

PALACKÝ UNIVERSITY OLMOUC

Faculty of Philosophy

Department of Political Science and European Studies



Hana Vargová

SHAPING THE POST- SOVIET SPACE?

RUSSIAN INFLUENCE ON THE SECURITY POLICY MAKING IN THE FORMER USSR STATES

CASES OF ARMENIA AND BELARUS

Bachelor Thesis

Bachelor Thesis supervisor:

Mgr. Markéta Žídková, Ph.D., M.A.

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Autor práce: Vargová Hana

Vedúci práce: Mgr. Markéta Židková, Ph.D., M.A.

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Abstrakt v SJ:

Bakalárska práca sa zaoberá bezpečnostnou spoluprácou v post-sovietskom priestore. Hlavným cieľom je analyzovať vplyv ruskej zahraničnej politiky na vývojové trendy v bezpečnostnej politike Arménska a Bieloruska. Na príklade týchto dvoch krajín autorka demonštruje ako Rusko ovplyvňuje tvorbu bezpečnostnej politiky v daných krajinách prostredníctvom bilaterálnych a multilaterálnych nástrojov a ako sa tento vplyv odráža vo vzájomnom pôsobení s ďalšími aktérmi na poli medzinárodných vzťahov. Práca je písaná v anglickom jazyku.

Abstrakt v AJ:

This presented Thesis deals with the security cooperation in the post- Soviet space. The main goal is to examine the impact of the Russian foreign policy on the developments in the area of security in Armenia and Belarus. On the example of these two post- Soviet countries, the author demonstrates, how Russia has been affecting the security policy making in the above mentioned states by means of bilateral and multilateral instruments and how this influence has reflected in the interaction with other players. The Thesis is written in English.

Kľúčové slová v SJ:

Rusko, Arménsko, Bielorusko, bezpečnosť, integrácia, bilaterálny, multilaterálny, spolupráca, CIS, CSTO, ECU

Kľúčové slová v AJ:

Russia, Armenia, Belarus, security, integration, bilateral, multilateral, cooperation, CIS, CSTO, ECU

Rozsah: 49s.

Declaration on the word of honour of the author

I hereby declare, that I elaborated this Bachelor Thesis independently, based on the given sources and literature.

In Bratislava, 2013-04-23

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Introduction

This presented Thesis deals with the security cooperation in the post- Soviet space. The main goal is to examine the impact of the Russian foreign policy on the developments in the area of security in Armenia and Belarus. On the example of these two post- Soviet countries, the author will try to demonstrate, how Russia has been affecting the security policy making in the above mentioned states by means of bilateral and multilateral instruments and how this influence has reflected in the interaction with other players.

The main argument of the this Thesis is that, although Russia lost its hegemony over Armenia and Belarus after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, it remains even after two decades the most important player in the post-Soviet region. Russia still maintains influence in the shaping of the foreign and security policy of the two referred states. In order to maintain its status Russia uses international security structures and bilateral relations.

The research will focus on the multilateral and bilateral instruments Russia employs in order to maintain its influence in Armenia and Belarus and in the whole post-Soviet region in general. Among the multilateral tools most important are the international integration projects designed by Russia, above all the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO). The most recent Russian project, Eurasian Union (ECU) will be also discussed, although the security dimension is not the main focus of the organization. However, it seems to be very ambitious and promising integration effort in the future and will include Belarus for sure and possibly Armenia. In the area of bilateral relations, the agreements between Russia and Armenia, as well as between Russia and Belarus will be included in the research.

Russia is the most powerful and influential state in the post- Soviet region and it has to be taken into account in every study of the post- Soviet states. Even after the breakdown of the Soviet Union, most of the states from the former Soviet block, with few exceptions, remain under the sphere of interest and influence of the Russian federation. CIS, CSTO, ECU, but also bilateral projects such as Union State Russia – Belarus and other two-party agreements represent Russian tools operated to maintain its power in many fields in the region. Armenia and Belarus are illustrations of how this Russian intention works, because both countries count as very close allies of Russia, although each of them has different

background. This is exactly why in the following analysis these two cases were taken as the examples.

Why do these states accept and welcome the Russian involvement in their national policy making? Armenia's unfriendly geopolitical situation compels the country towards keeping close political, economic and security ties with Russia. Armenia views Russian interest as a mean of protecting itself against its neighbours. Within the CIS Russia has the closest military relation with Armenia. Belarus is situated on European periphery and is traditionally a close ally of Russia and a transit country for the export of oil and gas from Russia to Europe and to the Russian exclave in Kaliningrad. In the Russian-Belarus Union just the defence union has been relatively successful, while other aspects (economic and political) have lacked much achievement.

The Thesis shall answer the following main research questions: Under which geopolitical circumstances have Armenia and Belarus developed their security policy? To what extend has Russia kept its influence in these countries in the area of security policy? Which bilateral and multilateral tools does Russia use in order to maintain its influence? Which of them have been comparatively more fruitful with regard to this Russian intention?

The methodological approach includes descriptive analysis and a comparison of the two cases, Armenia and Belarus. A dependent variable is represented by the degree of Russian influence in the area of security policy in Armenia and Belarus, which is exactly the phenomenon this paper is intended to explain. An arbitrary variable in this case would be the degree of interlacing between Armenia and Belarus, on the one side, and Russia, on the other side, which is manifested in the bilateral cooperation as well as in the integration of the mentioned countries in the regional security groupings. Another variable which can intervene in the research of the relations pointed out is the engagement of other international players: in the Armenian Case it is important to refer to the United States in particular, as well as the European Union and Iran, while in the case of Belarus mainly the European Union.

The Paper is divided into three main chapters. In the first theoretical chapter it will be outlined the traditional concept of security in international relations, the regional security concept according to the Copenhagen School and the collective security and defence in international relations. The purpose of this chapter is to explain the security cooperation between Russia as a former hegemonic power with the former members of the Soviet Union from a theoretical perspective.

The second chapter is divided into three subheads. In the first one, the author will discuss the Russian policy towards post- Soviet countries¹ in the so called Near Abroad² and the general idea of the current Russian foreign security policy will be outlined. In the second subhead, the Belorussian case will be discussed, its geopolitical situation, the development of its defence policy and the role of Alexander Lukashenka. The third subhead deals with the Armenian geopolitical situation, where the author will outline the conflict issues and the development of its defence policy and in this context will also examine the bilateral relations maintained with Russia.

The third chapter aims to demonstrate how the cooperation between Russia and the post- Soviet countries mentioned in the first chapter reflects in the integration projects that emerged after the breakdown of the USSR. Here, the author will define the formal character of the regional organisations CIS and CSTO, which means that the purpose of this part is to create the framework based on the founding documents and charters of the international organizations, in which Armenia, Belarus and Russia participate as member states. This chapter deals with the structure, main goals and activities of security cooperation organizations, first of all with the formal framework of CIS and CSTO and their managing bodies. The description of the formal side of CIS and CST (O) will be followed by the most important practical activities, which have been conducted by these organizations. In the third subhead in this chapter, the Eurasian Union will be briefly discussed, since it is a new project proposed in 2011. The Belarusian and Armenian attitudes will be mentioned. In this chapter, the engagement of Armenia and Belarus in the regional security cooperation and structures will be discussed.

In the desk research conducted for the purpose of this bachelor Thesis the author used both primary sources and secondary literature on this topic so as to bring an alternative view and to confront the normative acknowledgments with the reality.

This Paper was partially written in Austria while working at the Austrian Institute for European and Security Policy and partially in Bratislava while working at the Belgian

¹ The Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) are excluded, they are members of the European Union and don't participate in any security cooperation with Russia.

² *Near Abroad* (*Blizhneye Zarubezhye* in Russian) as a term was used for the first time by former Russian foreign minister Andrey Kozyrev in 1992 and refers to newly independent republics which emerged after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Sometimes also the term *Near foreign countries* is used. Adopted from: <http://www.nytimes.com/1994/05/22/magazine/on-language-the-near-abroad.html> (17.01.2013). Though no longer normally employed in official statements, „Near Abroad“ can still be found in the Russian academic and popular press.

Embassy and in the Representation Office of the European Commission in Slovakia. All these institutions provided the author good sources useful for the writing of this Thesis.

Systematic research focused on recent development of post-Soviet space security integration is not very frequent in our countries (meaning Czech Republic and Slovakia), although there are some works worth reference. Many of the most prominent political scientists dealing with Russia, geopolitics in the post-Soviet space and South Caucasus work as lecturers and research fellows at the Charles University in Prague, more specifically at the Institute for Political Studies there. In the foreground could be mentioned Emil Souleimanov, whose regional focus is on The Caucasus, Russia, Turkey, to some extent also post-Soviet space, Iran, and the Turkic world with special focus on security and conflict studies. In 2007 there was published a collective volume adjusted by Souleimanov under the title *Rusko a postsovětský prostor* (Russia and the post-Soviet space). One of the articles in that volume was written by two lecturers from Palacky University in Olomouc bearing the title *Bělorusko-ruské spojenectví po roce 1991 a jeho další perspektivy* (Belarusian – Russian alliance after 1991 and its further perspectives) written by Markéta Židková and Jakub Dürr.

His very recent book *Understanding Ethnopolitical Conflict: The Karabakh, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia Wars Reconsidered* explores the causes and dynamics of ethnic conflict and civil war, distinguishing between onset-based and process-based theories. In his other works the Chechnya conflict is often present, but he also devotes to the Azerbaijani separatism and nationalism in Iran, energy security concept or recognition of the Armenian genocide as a political phenomenon and he has written a lot of papers on these topics.

Other scientist also from Prague is Slavomír Horák, from the Department of Russian and East-European Studies, who deals with Central Asia and Caucasus, energy security but also with Afghanistan and Iran. He is an author and co-author of many books and articles, among the most recent ones regarding Central Asia could be mentioned *Rusko a Střední Asie po roce 1991* (Russia and Central Asia after 1991) published in 2008 and the forthcoming book *Dějiny Uzbekistánu* (History of Uzbekistan) is to be published in 2013.

Together with Souleimanov and Horák, Michael Romancov is a Prague scientist who focuses on Russian geopolitics, relations with Asia and Central Europe, but also on the region of Caucasus. Exactly in the last mentioned field Romancov's forthcoming book *Jižní Kavkaz v bezpečnostní perspektivě* (South Caucasus in the security perspective) will be for sure a big

contribution to the current spectra of literature of the Czech origin dealing with the security in this region.

From the political scientists at the Masaryk University in Brno, it is necessary to mention at least the work of Petra Kuchyňková and Tomáš Šmíd. From the cooperation of these two authors emerged the book *Rusko jako geopolitický aktér v postsovětském prostoru* (Russia as a geopolitical player in the post- Soviet space) published by International Department of Political Science at the Masaryk University in Brno in 2006. This publication gives a good geopolitical overview regarding all post-Soviet countries with the exception of Baltic States.

To conclude the list of Czech political scientists, who deal at a certain level with Russia and post- Soviet space, Vladimír Baar from the University of Ostrava should be named too, although his field of interest is more on geography in the mentioned region he wrote also two books on the geopolitics of the post- Soviet area.

There are considerably less political scientists dealing with Russia, post- Soviet space, Caucasus and security issues in this area in Slovakia than in Czech Republic. This state is caused by the lack of interest about this topic in political science departments at the Slovak universities. However, Peter Plenta, PhD. candidate at the Comenius University in Bratislava focuses on Russia and foreign policy in Central Asia and its influence on regime legitimacy and the relations between Central Asia and the European Union. Regarding security cooperation in the framework of the CSTO and the role of Uzbekistan, he wrote recently an article *Uzbekistan's play with fire?*, where he analyses the reasons and the consequences of the Uzbekistan's repeated withdrawal from the organisation in 2012.

The diplomacy and international relations department at the University Mateja Bela in Banská Bystrica is considered as one of the best ones in Slovakia and its students at all academic degrees work on many projects. Regarding the nature of this Thesis it is necessary to mention at least project ARES, the associate fellows write analyses about the global security issues and conflicts. From time to time they also produce some papers about Russian energy policy and about Russian – Belarusian alliance. One of the most active contributors on that topic is a PhD. candidate, Andrej Vaščik. In 2008 Norbert Bozóky wrote under the auspices of the same project a reflection about the separatism in the region of Caucasus. However, the focus areas of this project does not exactly correspond with the ones of this Thesis, so therefore is this source quite poor.

Because of the limited access to the sources in Slovak or in Czech language, these form only marginal part of all the sources used by the author. The bibliography is therefore composed by sources and literature of English, German or Spanish origin. The author's insufficient knowledge of Russian language limits the use of the sources of Russian origin. The primary sources are Charters and agreements establishing regional organizations as Charter establishing the Commonwealth of Independent States and Collective Security Treaty Agreement. For a formal security policy tendencies and acknowledgments, security and military strategies of Russia, Armenia and Belarus, available from the web- pages of defence ministries, were very useful.

Among the English bibliography, the following books and articles need to be emphasized: To achieve a comprehensive understanding of the security in the international relations, the book of Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* was chosen. These two representatives of the Copenhagen School of security studies came with the concept of Regional Security Complex applied on various regions in the world, amongst them, on the regional security complex around Russia.

Marcel de Haas's book *Russian foreign security policy in the 21st century* provides broader outlook aimed at understanding of Russian security policy in the 2000s. The research of the author is based on the analysis of the Russia's basic security documents.

As a complementary source of information discussing the topic of Russian engagement in the post- Soviet space, the book *Russian Foreign Policy: The Return of Great Power Politics* by Jeffrey Mankoff offered a good overview. Author analyses current Russian position and conducted policies in the international relations. For the purpose of this paper, the most useful chapter was *Back on the Offensive? The Former Soviet Union*.

Research studies and papers published by think- tanks and research institutes form the most important part of the bibliography used in this bachelor Thesis. On this place is desirable to mention The Jamestown Foundation, which provides up-to-date information but also deep studies about the issues from Eurasia and China. The prominent senior fellow from the Eurasia program is Roger McDermott. He specializes in Russian and Central Asian defence and security issues and has published many articles on this topic.

