingness to use the Belarusian armed forces within

the framework of CSTO outside the country's territory and refusal to host a Russian air base in Belarus¹.

However, the level of interaction between Russian and Belarusian armed forces in 2016 was quite high. According to Belarusian Defence Minister Andrei Ravkov, the plan of cooperation between the ministries of defence of Russia and Belarus which in 2016 included more than 100 activities was successfully executed, and the military of the two countries learned to respond jointly to changes in the military-political situation in the Eastern European region². In this context, the joint maneuvers of airborne troops and special operations forces were of particular importance, as were command post exercises of the CSTO Collective Rapid Reaction Force³.

In 2016 Moscow and Minsk also paid special attention to the modernization of its armed forces. During the November 2016 discussion, the joint board of ministries of defence of Russia and Belarus noted that in 2016 more than 20 contracts for the supply and modernization of military equipment had been implemented and tens of contracts were still under implementation. Russia supplied Belarus a wide range of weapons, mostly artillery, tanks and armored personnel carriers. The supply of aviation technology and air defence systems was particularly important. Belarus received four divisions of S-300PS surface-to-air missile systems (SAM) and two S-400 Triumph SAMs. The parties also completed contracts on supplying 12 Mi-17V-5 helicopters, 8 Yak-130 combat training aircraft and other equipment⁴.

¹ Stepanov, A., Denied boarding, *Nasha versiya*, 13 Feb. 2017, <<https://versia.ru/belorusiya-torguetsya-o-razmeshhenii-rossijskoj-aviabazy-na-svoej-territorii>> [in Russian].

² Ravkov: Plan of cooperation between the Ministries of Defence of Belarus and Russia in 2016 was successfully implemented, *Belarus.by*, 2 Nov. 2016, <http://www.belarus.by/ru/press-center/speeches-and-interviews/ravkov-plan-sotrudnichestva-mezhdu-ministerstvami-oborony-belarusi-i-rossii-na-2016-god-uspeshno-vypolnen_i_48207.html> [in Russian].

³ Ibid.

⁴ Russia has completed a number of contracts to supply of weapons to Belarus, *Voyennoye obozreniye*, 20 May 2017, <<https://topwar.ru/116115-rossiya-zavershila-ryad-kontraktov-po-postavkam-vooruzheniy-v-belorussiyu.html>> [in Russian]; Russia handed over two S-400 systems to Belarus, *Gazeta.ru*, 28 June 2016,

According to some experts, the Belarusian army is more than 90% dependent on Russian military equipment⁵. And one of the essential items Belarus supplies to Russia is the chassis for mobile launcher complexes such as Topol-M, Iskander tactical-operational missile complex, S-300 and S-400 SAMs, Hurricane multiple rocket launcher system, which are produced by the Minsk Wheeled Tractor Plant.

A serious test for the military-political cooperation between Russia and Belarus has been the preparation for the Zapad-2017 joint strategic military exercises. These exercises will be held on 14-20 September 2017 during when over 3,000 Russian servicemen and 280 units of military equipment will arrive to the territory of Belarus⁶.

In November 2016, the official website of Russian state procurement published information on the ministry of defence's order for 4162 rail wagons for military transportation to Belarus. Such a high volume of traffic aroused the interest of the Russian media, as well as concerns on the part of the Belarusian opposition and the West over the Russian intentions toward NATO. 'Novaya Gazeta' newspaper sent a request for information in this regard to the Russian ministry of defence. In its reply the ministry confirmed that the number of wagons was about 4000, noted that this figure was comparable with those from military exercises of previous years held in Belarus⁷. The ministry also stressed that the 2017 exercises would be carried out solely for the purpose of strengthening the security of the two countries, and that Russia and Belarus would invite NATO military observers if the number of troops or military equipment reached the thresholds established by the 2011 Vienna Document.

<<https://www.gazeta.ru/army/news/8817317.shtml>> [in Russian]; Safronov, I., Dzhordzhevich, A., Demand creates weapons, *Kommersant*, 23 Mar. 2017, <<https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3249489>> [in Russian].

⁵ Western allies: what the military alliance of Russia and Belarus has achieved over 20 years, *News24Today*, 2 Apr. 2017, <<http://news24today.info/zapadnye-soyuzniki-chego-dostig-voennyi-blok-rossii-i-belorussii-za-20-let-suschestvovaniya.html>> [in Russian].

⁶ Khalip, I., Trains to the West, *Novaya gazeta*, 29 Mar. 2017, <<http://novayagazeta.ee/articles/13899/>> [in Russian].

⁷ Ibid.

Despite the Russian reassurances, the West started a campaign of accusing Russia in transferring more weapons and military equipment to Belarus than had been announced with the aim to start aggression against NATO. First of all, such claims were related to major Russian arms supplies to Belarus in 2016, often inaccurate data on troops redeployment provided by Russia, and classified military supplies details of which were not available to the public. Such claims fueled negative reaction both of the opposition-minded part of the Belarusian media and media and officials in Baltic states, Ukraine, and Poland⁸. Some speculated that such large-scale logistics and surge in transportation for Zapad-2017 could indicate plans to transfer to Belarus a part of the newly created First Guards Tank Army of the Russian Western Military District, or to invade the Baltic states. This anti-Russian information campaign was likely designed to rationalise further NATO's military build-up in the Baltic region.

In the end Lukashenko and Ravkov had to clear the air. Commenting on publications in the media and pundits' statements about the redeployment of a large number of Russian military equipment to the Belarusian territory for the Zapad-2017 exercises, Ravkov called them 'the hysteria of certain 'experts''. President Lukashenko, in turn, stressed that these exercises did not pose any threat to the sovereignty of Belarus: 'If someone believes that several thousand wagons have already been loaded and we are under occupation, that Russia deploys its troops here, do not be naive ... Here the troops come, and there they go'⁹.

In general, successful continuation of cooperation between the ministries of defence and stepping up of military-technical cooperation between the two countries in 2016 and early 2017 meant that the crisis in their relations caused by an increase in gas prices for Belarus, was overcome and that it did not inflict serious damage to the military-political interaction between Moscow and Minsk.

It should also be noted that preparations for the Zapad-2017 exercise did not lead to aggravation of tensions between Russia and

⁸ Aldohin, D., Russian military exercises 'Zapad-2017': questions and answers, *Tut.by*, 28 Apr. 2017, <<https://42.tut.by/541316>> [in Russian].

⁹ Ibid.

Western countries/NATO. As NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said on 13 July 2017, NATO did not see any threats for the member countries of the Alliance in connection with the exercise held by the Russian Federation¹⁰.

