

REGIONAL SECURITY

REGIONAL SECURITY MECHANISMS
IN CENTRAL ASIA:
DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

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Introduction

Security regionalization is one of the most striking features of international relations in a world where the formerly clear boundaries of national security are rapidly disappearing. The region is developing into an important factor of universal peace and stability. This, in turn, is largely changing our traditional ideas about the means and methods of national security as a sine qua non of sovereign states' stability.

Security regionalization is itself a direct outcome of such visible trends in the contemporary world as *much more frequent cases of "humanitarian interference" in the internal affairs of states; diminished pertinence of traditional armed conflicts against the background of much more frequent armed conflicts inside states; much higher significance of peacekeeping efforts and the "human security" factor, etc.*

These trends pushed the idea of regionalism to the forefront, demonstrated to all that the so-called sovereign answer to contemporary challenges is ineffective, and put a "collective (regional) response" to such challenges on the agenda.

It is commonly believed that in the 21st century no state can rely on its own forces alone, which means that "collective strategies, collective structures, and an awareness of collective responsibility have become absolutely indispensable."¹

In this context, the regional mechanisms and institutions of states are treated as effective international legal instruments of peace and security.

¹ "Bolee bezopasny mir: nasha obshchaia otvetstvennost'. Doklad Gruppy vysokogo urovnia po ugrozam, vyzovam i peremenam. Reziyume (Ö/59/565)," available at [<http://www.un.org/russian/secureworld/>].

Their usefulness is ensured mainly by internal structuring and the availability of means and mechanisms of conflict settlement (either inter-

state or domestic). These mechanisms and institutions are useful in settling local disagreements in full conformity with the U.N. Charter.

Central Asia: Regional Security Mechanisms, Their Development and Classification

The death of the Soviet Union, which destroyed the bipolar system of international relations, put an end to the single defense and security system.

It was replaced by a “security vacuum”² in which the old security system was either already nonexistent or ill-suited to the new realities, while a new one had not yet been created. The Central Asian countries had to act fast in the new conditions: they badly needed effective institutional and legal security frameworks to be set up as promptly as possible. This meant that the Central Asian states had to cope with the dual task of preserving (or adjusting) some of the old security elements and setting up a qualitatively new security system in the region.

This institutionalized security at two interconnected and mutually complementary levels: post-Soviet and regional (Central Asian), thus enforcing the international legal and organizational relations between the states.

The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) ushered in an era of sovereign states. One of the basic documents, the agreement which set up the CIS, said that “*the Union of the S.S.R. as a subject of international law and a geopolitical reality has ceased to exist.*”³

Until the mid-1990s, when other regional inter-state structures came into being (the Central Asian Union [CAU], the Partnership for Peace NATO Program, the Shanghai Five, etc.), the CIS was the only “security umbrella” for Central Asia.

The CIS can be described as a unique alliance of states: elsewhere in the world “commonwealths” were set up as “informal clubs” of former colonies based on shared interests.⁴

The Alma-Ata Declaration that created the CIS says that the new structure “is open to all Soviet successor states.”⁵ The CIS founders deemed it necessary to point out that “the Commonwealth is neither a state nor a supra-state structure.”⁶

This and similar alliances are loosely subordinated; there are no obligations among them stemming from agreements or other documents; their cooperation is not very structuralized, while decisions are taken by consensus. The CIS organizational structure is much more ramified than that of similar alliances and, as distinct from them, it is a regional agency, that is, a regional arrangement set up in conformity with Chapter VIII of the U.N. Charter.

² The term, as a rule, was used to describe the situation in post-bipolar Europe, from which the enemy image disappeared together with the U.S.S.R. and the Warsaw Treaty Organization.

³ “Soglashenie o sozdanii Sodrzhestva Nezavisimykh Gosudarstv,” available at [<http://www.cis.minsk.by/webnpa/text.aspx?RN=N09100001>].

⁴ The British Commonwealth of Nations is an alliance of independent sovereign states which emerged from the ruins of the British colonial empire. Today, it comprises 49 states.

⁵ “Alma-Atinskaia deklaratsia Sodrzhestva Nezavisimykh Gosudarstv,” available at [<http://www.cis.minsk.by/main.aspx?uid=178>].

