

THE CSTO, GUAM: TRANSFORMATION OF THE POST-SOVIET AREA

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It is impossible to understand the structure of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) or GUAM (a regional organization comprising Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova) outside the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and its evolution. On the one hand, since the breakup of the Soviet Union, the political elites of the newly independent states did not have a clear idea of how the CIS should develop. CIS documents only made general declarations about the need to get rid of the Soviet past and build relations on a new, “civilized” basis. On the other hand, the political elites in those states sought, as far as possible, to limit any interference in their domestic policies, which were aimed mainly at creating their own independent institutions of governance and administration.

Political elites in those states where serious internal civil conflicts had erupted before the formal disintegration of the U.S.S.R. were inclined to attribute their failures to “Russian interference” or to “Moscow’s recurring imperial aspirations.” They extended their assessments to new integration projects with Russia’s participation. Indeed, conflicts in Abkhazia, South Ossetia Nagorno-Karabakh, the Transnistrian region, and Tajikistan in the early 1990s stimulated the search for new structures to deal with security problems. However, at that time security was understood in a broad context, including the neutralization of an external military threat. To Russia, a former superpower, that appeared to be a consideration of the utmost importance.

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The CSTO is a successor to a structure that was formed soon after the split-up of the U.S.S.R., which led to the disintegration of a unified defense area. The U.S.S.R.’s defense infrastructure historically evolved on the territory of an entire state, as a single whole, and on a sound technical basis. It is important to note that a substantial part of Soviet defense elements were positioned in border areas (including in the Union republics). By deploying defense infrastructure in the periphery, the central authorities effectively pushed the hypothetical battlefields as far away as possible from Moscow. For example, missile attack early warning systems were based in Belorussia (Belarus), the Baltic republics, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Tajikistan. Submarine and surface ship bases were deployed in the Baltic republics, Ukraine, and Georgia. Nuclear weapons were concentrated in Russia, Belorussia, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine. At first, each of the said republics even tried to claim a nuclear status.

Following the breakup of the U.S.S.R., each post-Soviet state started building its own armed forces. Except for the Russian Federation, no other country sought to include its forces into some joint system. Furthermore, there was a group of countries that pointedly ignored collective defense activities. Ukraine followed a special policy. For example, Kiev included a provision in the Armed Forces and Border Troops Agreement (30 December, 1991) stipulating that Ukraine would start creating its own armed forces on 3 January, 1992. Moldova and Turkmenistan announced their course toward neutrality. Georgia was rocked by an internal civil conflict as President Gamsakhurdia’s regime was about to fall. Not surprisingly, Tbilisi would not even hear anything about any joint security projects. It should be recalled that Georgia only joined the CIS on 9 December, 1993.¹ As for its principal document—the CIS Charter, including Section III, on collective security and military-political cooperation—it had yet to be adopted. Nevertheless, in other CIS documents, the member states assumed certain obligations, in particular, to maintain joint command of the unified military-strategic area, including control over nuclear weapons, and guarantee the necessary conditions for the deployment, operation, maintenance, and financial and social support for their strategic armed forces.

On the official level, over the first one and a half to two years after the disintegration of the U.S.S.R., it might seem that the CIS was forging ahead with a collective defense and security system, adopting an array of interstate documents. Thus, on 30 December, 1991, the CIS heads of state signed an agreement on strategic forces, making provisions for the establishment of a joint command. The term “strategic” was applied to formations, units, agencies, and training establishments of the Strategic Missile Forces, the Air Force, the Navy, the Air Defense Forces, the office of the chief of space assets, the Airborne Troops, strategic and operational intelligence agencies, as well as forces, assets,

¹ It is important to note in this context that Georgia joined the CIS not as a former Union republic but as a newly independent state with a different population and different state borders.

and other military installations and facilities designed to exercise command and control of FSU forces. On 14 February, 1992, an agreement on the status of strategic forces was signed, but soon after that, those documents were forgotten.

It seems that a significant factor in such behavior was the lack (or perceived lack) of direct military threat in the early 1990s, common to all post-Soviet states. As is known, such a threat acts as a key incentive in the formation of stable military-political associations. Furthermore, the new pro-West generation of politicians in many of the newly independent states (including Russia) embraced the theory of conflict-free international relations.

In actual fact, the new generation of politicians of the CIS countries was little concerned with filling the vacuum left by the disappeared balance of forces that had been maintaining peace throughout the post-World War II period. The new political elites in the CIS were more concerned with the new possibilities for redistributing property and power in their own interests.

This is the perspective from which one should view the Collective Security Treaty (CST), which was signed on 15 May, 1992 in Tashkent (also known as the Tashkent Treaty) for a five-year term with the possibility of extension. The treaty was signed by Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan. Belarus joined it a little later (on 31 December, 1993). Therefore, four CIS states (Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova, and Turkmenistan) opted out of the treaty. At the time, two of those countries were being rocked by internal armed conflicts (the Transnistrian conflict in Moldova and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in Azerbaijan). Obviously, that affected the positions of Chisinau and Baku.