Moldova

The main event in the political life of the Republic of Moldova in 2016 was the presidential election won with 52% of votes by Igor Dodon – a politician known in the country as one of the most active supporters of the restoration of friendly relations with Russia. His first foreign visit was made to the Russian Federation in January 2017. During this visit Dodon held talks on the development of a new agreement on strategic partnership with the Russian Federation¹¹, which should replace the 2001 Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation. In April 2016 Dodon signed a memorandum of cooperation between Moldova and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), and in early 2017, the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council approved Moldova's application for observer status with the EAEU¹². Russia met these signs of Moldova's loyalty very positively and expressed its readiness to support President Dodon's course for rapprochement with Russia and the EAEU. However, without the backing of the ruling majority in the parliament which Dodon can hardly expect, this course has little chance to be implemented.

Nevertheless, one can expect an increase in economic cooperation between Russia and Moldova. After the January 2017 meeting of Dodon with the head of Transnistria Vadim Krasnoselsky experts believe that there may also be a certain unfreezing of relations

¹⁰ NATO is not afraid of Russian maneuvers 'West-2017', *Regnum*, 13 July 2017, <<https://regnum.ru/news/2300835.html>> [in Russian].

¹¹ Moldova will sign a new agreement on strategic partnership with Russia, *Moldavskiye vedomosti*, 29 Mar. 2017, <<http://www.vedomosti.md/news/moldova-podpishet-novoe-soglashenie-o-strategicheskoy-partnere>> [in Russian].

¹² Dodon admitted that in the future Moldova could join EAEC, *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, 12 July 2017, <<https://rg.ru/2017/07/12/dodon-dopustil-v-budushchem-vhozhdenie-moldavii-v-eaes.html>> [in Russian]; Moldova got an observer status at EAEC, *Voyennoye obozreniye*, 14 Apr. 2017, <<https://topwar.ru/113474-moldaviya-prisoedinyatsya-k-eaes.html>> [in Russian].

between Moldova and Transnistria in the social and economic areas¹³. But as for complex political decisions, most likely, they will be postponed to a later date. Thus, in early 2017 Dodon suggested that Transnistria should reintegrate into Moldova on a federative basis and its population should participate in the next cycle of the parliamentary elections in the Republic of Moldova. Also, he suggested holding a referendum on the restoration of a single country both in Moldova and Transnistria¹⁴. These reintegration initiatives were rejected by the leadership of the latter. However, there is no doubt that the final decision on the status of Transnistria would depend on Russia.

According to a number of experts, Russia hypothetically could agree to the status of Transnistria as a subject of the federal state in order to exert pressure on Moldova as it does with Ukraine using the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics. However, the problem here is Dodon's demand of complete withdrawal of the Russian forces from the territory of Transnistria. Russia will not do this as the leadership of Transnistria objects to it. In addition, Moscow believes that as soon as the reintegration takes place, Moldova will 'leave' for Romania. Therefore, the predominant belief is that Russia will seek an independent status of Transnistria with the prospect of turning it into a fully independent state. This belief is largely facilitated by Tiraspol's argument that the Transnistrian statehood has been confirmed twice: in the referendums on 1 December 1991 and 11 September 2006.

South Caucasus

Armenia

Armenia is considered one of Russia's closest allies in the post-Soviet space and, in particular, in Transcaucasia. However, the events of 2016 indicated quite serious tensions in the relations between

¹³ Meeting in Bender: will new leaders of Moldova and Transnistria find a compromise?, *Russia Today*, 4 Jan. 2017, <<https://russian.rt.com/ussr/article/347511-dodon-krasnoselsky-peregovory>> [in Russian].

¹⁴ Dodon gave possible date of unification of Transnistria and Moldova, *Noi.md*, 25 Apr. 2017, <http://www.noi.md/ru/news_id/218802> [in Russian].

Moscow and Yerevan. This was particularly evident after the ‘four-day war’ (2-5 April 2016) between Armenia and Azerbaijan in the context of the simmering conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh which in fact was the largest confrontation in Karabakh since the 1994 ceasefire agreement. One of the main causes of the war, according to experts, was large shipments of Russian weapons to Azerbaijan a few years before. Since the early 2010s Azerbaijan has received 60 Mi-17 transport helicopters and 24 Mi-35M attack helicopters, about 100 T-90S tanks, 100 BMP-3 infantry fighting vehicle, 18 2S19M1 Msta-S self-propelled artillery, 18 9A52 Smerch multiple rocket launchers, 18 TOS-1A Solntsepyok heavy flamethrowers, 10 Khrizantema-S self-propelled anti-tank vehicles, 300 Igla-S missile systems with 1,500 missiles, two S-300 PMU-2 Favorit missiles, several batteries of Tor-M2E anti-aircraft systems.

Russian arms supplies to Yerevan were much more modest¹⁵. That is why Armenia was forced to take steps to strengthen its positions after the balance of power was upset. In February 2016 it agreed with Russia on a preferential state export loan for \$200 mln to purchase weapons¹⁶. Yerevan is expected to receive Smerch multiple rocket launchers, Igla-S missile systems with missiles, TOS-1A with transport-loading vehicles, 9M113M guided missiles, grenade launchers, armored vehicles, Dragoonov sniper rifles, and other weapons and equipment. The military clashes of 2016, therefore, can be regarded as an attempt by Baku to ‘liberate the occupied territories’ carried out precisely at the moment when Azerbaijani army still had the superiority in the conflict zone in certain types of weapons.

In the wake of the military clashes in Karabakh (where the Azerbaijani side failed to achieve any serious success), the pro-Western opposition in Yerevan began to sharply criticise Russia’s policy towards Armenia and demand a review of allied relations between the two countries. As a rule, the critics’ arguments boiled down to the following points: Russia violated its obligations refusing to

¹⁵ Krylov, A., Karabakh problem: military aspect, *Rossiia i novyye gosudarstva Yevrazii*, No. 3, 2016, pp. 35-36, <http://www.imemo.ru/files/file/magazines/rossia_i_novay/2016_03/3_Karabahskaya_Krylov.pdf> [in Russian].

¹⁶ Ibid.

unequivocally support Yerevan in the Karabakh conflict; Moscow did not want to exert necessary pressure on the CSTO member countries to induce them to condemn Baku in the conflict with Yerevan; Moscow created a military imbalance between Azerbaijan and Armenia by supplying Azerbaijan with significant quantities of weapons. Some Armenian media hinted at the possibility of a more active rapprochement between Armenia and the West, relations which allegedly had more a 'fair' character¹⁷.

All Yerevan's concerns were rejected by Russia. Moscow stressed that it fulfilled its allied obligations. As is known, from the outset the Russian base in Gyumri and Armenia's membership in the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) were tacitly directed against Turkey, as was Russia's assistance to strengthen the Armenian-Turkish border. As for its refusal to supply weapons to Baku, as Moscow noted, Azerbaijan was not North Korea and it can purchase weapons in any other country. Russia confirmed that it strictly observed the balance in its supply of arms to Azerbaijan and Armenia. A notable example of this was Armenia receiving Iskander-E¹⁸ operational-tactical missile system, along with other weapons systems, such as the Smerch multiple rocket launchers and Buk missile systems which were reportedly demonstrated during the military parade in Yerevan on Independence Day on 21 September 2016¹⁹. In addition, both countries actively cooperated in the military-industrial sphere and planned to create a number of joint ventures.