⁶ *Ibidem.*

The CIS is obviously important for regional stability and security; it ensured mutual recognition of the member states and helped them confirm their international-legal status as Soviet successor states on the world arena. It contributed to the international legal foundation of both the post-Soviet and regional security system in Central Asia.

This means that the CIS

- ensured continuity in the field of security and defense;
- prevented a post-Soviet crisis similar to that in Yugoslavia;
- determined the fate of the Soviet nuclear potential;
- put the former Union republics' administrative borders into the international legal context, etc.

Collective structures were a logical response to the regional countries' objective need for *mutual security*. On the one hand, these institutions spoke of regional stability and consistently progressing inter-state relations in Central Asia. While on the other, they were the only correct and necessary step designed to protect the region against the globalization-induced threats and challenges.

The Central Asian states created the institutional foundations of regional security within a fairly short period of their independence and functioning as subjects of international relations.

Today, the region has practically all the necessary multisided security institutions: inter-governmental structures; cooperation programs; contact groups and consultative structures directly related to the collective security and defense systems; pluralist communities; and mechanisms for security dialogs and conflict management. More often than not, such mechanisms are described as either collective security, collective defense, or cooperative security systems as far as their purposes, aims, and tasks are concerned.⁷

For academic purposes, these institutions can be described as traditional and non-traditional regional and other collective arrangements designed to ensure regional security.

Today, the regional agencies with normatively specified aims and ramified organizational structures can be described as the most adequate international-legal security instruments. The Central Asian states regard their involvement in them as one of their foreign policy priorities and one of the main instruments of their integration into the world community.

Practice has shown that international and interstate organizations set up by the regional countries have proven to be the most effective in the regional security sphere.

Security globalization is moving toward integration of non-regional states into the regional security systems; this has been gradually developing into a norm. Regional organizations often move beyond the geographical boundaries of their responsibility to ensure the security of their member states.

This means that the regional security organizations operating in Central Asia can be divided into *intra-regional, mixed, and extra-regional* depending on whether one of the regional states founded the interstate organization, was one of its members, or was involved in any of such organizations.

There are two legal points related to the *intra-regional organizations*: first, such structures are set up by regional states; second, the sphere, scope, and target of direct legal impact are limited to the security issues of the Central Asian countries. The following structures belong to this category: the Central Asian Cooperation Organization (CACO), which merged with EurAsEC in 2006, and the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS).

⁷ See: A.J.K. Bailes, A. Cottey, "Regional Security Cooperation in the Early 21st Century," available at [<http://yearbook2006.sipri.org/chap4>]; B.L. Job, "'Alliances' and Regional Security Developments: The Role of Regional Arrangements in the United Nations' Promotion of Peace and Stability," in: *New Millennium, New Perspectives: The United Nations, and Governance*, ed. by R. Thakur, E. Newman, United Nations University Press, 2000, Tokyo, New York. Paris, and others.

As the only structure set up by all the region's five states, which are still members of it, the IFAS is unique, even though it cannot be described as a regional security institution in the classical sense. In fact, the regional security concept is much wider than the military-political dimension proper, which means that the IFAS can be described as one of the key security agencies of Central Asia. Moreover, it is not merely concerned with the Aral Sea (that is, with regional environmental security); it is also a collective mechanism for settling water-related issues in Central Asia.

The former is undoubtedly an urgent international legal problem of interstate cooperation which directly affects the region's security and stability.

The *mixed regional organizations* form the largest group; they are very important because the Central Asian countries are either among their founders (such as the SCO, CSTO, and CIS) or are officially represented in them (OSCE). Their considerable potential allows this group to remain the most active security agent in Central Asia.

The international legal status of some of these structures is fairly specific in the sense that fighting security threats and challenges in Central Asia is either their main function (CSO) or one of their priorities (CSTO). In other words, from the very beginning these organizations intended to operate in Central Asia.

Extra-regional organizations form the third group, in which the regional states are neither founders nor official members.

This does not prevent them from being actively involved in ensuring regional security in Central Asia. The regional activities of the European Union and NATO in the region (in Afghanistan, among other places) are a pertinent example.