It should be noted in this context that GUAM member states as a whole never joined the CST. That can hardly be a simple coincidence. Rather, it reflected the group's general reluctance to develop its relations within the CIS on the basis of integration, as well as its intention to limit ties with Russia as far as possible. Azerbaijan's decision to join the CST does not contradict this assumption: After all, in 1992, politicians at the National Front of Azerbaijan, led by Abulfaz Elchibei, dominated the Baku scene. It was not until the summer of 1993, when Elchibei, who was losing popularity, had to cede control of the Azerbaijani parliament to Heydar Aliiev, that old foreign policy approaches were reviewed.

It seems that to many political elites, the CIS originally served as "a front" for their own agendas and plans. Consider, for example, that the overwhelming majority of multilateral treaties and agreements within the framework of the CIS, which were subject to ratification or special approval procedure, never went into effect after they were signed. Thus, Ukraine, one of the largest CIS states, never inked the CIS Charter. Furthermore, it even ratified the Agreement on the Creation of the CIS (8 December, 1991) with a number of provisos and qualifications that substantially changed its essence.

On the same day that the Tashkent Treaty was signed, yet another notable event took place: In Tashkent Russia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, and Ukraine signed an agreement on principles and procedure of implementation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. Below, we will analyze the CFE Treaty and its impact on the CSTO and GUAM. But at this point it should be noted that the said agreement was designed to distribute the FSU's rights and obligations under the CFE Treaty between Russia and the seven other signatories. The Russian Federation ratified the document in 1992, but it did not come into force. Azerbaijan and Georgia did not ratify it. Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia refused to join the CFE Treaty.

In accordance with the Tashkent Treaty, the CST signatories pledged not to join military alliances or any groups of states aimed against another CST member country. They undertook to consult one another on international security matters affecting their interests, and to harmonize their positions on those matters.

In case of a threat to the security, territorial integrity or sovereignty of one or several CST member states or a threat to international peace and security, the member states pledged to use without delay a mechanism of joint consultations to coordinate their positions and implement measures to eliminate such a threat. The treaty made provisions for the formation of the Collective Security Council.

Therefore, the CST was not a classic military alliance. As for the provision concerning the use of the consultation mechanism, it subsequently aroused considerable criticism due to its ineffectiveness. The treaty was open to accession by other countries sharing its purposes and principles. The treaty was ratified by all of its signatories. It entered into force on 20 April, 1994 and was registered at the U.N. Secretariat on 1 November, 1995.

As a follow-up to the CST, on 6 July, 1992, a statute on the Collective Security Council was approved. The Council as a coordinating body was to meet in session at least twice a year. Emergency sessions could be called at the demand of at least two CST members. All Council members had equal rights in the decision making process.

Nevertheless, little, if any, progress was made in CST related activities. Russia's attempts to invigorate military cooperation invariably met with guarded reaction from its CST partners. The activity of the CST, as well as CIS bodies as a whole, eventually acquired mainly a formal/bureaucratic nature. Six months after the Tashkent meeting, by late 1993, the idea of preserving unified armed forces in the post-Soviet space was effectively forgotten.

A unified area for defense and common military infrastructure disintegrated for all intents and purposes without a new arrangement replacing it. Since the division of property, arms, and equipment was based on the principle of their territorial location, the member states subsequently ended up with a hodgepodge of defense assets. For example, Tajikistan received very little, even though the country was in the middle of a civil war, compounded by raids and incursions across the border from Afghanistan.

Formally, the CST continued to exist as an organizational structure. By the mid-1990s, internal armed conflicts in the CIS were effectively frozen. That enabled Azerbaijan and Georgia to join the CST (on 24 September and 9 December, 1993, respectively). In addition, attempts were made to invigorate the military-political cooperation within the CIS.

In 1995, the Collective Security Council approved the CST Collective Security Concept. The document presented the member states' views on the elimination of the threat to peace, collective defense against aggression, and ensuring sovereignty and territorial integrity. In a certain sense, the Concept was an attempt to flesh out and develop the general provisions of the Tashkent Treaty. That could have been the reason why the approach failed to receive unanimous approval from all CST member states (Azerbaijan did not sign the Concept, while Belarus signed it with some provisos).

The Concept included basic principles of military and collective security policy, as well as the main lines and stages in the creation of a collective security system. The document identified the following main lines in building a collective security system: harmonization of the basic defense and security provisions on the legislative level; regular consultations on military organization and training, and elaboration of common approaches on military matters. The collective security system was to be built on a stage by stage basis, taking into account the development of the military-political situation in the world.

- Stage 1: completing the organizational development of the member states' armed forces; developing a military-technical cooperation program and starting its implementation; and working out and adopting laws regulating the operation of the collective security system.

- Stage 2: forming coalition (joint) forces (troops) to repulse possible aggression and planning their employment; putting in place a joint (collective) air defense system; and considering the matter of creating unified armed forces.
- Stage 3: completing the formation of the CST collective security system.

On the same day as the CST Concept, an agreement on the creation of a unified air defense system and an agreement on the main lines of advancing military cooperation between the CST member states were adopted. It is noteworthy that the air defense agreement was open to accession not only by CST member countries, but also other CIS states. At the time, however, Azerbaijan and Moldova did not sign the document, while Belarus, Turkmenistan, and Ukraine signed it with provisos.