Another significant think tank dealing with the policy of Russian federation and of the states around Russia in Eurasia is Moscow Carnegie Center. There are many projects carried

on in the institute, for instance *War and Peace in the Caucasus* amongst many others. The scholars contributing to the research are personalities like Alexander Malashenko, Dmitri Trenin, Thomas de Waal and others publishing articles on the events development in the Caucasus region. In the field of Russian policy towards Belarus, the research is conducted by Matthew Rojansky, Olga Shumylo-Tapiola, Sam Green and others besides the already mentioned authors.

Other useful source proved to be the research papers and overviews written by the Spanish expert and research fellow at the *Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos* (Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies) with the specialization on the post- Soviet space and Russian relationship with this region, Francisco José Ruiz González, like *Conflictos en el espacio postsoviético: Situación actual y posible evolución futura* (The Conflicts in the Post-Soviet Space: Current Situation and Possible future development) or *La Rusia Caucásica y la Relación de la Federación con el Cáucaso Sur* (Russia in the Caucasus and the relationship between the Federation and the South Caucasus) and various papers with focus on Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict. More articles from the same author were published in Spanish Journal of Defence (*Revista Española de Defensa*) and proved to be very useful for the purpose of this Thesis, *La Cooperación multilateral en la Esfera Postsoviética* (The Multilateral Cooperation in the Post-Soviet Space) and *El Papel de Rusia en las Relaciones Armenia- Azerbaiyán* (The Role of Russia in the Armenia-Azerbaijani relations).,

Various studies published by the European Union Institute for Security Studies, written by the most prominent experts on security (ISS) are traditionally on very high qualitative level. Among all the fellows could be mentioned Andrei Zagorski whose article *Russia and the shared neighbourhood* addresses Russian policies towards the six newly independent states of the former Soviet Union that have been included in the European Neighbourhood Policy (Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia). Other research fellows contributing to the so called Chaillot Papers³ are occupied with the post-Soviet space, more specifically with foreign policy of Belarus are Clelia Rontoyanni and her article *Belarusian foreign policy* and Dmitri Trenin's *Moscow's Relations with Belarus: An awkward ally* published in the Chaillot Paper n° 85 (2005) called *Changing Belarus*. The topic of South Caucasus is discussed in the Chaillot Paper n° 65 (2003). *A regional security*

³ Institute's flagship publications, written by external experts as well as the Institute's research fellows, and based on collective work or individual research, they deal with all subjects of current relevance to the Union's security. Adapted from: <http://www.iss.europa.eu/publications/chaillot-papers/> (18.01.2013)

dynamic written by Dov Lynch provides a brief introduction into the region, states, geopolitics and external factors, meanwhile Pavel Baev in his *Russia's policies in the North and South Caucasus* analyses Russia's engagement in the region.

In the field of the integration projects in the post- Soviet space various articles and papers were a big contribution. Among them could be mentioned the study *Russlands Politik in Osteuropa: Konkurrenz und Konflikte mit der Europäischen Union* (Russian Policy in Eastern Europe: Competition and Conflicts with the European Union) by Hannes Adomeit from International Institute of Liberal Policy in Vienna. The most useful chapter was *Integrationsprojekte im postsowjetischen Raum* (Integration projects in the post- Soviet space) where the author summarizes and shortly describes all the integration projects, more interest is then dedicated to the role and engagement of Ukraine and Belarus.

For making a complex view on the security in the region with the connection of the powers was used among others also the article from Rumanian specialist on Russia's foreign policy in the CIS, Irina Ionela Pop: *Russia, EU, NATO and the Strengthening of the CSTO in Central Asia*. Good source of information and further references was a Master's thesis of Brynhidur Ingimarsdóttir from the University of Iceland with the title *Collective Security Treaty Organisation and NATO: "Never the twain shall meet"*.

Annette Bohr, an expert in the field of geopolitics in Central Asia, focuses in her article *Regionalism in Central Asia: new geopolitics, old regional order*, published in International Affairs at the first place on the Central Asian states, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, but refers also to the security integration projects in this region and therefore is this article for the purpose of this work relevant too.

Concerning the bilateral relations of Belarus and Russian Federation in the framework of integration projects, several studies provide analysis in this field. The article *The State of the Union: Military Success, Economic and Political Failure in the Russia- Belarus Union* by Ruth Deyermann published in Europe – Asia Studies in 2004 or Audrius Žulys's article in the magazine Lithuanian Foreign Policy, *Towards A Union State of Russia and Belarus*. Deeper analysis did Dr. Kaare Dahl Martinsen from the Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies in June 2002, in her study *The Russian- Belarusian Union and the Near Abroad*.

Generally it could be stated, that a complex research focusing on Russian influence on security policy making in these particular countries, meaning Armenia and Belarus, does not exist in the present. In the existing studies, both countries are listed together in the framework

of CIS, CSTO or merely like post- Soviet countries, otherwise as EU partners in the European Eastern Partnership program⁴. The relations between Russia and Belarus, as well as between Belarus and the European Union, are often an object of research, either in the energy or human rights context regarding the current regime in Belarus. Empirically observed, the development of the Russian relationship with Belarus is slightly more complicated and turbulent as the one with Armenia. Armenia is a traditional Russian ally and this alliance is produced partially by economic and partially by security interests. Besides, Armenia has a specific relation and also conflicts with the neighbouring countries and these become objects of research. Moreover, the influence and involvement of Armenian Diaspora in the Middle East, Europe, North America and Russia is certainly not negligible.

⁴In 2004 the EU introduces the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) as an instrument to regulate its relations with its new neighbours. In the framework of the ENP, the European Commission put forward concrete measures for enhancing EU's relations with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Adopted from: http://eeas.europa.eu/eastern/index_en.htm (20.01.2013)

However, mutual talks between EU and Belarus are on the stalemate lately because of the measures which are being adopted by the ruling authorities in Belarus and are unacceptable for the EU.

1. Theoretical Framework

In all discussions about security situation in the post- Soviet space, it is important to define firstly, what is the exact meaning of the term of security in international relations. The purpose of this Thesis is to examine the security environment with regards to military security and defence, therefore other fields of security will not be included in the research.⁵ Firstly, it is necessary to define the concept of security in international relations and to describe the security environment in the given region from the theoretical perspective. For this reason, this chapter will define the term of security in international relations and how was it was approached by some of the most influential experts in the field of international relations, such as classical author Arnold Wolfers or the American author best known thanks to his designation of the concept of Cold War, Walter Lipmann. This will be the content of the first subhead.

As in every research in political science, also in this case we encounter a difficulty, namely how to approach theoretically the problem we want to explain. With this issue deals the second subhead in this chapter, more specifically explaining the relations between Russia as a former hegemonic power and the former USSR states more than twenty years later. The concept of Regional Security Complex in the comprehension of the Copenhagen School is very useful for this purpose and will be also used as an additional tool by clarifying the base of the relations between Russia and Belarus and Russia and Armenia.

Because this Thesis aims to analyse the Russian influence on security policy making in the given countries based not only on the bilateral tools, but also on the multilateral cooperation and integration projects, it is essential to settle the principles and the fundamentals of the concept of collective security and collective defence in international relations. Addressing this issue makes the objective of the third subhead of this chapter. The outlined concept of collective security and defence will be used afterwards with the purpose of defining the regional security cooperation projects in the fourth subhead. The character of the regional groupings focused on security cooperation in a larger or smaller extent depends on the each organisation. Although the intention of the Paper is to focus on the CIS and CSTO in the first place⁶, it is important to at least mention and define other integration and cooperation projects which have emerged in this area, because these comprise either some of

⁵ Energy, financial, cyber security etc.

⁶ Because of the membership of all three examined countries, i.e. Russian Federation, Armenia and Belarus.

the surrounding countries⁷ or regional powers like Russia and China⁸ and this influences the security dynamic in the whole region.

1.1. Traditional Concept of Security in International Relations

The traditional concept of security in international relations generally refers to the national security. Max Weber's traditional definition of state requires as a necessary condition the monopoly on the use or licensing of violence within a given territory. The security of states was therefore threatened by any change that might threaten that monopoly of violence—whether through external invasion or internal rebellion.⁹ In Walter Lippmann's words, “*a nation is secure to the extent to which it is not in danger of having to sacrifice core values, if it wishes to avoid war, and is able, if challenged, to maintain them by victory in such war.*”¹⁰ This definition implies that security rises or falls with the nation's ability to deter or defeat an attack. In the classic essay by Arnold Wolfers published more than sixty years ago, security is defined as a value of which a nation can have more or less and which it can aspire to have in greater or lesser measure. A nation's security can run a wide gamut from almost complete insecurity or sense of insecurity at one pole, to almost complete security or absence of fear at the other.¹¹ He defines two kinds of security: “*security, in an objective sense, measures the absence of threats to acquired values, in a subjective sense, the absence of fear that such values will be attacked*”. At the same time, Wolfers adds, that security and power would be synonymous terms if security could be attained only through the accumulation of power, which is not the case.¹² Since Wolfers' definition of security was offered, writers have often failed in offering any other definition.¹³

⁷ For example in the Armenian case, Azerbaijan is member of some of them.

⁸ Both are members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

⁹ SACHS, Stephen, E.: *The Changing Definition of Security*. International Relations 5 Term 2003, Merton College Oxford. http://www.stevesachs.com/papers/paper_security.html (21.01.2013)

¹⁰ Lippmann quoted in WOLFERS, Arnold: *National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol*. Political Science Quarterly, Vol.67, No.4. 1952, pp.484- 502.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² The fear of attack- security in the subjective sense- is also not proportionate to the relative power position of a nation. Wolfers puts as an example some weak states which consider themselves more secure than the United States does.

¹³ BALDWIN, David, A.: *The concept of security*. Review of International Studies 23. 1997pp: 11. <http://tau.ac.il/~daniel/pdf/37.pdf> (21.01.2013).

1.2. Regional Security Concept in the Comprehension of the Copenhagen School

Traditionally, especially during the Cold War era, two levels dominated security analysis, national and global. The Copenhagen School raised attention upon a third level of analysis, the regional one. The Copenhagen School was a label given to the collective research agenda of various academics at the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute centred on B. Buzan and O'Wæver's work. They argue that in the post-Cold world the international relations have more a regionalised character and therefore we should switch our focus on regions for security analysis. According to their opinion, political and military threats travel more easily over short distances and insecurity is often associated with proximity.¹⁴ Based on these arguments, they propose, that a better way to understand international society is a regional one. Buzan argues that the core of the international society is still the West¹⁵ and the rest should be viewed in terms of regions in order to understand the differences between the western way of thinking about some issues and the regions' way of doing so.¹⁶ They use three main concepts: *securitization*, *security sectors* and *regional security complex*. Other concepts they work with are *desecuritization*, *facilitating conditions* and *securitizing move*. The Concept of *securitization* was outlined by Wæver in 1995 and refers to the discursive construction of threat, a process in which an actor declares a particular issue, dynamic or actor to be an existential threat to a particular referent object. On the other hand, *desecuritization* means the process whereby particular issues or actors are removed from the security realm and re-enter the realm of normal politics.¹⁷ Copenhagen scholars wanted to broaden the definition of security and include a neglected range of concerns such as environmental change, poverty or human rights in the state security agenda. As an answer to this call, Barry Buzan defined five *security sectors*: military, political, economical, societal and environmental.

One of the most important concepts outlined by the Copenhagen School is the *Regional Security Complex Theory*, first sketched by Barry Buzan in *People, States and Fear* (1983). The original definition of regional security complex (RSC) was that it is a "*set of states whose major security perceptions and concerns are so interlinked that their national*

¹⁴ Most states fear their neighbours more than distant powers.

¹⁵ Historical meaning, the non- Communist states of Europe and North America contrasted with the former Communist states of Eastern Europe. Adopted from: <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/west> (21.01.2013)

¹⁶ BUZAN, B., WAEVER, O., DE WILDE J.: *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. 1998. p. 10.

¹⁷ Ibid.

security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart to another".¹⁸ Later he proposed the second definition, which is basically the first one, but revised: the RSC is a "*set of units whose major processes securitization, desecuritization or both are so interlinked, that their security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from one another*".¹⁹ According to Buzan and Wæver, regional security complex theory uses a blend of materialist and constructivist approaches.²⁰ According to its promoters, the RSCT is useful, because, among others, tells something about the appropriate level of analysis in security studies and offers some organisation to empirical studies. Based on empirical examples it could be stated, that RSCs are influenced by patterns of amity and enmity²¹ and by penetration of the global powers into the RSC.²² The formation of the RSC derives from the interplay of the anarchic structure and its balance-of-power consequences and the pressure of local geographical proximity. That means, that by all RSC could be following variables defined: *boundary* (which differentiates the RSC from its neighbours), *anarchic structure* (RSC must be composed of two or more autonomous units), *polarity* (there must be a distribution of power among the units) and *social construction* (covers the pattern of amity and enmity among the units). These attributes implicate, that not any group of states can be seen as a RSC. In order to qualify as a RSC a group of states or entities must possess a degree of security interdependence, which is sufficient both to establish them as a linked set and to differentiate them from surrounding security regions.

Buzan and Wæver proved that the concept of RSC can be applied to the post- Soviet space, because it fulfils the conditions stated above and they described a regional security complex around Russia in the book *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, published in 2003. The regional security complex is clearly centred on a great power. Russia was until recently, in the period of USSR a superpower and is still a great power. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, in 1991 most of the countries declared independence and in December, Russia, Ukraine and Belarus proclaimed the Commonwealth of Independent States. It was then when the Soviet Union ceased to exist. Much of the history

¹⁸ Ibid. P. 12.

¹⁹ Ibid.p.44.

²⁰ The materialist side is close to realism and uses ideas of bounded territoriality and distribution of power. The constructivist side uses the securitization theory that focuses on the political processes by which security issues get constituted.

²¹ Local RSC can be affected by historical factors like long-standing enmities or the common cultural embrace of a civilisation area.