Specifics and Development Trends of Regional Organizations Today

The regional Central Asian organizations have traveled far: in 2001, the Shanghai Five was transformed into the SCO, while the Central Asian Economic Community (CAEC) set up in 1998 on the basis of the CAU was transformed in 2002 into the multifunctional CACO. This shows that the regional security system in Central Asia has reached a new stage in its development.

This has been a progressive phenomenon since, as distinct from their predecessors concerned with individual aspects of regional realities (territorial disputes, border security, and economic cooperation), the CSO and CACO were set up as collective security institutions concerned with the entire range of regional security issues.

The CACO Treaty described the following as its major objectives:

- active cooperation in the sphere of regional security and stability;
- mutual support in preventing threats to the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of the states;
- fighting regional and trans-national crime (drug trafficking, organized crime, illegal migration, and terrorism);
- coordinated and concerted actions in the sphere of rational and mutually advantageous use of water and energy resources;
- cooperation in other spheres of mutual interest.

The SCO and CSTO have gained much more weight, which was promoted by the following events: the merging of the CACO with EurAsEC in 2006⁸; ramification of the SCO's institutional structure by setting up a Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) in 2004 and the SCO-Afghanistan Contact group in 2005; Uzbekistan's return to CSTO in 2006, etc. China plays first fiddle in the SCO; this organization is growing even more important because of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region of China. This region largely affects Beijing's Central Asian policy, which is explained by its common borders with Turkestan and the local people's common ethnic, cultural, and religious roots.

According to statistics, the numerical strength of the Uighurs (the "titular nation" in the Autonomous Region) amounts to between 8 and 10 million. Over 350 thousand Uighurs live in the Central Asian countries (there are 300 thousand Uighurs in Kazakhstan and 50 thousand in Kyrgyzstan).⁹ This explains why the SCO as the only regional institution with Chinese presence is regarded as China's main (or even only) international legal instrument in Central Asia.

An analysis of the SCO's development and its basic documents describes it as a Central Asian project.

The Shanghai Five, the SCO's predecessor, played the key role in settling the frozen territorial disputes between China and the former Soviet republics and in formulating the legal security framework in the transborder regions. The following treaties can be described as the major achievements of the Shanghai Five: On Greater Confidence in the Military Sphere in Border Areas (1996) and On Mutual Reduction of Armed Forces in Border Areas (1997), which the parties described "as good experience in strengthening regional and global security and cooperation."¹⁰

These documents are especially important in the context of regional security because they, first, allowed the Shanghai Five to expand its sphere at the regional level and marked a new stage in its development into a multifunctional regional organization. Second, these documents set up a system of organizational and legal measures designed to reduce military threats and build up confidence.

Confidence-building measures as effective international legal instruments of military-political security were first registered in the CSCE Final Act of 1975. The above-mentioned agreement registered an entire range of confidence-building measures: exchange of observers at military exercises; information about military activities and large-scale troop movements; exchange of information related to armed forces and border guards, etc.

The SCO rests on "two whales"—the economy and security—which can be described as its greatest advantage. The structure operates on the organizational and legal basis of regional economic cooperation. On 14 September, 2001, three months after the SCO Declaration had been adopted, the member countries signed a Memorandum on the Basic Goals and Directions of Regional Economic Cooperation and Launch of Process on Creating Favorable Conditions in the Field of Trade and Investments. There is the Program of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation among the SCO Member States for the next 20 to 25 years adopted in 2003 and the Realization Plan dated to 2004. The Organization has a Deputy Executive Secretary for Economy, a Business Council, an SCO Inter-bank Association, etc.

The Central Asian countries are especially concerned with alternative transport routes within the SCO. Today, Kazakhstan and China are engaged in 12 projects intended to augment their transportation potential; the highway between Tajikistan and China and 600 km of the highway between Andijan and Kashgar (which passes through Osh, Sarytash, and Irkeshtam) have been completed. There are also plans to build a railway along this route.

⁸ Turkmenistan is the only Central Asian state which remained outside the EurAsEC. In October 2008, Uzbekistan suspended its EurAsEC membership.