Those plans never materialized. The statements by CIS leaders about their readiness to put in place a collective security system were not backed up by practical action. Amid an acute socioeconomic crisis in almost all CIS countries, their governments were looking for any financial assistance from other states. The U.S. and West European countries, while periodically providing such assistance, typically accompanied it by tacit demands of a political nature, including a “recommendation” to newly independent states not to become too actively involved in creating interstate structures, which could clash with Western interests. Furthermore, “the revival of Russia’s imperial ambitions” had become a widespread cliché.

As for Russia, during Boris Yeltsin’s presidency, it failed to make any significant achievements in pursuing economic reform that could have helped it to bring its CIS partners closer. The ineffectiveness of CIS structures was becoming increasingly evident, and over time, dissatisfaction with the CIS’s performance started to be openly expressed in the course of the organization’s meetings, in particular, during the Chisinau summit in 1997. That intensified the pressure to create alternative structures. Not surprisingly, GUAM was created in 1997.

Therefore, there were two main factors in the CST’s crisis and the formation of GUAM—i.e., the ineffectiveness of the CIS and the focused activity by foreign centers of influence to prevent the creation of an effective security system in the post-Soviet area.

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GUAM as an interstate organization, originally an informal consultative forum, was created on 10 October, 1997 by Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova at a summit of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, named after the initial letters of each of those countries. It would probably not be quite fair to suggest that the GUAM founders “betrayed” the idea of cooperation within the framework of the CIS. After all, during the same period Russia was working hard to form subregional organizations (for example, on a bilateral basis, with Belarus), but the approaches used by the GUAM states and Russia differed considerably. GUAM was originally proclaimed as an association oriented toward cooperation outside the framework of the CIS, relying on assistance from European and international structures. Unlike the CST, GUAM focused on cooperation not in ensuring collective security, but mainly in the political and economic sphere. That was another reason for the lack of contacts between the two organizations. True, it should not be forgotten, however, that for one and a half years, Azerbaijan and Georgia continued to operate within the framework of both GUAM and the CST.

Obviously, apart from its formally declared priorities, GUAM’s goals included the lessening of its member states’ economic (primarily energy) dependence on Russia, as well as ensuring energy transit along the Caspian-Caucasus-Ukraine-Moldova-Europe route, bypassing RF territory. That alone was enough to antagonize Russia and the CST, since it was quite obvious to them that

amid the ongoing internal armed conflicts, the GUAM member states would be unlikely to ensure security throughout the extent of the said route with their own resources. That increased the danger of GUAM seeking assistance from other external centers of power, which did not sit well with Moscow.

Needless to say, the differences in positions were also linked to other military-political issues. Moldova and Georgia were pushing for the withdrawal of Russian troops from the Transnistrian region and the Southern Caucasus, respectively. Just as its other GUAM partners, Ukraine, which had managed at great cost to sign a series of agreements with Russia on the Black Sea Fleet and other facilities (in 1997), suspected that Moscow had the intention to review the flank limits (treaty limited equipment, or TLE) under the CFE Treaty, signed in Paris on 19 November, 1990. On the Soviet part, that document was a major concession to the West, since it related to heavy military hardware and equipment—tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, artillery systems, combat aircraft, and helicopter gunships.² On some of those weapon systems the U.S.S.R. had superiority over the North Atlantic alliance, and reducing them to TLE levels could be regarded as a concession. Following the split-up of the U.S.S.R. and the Warsaw Pact, CFE provisions were obviously getting out of touch with reality, Russia, the CST's leading nation, being affected the most. Russia was under constraint in redeploying its troops even on its own soil. It was in 1997 that military and diplomatic experts started working on adapting the CFE Treaty to new reality. However, the West was clearly not interested to take Russia's concerns into account, but quite the contrary, insisted on disarmament in the so-called flank zones, even despite the fact that at the time Moscow was conducting military operations in Chechnia. Not surprisingly, the CST leadership viewed that as an attempt to exert humiliating pressure on Russia, and it regarded the new structure (GUAM) as leverage that the West might try to use to that end. On the other hand, Kiev, Chisinau, Tbilisi, and Baku presumably expected that in the context of such confrontation, Moscow could attempt to get the West to agree, in response, to the presence of Russian military contingents in Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. From a legal perspective, said forces had nothing to do with Russia's CFE obligations, but, as the subsequent course of events showed, Western countries had a different opinion on that issue. It is noteworthy that before long, the ruling elites in Chisinau and Tbilisi started airing that opinion.

There is no sufficient and conclusive evidence to prove that CFE related issues were a decisive or even significant factor in the lack of constructive cooperation between the CST and GUAM. However, from our perspective, there is a strong connection between the CFE Treaty and the status of the two regional structures. After all, the CST and GUAM's "numerical" transformation coincided with the adoption of the Agreement on Adaptation of the CFE Treaty (1999).³ However, other factors also were at work. At any rate, Russia for a long time complied with the CFE requirements in effect on a unilateral basis. As for Western states, in addition to constantly setting new demands to Moscow, they apparently created additional leverage to exert pressure on the RF in that regard—i.e., GUAM.