²² BUZAN, Barry-WAEVER, Ole: *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*. Cambridge Studies in International Relations. 2003.p.45.

of this area is about the shifting tides of a Moscow- centred polity.²³ However some of the other now- independent states also have (or are in the process of building) their own states histories. The evolution of the security dynamic in the region after the dismantling of the Soviet Union will be outlined in the second chapter bearing in mind the character of this paper, thus with special focus on Armenia and Belarus, but naturally in the geopolitical context.

1.3. Concept of Collective Security and Defence in International Relations

The concept of *collective security* in international relations is quite old, it was sketched for instance by Immanuel Kant in his *Perpetual Peace* from 18th century, where he proposed a league of nations which would control conflict and promote peace among states. Basically, the collective security means a system in which states have attempted to prevent or stop wars. Under a collective security arrangement, an aggressor against any one state is considered an aggressor against all other states, which act together to repel the aggressor.²⁴ Anyway, according to Danchin, the concept of *collective security* is “notoriously difficult to define, as the term is associated with a loose set of assumptions and ideas and its continued existence remains a contested concept.”²⁵

In the category of collective security organisations one can classify the League of Nations and the United Nations (UN), as both are based on the principles of collective security. As outlined, the concept of collective security has a long history, but it has been proved, in the case of League of Nations²⁶ and partially also in the case of UN²⁷ that it can also have certain inefficiency.

Whereas collective security organisations have as their main goal to promote and maintain peace, collective defence organisations have mostly the form of military alliances. As an exemplar case of military alliance is often used the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). The principle of collective defence is enshrined in Article 5 of the North Atlantic

²³ Baev, Trenin, Lieven quoted in Buzan, Weaver: *Regions and Powers...*op.cit. p. 401.

²⁴ Adopted from: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/125567/collective-security> (22.01.2013)

²⁵ DANCHIN, P.G.: *Things Fall Apart: The Concept of Collective Security in International Law*. In: Danchin, P.G- Fisher, H. (eds.): *United Nations Reform and the New Collective Security*. Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp: 40.

²⁶ Incapability to prevent the World War II and consecutive downfall of the organisation.

²⁷ UN failings and inefficiency in combating poverty or interminable negotiations in the case of intervention in Libya in 2011.

Treaty. It provides that if a NATO Ally is the victim of an armed attack, each and every other member of the Alliance will consider this act of violence as an armed attack against all members and will take the actions it deems necessary to assist the Ally attacked.²⁸

1.4. Character of Security Cooperation Projects in Post- Soviet Space

Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), founded in 1991 by Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, is a **regional organisation**, which is formed by some of the former Soviet Republics. According to the Charter adopted in 1993, the purpose of the CIS is “*to maintain cooperation between member states in political, economic, environmental, humanitarian, cultural and security sphere*”.²⁹ This implies, that formally the engagement of the member states in the field of security forms just part (although an important one) of the broader agenda of the organisation.

Collective security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), founded in 2003 could be considered as an **regional military alliance**. The Article 2 of the Treaty on Collective Security (1992) justifies this characteristics by this declaration: “*In case a threat to security, territorial integrity and sovereignty of one or several Member States or a threat to international peace and security Member States will immediately put into action the mechanism of joined consultations with the aim to coordinate their positions and take measures to eliminate the threat that has emerged.*”³⁰ Simultaneously Article 4 stipulates the following: “*In case an act of aggression is committed against any of the Member States all the others Member States will provide it with necessary assistance, including military one, as well as provide support with the means at their disposal in exercise of the right to collective defence in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter.*”³¹ The CSTO comprises, as of today, six member states: Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan. Most recently left the organisation Uzbekistan in 2012.

To create a complex view on the region from the perspective of international (security) cooperation, one has to mention also the *Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)*, formed

²⁸ Adopted from: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_59378.htm (22.01.2013)

²⁹ *Charter Establishing the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) 1993*. Article 2. Available from: <http://www.dipublico.com.ar/english/charter-establishing-the-commonwealth-of-independent-states-cis/> (22.01.2013)

³⁰ *Treaty on Collective Security 1992*. Adopted from: http://www.odkb.gov.ru/start/index_aengl.htm (22.01.2013)

³¹ *Ibid.*

in 2001³² by China and Russia with four former Soviet Central Asian republics: Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Observer states now include Mongolia, Iran, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Belarus and Sri Lanka are considered as a dialogue partners. Moscow and Beijing established the SCO in response to the growing US intervention in Central Asia, signalled by the US-led invasion of Afghanistan under the name of the “war on terror”. SCO could be considered as an **intergovernmental security organisation**.³³

In addition to the sub- regional groupings formed either wholly or primarily within the CIS space, the 1990s saw also other initiatives. To finish the brief overview of the security cooperation in the post- Soviet region, two more projects have to be mentioned although their real impact and influence on the security situation is disputable.

GUAM Group (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova) also called GUAM Organization for Democracy and Economic Development, originally founded as GUUAM (Uzbekistan withdrew in 2005) was formally created in 1997 as a **political economic and strategic alliance** uniting some of those CIS countries that opted to remain outside the Russian dominated CSTO.³⁴ GUAM is even less organized than CIS and Russian leaders see it as a ‘Trojan horse’, ‘anti-CIS’ and ‘anti-Russian’.³⁵

The Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) is included in the paper because although is not an institutionalized organisation, but an **intergovernmental forum**, it presents a kind of cooperation in the field of security in the examined area and therefore it is partially relevant in this context. CICA was created according to the Kazakh proposal in 1992, for enhancing cooperation towards enhancing peace, security and stability in Asia. As of today, the members are Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Cambodia, China, Egypt, India, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Palestine, Republic of Korea, Russia, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan and Vietnam.³⁶

³² Precursor of the SCO was the Shanghai Five created in 1996 formed by Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

³³ CHAN, John (): *Global Tensions Overshadow Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Summit*. World Socialist Website, 2012. <http://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2012/12/14/scos-d14.html> (23.01.2013)

³⁴ BOHR, Anette: *Regionalism in Central Asia: New Geopolitics, Old Regional Order*. International Affairs 80,3,2004. pp: 486-487.

³⁵ Buzan, Weaver : *Regions and Powers...op.cit.* p. 413.

³⁶ Adopted from: http://www.s-cica.org/page.php?page_id=7&lang=1 (23.01.2013)

2. Russian Foreign and Security Policy in the Post-Soviet Space After the Dissolution of the USSR

The purpose of this chapter, as noted at the beginning of the Thesis is to outline the main evolution lines of the Russian foreign security policy in the post-Soviet region. Firstly, the engagement of Russian Federation in the whole region will be briefly discussed, since the events and many issues occurring within the states have very often interstate character and therefore are inseparable from each other. The basis of the concept of Russian policy ‘Near Abroad’ will be explained. This part presents the real and practical application of the RSC concept on the security development in the region as outlined in the theoretical chapter. Afterwards in the two subheads the bilateral relations between Russia, Armenia and Belarus will be analysed and the author’s aim is to find out how these influence the security policy making in the given states.

2.1. Security Challenges in the Post-Soviet region, Near Abroad and the Role of Russia

Situated on the European and Asian periphery, Russia’s leaders have to shape an effective security policy: to act as a hegemonic power in its immediate neighbourhood, to maintain strategic nuclear parity with the US, to secure its borders and to cope with the current economic crisis is a difficult task.³⁷

Bobo Lo, visiting research fellow at the Carnegie Moscow Center defines four major determinants of Russian foreign policy in the post-Soviet era: the search for identity, perception of the global environment, the nexus between external and domestic politics and the institutional context.³⁸ All these factors have influenced Russian foreign policy since the breakdown of the USSR.

In the first two or three year period after the dissolution of the USSR, the Russian foreign policy had a clear Western orientation.³⁹ However, this policy led to criticism for a lack of really Russian foreign policy. The idea of the foreign policy orientation towards Near Abroad started to emerge in 1992 and became an official policy in 1993. The post-Soviet republics

³⁷ DIMITRIAKOPOLOU, Sophia – LIAROPOULOS, Andrew : *Russia’s National Security Strategy to 2020 : A Great Power In the Making ?*. Caucasian Review of International Affairs, Vol.4(1)- Winter 2010. http://www.cria-online.org/10_4.html (25.03.2013).

³⁸ LO, Bobo: *Russian Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: Reality, Illusion and Mythmaking*. Carnegie Moscow Center, Russia. 2002. p. 38.

³⁹ So called „Diplomacy of smiles“ during the period of Kozyrev as foreign minister.

were defined as a Russian sphere of interest, partially justified by the need to protect Russian minorities and partly in terms of economic interests.⁴⁰ The period of independency in the post-Soviet states shows, that none of those states except Baltic states has been really successful in terms of economic reform and growth and all of them have experienced serious drops in GDP, crime, social problems and disintegrative processes. In spite of that, the only republic which has sought directly a return to union and seemingly gave up independence was Belarus.⁴¹ It can be stated, that the 'Near Abroad' is the most obvious arena, where Russia might define its mission and it has also the other meaning, because having influence in larger geographical area makes it easier for Russia to be recognized at the global level as a great power. The level of the 'Near Abroad' is therefore a crucial arena and the ultimate measure is the global level.⁴²

During the Yeltsin era, Russia achieved nuclear-free Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan. But the 1990s was the period of shaping the Russian domestic and also foreign and security policy, the transformation phase of transition. Russia experienced the ruble crisis in 1998 and this fact influenced also her engagement outwards in that time, but in the following years, Russian GDP has grown and since 2000, has strengthen her foreign policy position. This strengthening of the position in the international arena was caused not only by the positive changes in the economy, but also thanks to the personal diplomacy of the new president Putin. During his first term in office, Putin carried out an upgrading of national security, military and foreign policy concepts to ensure Russia's progress toward a multidirectional, balanced and pragmatic external strategy.⁴³ Under Putin's leadership Russia abandoned the "Near Abroad" rhetoric⁴⁴, but that does not mean, that abandoned all its assumptions. Russia acted as a status quo power, which is no longer able to prevent or resist the rise of change.⁴⁵ After the Beslan school hostage crisis, Russia saw terrorism as the main threat and put forward a complex program for the development of antiterrorist cooperation.⁴⁶ But Moscow quickly realized, that Russia faced maybe even more serious threats than terrorism: extremist Islamic support for Chechen and other separatists and terrorists in the Caucasus; the split of the CIS after the "colour revolutions" in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan, Russia's own difficulties with some CIS states (Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova) and regional problems in the Western part

⁴⁰ Buzan, Weaver: *op.cit.* p. 405.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* P.406.

⁴² *Ibid.* p.408

⁴³ ZAKAURTSEVA, Tatiana: *The Current Foreign Policy of Russia* In: IWASHITA, Akihiro (ed.): *Eager Eyes Fixed on Eurasia*. Slavic Research Center, 2007. p. 87.

⁴⁴ In the meaning, that post-Soviet space is Russian backyard.

⁴⁵ ZAGORSKI, Andrei: *Russia and the Shared Neighbourhood*. Chaillot Paper n°74, January 2005. p. 69.

⁴⁶ LAVROV, Sergei V: *Pered litsom obshchei ugrozi*. *Diplomaticheskii ezhegodnik* 2004, (2005), 17–20.

(Kaliningrad) because of the EU enlargement and Eastern part- rapid growth of China's power and immigration of Chinese nationals to Russian sparsely populated territories, that China claimed as her own in the past.⁴⁷

In the years 2008 and 2009 Russia issued various documents concerning foreign and security concepts and strategies of the country. Foreign Policy Concept (FPC) from 2008 explicitly establishes the CSTO as a key instrument for maintaining stability and ensuring security in the CIS. The document repeatedly mentioned the importance of the strategic nuclear deterrent, but also added the option of negotiations aimed at reducing the number of nuclear weapons. The whole document with the emphasis on strengthening ties with India and China, with CSTO and SCO combined with the opposition vis-à-vis current (Western orientated) European security structures gives an impression, that the interests of RF in seeking security arrangements is moving from West to East.⁴⁸ Peter B. Humphrey from the Institute for National Strategic Studies at the American National Defence University stated in his article in 2009, that right now Russian main aim is to prevent sovereign states from joining international security and economic organizations and military alliances like SCO and CSTO are primarily aimed to prevent entrenchment but at the same time serve to protect autocracy.⁴⁹ CSTO and SCO provide thus an opportunity to fight against terrorism, extremism, drug trafficking etc. without the pressure to reform.⁵⁰ And by this could be explained their success in those fields.

Post- Soviet countries were indirectly mentioned as a sphere of Russian interest again, after Russo-Georgian conflict in 2008, when president Medvedev announced five principles of Russian foreign and security policy⁵¹:

1. Russia approves the primacy of international law.

⁴⁷ Zakurtseva, T.: *op.cit.* p. 89.

⁴⁸ DE HAAS, Marcel: *Medvedev's Security Policy: A Provisional Assessment*. Russia's National Security Strategy, Russian Analytical Digest, No. 62, 18 June 2009. P. 2-3. <http://www.css.ethz.ch/publications/pdfs/RAD-62.pdf>

⁴⁹ According to the up-to-date data from Freedom House 2013, only Armenia and Kyrgyzstan from the CSTO MS are considered as a "partly-free", all the other member countries fit in the category "not free". In the category "not free" we can find also China and Uzbekistan (members of the SCO apart from other Central Asian states). Adopted from:

<http://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/Map%20of%20Freedom%202013%2C%20final.pdf> (03.04.2013).

⁵⁰ HUMPHREY, Peter, B.: *The State of Play in Russia's Near Abroad*. JFQ, Issue 55, 4th quarter 2009. <http://www.ndu.edu/press/lib/images/jfq-55/7.pdf> (22.03.2013).

⁵¹ Ibid. P.3.

2. Russia sees it necessary to replace the US-dominated unipolar system by a multipolar one.
3. Russia does not want to isolate herself and seeks friendly relations even with the West.
4. It is Russian priority to protect its compatriots wherever they may be and will respond to any aggressive act against its citizens or Russia.
5. Russia has privileged interests in certain regions.