⁹ See: "Troubles across Turkestan," *The Economist*, 18-24 July, 2009, p. 58.

¹⁰ "Sovmestnoe zaiavlenie uchastnikov Alma-Atinskoy vstrechi," 3 July, 1998, available at [<http://russian.china.org.cn/russian/43089.html>].

The SCO economic dimension obviously meets the national interests of the Central Asian countries.¹¹

China is interested in developing an integrated transport system of the regional states; its objective interest is raised not only by possible economic dividends, but also by the desire to preserve stability in politically volatile Xinjiang.

China extended its technical support to the preliminary cost estimate of the Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan-China railway. The 974-km long Korla-Kashgar stretch (1996-1999) is the first step toward the more ambitious railway project. The Committee for the Reforms in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region decided to go on with the railway project as part of the 11th five-year plan (2006-2010).¹²

The military-political aspect of regional security remains the centerpiece of the CSTO responsible for all of its activities; it is building up its anti-terror and anti-extremist components. The objectives are matched by the Collective Rapid Deployment Force of the Central Asian region (CRDF); the Collective Operational Reaction Force (CORF) is being formed; a regional group of armed forces¹³ and a single air defense system are planned.

The Collective Rapid Deployment Force of the Central Asian region was set up by a Decision of the Collective Security Council of 25 May, 2001; it is staffed with military units from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Russia. A military air base was opened in the fall of 2003 in the city of Kant in Kyrgyzstan. In 2004, the Rapid Deployment Force began carrying out annual command post exercises code-named Rubezh.

Back in 2005, the Russian Federation put forward an idea about the CSTO CORF as another step in the same direction. The armed conflict between Russia and Georgia in August 2008 added vigor to the idea and its realization.

In February 2009, a meeting of the CSTO heads of state passed a decision on drafting corresponding documents. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan signed an agreement on the Collective Operation Reaction Force at a regular session of the CSTO Collective Security Council held on 4 June, 2009. Uzbekistan was the only CSTO member that steered away from the agreement with a Special Opinion on the issue.

The CORF pursues at least four major aims: protection of sovereignty and territorial integrity; fighting terrorism, extremism, and drug trafficking; special operations against organized crime; prevention and liquidation of the consequences of natural and technogenic disasters.¹⁴

A closer look at the above suggests questions about their regional future and implementation.

- The major tasks of the collective forces and the planned regional group of armed forces in Central Asia look similar, which creates certain international legal problems. Both structures are intended, first and foremost, to protect the local states' territorial integrity and sovereignty, which means that their functions are duplicated. We all know that external military threats remain the main threats to territorial integrity and sovereignty, while armed force remains the traditional means of defense.

¹¹ According to some analysts, this is a sign that China is seeking economic domination in the SCO expanse, while its policies are described as "aggressive and selfish" (A. Lukin, "The Shanghai Cooperation Organization: What Next?" *Russia in Global Affairs*, No. 2, July-September 2007). There is also the opinion, however, that the SCO's economic importance is an objective trend (see: V. Frolenkov, "Kollektivnoe ekonomicheskoe sotrudnichestvo stran-chlenov ShOS: nachal'ny etap stanovleniia," *Problemy Dal'nego Vostoka*, No. 2, 2007, p. 84).

¹² See: "Novy stary Shelkovy put'," 5 July, 2007, available at [<http://newspaper.kz/print.asp?aid=93202>].

¹³ Similar groups have been set up in the European and Caucasian sectors: the Russian-Armenian coalition forces were created in 1996; the Russian-Belarusian, in 1999.

¹⁴ See: N. Bordiuzha, "Finansirovanie chastey KSOR, ikh osnashchenie i snabzhenie budet osushchestvliat'sia..." (interview), available at [http://www.mamf.ru/odkb_mamf/pr/kzv.php].

Uzbekistan, one of the main CSTO members, described its position in the Special Opinion, which stems from the CSTO's international legal status as a military-political alliance. The Foreign Ministry of Uzbekistan pointed out in its press release that the CORF, as the CSTO's military component, should be used to repulse external military threats alone.¹⁵

- Second, CSTO Secretary-General Nikolai Bordiuzha said that the CORF would be used “to localize armed and *border conflicts* (italics mine.—*I.B.*).”¹⁶ This means that it would be used to settle interstate disputes. From this it follows that this does not suit, for objective reasons, the long-term interests of the regional countries: they have not yet completed demarcation of state borders and delimitation of their territories.