In accordance with the accords reached at the Istanbul summit (1999), Russia's quota was set at 6,350 tanks, 11,280 armored vehicles, 6,315 artillery systems, 3,416 aircraft, and 855 helicopters. Flank quotas for the Russian Federation (within the general quota) were increased to 1,300 tanks, 2,140 armored vehicles, and 1,680 artillery systems. However, initially, NATO's aggregate quota was 19,096 tanks, 31,787 armored vehicles, 19,529 artillery systems, 7,273 aircraft, and 2,282 helicopters. Skipping ahead, it should be pointed out that by mid-2007, Russia "froze" its participation in the CFE Treaty, while NATO's overall quota (including the newly admitted members) was 22,424 tanks, 36,570 armored vehicles, 23,137 artillery systems, 8,038 aircraft, and 2,509 helicop-

² The CFE Treaty does not apply to the navy, strategic aviation, and nuclear weapons.

³ The agreement was signed in Istanbul on 19 November, 1999.

ters. In other words, the North Atlantic alliance secured its threefold superiority of forces over Russia. That real threat could not be neutralized by any minor concessions to the RF, such as, for example, the reduction of flank limits.

Taking into account the aforementioned link between GUAM and the CFE Treaty, it turns out that the CFE Treaty (considering the breakup of the U.S.S.R. and the Warsaw Pact) legitimized Russia's obviously unequal status on conventional forces in relation to NATO. At the time of its signing (1990), the CFE Treaty was based on the premise that there were "Eastern" and "Western" groups of states in Europe. However, after the adaptation of the CFE Treaty, such countries as Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia could not be unequivocally regarded as Russia's allies in the event of a hypothetical conflict between Moscow and NATO. Formally, following the treaty's adaptation in 1999, a transition was to have been made from the treaty's bloc-to-bloc structure to national and territorial levels of arms and equipment with regard to each member state. The adapted treaty was to be open to accession by any OSCE member state. However, the adapted treaty was only ratified by four countries: Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine. Georgia and Moldova refused to ratify it, demanding the pullout of Russian troops in accordance with the Istanbul agreements, which had been signed alongside the Agreement on Adaptation of the CFE Treaty.

When the Tashkent Treaty's five year term expired, a number of states chose not to sign a protocol on its extension, thus quitting the CST. That included Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Uzbekistan. As for Azerbaijan, at the time it had started receiving substantial financial resources, in particular, in the form of foreign investment in projects to develop Caspian oil fields, and so Baku's expectation was that once it became economically stronger due to those programs, the country, with U.S. and Turkish aid, would have the capability to solve its security problems. The Georgian government under E. Shevardnadze was gradually drawn into the orbit of U.S. policies. As far as Uzbekistan was concerned, its authorities were unhappy, among other things, with the fact that after the Taliban came to power in neighboring Afghanistan, Russian officials failed to respond to Tashkent's plea for help in the form of arms and ammunition supplies. Furthermore, at the time, Tashkent was also being courted by the U.S. Whatever the case, when it pulled out of the CST, Uzbekistan pointedly—in Washington, within the framework of a NATO summit, timed to coincide with the North Atlantic alliance's 50th anniversary—on 24 April, 1999, joined GUAM, as a result of which the organization was renamed GUUAM.⁴

Meanwhile, in the second half of the 1990s, new threats and challenges to the security of the CIS states appeared, primarily those linked to the rise in international terrorism, drug trafficking, organized crime, gun running, and illegal immigration.

A session of the Collective Security Council, which took place on 2 April, 1999 in Moscow, saw the signing of a protocol on the extension of the Collective Security Treaty. It was ratified by Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. The document made provisions for the treaty's automatic extension for the following five-year periods. The decision to transform the CST was yet another attempt to invigorate military-political cooperation.

On 7 October, 2002, the presidents of the CST signatory states signed in Chisinau the CST Charter and an agreement on the CST's legal status. On 18 September, 2003, those documents went into effect. On 2 December, 2004, the U.N. General Assembly passed a resolution granting the Collective Security Treaty Organization observer status at the U.N. General Assembly, but the text of the 1992 treaty had not been substantially amended. It contains some fundamentally important provi-

⁴ Uzbekistan suspended its participation in GUAM activities in 2002. Officially, President Islam Karimov only announced the country's withdrawal from GUAM in May 2005. A formal cause for that was "a substantial change in the Organization's original purposes and goals." On 29 December, 2005, Uzbekistan officially terminated the documents signed within the framework of GUUAM.

sions. Thus, Art 4 states that “if an armed attack occurs against a Member State, all other Member States shall provide it the necessary assistance, including military assistance, with the means at their disposal in exercise of the inherent right to collective defense in accordance with Art 51 of the U.N. Charter.”

The CSTO member countries adhere to a purely defensive military policy and constantly declare the priority of political means in preventing and eliminating armed conflicts. They do not regard anyone as an adversary and are for mutually beneficial cooperation with all states. The CSTO’s goal is, through concerted efforts, to avert, and if necessary, to neutralize a military threat to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its member states. The member states agreed to invigorate their activity in that area to counter new challenges and threats to national, regional and international security by taking decisive action to fight international terrorism.

However, CSTO member countries cannot but be concerned over the changes that have occurred in the security system over the past several years. Although GUAM as a structure is not a form of military cooperation among its member states, there are high risks of U.S. and allied troops being deployed in a number of these countries. For example, on 21 March, 2003, the Georgian parliament ratified a defense cooperation agreement with the United States. It not only enables U.S. servicemen to enter Georgia without a visa but also permit the deployment on the republic’s soil of arms and military equipment with no restrictions placed on their movement. U.S. servicemen have in effect been granted the privileges and immunities that are enjoyed by administrative officers at the U.S. diplomatic mission in Georgia.