In 2009 Moscow presented another essential document, “National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation until 2020” (NSS) which replaced the National Security Concepts of 1997 (Yeltsin) and 2000 (Putin). In the military field it was stressed, that the parity with the USA in strategic nuclear weapons should be maintained and that Russia should develop into a global power. Furthermore, another Russian interest was highlighted, the protection of Russian citizens in the so-called “Near Abroad”.

It is important to clarify, that the post-Soviet states do not form a homogenous group and therefore also Russian approach towards them differ from case to case. South Caucasus and Moldova represent the second poorest group within the former USSR, slightly better than that of most of the Central Asian states.⁵² Ukraine is one of the more developed states, although still comparable with South-East European countries.⁵³ In statistic economic terms, Belarus is the only one comparable to level of the Baltic states, but because of the lack of reform and authoritarian rule of Lukashenka, has been unable to benefit from this advantage and therefore its economy has eroded.⁵⁴ There have been many interstate disputes between newly independent states regarding territory claims and ethnic riots. The security agenda in four out of six neighbour states is largely shaped by the so called ‘frozen conflicts’ in the Transnistrian breakaway republic of Moldova, Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia and Nagorno Karabakh, the interstate rivalry which erupted between Armenia and Azerbaijan. While the first three conflicts have in fact domestic character, the last one has an explicit international dimension. Most other security problems are more unconventional and differ in each sub-region.⁵⁵ In mentioned frozen conflicts, Russia often plays a crucial role in negotiations to settle the clashes. Moscow has peacekeeping forces in Moldova and Georgia and maintains

⁵² Kazakhstan is an exception.

⁵³ In terms of GDP per capita.

⁵⁴ ZAGORSKI, Andrei : *Russia and Shared Neighbourhood*. Chaillot Paper n° 74, January 2005.

⁵⁵ Secessionist minority-state-Russia pattern in the case of Abkhazia ; domestic and transnational Islamic rebels in Tajikistan etc.

military bases in both countries. In the case of the dispute about Nagorno Karabakh, the role of Russia is very specific. On the one hand Russia has traditional strong ties with Armenia⁵⁶, but on the other hand the Russian relations with Azerbaijan are crucial in order to secure oil and gas supply from Caspian and to oppress the Iranian influence in the region. These are the reasons, why Russia's official stance during the conflict was neutral, although in practice the materiel of all kinds was delivered to both sides.⁵⁷ Since the ceasefire agreed in 1994, the negotiating process has been paralysed. Azerbaijan considers the territory as its own and wants Armenians to leave. Armenia on the other side refuses to accept Nagorno-Karabakh as a part of Azerbaijan and argues that this country declared its independence and also insists on Nagorno-Karabakh's government being allowed to take part on the peace talks.⁵⁸

Most of the countries in this region have not yet completed the formation of a stable political system and none of them can be considered truly democratic, although the political regimes vary from country to country. The authoritarian regime in Belarus and dynastic presidency in Azerbaijan are just a few examples. Armenia and Belarus are close allies of Russian Federation. Their defence cooperation goes beyond the CIS framework and is based on bilateral mutual assistance treaties. Moreover, since 1996, Belarus has engaged in numerous integration projects with Russia, as the Union state Russia-Belarus, Eurasian Economic community, Custom union etc.⁵⁹

2.2. Belarus as the last autocracy in Europe – Russia's closest ally?

The geopolitical location of Belarus alone makes it extremely important to Russia. Belarus, located on the European periphery between Russia and Poland is used to be a principal defensive bulwark and a forward base for power projection. Some Russian commentators argue however, that it is Belarusian location that is Lukashenka's bad luck. If the country was located in Central Asia, he would become a valuable U.S. ally.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ They share Indo-European ethnicity and christian religion.

⁵⁷ GONZALEZ, Francisco J.R.: *The Caucasus : Nagorno Karabakh ; Geopolitical Overview of Conflicts 2011*. Spanish Institute of Strategic Studies, Ministry of Defence, 2001 , p. 95.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* p.96..

⁵⁹ Zagorski,A. : *op. cit.* 67.

⁶⁰ TRENIN, Dmitri: *Moscow's Relations with Belarus. An awkward ally*. Chaillot Paper No°85, November 2005, Institute For Security Studies. P. 70.

Belarus is the only post-Soviet country whose economic dependence on Russia has increased rather than decreased.⁶¹ Belarusian diplomacy has made efforts in order to improve country's interaction with its main international partners⁶², including EU⁶³, and sometimes criticised Russia on the public, but these acts can not be understood as a fundamental change in the Belarusian foreign policy direction. Since 1997⁶⁴, President Lukashenka's unwillingness to modify his authoritarian style of government and rejecting any international criticism has deprived Belarusian foreign policy of alternatives to this dependency.⁶⁵

Belarusian dependency on Russia is from the great part based on economy and although the main goal of this Thesis is to make an analysis of cooperation in the military field, it is inevitable to mention briefly the basis of the Russian- Belarusian economic relations. Belarus has strongly export oriented and import dependent economy, and Russia can cover both aspects: provides energy resources and raw materials and offers the market for Belarusian manufactured goods that the domestic market can not absorb and that have problems to break into new markets. Belarus has preserved certain aspects of the Soviet economic system, such as state ownership of large enterprises and, price controls coupled with state subsidies for consumer and industrial goods, currency control and inflationary currency emission and by these tools managed to avoid sharp economic decline and social upheaval experienced by Russia and most other CIS states. These measures helped to secure low, but stable standard of living and that ensured popular support for President Lukashenka, especially among rural and less educated voters. This system of avoiding economic reforms and relying on Russian subsidies is not sustainable, reformist economists argue. These economic aspects only confirm the fact that the launch of the bilateral integration process with Russia was accompanied by progressive reductions in the gas price charged to Belarus and free trade agreement with Russia made Belarus one of the Russian largest trading partners.⁶⁶

The most successful although less visible dimension of Russian-Belarusian bilateral relations is cooperation in foreign and military field. The two countries consistently support

⁶¹ Zagorski, A.: *op. cit.* p.68.

⁶² In 1992 Belarus joined CSCE (later OSCE) an NATO's North Atlantic Cooperation Council.

⁶³ In 1993 Belarus applied for membership in the Council of Europe (suspended in 1997) and began negotiations for a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the EU.

⁶⁴ The EU offered Belarus assistance in meeting democratic standards, but the Belarusian authorities refused to acknowledge, that their conduct was in any way deficient with regard do democratic norms. President Lukashenka does not recognize the authority of the EU or other international organisation to evaluate the conformity of Belarus with international democratic standards.

⁶⁵ RONTYANNI, Cleila: *Belarusian Foreign Policy*. Chaillot Paper n°85, Institute for Security Studies, November 2005. p. 47.

⁶⁶ RONTYANNI, C.: *op.cit.* p. 60.

each other's positions in the UN and OSCE and in the negotiations with third countries. Besides, as mentioned in the previous chapters, Belarus is member of all integration projects initiated by Russia.⁶⁷ However, under Putin, the mutual relations became more difficult given partly also by the poor personal rapport between the two presidents. In that time the Russian demand to privatise the large enterprises became an important part of the negotiations.⁶⁸ In 2003 Putin made a pressure to Lukashenka to choose between two options, either liberalisation of the economy or incorporation into the Russian Federation.⁶⁹ Lukashenka finally committed himself to reforms in the economy, but was afraid of potential entrance of entrepreneurial class (oligarchs), that might seek political power and influence. Belarus simultaneously also postponed the introduction of the single currency and introduced more demands on Russians.⁷⁰ Lukashenka demanded an equal say over monetary policy as well, which was flatly rejected by Moscow. Nevertheless, none of the countries wanted to give up on the integration project and in 2005 Russia made some substantial economic concessions.⁷¹

In the military sphere, Russia's interest follows the broader geopolitical interests. Belarusian borders on NATO countries are de facto Russian strategic borders with the West.⁷² Belarusian army counting around 80,000 soldiers is in a better shape than Russian army and is designed to resist NATO invasion.⁷³ Lukashenka therefore sees the armed forces as an asset in relations with Moscow. The Belarusian armed forces and Russia's western military districts are assigned to a 300,000- strong joint command, to be activated in the case of a crisis.⁷⁴ In 2001 a joint military doctrine was adopted and since Belarus joined the Joint Air Defence System of the CIS states already in 1995, the air defences have been de facto integrated into Russia's.⁷⁵ In return, Russia supplies Belarus with modern air defence systems and both countries hold periodical military exercises.

⁶⁷ CSTO, Eurasian Economic Community and Single Economic Space.

⁶⁸ Russian Gazprom pressed for the sale of Beltransgaz (the Belarusian state company which transports cca 10% of Russian gas to Central and Western Europe)

⁶⁹ Both options were difficult to accept, but the second one was unacceptable to official statehood.

⁷⁰ Russian oil and electricity supplies at Russian domestic rates etc.

⁷¹ Putin agreed to keep low prices for Russian gas supplies at least for the next two years.

⁷² Russian General Staff considers Belarus alongside with Ukraine and Moldova to be buffer zones. Belarus proved to be the most reliable of the three countries.

⁷³ PLUGATAREV, Igor: "*Gribnaya Pora*" voennoy reformy v Belorusii (Military Reform in Belarus). *Nezavisimoye voennoye obozrenie*, October 22, 2004.

⁷⁴ TRENIN, Dmitri: *Moscow's Relations...*, *op.cit.*, p. 71.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

Russia has no combat troops in Belarus, but it has an important military assets. The two of the vital importance are the missile attack early-warning station at Baranovichi⁷⁶ and the naval communication facility at Vileika⁷⁷ comprising together 850 troops.⁷⁸

In the Soviet times, Belarus was a republic with many defence industrial companies and even today, Russia relies substantially on defence industrial cooperation with Belarus. Moreover, Lukashenka actively promotes restoring the former military industrial complex with the hope to get even more Russian government orders. Also Belarusian armed forces were created on the basis of the previous Soviet military structure in the republic.⁷⁹

Dmitri Trenin from the Carnegie Moscow Center says, that it is not exaggerated to say, that there is a common defence and security space between Russia and Belarus. In the economic space, the situation is far more complicated and the problems are bigger.⁸⁰

2.2.1. The Russian-Belarusian Union: Military Success

As with other post-Soviet international organisations, most notably CIS, the process of union between Russia and Belarus has been composed of two elements, the umbrella treaties establishing general commitments to union and broad areas of activity and more specific agreements on particular policy areas, generally military and economic.⁸¹ Some of them will be mentioned in this subsection.

Belarus and Russia agreed to establish the Union State in 1999. There was and still is a popular will to live in the union state, however there have been complications. With the signature of the Treaty on the Establishment of The Union State between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus, both states committed themselves to have common currency and to create common economic space. Belarus, however, still refuses to introduce Russian ruble and ratify the Constitutional Act. Whereas under Yeltsin leadership Lukashenka was the one actively promoting the project since Putin became president in his first term,

⁷⁶ Allows Russian military command to monitor missile launches in the western direction.

⁷⁷ Provides communication with Russian ships and submarines in the Atlantic.

⁷⁸ KLEIN, Margarete: *Russia's Military Capabilities: "Great Power" Ambitions and Reality*. SWP Research Paper, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik- German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Berlin 2009. p. 20. http://www.swpberlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/research_papers/2009_RP12_kle_ks.pdf (05.04.2013)

⁷⁹ Whereas the other post-Soviet states saw the former Soviet military structures on their territory as alien or potentially hostile, Belarus accepted them and used them as a basis of its armed forces.

⁸⁰ TRENIN, D.: *Moscow's Relations...op.cit.* p. 72.

⁸¹ DEYERMOND, Ruth: *The State of the Union: Military Success, Economic and Political Failure in the Russia-Belarus Union*. Europe-Asia Studies, Vol.56, No.8,2004, p.1191.

Russia took the initiative. The Russian economist and leading research fellow at the Institute of Economics at Russian Academy of Sciences Yurii Godin in his article from 2008 states, that only the long-term economic integration based on market principles will enable the two countries to level and overcome their current differences and achieve painless integration.⁸² For now is thus the economic integration of Belarus into the union states more failure than success.

The lack of agreement and common position in economic field is not the case in the military terms. Belarusian strategic importance for Russia has increased especially in the wake of NATO enlargement and especially when Baltic States became members. Already in 1995 the defence ministers of two countries signed an agreement granting Russia usage of further military installations. Officially both republics were given the right to use the installations on the territory of the other. In practice, however, it meant the Russian access to the Belarusian military installations.⁸³ The treaty was signed for 25 years and Russia has it free of charge. In the same year, the agreement for cooperation between the border troops to protect Belarusian borders was signed.⁸⁴ In 2003 the Belarusian parliament ratified an agreement on joint logistical support for the Russian-Belarusian regional group of forces. The military cooperation of both states is therefore very visible and comparatively more successful than the cooperation in economic field.

Russian-Belarusian relations have experienced periodic cooling throughout the period since the break-up of the USSR, notably since Putin became President of Russia and the relations did not improve during Medvedev's intermezzo. Lukashenka's even anti-Russian rhetoric and the issue of non-recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia became a permanent subject of political disputes.⁸⁵ The agreement on aspects of military integration has been possible because of the desire on the part of those involved that it succeeded. It gives Minsk an important tool in negotiations in the economic field and Moscow views it as a part of wider Russian strategy of maintaining military presence and influence in the CIS and keeping Belarus as a buffer zone.

⁸² GODIN, Iurii: *Russia and Belorussia: Ten Years of Integration Incompatibility*. Russian Politics and Law, vol. 46, no. 2, 2008. p. 19.

⁸³ MARTINSEN, Kaare Dahl: *The Russian-Belarusian Union and the Near Abroad*. Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies, 2002, p. 7-8.

⁸⁴ The agreement was applied only to the borders with Poland, Lithuania and Latvia.

⁸⁵ Medvedev quoted in Russian Times 4.10.2010. <http://rt.com/politics/medvedev-lukashenko-criticism-belarus/> (05.04.2013)

2.3. Russia's ally in the South Caucasus – Armenia

Armenia is situated in the South Caucasus in a very complicated geopolitical situation with Georgia on the north struggling to maintain the control over its own territory, with open enmity with Azerbaijan in the East and with the Azerbaijani exclave in the West and with economic blockade and closed border with Turkey. Iran seeking influence in the region is considered as a good neighbour and partner.