There are many other issues, some of them conflict-prone, which require adequate regional handling.

These areas of interstate cooperation might develop into the “Achilles’ heel” and create conditions in which some states might meddle in the domestic affairs of their regional neighbors. The CORF is obviously ill-suited to deal with interstate disputes.

Uzbekistan has voiced its disagreement and pointed out that it wants to be sure that the CORF will never, even hypothetically, be used to settle regional disputes.¹⁷

It should be said that, according to the international legal doctrine, the “collective security” system should deal with both external and internal challenges and threats. However, as distinct from the collective security mechanisms, military-political alliances (the CSTO in this case) cannot be involved in conflict settlement inside the system.¹⁸

- Third, the CORF's powers overlap those of other CSTO structures; in 2005, all the Central Asian CSTO members became involved in the Coordinating Council of Heads of Competent Authorities on Illicit Drug Trafficking Counteraction of the member states of the CSTO; since 2006, they have been contributing to operative preventive measures to identify the channels of illegal migration and intercept the activities of transborder criminal groups.

In 2003, Operation Channel designed to check illegal drug trafficking became an annual feature within the CSTO. There are plans to transform Operation Channel into a permanent regional anti-drug operation within the CSTO.¹⁹

- Fourth, to be endorsed by the national parliaments of the member countries, the Agreement should be discussed separately. Under the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan On International Treaties, agreements related to the country's defense capability need parliamentary approval. The deputies of the Oliy Majlis discussed the Special Opinion of the Republic of Uzbekistan and disagreed with the Agreement's provision that permitted its temporary application even before it was ratified in full conformity with the national procedures.²⁰

¹⁵ See: Press release. “K itogam uchastia Prezidenta Respubliki Uzbekistan I.A. Karimova v sessii Soveta kollektivnoy bezopasnosti ODKB i zasedanii Soveta glav gosudarstv ShOS ot 18 iyunia 2009 goda,” available at [<http://www.uzbekistan.pl/index.php?goto=985>].

¹⁶ N. Bordiuzha: “Eto budet piatistoronniaia gruppovka dlia bolshoy voyny” (interview), *Kommersant*, 29 May, 2009.

¹⁷ See: Press release of the Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Uzbekistan, available at [http://mfa.uz/rus/prensa_I_media_servis/press_reizi/180609u_7.mgr].

¹⁸ At one time, U.S. Secretary of State Dulles offered the following comment about the role of NATO (an organization close in nature to the CSTO) in dealing with disagreements among its members: “NATO cannot undertake pacific settlements of disputes amongst its members” (*The Department of State Bulletin*, 34/884 (4 June, 1956) 925-26). Quoted from: A. Abass, *Regional Organisations and the Development of Collective Security*, Hart Publishing, Oxford and Portland, Oregon, 2004, p. 38).

¹⁹ See: “Ezhegodny doklad General'nogo Sekretaria Organizatsii dogovora o kollektivnoy bezopasnosti,” in: *Dokumenty po voprosam formirovaniia i funktsionirovaniia sistemy kollektivnoy bezopasnosti gosudarstv-chlenov ODKB*, Issue 9, Moscow, 2008, p. 63.

²⁰ See: “O zasedanii Zakonodatelnoy palaty Oliy Mazhlisa Respubliki Uzbekistan,” available at [<http://uza.uz/ru/politics/7009/>].

More than that: this violates the rule of consensus decision-making within the Collective Security Council of the CSTO: under Art 12 of the CSTO Charter, the decisions (except those related to procedure) of the Collective Security Council, the Council of Foreign Ministers and Defense Ministers, and the Committee of the Secretaries of the National Security Councils are made by consensus.

The CSTO is obviously seeking monopoly in dealing with border security; so far only Tajikistan and Armenia have agreements on joint border-guarding with the Russian Federation. All the other members guard their borders independently.