Moscow also regards the plans by some GUAM member states to join NATO as a basically new level of threats to Russia’s national security. CSTO General Secretary Nikolai Bordiuzha said: “Should Georgia join NATO, the CSTO will have to react to such serious changes in the geostrategic situation in the region.” Bordiuzha is convinced that “Georgia’s membership of NATO would mean the further advancement of the alliance’s military infrastructure to CSTO borders and enhancing the level of military activity near the external boundaries of the organization’s area of responsibility.”⁵

CSTO leaders have stated on many occasions that thus far it has proved impossible to achieve the necessary level of mutual understanding between NATO and the CSTO with both Bordiuzha and Russia’s permanent representative to NATO Totskiy saying that the North Atlantic alliance is reluctant to cooperate with the CSTO.⁶

This cannot but worry the organization’s leadership in Moscow, which believes that military risks on the CSTO’s borders are increasing. The substantial increase in the length of the CSTO-NATO border is regarded as a disturbing factor. Just as the CSTO, the North Atlantic alliance keeps making official statements about strengthening the political component of NATO’s activity. However, facts on the ground compel the CST member countries to doubt them. After all, NATO’s military component not only prevails, but also tends to expand. Thus before NATO enlargement (16 states), it comprised 20 army corps, 35 divisions, 100 brigades, 1.5 million personnel, 4,500 combat aircraft, 2,000 combat helicopters, 500 warships, 14,000 tanks, and 23,00 artillery guns.

When Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic joined NATO in 1999, the alliance expanded by five divisions and 10 brigades with a total numerical strength of 200,000 servicemen, as well as 500 combat aircraft, 500 combat helicopters, 50 warships, 3,500 tanks, and 5,500 artillery guns. Following the admission of seven new member state in 2004—Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Rumania, Slovakia, and Slovenia—NATO troops enlarged by another 45 brigades (300,000 personnel), 500 combat aircraft, 50 warships, and 4,500 tanks. As a result of NATO expansion, the territories of

⁵ *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie*, 1 February, 2008.

⁶ See: *Vremia novostey*, 20 December, 2006.

CSTO member countries—from Murmansk to the Caspian—ended up within the effective range even of NATO tactical aviation.

Revisiting the aforementioned connection between GUAM and the CFE Treaty, it should be stressed once again that the CFE turned from a treaty designed to ensure stability in Europe into a factor in a future armed conflict, a tool in the hands of forces hatching plans to take forceful action against Russian interests. After all, instead of eliminating surprise attack capability, the CFE Treaty has, in effect, become a lawful means of building up such capability.

Although the CSTO is often compared with the Warsaw Pact (1955), that comparison is not quite appropriate. This is evident when one looks at the CSTO structure. The Warsaw Pact was mostly a military alliance, a counterweight to NATO. Therefore, at the time, the main political goal was to maintain parity in relations between the two opposing organizations and the arms race. The CSTO has given priority to political means of strengthening security. The security space has also shrunk, acquiring a regional rather than global nature. The CSTO abandoned that diversified system of military coordination agencies that was used in the Warsaw Pact. The ideological component also disappeared, as did domination by just one member country. Today it is impossible to impose one's will on other CSTO member states. For example, while being a CSTO member, Kazakhstan participates in operations conducted by the United States and its allies in Iraq, even though Russia, as is known, takes a negative view of allied operations in Iraq. A special purpose unit of Kazakh army engineers has been based in Iraq since 2003.

The CSTO has an appropriate command and control structure, including the Collective Security Council, the Foreign Ministers Council, the Defense Ministers Council, the Committee of Security Council Secretaries, the CSTO general secretary, the CSTO Secretariat, and the CSTO Joint Staff. On 16 November, 2006, the decision was made (in St. Petersburg) to create a CSTO parliamentary assembly.

The GUAM structure comprises the Heads of State Council, the Foreign Ministers, National Coordinators and Permanent Representatives Council, the Secretariat, a number of working and auxiliary agencies, and the general secretary.

It is beyond the scope of the present article to compare all parameters of CSTO and GUAM activity, including their military capabilities. The CSTO and GUAM are not opposing military blocs. GUAM is only marginally concerned with security problems (terrorism, drug trafficking, and organized crime). The GUAM structure includes a special working group on fighting terrorism, organized crime and drug trafficking, but thus far this activity is, rather, in the conceptual stage than part of large-scale concrete projects.

Nevertheless, it is essential to make a few comments in this context. Thus, the different approaches that the GUAM member countries take toward ensuring their security, in particular, the fact that there is a wide disparity in military spending by Moldova (\$12.6 million in 2008, or 0.3 percent of GDP) and Georgia (\$600 million, or 4.95 percent of GDP),⁷ suggest that GUAM sees the resolution of security problems not so much in their own efforts as with the help of some external "actor," presumably the North Atlantic alliance. GUAM documents contained fairly unequivocal provisions bearing out this conclusion. Here is what the Kiev Declaration on the Establishment of the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development—GUAM (23 May, 2006) says in part: GUAM member states "10) Reaffirm GUAM's course toward deeper European integration and closer relations with the European Union and NATO. 11) Stress GUAM Members' interest in further developing partner relations with the United States of America and other countries and organizations, in particular, in implementing joint projects."