The CSTO of which both Russia and Armenia are members in fact ignored the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in 2016²⁰. The fact is that

¹⁷ Akopyan, S., Who in Armenia directs protest grudge against Russia?, *Regnum*, 1 June 2016, <<https://regnum.ru/news/polit/2139684.the.html>> [in Russian].

¹⁸ Armenia is the only foreign country (as of 2016) which received Iskander system from Russia.

¹⁹ Khalatyan, A., Armenia – 2016: five fateful events, *Kavpolit*, 27 Dec. 2016, <http://kavpolit.com/articles/armenija_2016_pjat_sudbonosnyh_sobytij-30692/> [in Russian].

²⁰ In this respect CSTO only adopted a short statement calling for de-escalation of the conflict. See: Statement of heads of the CSTO member states on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict from 14 October 2016, Collective Security Treaty Organisation, <http://odkb-csto.org/documents/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=8380> [in Russian].

formally the CSTO can react only to a direct threat to the territory of Armenia and upon a direct request of Yerevan which did not submit one.

Finally, Russia made it clear that it regarded the Armenian threat of a possible rapprochement with the West more as a means of blackmail. Even if Yerevan shifted its focus to a Western country or bloc, the latter would not be able to provide effective military presence in Armenia or in the Transcaucasian region as a whole. Washington, in particular, both currently and generally, tries to avoid such presence in peripheral regions without absolute necessity, while the EU de facto lacks effective military forces capable of ensuring a long-term presence in Armenia.

Azerbaijan

In 2016 the Russian-Azerbaijani cooperation was largely military. In the course of high-level visits the parties signed a number of important agreements. They announced plans to open a high-tech centre for the modernization of Russian-made helicopters, as well as an aircraft assembly plant in Baku²¹. The parties also reached a number of agreements on supply of Russian weapons to Azerbaijan. The negotiations on military-technical cooperation were held, among others, during the December visit to Azerbaijan of Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin²².

Despite the absence of relevant official statements, a number of sources reported that the subject of special attention during the December talks was the Russian-Armenian deal on Iskander-E missile defence system which aroused concern of the Azerbaijani side. In connection with this issue members of the Azerbaijani parliament demanded from the leadership of the country to reconsider relations with Russia. However, the problem was gradually allowed to fade away. Azerbaijan interested in military-technical partnership formally

²¹ In Azerbaijan there will be two modern aircraft enterprises, *Avia.pro*, 8 Sep. 2016, <<http://avia.pro/news/v-azerbadzhane-poyavitsya-dva-sovremennyh-aviacionnyh-predpriyatiya>> [in Russian].

²² Avetisyan, G., Key vectors of Azerbaijani foreign policy, *Armedia*, 12 Jan. 2012, <<http://armedia.am/rus/news/43644/osnovniye-vektoriy-vneshney-politiki-azerbaiydzhana-v-2016-om-godu.html>> [in Russian].

accepted Russia's explanation that it strove to restore the balance between Yerevan and Baku on arms supplies. It was also applied to the formula voiced by the Russian Foreign Ministry that Russia and Armenia had allied relations, while Russian-Azerbaijani relations were seen as a 'strategic partnership'²³.

Georgia

In 2016 Georgia continued to intensify its relations with the United States and NATO. In addition to setting up a school of mountain shooters (near Tbilisi) by NATO standards, Georgia became a member of the NATO Rapid Reaction Force (NRRF)²⁴. In 2016 a first Georgian light infantry company joined NRRF with a second being in line²⁵.

After the victory in the October 2016 parliamentary elections the Georgian Dream party, the policy of the Georgian leadership towards Russia underwent certain adjustments and became more pragmatic. The main direction of the new Georgian political course was cooperation with the EU and NATO but 'without confrontation with Russia'²⁶. According to experts, the Georgian leadership pursued two main goals. On the one hand, Georgia was interested in entering the Russian market and attracting tourists from Russia, and on the other hand, it sought to show the West that NATO's policy and expansion of the military cooperation with Georgia were safe from the point of view

²³ According to the statement of A. Pavlovskiy, Director of the 4th Department of the CIS Countries at the Russian Foreign Ministry from 20 May 2016. See: The Armenian-Russian relations entered a phase of explanation, Centre for Support of Russian-Armenian Strategic and Public Initiatives, 29 May 2016, <<http://russia-armenia.info/node/27950>> [in Russian].

²⁴ Georgia has become a member of NATO Rapid Reaction Force, *Interfax*, 29 Sep. 2015, <<http://www.interfax.ru/world/469893>> [in Russian].

²⁵ It means that both these units are transferred under the command of the North Atlantic Alliance. See: Another Georgian squadron will become a part of the NATO Rapid Reaction Force, *Novosti-Gruziya*, 12 June 2017, <<https://www.newsgeorgia.ge/eshhe-odna-gruzinskaya-rota-stanet-chastyu-sil-bystrogo-reagirovaniya-nato/>> [in Russian].

²⁶ Ogandzhanov, I., Military-political novel: what strengthening cooperation between NATO and Georgia bodes for Russia?, *Russia Today*, 3 Jan. 2017, <<https://russian.rt.com/ussr/article/347339-gruziya-nato-sotrudnichestvo-makkein-rossiya>> [in Russian].

of a possible confrontation with Russia. This was all the more important for Tbilisi that the North Atlantic Alliance, while demonstrating its military 'patronage', did not really give Georgia any guarantees of security.

Regarding the normalization of economic relations with Russia, Georgia being in a difficult economic situation sought to cooperate with Moscow despite the ongoing conflicts over Abkhazia and South Ossetia in which Russia took a very tough stance. Currently, Russia and Georgia continue a bilateral dialogue within the framework of the Geneva Agreements established after the end of the 2008 conflict and regular meetings between the Georgian Prime Minister's special envoy Zurab Abashidze and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grigoriy Karasin and which dealt with economic, trade-economic, transport and humanitarian issues. Lately, the parties have conducted negotiations on the control of the flow of goods on the Georgian border with Russia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which Moscow and Tbilisi agreed in principle back in 2011. An important objective for Georgia was the restoration of diplomatic relations with Russia but it was still far away largely due to the 'special position' of the Georgian side. As Abashidze told RIA Novosti in January 2017, the issue of restoring diplomatic relations was irrelevant until significant progress had been made on the issue of Abkhazia and South Ossetia²⁷.

Central Asia

Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan which occupies a key position in the Central Asian region, plays a role of a capstone in the security system in the south. Therefore, Russia has always considered strengthening of military-political relations with Tashkent as one of its main tasks. This is especially important, since until recently Uzbekistan remained the most closed country in the post-Soviet space, excluding Turkmenistan.

²⁷ Georgia links diplomatic relations with Russia to the issue of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, *RIA Novosti*, 21 Feb. 2017, <<https://ria.ru/world/20170221/1488476397.html>> [in Russian].