It should be said that there are parallel structures dealing with border issues in the CIS, CSTO, and EurAsEC: the Council of the Commanders of Border Guards of the CIS (set up in 1992) and the Council on Border Issues of the EurAsEC. The CSTO leaders deemed it expedient to transfer the powers related to “collective security in the border sphere” from the EurAsEC to the CSTO.²¹

The CSTO is a collective defense institution; as a military-political alliance it is intended to defend its members against external military threats and oppose the challenges and threats of the day, which means that military force is its main instrument.

As distinct from the CSTO, the SCO is a traditional multi-purpose regional structure; as a collective security system it promotes “more efficient common use of the emerging possibilities and counteracting new challenges and threats.”²²

The SCO Charter and other founding documents regulate interstate relations in opposing trans-border and other contemporary challenges to security. The SCO jurisdiction is related to the military-political sphere, however its founding documents do not register the right to collective self-defense, that is, the mechanism of the use of force to repulse armed aggression as registered by Art 51 of the U.N. Charter. SCO and CSTO officials respond to suggestions to merge the SCO and CSTO with references to the difference in “their functional tasks.”²³

At the same time, in view of the current reality, the SCO members are discussing the possibility of joint use of their armed forces to oppose terrorism, extremism, and separatism. There are plans to use armed forces to jointly rebuff large armed bands of international terrorists if they cross into any of the member states.²⁴ Between 9 and 17 August, 2007, the joint military exercises Peaceful Mission-2007 were carried out in the territories of Russia and China; the exercises intended to create unified methods for dealing with crises, ensuring regional security, and testing whether the armed forces of both countries were ready to carry out these tasks.²⁵

The NATO military contingent in Afghanistan (over 90 thousand) which moved into the country in the wake of 9/11²⁶ can be described as an important element of regional security of Central Asia; today, everything related to the security issues in Afghanistan belongs to the Alliance’s responsibility sphere.

Since 2003, the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan set up in December 2001 under a SC U.N. mandate has been under NATO command.

²¹ See: “Ezhegodny doklad General’nogo Sekretaria Organizatsii dogovora o kolektivnoy bezopasnosti,” p. 68.

²² Khartia Shankhaiskoy organizatsii sotrudnichestva, available at [http://russian.china.org.cn/international/txt/2002-06/12/content_2033359.htm].

²³ “My vziali kurs na transformatsiu ODKB iz voenno-politicheskoy struktury v mnogofunktsional’nuu organizatsiu,”—N. Bordiuzha,” available at [<http://www.kisi.kz/site.html?id=3938>].

²⁴ See: *Analiticheskie doklady Nauchno-koordinatsionnogo soveta po mezhdunarodnym issledovaniyam MGIMO (U) MID Rossii*, Issue 3 (18), May 2007. Subject: “Shankhaiskaia organizatsia sotrudnichestva i sovremenny mir,” p. 49.

²⁵ The joint military exercises of the SCO members involved over 6,500 military and 80 aircraft; they were carried out on two terrains: the testing ground of the 34th motor rifle division in the town of Chebarkul in the Volga-Urals Military District (the RF) and in Urumqi, the administrative center of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (China).

²⁶ See: “British Forces in Afghanistan,” *The Economist*, 18-24 July, 2009, p. 26.

This speaks of NATO's growing role in Afghanistan as an important Central Asian security factor.

In the other Central Asian countries, NATO completely relies on the Partnership for Peace Program as its main foreign policy instrument. It involves all the Central Asian countries, including Turkmenistan with its "positive neutrality" principle. Tajikistan was the last regional country to join the program in 2002.

According to the Foreign Ministry of Uzbekistan, the republic has already been involved in over 400 events within the program; over 100 scientific and technical projects have been implemented in the republic.²⁷

In 2004, NATO created the post of Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia, which was filled from the start by Robert F. Simmons.

Political scientists regard the OSCE as a result of a consensus between the East and the West during the Cold War era²⁸ and as an important security institution in Central Asia which strives to universalize the goals and tasks of international and regional security.

Together with the IFAS and CIS, the OSCE is one of the three regional structures in which all the regional states are represented. The principles and rules of regional and international security elaborated by the OSCE are registered in international legal documents.