⁷ See: *Voенно-promyshlennyi kurier*, No. 1, 2008.

In October 2005, Georgia adopted a national security concept, identifying the U.S., Ukraine, Turkey, and the EU as the republic's strategic partners. Georgia officially announced its intention to become a NATO member in November 2002 at the Prague summit—that is to say, at a time when President E. Shevardnadze was still in office. Almost at the same time, the Georgian parliament unanimously passed a resolution on starting the country's NATO membership procedure. Analysis of the situation suggests that the alliance could even make an exception for Georgia and close its eyes to the ongoing conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Yet another GUAM member state is also striving to join NATO. Thus, the Ukrainian president issued a decree proclaiming NATO membership as a priority back on 8 July, 2002.⁸ A year later, the Law on the Basic Principles of Ukraine's National Security was adopted, NATO membership being proclaimed as one of the principal lines of state policy.

This conclusion is also borne out by the practical steps that the GUAM countries have taken. For example, in 2006, Moldova pointedly hosted a NATO exercise, Cooperative Longbow/Lancer 2006, at a time when a referendum was being conducted in the Transnistrian region on Moldova's relations with the breakaway region and with Russia. It is noteworthy that according to its Defense Minister, V. Pleshka, Moldova, whose Constitution proclaims its neutrality, spent around \$750,000 on the exercise. Moldova's example is rather indicative. The fact is that its neutral status, enshrined in Art 11 of its Constitution, is gradually becoming a mere declaration. Chisinau already has a well established system of interaction with NATO. According to various estimates, between 200,000 and 250,000 Moldovan citizens have acquired Rumanian passports, Rumania being a NATO member state. Moldova's top officials from time to time inadvertently reveal their plans.⁹ For example, in October 2006, Moldova's Parliament Speaker M. Lupu said that "the Republic of Moldova is firmly committed to becoming an element of the NATO area." He called for the country's gradual rapprochement with the alliance "with the prospect of joining this Euro-Atlantic structure."¹⁰

From our perspective, in this respect, the CSTO better meets its declared goal—i.e., as a regional structure, to promote and facilitate the pooling of its member states' efforts in the security sphere. The CST and the CSTO had a pronounced regional vector. The principles and forms of cooperation, formally declared in establishing the CST, as well as its positions, opened the way for it to become part of a general and comprehensive security system in Europe and Asia. "If a collective security system is formed in Europe and Asia," Art 1 of the Tashkent Treaty says, "and if appropriate collective security treaties are signed—something to which the contracting parties have committed themselves—the member states will immediately open consultations with the aim of making necessary amendments to the present Treaty." That fundamental point was confirmed in the CST's subsequent documents. "Having committed themselves to joining their efforts in the collective security sphere, the Member States regard the collective security system that they are creating as a component of the all-European security system, as well as part of an Asian security system," said the Declaration of the CST Member States on 10 February, 1995. Point 3 of the said declaration is also indicative in terms of the CSTO's evolution: "The Member States are convinced that coordination of their defense efforts will respond to the goal of reducing the level of military spending, taking into account the existing military infrastructure, the interoperability of arms and military equipment in their armed forces, traditional ties between defense industry enterprises, and their scientific, research, and military training facilities."

⁸ That was preceded by a number of other acts. In particular, a charter on special partnership, adopted in Madrid on 9 July, 1999, and a program of expanding Ukraine-NATO cooperation through 2001, approved by the Ukrainian president on 4 November, 1998.

⁹ However, the Moldovan president repeatedly stated that "Chisinau is not aspiring for NATO membership" (NewsInfo, 29 August, 2006).

¹⁰ According to the Regnum news agency.

Another aspect that could be considered in this context is concerned with the assessment of the effectiveness of the CSTO and GUAM's performance. Since it is difficult to make such an assessment due to the obvious differences in their areas of activity, our conclusions may not be to everyone's liking. However, evidently, the GUAM countries have not achieved much success even in the sphere of economic cooperation. Yes, a free trade area has been created,¹¹ and GUAM has indeed recorded a growth of trade. Nevertheless, trade within GUAM is considerably behind trade within the CSTO and even trade between GUAM and CSTO member states both in absolute and relative terms (see the table).

By contrast, the CSTO has demonstrated unequivocal success in its area of activity. It has been highly instrumental in building national armed forces in its member states, also ensuring a favorable environment (to the degree possible) for effective force development in the CIS countries.

One could cite numerous examples demonstrating the practical value of the Tashkent Treaty. It is especially important to stress this in connection with frequent criticism from political elites in GUAM member states over the ongoing conflicts in the Transnistrian region, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Nagorno-Karabakh. Oftentimes Russia is blamed for the situation: The keys to a peaceful settlement of those conflicts, they say, are in Moscow, while Moscow purportedly is not really interested in achieving a settlement, but would like such confrontation to continue so as to use it as leverage to exert pressure on Chisinau, Tbilisi, and Baku. With regard to the aforementioned conflicts, attempts are being made to force Russia to unequivocally back only one of the conflicting sides—moreover, one that is a GUAM member state. On the other hand, some GUAM members would evidently like forceful pressure to be exerted on one of the sides to an internal conflict by the new “boss”—i.e., the North Atlantic alliance. On the official level, GUAM issues nicely worded declarations on the need to resolve ongoing conflicts—for example, a joint declaration by the GUAM heads of state on conflict resolution, which was adopted on 23 May, 2006.