In this context, the peaceful transfer of power after the death of President Islam Karimov, who ruled the country for many years, came as a pleasant surprise. Even more important, according to many experts, was that the political class of Uzbekistan appeared to be ready for reforms. However, their implementation would likely require a consensus among the main clans and influence groups, and further development of Uzbekistan would depend on that.

While under President Karimov the prospects for military-political relations between Russia and Uzbekistan remained rather vague, after his death the process of normalization started almost immediately. Already at Karimov's funeral Shavkat Mirziyoyev who later became the president of Uzbekistan and Russian President Vladimir Putin stated that Uzbekistan and Russia 'are and will be friends and strategic partners'. On 29 November 2016 Moscow hosted talks between the Russian Defence Minister Army General Sergey Shoigu and Uzbek Defence Ministry Colonel-General Kabul Berdiyev on security issues in Central Asia and the fight against extremism. During the talks Shoigu expressed confidence that Russia and Uzbekistan had the capacity and opportunity to expand military and military-technical cooperation in order to strengthen security of both states and stressed that Russia was the key strategic partner for Uzbekistan.

Shoigu also said that by 2020 the two countries would have implemented a programme of modernization and re-equipment of the Uzbek armed forces with modern Russian weapons and military equipment. Upon completion of the talks, Shoigu and Berdiyev signed the Treaty on the Development of Military-Technical Cooperation and the Plan for Bilateral Cooperation between Defence Ministries for 2017²⁸. The above statements indicated that bilateral relations between Russia and Uzbekistan would develop in a number of areas, and above all in the fight against the threat of terrorism and extremism posed by neighboring Afghanistan.

²⁸ Russia and Uzbekistan will expand military-technical cooperation, *Regnum*, 29 Nov. 2016, <<https://regnum.ru/news/2211308.html>> [in Russian].

However, it is still difficult to predict how Uzbekistan's foreign policy will change in the foreseeable future. According to the presidential decree 'Strategy for actions on five priority areas of the development of the Republic Uzbekistan in 2017-2021'²⁹, Uzbekistan will continue to adhere to Karimov's multi-vector policy trying to keep a balance between the main geopolitical centres – Russia, China and the US – without getting particularly close with any of them. Thus, at least in the foreseeable future Uzbekistan is unlikely to host a foreign base. Tashkent believes a bilateral format of relations to be the most effective and is likely to refuse developing partnerships within political alliances, such as the CSTO and EAEU.

Tajikistan

2016 was marked by Russia's attempts to strengthen military-political cooperation with Tajikistan which is the weakest link in the united front preventing Islamism and international terrorism from penetrating into the post-Soviet space³⁰.

In March 2016 Tajikistan hosted major military exercises by the United Group of Armed Forces of Russia and Tajikistan. The Su-25SM attack aircraft, Su-24M front-line bombers, Mi-24 attack helicopters, Mi-8 transport helicopters, and transport aircraft made up a combined aviation group. For the first time the strategic aviation air wings (long-range Tu-22M3 bombers) participated in the exercise³¹. On 30 November 2016 Russian Defence Minister Sergey Shoigu officially announced that in 2017 Russia will supply Tajikistan with a significant

²⁹ President approved an action strategy for the development of Uzbekistan, *Gazeta.ru*, 7 Feb. 2017, <<https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2017/02/07/strategy/>> [in Russian].

³⁰ The main efforts of the region's countries in the fight against international terrorism were agreed upon at the summit meetings of the CIS and CSTO in 2015, including on the need for increased cooperation on the strengthening the Tajik-Afghan border. See: Vladimirov, V., Relations between Russia and CIS/CSTO countries: key aspects in 2015. In *Russia: Arms Control, Disarmament and International Security* (Moscow: IMEMO, 2016), pp. 163-175.

³¹ Aircraft of the Russian Central military district relocated to airfields in Tajikistan for training, *RIA Novosti*, 11 Mar. 2016, <https://ria.ru/defense_safety/20160311/1388508466.html> [in Russian].

amount of armaments and military equipment, primarily aviation equipment³².

At the same time, the overall level of military-political relations slightly decreased, despite that in 2015 Russia helped the president of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon, to suppress another Islamist insurgency. The opposition increasingly demanded building a 'national state' completely independent of Russia. In this context all actions to strengthen the Russian military presence in the country were viewed in a negative light, as were Russia's proposals on joint protection of the border with Afghanistan, which Moscow actively promoted at an informal level but Dushanbe never responded positively to these proposals³³.

Moreover, throughout 2016 Tajikistan repeatedly made it clear that its security was increasingly associated not only with Russia, but also with a number of key external actors – the US, EU, China, and even Iran and Saudi Arabia. Particularly notable was Dushanbe's public endorsement of the US decision to allocate \$50 mln to the countries of Central Asia to fight terrorism in 2016-2017, despite the fact that a significant portion of this money was intended for Tajikistan³⁴.

A statement by the Tajik Ambassador to Saudi Arabia that Tajikistan was considering joining the international coalition against terrorism headed by Saudi Arabia provoked a negative reaction on the part of Russia. However, soon this idea was disavowed by the leading Tajik media and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan³⁵.

³² Russia will supply Tajikistan with a large number of aircraft, *Regnum*, 30 Nov. 2016, <<https://regnum.ru/news/polit/2211758.html>> [in Russian].

³³ As the Russian Deputy Defence Minister Anatoly Antonov diplomatically put it, the Tajik authorities did not request Russia's assistance in protecting the border with Afghanistan. See: Antonov: Tajikistan did not ask for help in guarding the border with Afghanistan, *Asia-Plus*, 25 Mar. 2016, <<http://s01.news.tj/ru/news/antonov-tadzhikistan-ne-prosil-pomoch-v-okhrane-granitsy-s-afganistanom>> [in Russian].

³⁴ Tajikistan will receive most of the Pentagon's \$50 million requested for the fight against terrorism in Central Asia, *CA-News.org*, 22 Feb. 2016, <<http://ca-news.org/news:1179273>> [in Russian].

³⁵ Tajikistan has no plans to join the Islamic military coalition, *Regnum*, 22 Dec. 2015, <<https://regnum.ru/news/polit/2041699.html>> [in Russian].

However, in 2016 Moscow was particularly dissatisfied with the demonstratively active rapprochement between Tajikistan and China. Specifically, it involved the accession of Tajikistan which was a member of the CSTO to the quadripartite coalition against terrorism (China, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan) which, experts say, could facilitate ousting Russia from Central Asia³⁶. Another irritating factor was an agreement between Tajikistan and China on cooperation to strengthen the Tajik-Afghan border which was initiated by Dushanbe. Under the agreement, China was supposed to deploy a number of units in the border areas of Tajikistan and a training base for the border troops³⁷.