The European Union is the only interstate organization involved in the Central Asian regional institutions system, in which the regional countries are not represented as members.²⁹

The European Union maintains its presence in Central Asia mainly in the form of various programs and projects covering a wide range of regional issues. This is, in fact, the cornerstone on which the EU programs rest.

Since 1992, the EU's regional programs have been implemented within the *Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States Program* (TACIS); the regional states are involved in the following EU programs: Border Management Program in Central Asia (BOMCA); the Central Asia Drug Action Program (CADAP); Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA); Interstate Oil and Gas Transport to Europe (INOGATE), as well as specialized programs for education (TEMPUS) and science (INTAS).³⁰

The *BOMCA* and *CADAP* programs are the centerpieces of the regional security efforts. The former contributes to the system of border management in the region, while the latter helps coordinate the efforts to curb drug trafficking; its special representative set up his office in Tajikistan.

On the one hand, these programs are intended to consolidate regional stability; while on the other, they help neutralize the challenges to the EU members by creating a security belt of sorts. This means that both are important instruments designed to prevent or, at least, reduce the security risks emanating from Central Asia.

The European leaders are fully aware of the region's importance for ensuring and maintaining stability in the European Union in the long-term perspective. Peter Struck, former Defense Minister of Germany, pointed out: "Germany is also being defended at the Hindu Kush."³¹

²⁷ [http://mfa.uz/rus/pressa_i_media_servis/news/040408r_5.mgr].

²⁸ See: E. Chung, "Multiple Regional Security Frameworks for Central Asia," p. 292, available at [http://www.sejong.org/Pub_st/PUB_ST_DATA/kst005-09.pdf].

²⁹ The European Union is a regional association of European countries set up in 1993 on the basis of the European Communities, an alliance of three formally independent yet interconnected regional economic organizations: the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) set up in 1951; the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom); and the European Economic Community (EEC) set up in 1957.

³⁰ In 2007, the Central Asian countries were involved in the Development Cooperation and Economic Cooperation Instrument, which replaced TACIS as a result of the reform of external cooperation of the EU Commission and its new Regulation for the period 2007-2013.

³¹ [<http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,630090,00.html>].

Table

The Main Regional Organizations

| Organization | Organizational and Legal Status | Regional Affiliation | Membership of the Central Asian States | Foundation Date |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|---|--|
| CIS | Collective security organization | mixed | All the Central Asian states are founders* (11 members in all)** | 1991 |
| CSTO | Collective defense organization | mixed | Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan are founders ³² (7 members in all) | In 1992 CST; since 2002, CSTO ³³ |
| SCO | Collective security organization | mixed | Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan are founders (6 members in all) | In 1996, The Shanghai Five; since 2001, the SCO |
| OSCE | Cooperative security organization | mixed | All the Central Asian states belong to it (56 members in all) | In 1975, CSCE; since 1994, OSCE |
| EU | Collective security organization | extra-regional | The Central Asian countries do not belong to it (27 members in all) | 1993 |
| NATO | Collective defense organization | extra-regional | All the Central Asian states belong to the Partnership for Peace program (20 partner-states in all) | 1949 NATO set up its Partnership for Peace program in 1994 |
| IFAS | Ecological security organization | intra-regional | All the Central Asian states are founders | 1993 |

* Turkmenistan did not sign the CIS Charter and remained its associated member.
 ** Georgia officially suspended its CIS membership.

³² In 2006, Uzbekistan restored its CSTO membership. Today, it has joined the main documents out of the total 74 envisaged by the Protocol on Uzbekistan's Restored CSTO Membership.

³³ Turkmenistan is the only Central Asian state that remained outside the CSTO. The country's new Military Doctrine adopted in January 2009 bans membership in any military-political alliances. The country, however, is represented in CSTO events. In 2007, the republic's Ministry of the Interior participated, for the first time, in Operation Channel-2007.

The Non-Traditional Institutions Factor

What place do non-traditional institutions occupy in the Central Asian security institutions?

Since 1994, the Central Asian countries have been involved in the *NATO Partnership for Peace Program*; there is a *Central Asia-Japan Dialog* or *6 + 1*, a format of cooperation at the foreign ministers' level.³⁴

In 1997, Uzbekistan initiated *Contact Group 6 + 2* to settle the Afghan conflict.³⁵

There is also the *Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia* (CICA), a structure patterned on the OSCE designed to achieve political stability in Asia.