Previously, one acute conflict in the CIS area took a far heavier toll than those in the Transnistrian region, Nagorno-Karabakh, or Georgia—namely, a civil war in Tajikistan. The CST played a crucial role in resolving that conflict. National reconciliation in Tajikistan was achieved by taking into account the interests of all parties involved. The bloody civil war (1992-1997) was brought to an end not least through military and diplomatic assistance that had been provided to the Tajik government by CST member states—Russia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. To that end, CST multilateral forces were brought into Tajikistan, in particular to protect its borders against raids by militants from Afghanistan.

The CST capability was effectively used in 1999 and 2000, during the period of the so-called Batken wars—i.e., neutralization of attempts by armed groups of radical Islamic terrorists to get across the border in the south of Kyrgyzstan.

Crisis phenomena in 1997-1999 did not halt the development of the CST's military component. For example, in 2001, the CST created collective rapid deployment forces of the Central Asian region, which were comprised of four battalions from Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan each with a total strength of 1,500 servicemen, as well as a command and control agency.

Taking into account new reality, including the member states' positions, in May 2002, the CST was reformed: The transformation of the Collective Security Treaty into an international/regional organization was officially necessitated by the need to adapt the CST to “regional and international security dynamics” and to counter new threats and challenges. The new organization's main goals were to coordinate and deepen military-political cooperation, develop multilateral cooperation structures and mechanisms designed to ensure the national security of its member states on a collective

¹¹ See: *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 24 May, 2006.

Table

GUAM, CSTO's Share in Trade with Regional Countries in 2006
(as a percentage of the overall volume of trade with the CIS countries)¹²

State*	With GUAM Countries	With CSTO Countries
Exports		
Azerbaijan	34.8	63.3
Armenia	36.7	60.9
Belarus	16	83.1
Georgia	37.9	43.3
Kazakhstan	16.7	76.1
Kyrgyzstan	2	90
Moldova	32.5	66.9
Russia	41.6	55.3
Tajikistan	6.6	57.3
Ukraine	11.1	86.2
Imports		
Azerbaijan	17.6	63.4
Armenia	28.9	69.1
Belarus	9	90.8
Georgia	45.8	46.6
Kazakhstan	9.8	86.2
Kyrgyzstan	5.1	88.2
Moldova	50.8	48.8
Russia	44.2	49.8
Tajikistan	18.7	59.8
Ukraine	1.2	79.4
* Excluding Uzbekistan, which became a CSTO member in the summer of 2006.		

basis, and provide necessary assistance, including military assistance, to a member state that has been attacked.

¹² The Table is based on data from *Vneshniaia torgovlia stran Sodruzhestva Nezavisimykh Gosudarstv 2006*, Moscow, 2007, pp. 54-57.

Following the CST's May 2002 decision to establish the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), on 7 October, 2002, the CSTO heads of state signed a charter and an agreement on the structure's legal status. The CSTO Charter included a provision to the effect that one of the Organization's principal goals and areas of activity is coordination and joining its member states' efforts in the fight against international terrorism and other unconventional security threats. It recorded the member states' obligation to coordinate and harmonize their foreign policy positions on international and regional security issues.

A number of CSTO structures have emerged as not only consultative but also executive bodies. The CSTO Permanent Council (it comprises permanent representatives appointed by the member states) is entrusted with coordinating cooperation between the member states in carrying out decisions made within the framework of the Organization. It should be noted that the CSTO Charter makes the fulfillment of such decisions binding on the member states and provides for sanctions for failure to fulfill them (which, however, are not used in practice). In the interest of invigorating the Organization's military component, a military staff agency has been formed—the CSTO Joint Staff. Countries or international organizations may be granted observer status at the CSTO.

All CSTO member states pledged to follow a coordinated, unified military-political and military-technical policy line. In particular, they are dealing with the problem of applying unified standards in developing, manufacturing and modernizing military equipment in service with the member countries' armed forces. Such military equipment is sold to CSTO member states not at world prices but at domestic Russian or preferential prices.

Analysis of the past several years shows that the CSTO has indeed invigorated its activity in a number of areas of cooperation. Thus, intensive efforts were made to draw up lists of terrorist organizations based in the CSTO member states. According to CSTO General Secretary Nikolai Bordiuzha, these lists are unique documents on terrorist and extremist structures, which have no counterpart in the world. Several large-scale operations were conducted within the framework of the CSTO to fight drug trafficking from Afghanistan, with the participation, apart from the CSTO member states, of China, Pakistan, Ukraine, and Azerbaijan. In some operations, even the United States became involved as an observer. At present, this work proceeds, in particular, within the framework of the CSTO plan to counter trafficking in narcotic substances, psychotropic substances and their precursors (for 2008-2011).¹³ Last year, in the course of the first two stages of Operation Channel 2007 alone, approximately 30 metric tons of various illicit drugs were seized and thousands of firearms confiscated.¹⁴ According to N. Bordiuzha, similar operations were conducted in the area of immigration and financial monitoring.