Barry Buzan argues, as it was partially stated in the first chapter, that any discussion of external military security must examine the relationship between states located in geographic proximity. According to this thesis, in order to determine whether or not trade and foreign investment can contribute to state economic security or insecurity it is necessary to consider the following: increases and decreases in number and types of economic partners and membership or association with a regional economic bloc. In the case of Armenia several of the indicators Buzan defined, do fit.

On the contrary with Belarus, Armenia does not have an authoritarian regime, although can not be stated that is free either, according to the figures of Freedom House. In 1996 Armenia and the EU signed the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement and afterwards the country was included into the EU's European Neighbourhood Program (ENP) and in 2007 in the EU's "Black Sea Synergy" initiative as well. Also NATO characterised South Caucasus as an important region for the alliance. Armenia thus finds itself in the delicate situation of clarifying its position between a deepening dependence on Russia in the economic sector and a process of rapprochement with the U.S. and NATO. With the still existing trauma of being threatened by Turkey reinforces Russian traditional role of protector.⁸⁶ Armenia has tried to live in this contradictory position by introducing the policy of complementarity.

Armenian first president since the country became independent was Levon Ter-Petrosyan and he set forth the initial strategy for Armenian foreign policy with basically two main principles: Firstly, the security of state and people depends among other factors upon the normalization of relations with all the neighbours, the resolution of existing disputes by the peaceful meanings and development of regional integration. Secondly, there was a conception of not uniting to any political or military bloc. These were the basic lines in the Armenian

⁸⁶ WIRMINGHAUS, Rainer Freitag: *Prospects for Armenia and Azerbaijan between Eurasia and the Middle East*. In: Hamiltion, Daniel-Mangott Gerhard (eds.): *The Wider Black Sea Region in the 21th Century: Strategic Economic and Energy Perspectives*. 2008,p. 55.

foreign policy from 1991 to 1998. Petrosyan was replaced by Robert Kocharyan who advocated tougher stance towards Nagorno Karabakh issue than his precursor but improved relations with Turkey and also strengthened regional cooperation. Kocharyan during his presidency in 2006 expressed his opinion that although Armenia intensified the cooperation with the EU, has no aim to become a member. Current president Serj Sargsyan stressed the importance of cooperation with the European partners in order to carry out necessary reforms. However, after the Putin's announcement about the creation of the Eurasian Union in 2011 stated that Armenia welcomes this initiative and considers it as a necessary and timely.

Just after the dissolution of the USSR Armenia began to decrease ties with Russia. Soon after independence Yerevan realized however, that it was not good to isolate itself from a regional power. This fear of isolation has remained visible in the Armenian foreign policy till the present days, although now there are other important players involved, EU, US and NATO. Armenia joined both major integration and cooperation projects initiated by Russia in the 1990s, the CIS and the CST. Armenia sees the cooperation with Russia as a mean how to protect itself against neighbours; Russia is motivated to support Armenia by its opposition to the expansion of the U.S., Iranian or Turkish influence in the region.⁸⁷

At the times of independence the country remained the most heavily dependent of all of the Soviet republics on Russian trade. This dependency did not vanish completely after gaining independence and Russia is the most important trading partner. As a practical demonstration of how much influence Russia has in the Armenian economy the following example could be taken: in 2002 the Armenian parliament voted to transfer control of five Armenian enterprises to Russia in exchange for debt repayment.⁸⁸

Few years later, Yerevan was very disappointed when Moscow increased to double the gas price in 2006. This disappointment among Armenians was caused because of the fact that Russia does not pay for its military bases in the country. Russians have an airbase in Yerevan and military base in Gyumri comprising 3,214 troops.⁸⁹

The cut-off the gas supplies in the same year and following attacks on the pipeline through Georgia and the Russian obvious intention to sell weapons to Azerbaijan damaged to certain extent the image of Russia as the Armenian strategic partner. However, the Armenian

⁸⁷ PETROS, Tiffany G.: *Evolution of Armenia's Foreign Policy*. Armenian International Policy Research Group, Working Paper No.03/13, 2003, p. 4.

⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 5.

⁸⁹ KLEIN, M.: *op.cit.* p. 20.

dependency on Russia in the economic sector has increased. Russia has now near total control over Armenia's energy and transportation sectors. The initial project created to diversify energy dependency away from Russia by supplying gas from Iran has also come under Gazprom's control in 2006.

Another element which weakens Armenia regarding Russia is its dependence on circa two million Armenians living in Russia, who send remittances to their homeland. On the other hand, there is a strong Armenian Diaspora in the U.S. and this fact plays an important role too and relations with both countries naturally have rapidly well developed. Armenia is the only country that receives American generous support even as it upgrades its relations with Russia and Iran.⁹⁰

The Armenian case, given its size and location, the country's security cannot be considered independent of its neighbours or the major powers influencing the region. In this case, it is not possible to examine Armenian security policy from a purely political/military perspective. The economic aspects have to be worn in mind during such analysis as well.

In spite of a great dependence of Armenia on Russia in economic terms and close military cooperation, it have been noted certain shift in Armenian foreign policy towards Western political and military structures. Armenia ratified the agreements and participates in NATO programs⁹¹ but the contradictory situation still remains: while cooperation with NATO promises to help Armenia implement defence reforms, the CSTO guarantees a security system in the Armenia's geopolitical situation. However, Sargsyan recently stated that no one forced Armenia to enter the Customs Union and in April Armenia would sign a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Eurasian Economic Commission. These documents have a declaratory character and Armenia probably wants to postpone further integration with Russia.

Armenia also participates on the European Neighbourhood Program as mentioned above and was the first country to draft a National Program for implementing its Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. Moreover, it became clear, that in November 2013 Armenia and EU are going to finalize negotiations for the Association Agreement in order to sign it by 2014.⁹² The idea of all of this is to bring Armenia closer to the European standards.⁹³ This

⁹⁰ Armenia also opened its air space to the U.S.

⁹¹ Partnership for Peace and Individual Partnership Action Plans.

⁹² HAYRUMYAN, Naira: *Is Russia Changing Its Policy on Armenia?*.

<http://www.lragir.am/index.php/eng/0/politics/view/29386> (09.04.2013).

integration to the Euro-Atlantic structures, however, would require normalisation of relations with Turkey.⁹⁴ Anyway regarding the current situation it is not sure yet, which side Armenia will choose at the end, the European or the Russian.

Without any exaggeration it can be stated, that there are three main determinants which lead the way of Armenian foreign and security policy: economic dependence on Russia, Russian monopoly of gas supplies and geopolitics, including disputes with Azerbaijan and Turkey. With the deepening of the relations with Euro-Atlantic structures, dismantling economic barriers, diversification of gas supplies and resolving the problems with Turkey and Azerbaijan, the country's attachment to the Russian Federation will probably get weakened. But on the other hand, Russia has offered Armenia very attractive integration project to join, the Eurasian Union, which will bring probably more benefit to the country than the European one. Perhaps it would be also easier way to go.

⁹³ Armenians regard themselves as Europeans and Armenia regards integration into European structures as a high priority foreign policy goal.

⁹⁴ This is the same condition for Turkey to become a member of the EU.

3. Security Cooperation Projects in the Post- Soviet Space

In this chapter the security cooperation projects which have arisen after the collapse of the Soviet Union will be discussed, chronologically starting with the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), followed by Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and probably the most actual, Eurasian Union. Although, only CSTO is being understood as a primarily security organization, CIS and also the Eurasian Union have overlap into security field too. CIS was an important first platform for the integration in the 1990s, the Eurasian Union is a very actual projects actively promoted by the current Russian Establishment.

Russia has traditionally followed a realist foreign policy focusing on nation states and Russian world view is more focused on power than rules.⁹⁵ Since the breakdown of the Soviet Union, the post- Soviet states, which form the CIS⁹⁶ has turned into a contested zone between the major powers: Russia, the United States, Europe and increasingly China. This struggle for influence has come as a surprise to Moscow, which long regarded the entire region as its exclusive preserve but was too weak for much of the 1990s to enforce this claim.⁹⁷ In this period Russia tended to neglect relations with its neighbours. It established CIS, which has never developed into serious organization. Russian federation joined also the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to form an uneasy partnership with China on subjects as terrorism, separatism and extremism. It put more effort into the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) a formal defence alliance, and tried to have it recognized on a par with NATO.⁹⁸ Kremlin has realized that the old aggressive policy towards Near Abroad had failed. Not only in the field of security, but also in economic area, Russia started to enforce the cooperation with the allied countries in the way of integration in order to maintain influence there.

⁹⁵ HANSON, Philip-Cameron, Frasier (2012). *The Political and Social Developments in Russia in 2012 as a Consequence of Its New Role on the Global Stage*. Issue Twenty One, The EU-Russia Centre Review. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/studiesdownload.html?languageDocument=EN&file=73731> (28.01.2013)

⁹⁶ The Baltic states showed very soon their will to become part of the Euro-Atlantic structures.

⁹⁷ MANKOFF, Jeffrey: *Russian Foreign Policy-The Return of Great Power Politics*.2009. p.241.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

3.1. Commonwealth of Independent States as a Primary Platform for Further Integration

The oldest integration project- the Commonwealth of Independent States emerged as a dramatic geopolitical consequence of the dissolution of the USSR and confirmed once again the historical fact (after the Roman Empire, the Arab Caliphate, Austria-Hungary, etc.) that huge multinational state formations are necessarily temporary. CIS was founded in 1991 by the signature of the Alma-Ata protocol⁹⁹ soon after the Belavezha Accords¹⁰⁰ and today it has nine official members (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) and two unofficial ones (Turkmenistan and Ukraine).¹⁰¹ Georgia withdrew from the organisation in 2008.¹⁰² There was stated in the Alma-Ata declaration, that with the establishment of Commonwealth of Independent States, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics ceased to exist. The members confirmed the promise of the former republics to cooperate in various fields of external and internal policies, and announced the guarantees for implementation of the international commitments of the former Soviet Union. The CIS performs its activities on the basis of the Charter adopted on 22 January 1993. The Charter stipulates the goals and principles of the Commonwealth as well as rights and obligations of its members. Bearing in mind the character of this study, just the articles regarding security and defence cooperation will be analysed.

In Article 2 in the Charter it is stated, that cooperation among the Member States (MS) in safeguarding international peace and security and implementing effective measures for the reduction of armaments and military expenditures, for the elimination of nuclear and other kinds of weapons of mass destruction and for the achievement of universal and complete disarmament, is one of the main objectives of the Commonwealth.¹⁰³ For the achievement of these objectives, the MS shall organize their relationships in accordance with the principle of inviolability of States' boundaries, recognition of existing borders and rejection of unlawful

⁹⁹ The text of the Declaration is available from: http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/belarus/by_appnc.html (12.02.2013)

¹⁰⁰ Agreements declaring the dissolution of the Soviet Union signed on December 8, 1991 by Russian president Boris Yeltsin, Ukrainian president Leonid Kravchuk and the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of Belarus Stanislau Shushkevich. Adopted from: <http://charter97.org/eng/news/2005/12/08/14> (28.01.2013).

¹⁰¹ Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) rejected the offer to join the CIS just after the dissolution of the USSR. Georgia ratified the Charter in 1993.

¹⁰² After the so called Five- Day War in August 2008 between Georgia and Russia.

¹⁰³ VOITOVICH, Sergei A.: *The Commonwealth of Independent States: An Emerging Institutional Model*. European Journal of International Law. 4 (1993). p.17.

territorial acquisitions. The territorial integrity of States is guaranteed and it is forbidden to commit any actions to split another's territory¹⁰⁴.

The MS' joint activities are conducted on an equitable basis, through common coordinating institutions in conformity with the obligations undertaken by the MS within the Commonwealth and shall embrace also the cooperation in the fields of defence policy and protection of external borders.

Section III in the Charter defines collective security, military and political cooperation. The MS agreed, they will conduct a coordinated policy in the field of international security, disarmament and armaments control, as well as in the building of the *Armed Forces* (AF) and maintain security within the Commonwealth, in particular with the aid of groups of military observers and collective peace keeping forces. In the case, the sovereignty, security or territorial integrity of the MS is threatened or there is a threat to international peace or security, the MS shall immediately put into operation the mechanism of joint consultation for the purpose of coordinating their positions and taking measures to avert the threat that has arisen. The measures include peace-making operations and, in the necessary case, the use of the AF in realization of the right to individual or collective self-defence in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter¹⁰⁵.

All the decisions on the joint use of military forces taken by The *Council of Heads of States* of the Commonwealth or by the MS shall be considered in the line with the national legislation. On a basis of mutual consent, the MS should coordinate operations of their border troops and other competent services they control and which are in charge of maintaining the established order for crossing the external borders of the MS.

The supreme organ of the CIS dealing with defence and protection of the MS' external frontiers shall be the Council of Heads of State. In the field of conflict prevention and dispute settlement, the Article 16 in the fourth Section prescribes, the MS shall take all possible measures to prevent conflicts and on a basis of mutual consent help each other in resolving such conflicts, inter alia within the framework of international organizations. Finally, the CIS

¹⁰⁴ This principle was attacked in the so called "Five- Day War" between Russia (and separatist governments in Abkhazia and South Ossetia) and Georgia in August 2008.

¹⁰⁵ *Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security. Measures taken by Members in the exercise of this right of self-defence shall be immediately reported to the Security Council and shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to take at any time such action as it deems necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security.* Adopted from the UN Charter (1945). Available from: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter7.shtml> (05.02.2013)

MS shall refrain from actions liable to injure other MS or lead to aggravation of latent disputes¹⁰⁶.