Despite those events, President Rahmon seemed to be unwilling to end Russia's economic and military presence in Tajikistan given the unstable situation in the country. But the question is whether Rahmon's successor will maintain the same approach. The most likely scenario is that Russia will be treated by Tajikistan as a source of financial assistance, while the continuing presence of the 201st military base will stir a growing opposition from both the local political elite and external players.

Kyrgyzstan

In 2016 Kyrgyzstan remained one of the outposts of strengthening the Russian military presence in Central Asia. The country hosted the Kant air base³⁸ and three other Russian military facilities – the Russian Navy's long-distance communication centre in Kara-Balta, test base of anti-submarine weapons in Karakal on Lake Issyk-Kul, and seismic station in Mailuu-Suu – which in early 2017

³⁶ Volkov, K., China to help Tajikistan strengthen Tajik-Afghan border, *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, 26 Sep. 2016, <<https://rg.ru/2016/09/26/kitaj-pomozhet-tadzhikistanu-ukreplit-tadzhiksko-afganskuiu-granicu.html>> [in Russian].

³⁷ Accents of the week: political process in Afghanistan, *Afghanistan.ru*, 26 Sep. 2016, <<http://afghanistan.ru/doc/102689.html>> [in Russian].

³⁸ Air force base (airfield) in Kant is a part of air component of the CSTO Collective Rapid Deployment Force (CRDF). It includes an air group of the Russian Air Force.

were merged into a single system (a joint Russian air base) under common command and control³⁹.

According to Kyrgyz experts, the purpose of this air base was closely related to strengthening Russia's influence in the Central Asian region. Meanwhile, Kyrgyzstan faced the problem of modernization of its armed forces equipped with obsolete Soviet weapons. The Kyrgyz army had unmodernised T-72 tanks, practically no combat aircraft or modern air defence systems⁴⁰. This is one of the reasons why Kyrgyzstan could not play a serious role within the CSTO or ensure the country's security in the event of a conflict with its neighbors – for example, if occasional armed clashes between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan escalated to larger-scale violence (see table 1).

Table 1. The armed forces of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan⁴¹

	Kyrgyzstan	Uzbekistan
Personnel (ths)	10.9	48.0
Tanks	150	340
Armored vehicles (armored personnel carriers and infantry fighting vehicles)	395	708
Artillery including MRLS	246 21	487 108

Recently Kyrgyzstan regularly complained about receiving limited military and technical assistance from Russia, although the military-political relations between Moscow and Bishkek in 2016 intensified. Russian President Vladimir Putin visited Kyrgyzstan to participate in the anniversary summit and meeting of the CIS Council

³⁹ Tikhonov, R., Combined forces: agreement on the Russian base in Kyrgyzstan came into force, *Russia Today*, 29 Jan. 2017, <<https://russian.rt.com/ussr/article/354295-kirgiziya-baza-rossiya>> [in Russian].

⁴⁰ Russia and Eurasia. In *The Military Balance 2016* (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 186-187.

⁴¹ Ibid, pp. 186-187, 207-208.

of Heads of State⁴², Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev travelled to the country two times during the year. Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambayev also visited Russia two times. At these meetings, the parties discussed primarily issues of military-political and military-technical cooperation. An important step was Moscow's commitment to assist Bishkek in developing a set of measures to modernise the national armed forces – the relevant statements were made at a meeting in Moscow between Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces Army General Valery Gerasimov and Chairman of the Kyrgyz State Committee for Defence Major General Marat Kenzhisariev⁴³. In February 2016 under the earlier agreements on the provision of military-technical assistance to Kyrgyzstan for about \$1 bln, Russia transferred to Bishkek BTR-70M armored personnel carriers with full equipment and computer software for interactive training. Kyrgyzstan also received free of charge armored vehicles, artillery systems with spare parts and ammunition for various types of small arms⁴⁴.

However, the Kyrgyz opposition (in fact, preparing the ground for the presidential elections scheduled for November 2017) criticised the government's position arguing that Russia's assistance was insufficient and that rent-free use of military facilities by Russia was the embodiment of Moscow's 'imperial ambitions'. In this situation, an important role was played by President Atambayev's statements on reducing the lease of the Russian air base to 15 years and demanding payment for the use of some of its facilities. It was on these terms that the agreement on the status and conditions of Russia's joint military

⁴² Latukhina, K., Putin arrived to Kyrgyzstan for the CIS summit, *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, 16 Sep. 2016, <<https://rg.ru/2016/09/16/putin-priehal-v-kirgiziiu-na-sammit-sng.html>> [in Russian].

⁴³ Russia and Kyrgyzstan intend to develop measures for the modernization of the Kyrgyz armed forces, *RIA Novosti*, 31 Mar. 2016, <https://ria.ru/defense_safety/20160331/1400679493.html> [in Russian].

⁴⁴ Russia supplied military equipment to Kyrgyzstan within the framework of military-technical cooperation, *Gazeta.ru*, 11 Feb. 2016, <<https://www.gazeta.ru/army/news/8236457.shtml>> [in Russian].

base in Kyrgyzstan, signed back in 2012, entered into force on 29 January 2017⁴⁵.

Atambayev's statement that in five years Kyrgyzstan should rely solely on itself in developing its armed forces also aroused some interest. Russia regarded it as populist, given the country's difficult economic situation. However, one can hardly agree with some experts that Russia has little interest in the presence of its military in Kyrgyzstan. Undoubtedly, the Kant air base is an essential part of the CSTO efforts to provide security in Central Asia, closely connected with the 201st base in Tajikistan. If the latter is used for military operations, it will need air support which can be provided by the modernised Su-25SM attack helicopters and Mi-8 helicopters currently deployed at the Kant base, as well as by military transport aircraft which can be deployed at the base⁴⁶.

Kazakhstan

2016 witnessed a fairly high level of the military-political relations between Russia and Kazakhstan. Astana continued to actively participate in the CSTO summits and to successfully develop military-technical cooperation with Russia.

In 2016, the most notable event in this regard was KADEX-2016, the International Exhibition of Weapons and Military Equipment, held in Astana on 2 June. Lieutenant General Okas Saparov, Deputy Defence Minister of Kazakhstan, who participated in the event stated that 80% of weapons and equipment, especially helicopters, purchased by Astana were originated in Russia, and relations with Moscow in the area of military-technical cooperation had been improving every year. Saparov, among other things, told about the plans to strengthen the national air force with Russian multi-purpose Su-35 fighters and

⁴⁵ According to it, Russia will pay Kyrgyzstan \$4.5 mln annually for the use of land and water resources (Bishkek charges Moscow for the testing facilities on Issyk Kul and Navy long haul unit, but not for the airfield in Kant or seismic stations). The agreement is valid for 15 years and can be renewed every five years. See: Slobodyan, E., What is Kant Russian airbase, *Argumenty i fakty*, 1 Mar. 2017, <http://www.aif.ru/dontknows/file/chto_predstavlyaet_soboy_rossiyskaya_aviabaza_kant_v_kirgizii> [in Russian]; Tikhonov, R., Combined forces: agreement on the Russian base in Kyrgyzstan came into force...