The CSTO is an observer organization at the U.N. General Assembly. Another important development was Uzbekistan's decision to return to the organization. Uzbekistan issued a formal statement to that effect in June 2006, while two months later, on 16 August, 2006, a relevant protocol was signed. In 2007, Uzbekistan acceded to 80 percent of CSTO documents.

Russia is building up its military presence under the auspices of the CSTO also in Kyrgyzstan (the Kant military base). The Kant air base is the only military installation that the RF has created in the post-Soviet period. Work is underway to form joint collective security forces of the Central Asian region. Their principal goal is to localize and neutralize possible conflicts near Central Asian borders, as well as to eliminate enemy groups. In accordance with the CSTO's new vision of its mission, auxiliary coordinating bodies and cooperation mechanisms are being created in the Organization—for example, the Counterterrorism Committee, comprised of interior ministers and directors of security, intelligence and border services.¹⁵

¹³ See: *RIA Novosti*, 29 January, 2008.

¹⁴ See: *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie*, 18 January, 2008.

¹⁵ See: *Krasnaia zvezda*, 16 May, 2007.

The CSTO is prepared to start building joint peacekeeping forces. Back in June 2004, at their summit in Astana, the leaders of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan approved the Concept for the Formation and Operation of a Peacekeeping Mechanism of the Collective Security Treaty Organization. A set of four documents was worked out: the Agreement on CSTO Peacekeeping Activity; the Statute on CSTO Collective Peacekeeping Forces; the Statute on the Working Group for the Preparation of CSTO Peacekeeping Operations, and the Statute on the Head of the CSTO Peacekeeping Mission. The underlying assumption is that any “trouble spot” in the world can become an area of the CSTO’s peacekeeping activity. If a peacekeeping operation is to be conducted on the territory of CSTO member states, the decision will be made by the Collective Security Council (with the U.N. being informed immediately). Proceeding from the situation, the scale of a conflict and its possible impact on the situation in the region, the Collective Security Council will even be able to ask for relevant powers (mandate) from the U.N. Security Council. A peacekeeping operation outside the CSTO area of responsibility may only be conducted on the basis of a U.N. mandate. To conduct an operation, collective peacekeeping forces are created. CSTO member states contribute specially trained units and subunits from their own peacekeeping contingents. Today, almost all CSTO member states have such contingents. Russia, for example, has a special division, while Kazakhstan has a special brigade.¹⁶

On 6 October, 2007, the CSTO member states signed the relevant documents and are currently in the process of ratifying them in their national parliaments, after which a peacekeeping contingent will be created in short order.¹⁷

According to military experts, the CSTO peacekeeping force will be comprised of: 1) motorized infantry, airborne, and mountain rifle units; 2) engineer units; 3) CBR units; 4) signal units; 5) medical units; 6) a group of military observers; 7) a police contingent with investigating officers; 8) technical and logistic assets; and 9) an aviation component (helicopter unit).¹⁸ The CSTO peacekeeping force can vary between an estimated 4,000 and 5,000 servicemen.¹⁹

Therefore, the CSTO has advanced much further down this line than GUAM has. There is no doubt that the West has been actively prodding the latter to create its own “blue helmet” units, but GUAM member states are still divided on the issue.

The idea of GUAM’s military component has been opposed not just by neutral Moldova, but even by the largest state of the association and its informal leader—Ukraine.

In late May 2006, the CSTO general secretary expressed the intention to expand the organization’s area of activity, namely, to create a universal international security system within the CSTO’s zone of responsibility—in other words, to turn the CSTO into a “more multifunctional system.” In this connection, Bordiuzha said in an interview: “Taking into account the fact that many CIS structures today are unviable, the CSTO is taking over some of their functions and is prepared to continue doing that in the future.” He added that a direct armed conflict between CSTO member states and their neighbors today is unlikely. The most pressing problems are terrorism, religious extremism, and drug trafficking. Therefore, the CSTO intends to make a transition from a military-political bloc to a multifunctional international organization, which would possess the ability to respond to new challenges, primarily those not involving the use of military force, in a timely and effective manner. Proceeding from that, the CSTO is working to create an organization with an appropriate set of charter mandated agencies that will have collective forces to neutralize the effects of natural and man-made disasters, fight illegal immigration, and conduct peacekeeping operations. Early in

¹⁶ See: *RIA Novosti*, 8 October 2007.

¹⁷ See: *Regnum*, 11 January, 2008.

¹⁸ See: *Voenno-promyshlenniy kurier*, No. 46, 2007.

¹⁹ See: *Krasnaia zvezda*, 6 December, 2007.

2008 it became known that the CSTO plans to create a committee of heads of special services and security agencies.²⁰

The political component of the CSTO's activity is receiving additional incentives for development. It would be appropriate in this connection to recall a provision from Art 3 of the CSTO Charter: "The Organization's goals are to strengthen peace, international and regional security, and protect, on a collective basis, the territorial integrity and sovereignty of its Member States, which give priority to political means of achieving these goals."

By contrast, the success of the GUAM member countries in advancing multilateral cooperation has been far more modest.

²⁰ See: *Kommersant*, 6 February, 2008.