Beside the Council of Heads of States Charter establishes other institutions, in the defence area and these shall be *Council of Ministers of Defence* and *High Command of the United Armed Forces*. Moreover, it establishes *Council of Commanders of Border Troops* dealing with matters of protecting and ensuring the stability of the external frontiers of the Member States¹⁰⁷

This is thus the formal framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States. As results from the statements mentioned above, the CIS does not have supranational powers, the interaction of the MS within the CIS is accomplished through its coordinating institutions¹⁰⁸. In fact, the cooperation between the CIS MS is based on the bilateral agreements and the real impact of the organisation as a whole is therefore quite limited.

To mention the practical impact of this regional grouping, during the tenure of the CIS several steps have been taken regarding security cooperation. In the field of security, most of the Central Asian states strengthened their ties with Russia by allowing Russian participation in patrolling their borders, so that today Russian troops are patrolling most of the external border of the CIS.

In 1995 the security chiefs from the CIS signed an agreement on combating organized crime, which included protocols on nuclear smuggling, terrorism, drug trafficking and “illegal armed formations”. Two years later, the Council of Heads of State and the Council of Heads of Government held meetings and discussed documents relating to the issues of peacekeeping in the conflict zone of Abkhazia, Georgia, and they prolonged the presence of the collective peace-making forces in Tajikistan¹⁰⁹

In 2000 at the meeting of the Heads of States and Governments the decisions on counteracting international terrorism were adopted. Heads of States also analyzed the report on the implementation of the interstate program of joint measures for the struggle against organized crime and other dangerous crimes on the territory of CIS MS. The presidents of then 12 MS also welcomed Russia’s ratification of the START II Treaty, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and the 1997 package of agreements on missile defence. In addition, they

¹⁰⁶ VOITOVICH, A.: *op.cit.* p. 421-423.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.* 426.

¹⁰⁸ The Council of Heads of State, the Council of Heads of Government, The Council of Foreign Ministers, Defence Ministers, Border Troops Commanders, the Inter- Parliamentary Assembly, the Executive Committee and the Interstate Economic Committee of the Economic Union

¹⁰⁹ *The Nuclear Threat Initiative. 2007. Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).* p. 3-4. Available from: <http://www.nti.org/treaties-and-regimes/commonwealth-independent-states-cis/> (05.02.2013)

issued a joint statement saying that the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty must remain the “foundation of global strategic stability, international security and peace around the world”. They also established a joint *Anti-terrorist Centre* (ATC) based in Moscow, which is jointly run by Russia and Ukraine. Though the ATC had been conceived as a supra-national structure, in essence it was under full control of Federal Security Service of Russian Federation (FSB): Russia held the command and 50 percent of the staff slots (60 as a whole), as well as providing 50 percent of the budget, of both the Moscow-based ATC and its Central Asia branch while the other CIS countries shared the rest. ATC was headed by the first deputy director of the FSB, and the FSB also supervised “collective” anti-terrorist exercises in Central Asia, which were held annually every April. According to the Institute for Advanced Strategic & Political Studies, ‘This supervision arrangement implicitly treats CIS member countries as a field of action for Russia’s internal security agency’¹¹⁰

In 2002 the Council of Defence Ministers adopted a decision on exchanges of air defence data and decided to establish a common database for their air defence systems and approved a list of airfields, the services of which may be engaged by the aircraft of CIS countries in the event of necessity. In the same year, number of documents on strengthening the integration processes in the CIS were signed, one of them about a program on military- technical cooperation between CIS countries and creation of a Central Asian division of the CIS anti-terrorist measures in the CIS.

Meetings of the foreign ministers and ministers of defence in the following three years were marked by the war in Iraq and brought some meetings with attempts to adopt some steps towards the non-proliferation of the WMD but without an important impact. In May 2006, Ukraine and Georgia began talks discussing the possibility of seceding from the CIS and while Ukraine later promised to remain a member, Georgia did affirmed, that a slow pullout was being considered and in 2008 after the Russian-Georgian war actually withdrew from the CIS.¹¹¹

As noted Philipp Roeder, Harvard professor and specialist on nationalism and Soviet successor states, CIS’s whole conception is too openly about Russian interests to become a successful international organisation.¹¹² In 2002 the CIS had twelve members and it was a period of shaping, especially in the first two years since the beginning of the millennium, by a polarization between the independence-oriented states (GUUAM and Turkmenistan) and the

¹¹⁰ *CIS Antiterrorist Centre*. Agentura.ru- the secret services watchdog.

<http://www.agentura.ru/english/dossier/atc/> (05.02.2013)

¹¹¹ The Nuclear Threat Initiative, *op.cit.* pp. 1-2.

¹¹² Roeder quoted in: Buzan-Weaver: *Regions...*, *op. cit.*, p. 411.

'Russia plus five group' with Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The security component of CIS, the Tashkent Treaty has had a certain problems with ratification in the member countries, even Uzbekistan rejected the signing and although Tashkent then moved back towards Russia, this act was purely bilateral and did not include re-entry into the treaty. But to Russia the main role of the CIS is the projection of Russia as a bloc-leader and the perception that Russia speaks on behalf of the whole region.¹¹³

To make an evaluation of the results and actions which came into practise while facing the agreed charters and agreements, it can be stated, without any exaggeration, that the project of the CIS was the abortion since its beginnings. In spite of the normative and global declarations, only a few of them found a real personalization in the practice. Instead of some kind of continuation of the Soviet Union as a federation or confederation of the states, this community tried at the beginning to assume very limited powers in the field of market, finance or security and the cooperation got weak in the line with the construction of the national identity of each state, quite often it was in the contraposition to Russia. From the beginning, member states of the CIS had much difficulty in agreeing on how to react on various political and security issues that arose. A clause within the CIS Charter foresaw commitments among MS to military and security cooperation, but in reality only half of the members agreed to this need, while the other half feared it as opening the way to return of Russian hegemony¹¹⁴ Moreover, the Russian leader Boris Yeltsin supported the secessionist demands of the residual republics. His goal was to weaken Gorbachev and that caused territorial disputes which disabled establishing any definite influence in the rest of the CIS.¹¹⁵

In the security field, originally it was expected the formation of a common Armed Forces for which was created a permanent structure under the Council of Ministers of Defence called Headquarters of the Armed Forces of the CIS, very symbolically situated in the former seat of the Warsaw Pact in Moscow. But this ambitious project failed and in December 1993 was replaced by Headquarters of the Coordination of Military Cooperation of the CIS. Already before the signature of the CIS Charter, was established its armed hand, Collective Security Treaty (CST) signed in 1992.¹¹⁶ With the respect to the territorial

¹¹³ According to Buzan and Weaver, the same thing tries to do Turkey on behalf of all Turkic speaking people and Brasil in Mercosur.

¹¹⁴ KARSTEN, Jakob Møller: *Collective Security Treaty Organization: An Entangling Alliance*. In: TRUELSHEN, Peter, Dahl (ed.): *International Organizations: The Role in Conflict Management*. (203-223), Copenhagen: Royal Danish Defence College, 2009, p.205.

¹¹⁵ GONZALEZ, Francisco J.R.: *La Cooperación Multilateral en la Esfera Postsovietica*. Revista Española de Defensa. Abril 2012.

¹¹⁶ Basis of the future Collective Security Treaty Organization.

disputes, as well in the Alma-Ata protocol as in the CIS Charter the inviolability of the borders was proclaimed, that these can be modified just by peace measures and common consent. Even though, the transformation of the administrative international ex-soviet borders and the borders of the new states was not exactly defined and with the inclusion of the reference to the inevitable right of the self-determination of the nations, this fact opened the door for the secession processes, in which Russia wanted to play more or less an active role. The military mechanism of the CIS was therefore ill defined and never used in serious conflicts that broke out, for example in South Ossetia (1991-1992), Transnistria (1992), Nagorno-Karabakh (1992-1994) and Abkhazia (1992-1994), besides the civil wars in Georgia and Tajikistan (1992-1997). Ceasefire agreements in each of those crises have been present in the frozen conflicts although, CIS was the key guarantor of the agreements, in the practise the peace troops which separated the belligerents were exclusive Russian. The treaty had a clause on mutual assistance in case of its member states being threatened by aggression, but as the above conflicts show, the treaty never lived up to its vision of collective security, or at least not when MS were fighting each other.¹¹⁷ With time the states that lost control of the part of their territory, like Moldova, Georgia or Azerbaijan, started blame Russia for supporting the secessionists in the context of growing clash with Moscow.¹¹⁸ These events both with the financial crisis in 1998 limited partly the Russian capacity of influence in the post-Soviet space in that time.¹¹⁹ However, Russian involvement in the CIS has never been completely labelled as a foreign policy and this fact became clear during the Moscow's invasion to Georgia in the face of its prior declarations about the importance of international law and state sovereignty.

¹¹⁷ SAAT, J.H.: *The Collective Security Treaty Organization*. Central Asian Series, February 2005, p.3.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ The same case was the decision of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Uzbekistan to withdraw from the CST in 1999 or the formation of GUUAM in the same year.

3.2. Collective Security Treaty Organisation - CIS Armed Hand

The Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) has emerged as the primary vehicle for the re-establishment of Moscow's strategic influence in Central Asia. Some Russian strategists have seen this organisation as a kind of Eurasian NATO. CSTO is based on the principle of collective defence and currently joins Russia with the Central Asian states (apart from officially neutral Turkmenistan¹²⁰), Armenia and Belarus. The principle of collective defence commits the members to coming to one another's aid in the event of an outside attack.¹²¹ As it was already explained in the first chapter, CSTO sets up a defensive alliance which forbids joining any military alliance or group of states against other members, and considers that aggression against one member is aggression against all¹²².

The organization was formally institutionalized in 2003, but the Collective Security Treaty (CST), on which the institution is based, has been in effect since 1992 under the auspices of the CIS. CST was signed by several CIS member states on 15 May 1992 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan for a period of five years with the possibility of prolongation. Presidents of six of the twelve CIS nations adhered to the treaty, notably Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Azerbaijan, Belarus and Georgia signed the treaty in 1993. Turkmenistan is not involved because of the already mentioned neutrality, Moldova and Ukraine refused any military cooperation in the CIS framework. The CST was up for a prolongation in 1999, but Azerbaijan, Georgia and Uzbekistan decided to withdraw from the treaty in the same year.¹²³ The remaining members¹²⁴ had agreed on formally institutionalizing the CST. The Charter of CSTO was signed in Chisinau on 7 October 2002. In 2003 CSTO as an institution came into being. It included three 'regional groups of forces', with Russia as a leading member in all of them: the western group comprising Russia and Belarus; the South Caucasus group comprising Russia and Armenia and the Central Asian group with Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.¹²⁵

The CSTO Charter represents the legal basis of the institutions and actions conducted within the organisation. Main goals and purposes of the organisation are traditionally to

¹²⁰ Turkmenistan never ratified the CST because of its desire to acquire neutral status, which was accepted by the UN General Assembly on 12 December 1995.

¹²¹ MANKOFF, J: *op.cit.* p.270.

¹²² POP, Irina Ionela: *Russia, EU, NATO and the Strengthening of the CSTO in Central Asia*. *Caucasian Review of International Affairs*. Vol.3 (3)–Summer 2009. pp. 280. http://cria-online.org/8_4.html (06.02.2013).

¹²³ Uzbekistan re-joined the CSTO again in 2006, but withdrew in 2012.

¹²⁴ Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan.

¹²⁵ AFZAL, Amina: *Security Cooperation in Central Asia: The Changing Role of Multilateral Organizations*. *Strategic Studies*, 26(4), 2006.

strengthen peace and international and regional security and stability and to ensure the collective defence of the independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of the MS, in the attainment of which the MS shall give priority to political measures.¹²⁶ Regarding the areas of activity, according to Article 8 in the Charter, the MS shall coordinate and harmonize their efforts in combating international terrorism and extremism, the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and arms, organized transnational crime, illegal migration and other threats to the security of the MS.¹²⁷

The main managing bodies of the organisation are the following: *The Council on Collective Security* (hereinafter “the Council” CCS) is the highest body of the CSTO and considers principle questions concerning the activities of the organization, and adopts decisions aimed at realizing the Organization's objectives and tasks. It is composed of the heads of the MS. *The Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs (CMFA)* is the consultative and executive body of the Organization on issues of co-ordinating the joint activities of the MS in the field of foreign policy. The main task of *the Council of Ministers of Defence (CMD)* is to co-ordinate the joint activities of MS in the field of military policy, military construction and cooperation in military technology. *The Committee of Secretaries of the Security Council (CSSC)* deals with the issues of coordinating the joint activities of MS in the field of guaranteeing their national security. *Secretariat* of the Organization is a permanent working body of the CSTO that provides organizational, informational, analytical and consultative support for the activities of the organs of the Organization. The post of the *Secretary General (SG)* of the CSTO is the highest administrative official of the Organization and is the head of the Organization's Secretariat. The Secretary General is a citizen of a MS who is appointed by decision of the CCS and reports to the CCS. At the present time, the SG of the CSTO is Nikolai Bordyuzha.¹²⁸ As outlined by Bordyuzha, during the evolution of the CSTO, three principal areas of activity have been defined. Firstly, political action of a preventive nature and also crisis- response measures in the event of real conflicts, secondly, collective action and agreed measures by MS to combat non- traditional challenges and threats to security, the systematic violation of state borders, increased cross- border migration by armed groups and the nurturing of extremist and terrorist organizations within states. These threats are recently the most dangerous for the MS. Third area of activities represents combating traditional

¹²⁶ *Charter of the Collective Security Treaty Organization* (2002). Chapter II, Article 3. Available from: http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/Varios/2002_Carta_de_la_OTSC.pdf (06.02.2013)

¹²⁷ CSTO Charter, Chapter III, Article 8, *op.cit.*

¹²⁸ BORDYUZHA, Nikolai: *The Collective Security Treaty Organization: A Brief Overview*. (translated from Russian by Peter Morly), in SCHLICHTING, Ursel (ed.) *OSCE Yearbook 2010* (p. 339-350), Munich: Nomos, 2011, p.340-341.

threats to security, which include an armed attack on a state or group of states; the likelihood of war with the use of conventional weapons; and interstate conflict with the deployment of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).¹²⁹

How have been the goals and objectives defined in the Charter applied in practice so far? Military cooperation carried out within the CSTO includes formation and development of coalition and regional (joint) groupings of forces and the creation of collective forces of the CSTO as well as development of the CSTO's peacekeeping forces. Already in May 2001, the CIS members created a *Collective Rapid Deployment Force (CRDF)* in Central Asia in order to be able to provide a collective response to terrorist attacks or incursions. The placing of the new airbase for this purpose was very convenient, in the one country among the CST members which hosts a US airbase, Kyrgyzstan.¹³⁰ By the creation of CRDF it was assumed, that the allocation of battalions from the national armies of Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan would comprise around 4000 persons. In the Caucasus, circa 1,500-strong RDF comprise Russian and Armenian troops. Joint military command was formed in Moscow to oversee the CRDF. The permanent military air base established in 2003 in Kyrgyzstan which primary purpose was to provide air support to the Central Asian CRDF, represents a major initiative by Russia to project its strategic influence beyond Russia's borders.¹³¹

Operational and military preparations for joint action by CSTO forces are carried out through joint exercises and training. Combined- corps exercises have been held every year since 2004 under the name *Rubezh*.¹³² In 2007 the Agreement on Peacekeeping Activities of the CSTO was signed. To form the Peacekeeping Forces, MS assign peacekeeping units on a permanent basis. In 2010, the formation of *The Collective Peacekeeping Forces (CPF)* was completed and it includes military, police and civilian personnel. These are trained by CSTO's joint programmes. The international peacekeeping force and CPF created by the CSTO member states comprise 4,200 personnel.¹³³ However, the CSTO has been criticized for its attitude during and after the Kyrgyzstan crisis in June 2010, the organisation decided not to intervene in this case. One year later, the CSTO's Secretary General stated that the decision not to interfere in what was at that time qualified as the internal affairs of a MS was

¹²⁹ Ibid. p. 340.