This means that various collective structures differ from one another as far as their aims, potential, and the range of instruments designed to achieve regional security are concerned. Non-military, or "peaceful means" predominate: dialog, partnership, confidence, and transparency of military politics.

The absence of the component that presupposes the use of force should not be taken as a sign of inefficiency; this does not diminish the role of these organizations in maintaining peace in the region. In fact, the transborder and complex nature of the current problems and challenges presupposes new approaches: force can be combined with peaceful means.

This suggests that the advantages of these structures should be studied in detail. As a rule, the regional organizations are rooted in common values (as well as interests, problems, and threats); the absence of enmity in mutual relations attracts the states. As distinct from the regional organizations, this element is not an obligatory criterion of cooperation within the non-traditional mechanisms. For instance, India and Pakistan, two countries which since 1947 (the year of their independence) have been at war three times, are both CICA members even though their national security strategies described each other as the main security threat. Their nuclear status, the fact that they border on regional seats of instability, and their confrontation over Kashmir make these countries a security concern for the Central Asian states.

Their cooperation as CICA members is important for stability in South and Central Asia. The Declaration on Eliminating Terrorism and Promoting a Dialog Among Civilizations adopted by the first CICA summit in 2002, as well as the Catalogue of the CICA Confidence-Building Measures and creation of a Secretariat as the CICA's permanent administrative body point to its growing regional role.

These mechanisms are concerned with specific tasks, which can be described as their greatest advantage. The *6 + 3 Contact Group*, for example, is concerned with the Afghan crisis. In fact, Afghanistan's neighbors do not belong, as a group, to any of the regional organizations.

Pakistan and Iran, for example, hold an observer status in the SCO, which is concerned with Afghan settlement among other things.

Only two out of Afghanistan's six neighbors (Uzbekistan and Tajikistan) are members of the CSTO. NATO, in turn, has so far shown no intention of cooperating with the CSTO.

The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) does not include China; more than that: it is a trade-economic organization.³⁶

In light of the above, the *6 + 3 Contact Group*, which includes all of Afghanistan's neighbors and the conflicting sides and power centers, such as NATO, the U.S., and Russia, looks like the mechanism best adapted to conflict settlement.

From the point of view of the Central Asian states, this mechanism has the following advantages:

- First, it is a Central Asian project designed to achieve peace in Afghanistan as the main regional value;

³⁴ Azerbaijan is an extra-regional member. The dialogue was set up in September 2004 on the initiative of Japan.

³⁵ In April 2006, President of Uzbekistan Karimov addressed the NATO summit with a suggestion to transform the *6 + 2 Group* into the *6 + 3 Group* and involve NATO in it.

³⁶ It is, however, becoming more politically involved. Its latest summit held in Tehran in 2009 discussed, besides economic issues, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and foreign military presence in Afghanistan.

- Second, Afghanistan's neighbors can be directly involved in restoring regional peace and stability;
- Third, it is an alternative mechanism, which makes it possible to coordinate the efforts of America, China, and Russia in the Afghan direction.

In Lieu of a Conclusion

We should all accept the fact that each of the regional states regards the acts (either cooperative or antagonistic) of its regional neighbors as important determinants of its foreign and security policies.³⁷

Their closeness, that is, coexistence in the same region, offers the regional states a chance to establish close ties among themselves, which will lead to more frequent contacts, closer interpenetration and, hence, much more stable relations.

An analysis of contemporary interstate relations in Central Asia shows that regional security mechanisms occupy an important place in the regional context, while their role cannot be overestimated.

Today, the traditional institutions, such as collective security and collective defense structures, dominate the Central Asian security expanse.

The regional states, however, are fully aware of the need to set up a single mechanism of regional security, which means that cooperation in this sphere should be treated as a priority, while the number of members will increase.

It can be said that today the triad of mutually complementary mechanisms described above can offer reliable regional security in this strategically important area.

³⁷ See: J.S. Nye, *International Regionalism*, Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1968, p. vii.