⁴⁶ Ibid.

modernised Mi-35M helicopters⁴⁷. It should also be noted that Kazakhstan not only purchased equipment from Russia, but also received it in the framework of military-technical cooperation of the CSTO member countries.

Despite the active procurement of weapons and military equipment from Russia, Kazakhstan also purchased military equipment from other countries – in particular, the United States, France, Germany, and Israel. In addition, Astana stressed the importance of joint production of weapons with Russia and some other countries.

In this regard, Kazakhstan's plans on signing a 'large package of contracts' with Russian defence-industrial enterprises and the Rosoboronexport, the sole Russian exporter of arms and military equipment, were quite indicative⁴⁸.

However, despite the declarations of friendship and cooperation, the two countries differed in assessing a whole range of foreign policy issues, primarily the sanctions war launched by the US and EU/NATO against Russia in the wake of its reunification with the Crimea, NATO expansion, instability in eastern Ukraine, participation of the Russian Federation air force in the Syrian conflict, and the fight against the Islamic State terrorists⁴⁹.

As 2015-2016 demonstrated, Kazakhstan continued a very distinctive policy in economic and military-political areas with Russia. In particular, Kazakhstan began to distance itself from the EAEU. According to experts, it was prompted by a number of alternative options, in particular in the WTO which Kazakhstan joined in late 2015 and within which its priorities on a number of issues did not coincide with the Russian ones. Kazakhstan also concluded an agreement on enhancing partnership and cooperation with the European Union⁵⁰.

⁴⁷ Zgirovskaya, E., Kazakhstan does not put all eggs in one basket, *Gazeta.ru*, 2 June 2016, <<https://www.gazeta.ru/army/2016/06/02/8279579.shtml>> [in Russian].

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Malysheva, D.B., Kazakhstan and Russia: problems of interaction, Primakov National Research Institute of World Economy and International Relations, 7 Sep. 2016, <https://www.imemo.ru/index.php?page_id=502&id=2573> [in Russian].

⁵⁰ Kazakhstan signed an agreement on expanded partnership with the European Union, *Regnum*, 25 Mar. 2016, <<https://regnum.ru/news/2105578.html>> [in Russian].

Astana strove to be a leading party in the Chinese Silk Road project as an important transportation hub. While Russia advocated integrating EAEU with the Silk Road project, Kazakhstan did not fully support this idea. Moreover, on 28 November 2015 in Istanbul Kazakhstan together with Turkey, China, Azerbaijan, and Georgia signed an agreement on creating a consortium for freight transport from China to Europe bypassing Russia⁵¹. In 2016 the parties already started transporting goods through Ukraine to Northern and Eastern Europe. The intensification of military-political cooperation between Kazakhstan and the US that actively supported the agreement was perceived in Russia very negatively. In general, such a multilateral format of foreign trade and logistics interaction under China's leadership and with broad involvement of Kazakhstan can affect Russia's leadership in the CSTO and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), and affect effectiveness of these organisations.

Another threat to Russian-Kazakh relations was increased activity of internal political forces supporting the idea of Kazakhstan as a 'state of Kazakhs'. As a result, the ongoing process of de-Russification of Kazakhstan would lead to narrowing the area of cooperation with Russia with the tacit approval of Western countries which support any foreign policy of Kazakhstan, except the pro-Russian one.

However, despite a number of disagreements between Moscow and Astana, most experts believe that as long as President Nursultan Nazarbayev is in power in Kazakhstan, Russian-Kazakh relations will not radically change.

* * *

As 2016 showed, Russia remains the leading economic, political and military power in the post-Soviet space, although its potential for influence on the situation in the region has to a certain

⁵¹ Turkey and China established a consortium to deliver goods to Europe bypassing Russia, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 30 Nov. 2015, <<http://www.ng.ru/news/525642.html>> [in Russian].

extent weakened. This facilitates the desire of certain CIS countries to pursue a more independent political course. However, given the concern of neighboring countries about stability of their regimes in the face of growing number of challenges and threats, there is reason to believe that in the foreseeable future these countries will retain their orientation primarily to Russia. At the same time, since the situation remains uncertain, Moscow needs to work out a new long-term strategy for its relations with the countries of the near abroad. First and foremost, Moscow must be prepared for the consequences of changing political regimes in these countries and do everything possible to extinguish the growth of anti-Russian sentiment there.

Russia should build relations with the current ruling elites of the allied countries on the basis of pragmatism, as well as of more active participation in various new cooperative projects mutually beneficial both bilaterally and within the framework of the modernised mechanisms of the CSTO, SCO, and EAEU to create a zone of stability in the entire post-Soviet territory.

As for Russia's military-political relations, it is necessary to find new areas of interaction not only within the CIS, CSTO, and SCO, but also with countries neighboring the post-Soviet space, in order to include the CIS in the common security zone of the whole Eurasia.

Finally, it is necessary to ease tension with external powers that show interest in the post-Soviet states and agree on certain rules of engagement. If at least some of these tasks are accomplished, it will strengthen Russia's position in the near abroad and contribute to the improvement of the situation in the region.

PART III. DOCUMENTS AND REFERENCE MATERIALS

11. Key documents of the Russian Federation on national security, defence, and arms control (January-December 2016)

11. KEY DOCUMENTS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION ON NATIONAL SECURITY, DEFENCE, AND ARMS CONTROL (JANUARY-DECEMBER 2016)

*Sergey TSELITSKY*¹

Legislative acts

Federal Law no. 10-FZ of 15 February 2016 ‘On ratifying the Protocol between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on amending the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on rent for facilities and combat fields at the 929th State Flight Test Centre of the Russian Federation, located on the Republic of Kazakhstan’s territory, of 18 October 1996’

Passed by the State Duma (SD) on 29 January 2016, approved by the Federation Council (FC) on 10 February 2016, signed by the President of the Russian Federation (President) on 15 February 2016.

Federal Law hereby ratifies the Protocol between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on amending the agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on rent for facilities and combat fields at the

¹ Anton Tuzin assisted in the compilation of this chapter.

929th State Flight Test Centre of the Russian Federation, located on the Republic of Kazakhstan's territory, of 18 October 1996.

Federal Law no. 13-FZ of 15 February 2016 'On ratifying the Protocol on amendments and addendums to the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan on procedures for the use of the 929th State Flight Test Centre (facilities and combat fields located on the Republic of Kazakhstan's territory) by the Russian Federation's Defence Ministry of 20 January 1995'

Passed by the SD on 29 January 2016, approved by the FC on 10 February 2016, signed by the President on 15 February 2016.

Federal Law hereby ratifies the Protocol on amendments and addendums to the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan on procedures for the use of the 929th State Flight Test Centre (facilities and combat fields located on the Republic of Kazakhstan's territory) by the Russian Federation's Defence Ministry of 20 January 1995.