¹³⁰ Otorbaev quoted in Buzan- Waever: *op.cit.*

¹³¹ Bohr, A.: *op.cit.*, p. 489.

¹³² Ibid. p. 342.

¹³³ BLAGOV, Sergei: *The CSTO Seeks Stronger Security Agreements*. European Dialogue- Eurasian Daily Monitor 10.06.2011. : <http://eurodialogue.org/The-CSTO-Seeks-Stronger-Security-Arrangements> (02.03.2013)

correct and was taken in accordance with the founding Charter of the organization.¹³⁴ The deployment of CSTO peacekeeping forces has therefore not yet been tested.¹³⁵

The Russian- Georgian war in August 2008 accelerated the militarisation of the CSTO. In 2009 the legal documents were approved and units of military task forces and Special Forces assigned by the MS to the *Collective Rapid Reaction Forces (CRRF)* were drilled in joint actions. CRRF was created to be an effective, all-purpose instrument that can be counted on to realize security objectives throughout the CSTO. These include resisting military aggression, conducting special operations to eliminate terrorists and extremists, the fight against organized crime and drug trafficking, as well as dealing with the consequences of natural and industrial disasters. According to Stratfor the CRRF comprise 16,000 troops, with Russia providing 8,000 troops, Kazakhstan 4,000 and Tajikistan, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia 1,000 troops each.¹³⁶ Uzbekistan did not join the bloc's Rapid Reaction Force and did not participate in CSTO military exercises. The establishment of the CRRF could be viewed as an extension of the Russian influence in Central Asia.¹³⁷

Regarding the fight against international terrorism, the Working Group of Experts on Questions Related to the Fight against International Terrorism and Extremism was established in 2005. The consultations conducted on a regular basis are held at the level of counter-terrorist agencies. In 2008 the CCS adopted the Collective Action Plan of MS of the Collective Security Treaty Organization on Implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy for 2008-2012. The real work is based on information activities of the anti- terrorist agencies of MS. More specifically, an official list of the organizations in terrorist or extremist nature operating within the CSTO MS was drawn up.

According to the goals and principles of the Organization, CSTO carries out several more projects in the area of anti- drug operations or counteracting illegal migration and trafficking in human beings. Combating the drug trafficking is the challenge the CSTO has been facing and most of its practical efforts have involved fighting drug smuggling and it can be stated, that this work has had some positive results so far. The aim is to block drug flows coming

¹³⁴ As the Article 5 of the CSTO Charter stipulates: The Organization shall operate on the basis of strict respect for the independence, voluntary participation and equality of rights and obligations of the MS and non-interference in matters

¹³⁵ INGIMARSDÓTTIR, Brynhildur: *The Collective Security Treaty Organization and NATO: "Never the twain shall meet"*. Master's thesis 2011. (online) Available from:

<http://skemman.is/en/stream/get/1946/10078/25176/1/Brynhildur.pdf> (07.02.2013)

¹³⁶ Data from 2009. Bohr, A., *op.cit.*, p.286.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.* p. 289.

from Afghanistan. In this field, the international anti- drug operation called *Kanal* is held regularly under the auspices of the CSTO.¹³⁸

At the end of 2012, the CSTO MS decided to create CSTO Collective Forces, which would unite all the military bodies created as part of the organisation earlier. Besides, the heads of states agreed on creation of collective forces to respond to emergencies.¹³⁹ Another step on the way of CSTO collective forces announced in March 2013 Secretary General Nikolai Bordyuzha. He stated that also the preparation of the creation of CSTO collective air force had been completed.¹⁴⁰

The lack of intervention in Tajikistan¹⁴¹ and Kyrgyzstan¹⁴² from the part of CSTO raises the question of the true intent and capabilities of the military bloc. These were the most serious security challenges the CSTO has seen within its member states, yet it did not intervene. There are several possible reasons for this. One possibility is that the lack of intervention was a matter of capability. It is very difficult to operate in Kyrgyzstan's and Tajikistan's nearly entirely mountainous terrain, where troop movements are challenged by roads and infrastructure. The second and more likely possibility for the lack of CSTO deployments is the matter of intent. The last factor is the bloc's image and others' perception, particularly the West's. A CSTO deployment dominated by Russia would undermine the notion that the CSTO is a truly multinational military bloc. Ultimately, Russia is the dominant power of the CSTO. The key difference between the CSTO and NATO is that NATO has deployed many times before but the CSTO has not.¹⁴³

The CSTO is a young organization and still in shaping. The member states, especially Central Asian ones have not very good mutual relations and Russia is not helping in this case because of its discriminatory practices and occasional divide-and-rule tactics.¹⁴⁴ It can be stated, that smaller members are willing to stay in the CSTO, non-Russian members are seen as mainly concerned to protect themselves against Western political interference. Some states¹⁴⁵ are also using NATO and other external relationships to offset their one-sided dependence on Russia within the CSTO, thus they are balancing against Russia, as well as

¹³⁸ Bordyuzha, N: *op.cit.*, p.345.

¹³⁹ *CSTO Presidents Decide On CSTO Collective Forces*. Belarusian Telegraph Agency, 19.12.12. Available from: <http://news.belta.by/en/news/politics?id=702273> (02.04.2013).

¹⁴⁰ *Concept To Create CSTO Collective Air Force Ready*. Belarusian Telegraph Agency, 28.03.2013. Available from: http://news.belta.by/en/main_news?id=710971 (02.04.2013).

¹⁴¹ Clashes with the islamist militants of the Al- Qaeda linked Islamist Movement of Uzbekistan in 2010.

¹⁴² Interethnic clashes between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in 2010.

¹⁴³ *Re-Examining the Collective Security Treaty Organization*, Stratfor Global Intelligence, 2012. Available from: <http://www.stratfor.com/sample/analysis/re-examining-collective-security-treaty-organization> (07.02.2013)

¹⁴⁴ Ingimarsdóttir, B: *op.cit.*, p. 51.

¹⁴⁵ Like Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, but also Armenia to certain extend.

bandwagoning with it.¹⁴⁶ The experts say that CSTO needs to be reformed. Dmitri Trenin in his article from 2010 defined five aspects, where CSTO has to be reformed. First of all, that CSTO's focus needs to be, above all on Central Asia, because the security threats in this region affect the interests of majority of the MS. Secondly, CSTO needs an integration of a serious political component, because the current organization is not enough. CSTO needs more solid military component as well, beside the CRRF also collective police and peacekeeping forces able to prevent interethnic, social and other internal unrests. Trenin concluded that CSTO also needed a broad political and expert support from the MS.¹⁴⁷

There were great expectations from the CSTO, but have not been completely fulfilled yet.¹⁴⁸ The outside world perceives the organisation as an instrument of Russian economic domination and the member states as a necessary gesture of approval to Moscow in order to keep the Russian arm suppliers at bargain prices.¹⁴⁹ This attitude needs to be changed; otherwise the CSTO can not move forward towards a serious security and defence organisation based on equality and international acknowledgement.

3.2.1. Belarusian Engagement in CSTO

Officially is the foreign (and security) policy described as “multidirectional”, in fact is mainly if not exclusively oriented towards Russia and the CIS. This tendency became clear in 1993 and remains unchanged although there have been some disagreements between Moscow and Minsk which were discussed in the previous chapter. This direction is clearly expressed in the defence strategies and priorities as well, where as the most important direction in the foreign policy of Republic Belarus is identified the cooperation with the CIS countries and CSTO member states. The state leaders and representatives take an active part in sessions of the Defence Minister's council, Joint Chief of Staff, CIS, etc.¹⁵⁰

In 2009 Belarus announced, that it would join the CSTO rapid reaction force, although initially refrained from signing the deal because of the trade disputes with Russia.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁶ Ingimarsdóttir, B: *op.cit.*, p.54.

¹⁴⁷ TRENIN, Dmitri: *CSTO: Ripe for Reform?*. Carnegie Moscow Center. Available from: <http://www.carnegie.ru/2010/08/25/csto-ripe-for-reform/ct80> (02.04.2013).

¹⁴⁸ Fail in the peace-keeping operations, but partial successes in combating drug and human trafficking, for example.

¹⁴⁹ TRENIN, D. *Op.cit.*

¹⁵⁰ *The Republic Belarus Ministry of Defence's Activities in the Framework of Military Cooperation*. Available from: http://www.mod.mil.by/megd_sotr_eng.html (29.03.2013).

¹⁵¹ The case of Russian ban on Belarusian dairy products.

However, the leaders have continued to stress, that Belarus will not deploy its forces outside its borders.

In the 2010 crises in Kyrgyzstan CSTO did not deploy its forces to handle the situation. This act was criticised afterwards by the political analysts and it was Belarus in that time, or Lukashenka who called for intervention to restore Kurmanbek Bakiyev to power.

In 2011 Belarus held a CSTO chairmanship and in spite of previous disagreements, on the unofficial summit held in Astana in August 2011, Lukashenka actively campaigned for increasing in the role of the CSTO and strengthening of CRRF.¹⁵² Among the priorities outlined by Belarus at this meeting was creating a legal framework for drafting a list of personae non gratae on the territories of CSTO countries. Another priority highlighted by Lukashenka at the summit but also during whole Belarusian chairmanship was the threat of popular unrest in the Arab countries. In the same year Lukashenka even stated, that there is a possibility of using CRRF to prevent coups. The Minsk fears were quite predictable regarding series of protests in the wake of presidential elections in December 2010.¹⁵³

European Union continues in sanctions against Lukashenka's regime for the human rights violation and in 2012 CSTO Secretary General Bordyuzha expressed the support to the Belarusian leader speaking on behalf of the CSTO MS stressing, that Western policy of sanctions will bring no results.¹⁵⁴

3.2.2. Armenian Engagement in CSTO

Armenia as a member of CIS and CSTO actively participates in the projects conducted in their framework in accordance with the national security strategy and military doctrine of the country. In the National Strategy of the Armenian Republic published in 2007 it is clearly expressed, that country carries on the foreign and security policy of 'complementarity'.¹⁵⁵ Armenia is involved in regional and international integration and as a practical demonstration of this policy points to the strategic partnership with Russia, the adoption of the European model of development, mutually beneficial cooperation with Iran and the United States,

¹⁵² For example, Russian and Belarusian air defence systems are already closely integrated and regional task force of Belarusian and Russian ground forces conducts joint military exercises.

¹⁵³ *Belarus Seeks Protection Against Coups*. Russia Today, 31.08.2011, Available from: <http://rt.com/politics/lukashenko-protest-csto-forces-505/> (02.04.2013).

¹⁵⁴ XUEQUAN, Mu: *CSTO to Support Belarus Against Western Sanctions*. English.news.cn. http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2012-08/17/c_123593423.htm (02.04.2013).

¹⁵⁵ This policy implies friendly relationship with many different partners, such as Russia, the U.S, NATO and Iran.

membership in the Commonwealth of independent states and the Collective Security Treaty Organisation and intensification of the cooperation with NATO.

The actual involvement of the country in CIS is defined very vaguely in the strategy. On the other hand, in the case of CSTO Armenia sees as a key priority for the country the privileged conditions for the supply of military equipment to CSTO-member states. Armenia supports intensification of the cooperation in this grouping in order to better address the international threats such as drug trafficking and terrorism. However, there is a great deal of criticism in the document regarding the role of other CSTO MS in the inter-state conflicts disputes. The CSTO should clarify the regulations regarding its involvement in the cases of military aggression direct against a MS, it is concluded.¹⁵⁶ Military doctrine of the Republic of Armenia establishes permanently acting combined forces with the Russian Federation, such as joint formation of troops of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia and the Russian Federation. Country defines as its priority the active and practical participation in the programs of the CSTO such an elaboration of the main direction of the military policy, development of a collective security system based on a regional principle, improvement of the air defence systems of the CIS and CSTO and bilateral cooperation between member states of the CSTO.¹⁵⁷

Armenian role in this organization is very specific. Armenia is the only CSTO member with strong relations to NATO.¹⁵⁸ Nevertheless, it can not be stated that these relationships are equal. In fact, Armenia's membership in the CSTO is an extension of its bilateral military relations with Russia.¹⁵⁹ After a gas crisis in 2006, many opposition politicians who supported Moscow before, started to recommend pro-western attitude including relying on NATO rather than on the weak CSTO.¹⁶⁰ However, these political tendencies did not change common pro-Russian moods in that time. In 2012 Armenian parliament ratified the Protocol on the Location of Military Installations in Collective Security Treaty Organisation Member States, which was signed already at the end of 2011. With the signature, country agrees not to host

¹⁵⁶ *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia, 2007*. Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Armenia. Available from : <http://www.mil.am/files/NATIONAL%20%20SECURITY%20STRATEGYeng.pdf> (27.03.2013)

¹⁵⁷ *The Military Doctrine of the Republic of Armenia*. Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Armenia. Available from : <http://www.mil.am/files/mil-doctrine-eng.pdf> (27.03.2013)

¹⁵⁸ This is given among others by the policy of complementarity.