Federal Law no. 14-FZ of 15 February 2016 'On ratifying the Protocol on amending the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the conditions of use and rent of the Sary-Shagan testing range and providing vital services to the town of Priozersk of 20 January 1995'

Passed by the SD on 29 January 2016, approved by the FC on 10 February 2016, signed by the President on 15 February 2016.

Federal Law hereby ratifies the Protocol on amending the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the conditions of use and rent of the Sary-Shagan testing range and providing vital services to the town of Priozersk of 20 January 1995.

Federal Law no. 15-FZ of 15 February 2016 'On ratifying the Protocol between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on amending

the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on rent for the Sary-Shagan testing range of 18 October 1996'

Passed by the SD on 29 January 2016, approved by the FC on 10 February 2016, signed by the President on 15 February 2016.

Federal Law hereby ratifies the Protocol between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on amending the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on rent for the Sary-Shagan testing range of 18 October 1996.

Federal Law no. 106-FZ of 26 April 2016 'On ratification of the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of South Ossetia on the state border'

Passed by the SD on 15 April 2016, approved by the FC on 20 April 2016, signed by the President on 26 April 2016.

Federal Law hereby ratifies the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of South Ossetia on the state border, signed in Moscow on 18 February 2015.

Federal Law no. 226-FZ of 3 July 2016 'On the Russian Federation National Guard'

Passed by the SD on 22 June 2016, approved by the FC on 29 June 2016, signed by the President on 3 July 2016.

In accordance with the Federal Law the Russian Federation National Guard is a state military organisation intended to guarantee national and public security and protect human and civil rights and freedoms.

Federal Law no. 376-FZ of 14 October 2016 'On ratification of the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Syrian Arab Republic on the deployment of an air group of the Russian Federation's Armed Forces in the Syrian Arab Republic'

Passed by the SD on 7 October 2016, approved by the FC on 12 October 2016, signed by the President on 14 October 2016.

Federal Law hereby ratifies the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Syrian Arab Republic on the deployment of an air group of the Russian Federation's Armed Forces in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed in Damascus on 26 August 2015.

Federal Law no. 381-FZ of 31 October 2016 'On suspension by the Russian Federation of the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the United States of America concerning the management and disposition of plutonium designated as no longer required for defence purposes and related cooperation and protocols to the Agreement'

Passed by the SD on 19 October 2016, approved by the FC on 26 October 2016, signed by the President on 31 October 2016.

Federal Law suspends the Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Russian Federation concerning the management and disposition of plutonium designated as no longer required for defence purposes and related cooperation, signed in Moscow on 29 August 2000 and Washington on 1 September 2000, and also the protocols to the Agreement. The Federal Law was adopted in response to threats to strategic stability that emerged as a result of the US's hostile actions towards the Russian Federation and its inability to fulfill its obligations to dispose of surplus plutonium. It radically changed circumstances that were of substantive importance for Russia when the Agreement and its protocols were signed.

Federal Law no. 387-FZ of 22 November 2016 'On ratification of the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Abkhazia on a Joint Group of Armed Forces of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Abkhazia'

Passed by the SD on 2 November 2016, approved by the FC on 16 November 2016, signed by the President on 22 November 2016.

Federal Law hereby ratifies the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Abkhazia on a Joint Group of Armed

Forces of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Abkhazia, signed in Moscow on 21 November 2015.

Federal Law no. 390-FZ of 22 November 2016 ‘On ratification of the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China on cooperation in fighting terrorism, separatism and extremism’

Passed by the SD on 11 November 2016, approved by the FC on 16 November 2016, signed by the President on 22 November 2016.

Federal Law hereby ratifies the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China on cooperation in fighting terrorism, separatism and extremism, signed in Beijing on 27 September 2010.

Federal Law no. 415-FZ of 19 December 2016 ‘On the 2017 Federal Budget and the 2018-2019 Budget Plan’

Passed by the SD on 9 December 2016, approved by the FC on 14 December 2016, signed by the President on 19 December 2016.

Federal Law sets out the key parameters of the 2017 Federal Budget and the 2018-2019 Budget Plan.

Federal Law no. 477-FZ of 28 December 2016 ‘On ratification of the Agreement between the Russian Federation and Republic of Armenia to establish a Joint Regional Air Defence System in the Caucasus region of collective security’

Passed by the SD on 14 December 2016, approved by the FC on 23 December 2016, signed by the President on 28 December 2016.

Federal Law hereby ratifies the Agreement between Russian Federation and Republic of Armenia to establish a Joint Regional Air Defence System in the Caucasus region of collective security.

Normative acts

Decree no. 10 of the President of 15 January 2016 ‘On amending the Decree no. 1062 of the President of 10 September

2005 ‘Issues of military-technical cooperation between the Russian Federation and foreign countries’ and the Regulations approved by this Decree

The document amends the Decree no. 1062 of the President of 10 September 2005 ‘Issues of military-technical cooperation between the Russian Federation and foreign countries’ and the Regulations approved by this Decree.

Order no. 36-R of the Government of 20 January 2016 ‘On signing the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Belarus about joint technical support for the regional force grouping of the Russian Federation and Republic of Belarus’

Order hereby approves a draft agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Belarus about joint technical support for the regional force grouping of the Russian Federation and Republic of Belarus prepared by the Ministry of Defence in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other concerned federal executive bodies.

Decree no. 95 of the President of 2 February 2016 ‘On approving the regulation on realization of the Military-Technical Cooperation Treaty between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan of 24 December 2013’

Decree hereby approves the Regulation on realization of the Military-Technical Cooperation Treaty between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan of 24 December 2013.

Decree no. 100 of the Government of 13 February 2016 ‘On amendments to the certain acts of the Government of the Russian Federation in terms of division of powers between federal executive bodies on mobilization and mobilization training’

Decree hereby approves amendments in terms of division of powers between federal executive bodies on mobilization and mobilization training.

Decree no. 137 of the Government of 26 February 2016 ‘On amendments to the list of documents which are submitted to the federal executive bodies by subjects of military-technical cooperation in agreeing on projects of the President of the Russian Federation, Government of the Russian Federation and (or) Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation on deliveries of military purpose products’

Decree hereby approves the applied amendments to the list of documents which are submitted to the federal executive bodies by subjects of military-technical cooperation in agreeing on projects of the President of the Russian Federation, Government of the Russian Federation and (or) Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation on deliveries of military purpose products. The list of documents was approved by the Decree no. 135 of the Government of 3 March 2007 ‘The list of documents which are submitted to the federal executive bodies by subjects of military-technical cooperation in agreeing on projects of the President of the Russian Federation, Government of the Russian Federation and (or) Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation on deliveries of military purpose products’.

Decree no. 149 of the President of 1 April 2016 ‘On amending the Regulations of the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation approved by the Decree no. 1082 of the President of the Russian Federation of 16 August 2004’

In accordance with the Decree the Regulations are amended and the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation is authorised to maintain and support the Joint Information System containing data about payments within the framework of the State Defence Order.

Executive Order no. 108-RP of the President of 1 May 2016 ‘On signing the protocol on amendments to the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus on joint defence of the Union State’s external border and airspace and on the establishment of the Russian-Belarusian united regional air defence system of 3 February 2009’

Russia's Defence Ministry, along with the Foreign Ministry, is instructed to hold talks with Belarusian officials and, once an agreement is reached, to sign the protocol on the Russian Federation's behalf, with permission to make the amendments approved by the Russian Government that are not of fundamental nature.

Decree no. 561 of the Government of 20 June 2016 'On procedure of the destruction of defence equipment'

Decree hereby establishes the procedure to organise and perform the destruction of defence equipment and approves the regulation on the procedure. The destruction of defence equipment is approved as an exceptional measure and applied to defence equipment that is economically inefficient and cannot be disposed due to its technical condition.

Executive Order no. 198-RP of the President of 7 July 2016 'On signing the protocol on measures aimed at cancellation of the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan on the conditions of use and rent of the Emba testing range (5580th testing grounds) by the Russian Federation's Defence Ministry of 20 January 1995 and the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan on rent of the Emba testing range (5580th testing grounds) by the Russian Federation's Defence Ministry of 18 October 1996'

Executive Order hereby approves the proposal of the Government of the Russian Federation to sign a protocol on measures aimed at cancellation of the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan on the conditions of use and rent of the Emba testing range (5580th testing grounds) by the Russian Federation's Defence Ministry of 20 January 1995 and the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan on rent of the Emba testing range (5580th testing grounds) by the Russian Federation's Defence Ministry of 18 October 1996.

Decree no. 329 of the President of 8 July 2016 'On the size of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation'

In accordance with the Decree the size of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation is 1,885,371 personnel including 1,000,000 military personnel.

Decree no. 387 of the President of 30 July 2016 ‘On amendments to the Regulations on the procedure for military-technical cooperation between the Russian Federation and foreign states and to the Regulations on the procedure for licensing of export and import of military purpose products approved by the Decree no. 1062 of the President of 10 September 2005’

In accordance with the Decree Regulations on the procedure for military-technical cooperation between the Russian Federation and foreign states and Regulations of licensing of export and import of military purpose products approved by the Decree no. 1062 of the President of 10 September 2005 are amended.

Decree no. 440 of the President of 26 August 2016 ‘On amendments to some acts of the President of the Russian Federation on the issues of military-technical cooperation between the Russian Federation and foreign states’

In accordance with the Decree organisations that develop and manufacture military purpose products which were granted the right for foreign trade of military purpose products before the entry into force of the amendments to the Federal Law no. 114-FZ of 19 July 2016 are allowed to fulfil existing obligations under foreign trade contracts. Also they can sign and fulfil the obligations under foreign trade contracts if they were commissioned by Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation before 1 July 2016.

Decree no. 510 of the President of 30 September 2016 ‘On the Russian Federation National Guard’

Decree hereby approves the Regulations on the Federal service of the Russian Federation National Guard.

Decree no. 511 of the President of 3 October 2016 ‘On suspending the Agreement between the Government of the Russian

Federation and the Government of the United States of America on the disposition of plutonium designated as no longer required for defence purposes, its use and cooperation in this field, and the protocols to the Agreement'

Decree hereby suspends the Agreement and the protocols to the Agreement after 120 days from the date of receiving a suspension notice in connection with the inability of the United States to fulfil its obligations for the disposal of excess weapons-grade plutonium and the need for urgent measures to protect the security of the Russian Federation. At the same time it is established that the plutonium covered by the Agreement is not used for the manufacture of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, research, development, design or testing related to such devices or for any other military purposes. The Decree comes into force on the day of its signing.

Order no. 2071-R of the Government of 4 October 2016 'On termination of the Implementing Agreement between the State Atomic Energy Corporation 'Rosatom' and the Department of Energy of the United States of America on cooperation in feasibility studies of the conversion of Russian research reactors to use low-enriched uranium fuel of 7 December 2010'

Order hereby approves the proposal to terminate the Implementing Agreement between the State Atomic Energy Corporation 'Rosatom' and the Department of Energy of the United States of America on cooperation in feasibility studies of the conversion of Russian research reactors to use low-enriched uranium fuel of 7 December 2010.

Order no. 2072-R of the Government of 4 October 2016 'On suspending the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the United States of America on cooperation in nuclear- and energy-related scientific research and development of 16 September 2013'

Order hereby suspends the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the United States of America on cooperation in nuclear- and energy-related scientific

research and development of 16 September 2013 in connection with the restrictions introduced by the United States on cooperation with the Russian Federation in the nuclear energy sector and according to Paragraph 1, Article 37 of Federal Law ‘On international treaties of the Russian Federation’.

Executive Order no. 359-RP of the President of 12 November 2016 ‘On signing the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Armenia on a Joint Group of Armed Forces of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Armenia’

Executive Order hereby approves the proposal of the Government of the Russian Federation on signing the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Armenia on a Joint Group of Armed Forces of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Armenia.

Executive Order no. 383-RP of the President of 28 November 2016 ‘On signing the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Uzbekistan on developing military-technical cooperation’

Executive Order hereby approves the proposal of the Government of the Russian Federation on signing the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Uzbekistan on developing military-technical cooperation.

Decree no. 640 of the President of 30 November 2016 ‘On approving the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation’

Decree hereby approves the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation. The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation approved by the President on 12 February 2013 (no. Pr-251) is hereby void.

Decree no. 646 of the President of 20 December 2016 ‘On approving the Doctrine of Information Security of the Russian Federation’

Decree hereby approves the Doctrine of Information Security of the Russian Federation. The Doctrine of Information Security of the Russian Federation approved by the President 9 September 2010 (no. Pr-1895) is hereby void.

Decree no. 697 of the President of 20 December 2016 ‘On approving the Basic principles of the Russian Federation’s state policy on civil defence for the period until 2030’

Decree hereby approves the Basic principles of the Russian Federation’s state policy on civil defence for the period until 2030.

Executive Order no. 423-RP of the President of 23 December 2016 ‘On signing the Protocol to the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Syrian Arab Republic on deploying an aviation group of the Russian Armed Forces on the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic of 26 August 2015’

Executive Order hereby approves the proposal of the Government of the Russian Federation on signing Protocol to the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Syrian Arab Republic on deploying an aviation group of the Russian Armed Forces on the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic of 26 August 2015.

Executive Order no. 424-RP of the President of 23 December 2016 ‘On signing the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Syrian Arab Republic on expanding the territory of the Russian Navy maintenance centre in the port of Tartus and on the arrival of Russian ships in the territorial sea, national waters and ports of the Syrian Arab Republic’

Executive Order hereby approves the proposal of the Government of the Russian Federation on signing the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Syrian Arab Republic on expanding the territory of the Russian Navy maintenance centre in the port of Tartus and on the arrival of Russian ships in the territorial sea, national waters and ports of the Syrian Arab Republic.

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