¹⁵⁹ FREITAG-WIRMINGHAUS, Rainer : *Prospects for Armenia and Azerbaijan between Eurasia and the Middle East*. In : Hamilton-Mangott (eds) : *The Wider Black Sea Region in the 21th Century*, Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2008. p : 55-56.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.* P.56-57.

any military forces or other infrastructure of other states without a permission of CSTO.¹⁶¹ In September 2012, Armenia hosted CSTO CRRF exercises.¹⁶²

The relations slightly changed, first when Armenia refused Russian insistent invitation to join the Eurasian Union and the Customs Union.¹⁶³ Second, Armenia is going to sign the Association Agreement with the EU in November 2013. In order to avoid that, Moscow wants to use two instruments, she has: gas prices and CSTO. Thus, besides the boost of gas prices, Russia threatens to use CSTO quick reaction forces and deploy them in Armenia to handle the situation. With regard to the fact, that Armenia signed an agreement on CSTO quick reaction forces and their mandate to intervene in domestic affairs of the MS, this act could corner Armenia to accept Russian proposals.¹⁶⁴

3.3. Eurasian Union – Putin's new brainchild

In October 2011 the then-Prime Minister of Russian Federation Vladimir Putin called for the first time for the creation of the Eurasian Union (ECU)¹⁶⁵. Anyway, this is not a new concept. It was originally presented by the Kazakh president Nursultan Nazarbayev already in 1994 in his speech at the Moscow State University. According to Putin, this Union should be based on the experience of the European Union and has no ambition to re-store the USSR as many might fear, he claimed.¹⁶⁶ Belarus and Kazakhstan naturally welcomed this initiative, concerning the fact they already form a Customs Union with Russia¹⁶⁷ and launched the single economic space as well.¹⁶⁸ The positive effects on the trade of the countries involved in the Customs Union are already visible, according to the European Bank for Reconstruction

¹⁶¹ HAYRUMYAN, Naira: *Sovereignty curtailed? Armenia Agrees to Ask CSTO Permission for Hosting Other State's Military Facilities*. Available from: http://armenianow.com/commentary/analysis/40252/armenia_russia_csto_protocol_military_bases (29.03.2013).

¹⁶² McDERMOTT, Roger: *CSTO Excercises Rapid Reaction Forces in Armenia*. Eurasia Daily Monitor, Volume: 9, Issue:169. Available from: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=39854](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=39854) (02.04.2013).

¹⁶³ The basis of these integration projects will be discussed in the third subhead of this chapter.

¹⁶⁴ HAYRUMYAN, Naira: *Putin Blackmails Armenia by CSTO troops*. Lragir.am. <http://www.lragir.am/index.php/eng/0/country/view/29150> (29.03.2013).

¹⁶⁵ The abbreviation „ECU“ is used to distinguish between European Union and Eurasian Union.

¹⁶⁶ *Putin Calls for "Eurasian Union" of Ex-Soviet Republics*. BBC News Europe, October 04,2011. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-15172519>

¹⁶⁷ The three countries agreed to establish the Customs Union in November 2009.

¹⁶⁸ The agreed to establish a fully-fledged economic union in January 2015.

and Development.¹⁶⁹ Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are also considering the accession to the Eurasian Union.

The Mercator Fellow at Global Policy Journal, Liana Fix stated that Eurasian Union is the most ambitious Russian integration project since the breakdown of the Soviet Union and has become one of the top priorities of Putin's third presidency term. Some scholars argue that the creation of the Eurasian Union is more about politics than economics in the end and the objective remains the same after all: to prove Russia's great power status and make it centre of the Eurasian region. Although the West is still sceptical about the actual development of the ECU into a relevant organization, the proposed integration project has already a strong institutional framework and binding legal agreements.¹⁷⁰

Russia is persuading also other ex-Soviet countries to join a new project, among others¹⁷¹, Armenia. As it was already explained, Armenia pursues the political line somewhere in between the EU and NATO on the one side and Russia and CSTO on the other. Although some events mentioned in the previous chapters could mean that Armenia tries to come closer to the Euro-Atlantic structures, there are many antagonistic voices. Armenian expert on Turkish studies, Ruben Safrastyan stated that CSTO is the only military support Armenia has against the external threats. He adds, that as for the U.S. the main military commitments lie in Turkey, Armenia has no alternative to Russia, CSTO and the Eurasian Union.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ PYRKALO, Svitlana: *Customs Union of Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus is First Success in CIS Integration, Says EBRD*. European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, November 07, 2012.

<http://www.ebrd.com/pages/news/press/2012/121107a.shtml> (17.04.2013).

¹⁷⁰ FIX, Liana: *Putin's Eurasian Union: A Promising Development*. Euractiv.com, December 20, 2012.

<http://www.euractiv.com/europes-east/putin-urasian-union-just-union-analysis-516749>

¹⁷¹ Ukraine plays an important role here. Although the Ukrainian president Yanukovich declared country's willingness to become part of the European structures, the current relations are on the low point due to the imprisoning of Yulia Tymoshenko. Putin, on the other hand offers the access to the common market without constraining human rights or rule of law conditions.

¹⁷² *Armenia has no alternatives to Russia and Eurasian Union-expert*. News.am, January 15, 2013.

<http://news.am/eng/news/135943.html>

Conclusion

Since the dissolution of the USSR, this region experienced many differences in the development lines of the newly independent countries. Some of them became members of the EU and NATO, many of them have maintained authoritarian regimes, the others are still in shaping and struggling against domestic and international challenges or frozen conflicts and Russia approach them according to these developments and her own interests, geopolitical views and priorities. Armenia and Belarus as a demonstrative cases fulfil more of these patterns and also their relations with Russian Federation have not been unchanged for the whole period either.

As described in the first chapter, the former post-Soviet space does form a security complex around Russia. The security issues of the states can not be reasonably analysed apart from another and apart from the great powers intervening in the region, in the Armenian and Belarusian case these are Russia, the European Union, and the United States in particular. The social constructivist approach concerning patterns of amity and enmity between states in this complex has to be taken into account as well, especially in the case of Armenia.

This Thesis set as its primary goal to examine extends of the Russian influence in the post-Soviet space and whether this has changed over time. On Russian two closest allies from the group of these states the aim was to demonstrate if these still do consider Russia as a strategic partner without whom they can not address international challenges or domestic issues and on the contrary, if they are still important to RF and why.

The main argument, that Russia even after more than two decades remains the most important player in the region and has kept influence on the foreign and security policy making in Armenia and Belarus has proven to be basically well-founded although not entirely. Belarus with its “multi-directional” policy is based on the character of the ruling regime. In the security and military terms, Russia and Belarus have made almost an integrated union to the benefit of both countries. Armenia is very much determined by its difficult geopolitical situation and the official state policy of “complementarity” is nothing more than an attempt to balance between the dependence on Russia and an effort to come closer to the West in order to protect itself. In the both cases it can be stated, that the bilateral tools used by Russia to keep influence in given countries have been so far more successful than the

multilateral ones. This situation might change with the reform of the CSTO and development of the Eurasian Union.

The author set at the beginning of the Paper a series of questions to be answered and this aim was fulfilled. Each of both countries has developed their security policy regarding geopolitics, economy, character of the regime or ruling individuals and ties with Russia. Belarus, situated on the border between two giants, the EU and RF, could not become anything else but buffer zone. In spite of certain attempts to bring the country closer to the democratic European Union, the autocratic regime of Alexander Lukashenka detents closer cooperation and currently this is the main obstacle in the running projects, the EU has with its Eastern partners. Russia uses country as a backyard with two military bases in order to address NATO enlargement and as an access way to her exclave Kaliningrad. In turn provides subsidies to Belarus. Interlinked economies of the both states also commit Belarus to cooperation, because without Russian support, Belarusian regime is barely sustainable. Russia involved Belarus in all her integration projects, but the actual impact of these is debatable, perhaps with the exception of the partial success of CSTO in certain areas and the integration in the newly emerged project of Eurasian Union, but this can not be sufficiently evaluated yet due to very short period of duration. Mutual relations are mostly based on the bilateral arrangements. Successful cooperation was noted in the security area, in the economic field, however, the situation is complicated and the possible solution is not on the horizon. After all of this, it can be still stated, that Russia is a Belarusian strategic ally. However, this relationship is uneasy and for Russia it might be harmful in the eyes of the Western powers to support the Belarusian regime and its leader.

Armenia has developed its security policy in response to its geopolitical and economic situation. The country has traditionally close relations with Russia which are understood from the Armenian perspective as a primary effort of the state survival in the environment practically surrounded by enemies. As in the case of Belarus, also in Armenia, Russia has two free-of charge military bases. This military presence in the country understands RF as an attempt to resist Iranian effort to extend its influence in the region. Other possible reason could be that close cooperation with Armenia brings Russia another market to control, for sure in the energy and transport area. For Armenia, the cooperation with Russia has proved to be necessary, although not always accepted unconditionally. Armenia on the contrary to Azerbaijan does not have great sources of raw materials and therefore is dependent on Russian supplies. The economy is even more connected with the Russian because of the

closed borders with Turkey and Azerbaijan and therefore limited trade. Armenia tries to keep good relations with Iran for economic reasons as well. On the other hand, there is a message in the development of the Armenian foreign policy towards the EU, NATO and the US, that country has the intention to deprive of the dependency on Russia and come closer to the West as it was demonstrated in the Armenian temporary refusal to join Eurasian Union and the Custom Union for instance. Armenians consider themselves as Europeans and want to be part of its structures. On the other hand, NATO and the EU can not secure the state's security at this moment, by contrast CSTO can. If there is an aim to come closer to the West, it can not be completely fulfilled without resolving the frozen conflicts and unsolved issues with its neighbours (Turkey and Azerbaijan). Russia certainly will not release Armenia from her influence voluntarily and will use the two main tools she has, gas prices and CSTO. Armenia has been already assured of the real character of the CSTO, when Yerevan called for help in the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, because considers Azerbaijan as a major threat to the state security and has not become it. On the contrary, Russia threatens to use the deployment of the CSTO CRRF in order to remind Armenia to choose the side reasonably. Russia recently created other tool, Eurasian (Customs) Union, in order to persuade not only Armenia to stay on the 'Russian side'.

This Thesis could not cover all the problems and answer every question regarding the topic of shaping the post-Soviet space and the role of Russia and it was not the aim of the author either. The main goal was to outline the development lines, relations, interactions, integration tendencies and problems in the given region and in two countries in particular. Is Russia loosing her allies or better say "dependent partners"? Maybe it could be the case of Armenia in the future. But the path of gaining true independency is long and distressful. In Belarus everything is subject to the character of the ruling regime and personality of Alexander Lukashenka. Another aspect is the limit of patience of Russia- to which extent it would be bearable for Russia to support the controversial Belarusian leader in order not to damage the image in the views of its partners? Without the changing of the regime and necessary economic reforms, Belarus can not begin its way towards democracy and emancipation from Russian Federation. It will be anyway very interesting to monitor how the situation in the region will evolve in the forthcoming years.

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ABSTRAKT

Bakalárska práca sa zaoberá bezpečnostnou spoluprácou v post-sovietskom priestore. Hlavným cieľom je analyzovať vplyv ruskej zahraničnej politiky na vývojové trendy v bezpečnostnej politike Arménska a Bieloruska. Na príklade týchto dvoch krajín autorka demonštruje ako Rusko ovplyvňuje tvorbu bezpečnostnej politiky v daných krajinách prostredníctvom bilaterálnych a multilaterálnych nástrojov a ako sa tento vplyv odráža vo vzájomnom pôsobení s ďalšími aktérmi na poli medzinárodných vzťahov.

Teoreticky sa práca odvoláva na teóriu regionálnych komplexov Kodaňskej školy, ktorú autorka aplikuje na región bývalého Sovietskeho zväzu, s výnimkou Pobaltských štátov. V práci sú analyzované tri integračné projekty iniciované Ruskom od deväťdesiatych rokov až po súčasnosť, pričom je hlavná pozornosť venovaná oblasti bezpečnostnej spolupráce. Bilaterálne vzťahy v oblasti vojenskej spolupráce medzi Ruskom a Arménskom a Ruskom a Bieloruskom tvoria poslednú časť práce. Na základe týchto analýz autorka odpovedá na otázky vytýčené v úvode a predpovedá možné budúce vývojové línie v zahraničnej a bezpečnostnej politike Arménska a Bieloruska.

Práca je písaná v anglickom jazyku.

ABSTRACT

This presented Thesis deals with the security cooperation in the post-Soviet space. The main goal is to examine the impact of the Russian foreign policy on the developments in the area of security in Armenia and Belarus. On the example of these two post-Soviet countries, the author demonstrates, how Russia has been affecting the security policy making in the above mentioned states by means of bilateral and multilateral instruments and how this influence has reflected in the interaction with other players.

Theoretical framework of the Paper is based on the Regional Complex Theory presented by Copenhagen School which is applied on the region of the former USSR with the exception of the Baltic countries. In the Thesis three integration project initiated by Russia since the 1990s till present were analysed whereas the main focus is on the collective security area. The bilateral relations in the field of military cooperation between Russia and Armenia and Russia and Belarus form the last part of the Paper. Based on the analysis made throughout the work the author answers the questions set at the beginning and predicts possible development lines in the foreign and security policy of Armenia and Belarus. The Thesis is written in English.

