TITLE: CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PEACE OPERATIONS IN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION: Is There a Role for Security Institutions?

AUTHOR: CELESTE A. WALLANDER, Harvard University

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN RESEARCH

TITLE VIII PROGRAM

1755 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
PROJECT INFORMATION:

CONTRACTOR: Harvard University

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Celeste A. Wallander

COUNCIL CONTRACT NUMBER: 806-35

DATE: May 15, 1996

COPYRIGHT INFORMATION

Individual researchers retain the copyright on work products derived from research funded by Council Contract. The Council and the U.S. Government have the right to duplicate written reports and other materials submitted under Council Contract and to distribute such copies within the Council and U.S. Government for their own use, and to draw upon such reports and materials for their own studies; but the Council and U.S. Government do not have the right to distribute, or make such reports and materials available, outside the Council or U.S. Government without the written consent of the authors, except as may be required under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 5 U.S.C. 552, or other applicable law.

1 The work leading to this report was supported in part by contract funds provided by the National Council for Soviet and East European Research, made available by the U. S. Department of State under Title VIII (the Soviet-Eastern European Research and Training Act of 1983, as amended). The analysis and interpretations contained in the report are those of the author(s).
Conflict Resolution and Peace Operations in the Former Soviet Union: 
Is There a Role for Security Institutions?

Celeste A. Wallander 
Center for International Affairs 
and Russian Research Center 
Harvard University 
1737 Cambridge St. 
Cambridge MA 02138


DRAFT
Please do not cite without permission of the author

1This paper is being distributed by NCSEER, with the author’s permission, while still in preliminary form. It is intended for possible revision and publication at some future date after the June 5-8 conference.
SUMMARY

The demise of the Soviet Union created a rather stark and inescapable geopolitical reality on the territory of the historical Russian empire. Instead of one centralized state, fifteen independent states occupy territory which is divided even further by ethnic and religious differences and subdivided into subnational administrative units. Combined with the fact that these fifteen countries also had to create new domestic state structures under conditions amenable neither to democratization nor compromise, these factors produced political conflicts with the potential for militarization. Consequently, there is a genuine problem of instability which threatens regional and international security.

In addition, the form of the demise of the Soviet Union left another inescapable geopolitical reality: these fifteen states are far from equal in size and power. Russia emerged from the Soviet interlude as not only one of the largest countries in the world, but far larger and more powerful than its new neighbors. The potential for a mode of security relations based on hegemony and run according to Russian power and interests is significant.

Nevertheless, two factors work against such a style of security relations. The first is the reality of instability, which creates potentially common interests and stakes in cooperative conflict prevention and resolution and which constrains the effectiveness of unilateral use of military force to achieve security. It may be possible to deter a neighboring country from launching a military attack across the border, but it is more difficult to coerce a neighbor into having a stable government. It may be possible to occupy a neighbor and impose a solution, but in the modern world the governance costs of empire and even hegemony can be quite high, and the economic and political benefits less compelling. Insofar as many modern security problems have their roots in conditions requiring joint action over a long period of time for resolution, multilateral security strategies can prove more efficient than unilateral military threats or action.

The second factor working against Russian hegemony and unilateralism is Russia’s interest in a continually changing and evolving system of multilateral economic, political, and security institutions. This interest ranges from the purely instrumental, as in obtaining financial assistance from the IMF or access to the GATT trade regime, to the less tangible, as in Russia’s efforts to become a major player in leading multilateral organizations such as the G7.

Taken together, these two factors create the potential that Russia would chose multilateral strategies to deal with security issues, problems, and threats in its relations with the other newly independent countries of the former Soviet Union. In the discussion that follows I first

---

2 David Lake. paper for Littoral project on empires.
briefly explain some of the now-familiar security issues which arose with the break-up of the 
Soviet Union. I then outline a theory of the role of institutions in sustaining multilateral 
security strategies. In the third section, I explain why security strategies and institutions need 
to be differentiated according to different underlying strategic situations, and assess in greater 
detail the variety and variation in peace operations. Finally, I turn to Russian thinking and 
practice on peace operations and assess the role of international institutions in current cases and 
in Russia’s security relations with its neighbors in more general terms.

I. Security relations among the post-Soviet states

Although the leaders of the Soviet republics divorced in haste in December 1991 in order to 
escape the dual grip of the centralized Soviet and entrenched communist system, the 
founding and early documents of the Commonwealth of Independent States show at least some 
concern and thought for the difficult realities of security independence among the post-Soviet 
states. Following the 8 December and 21 December agreements establishing the 
Commonwealth of Independent States, the CIS members recognized the right of each state to 
establish its own military forces in Minsk on 30 December 1991. At the same time, however, 
they agreed to maintain overall "strategic" forces under CIS command, and to establish 
common procedures for border troops. Thus, while beginning to go their own ways with 
respect to national defense forces, the former Soviet states acknowledged and made vague 
provision for military forces and procedures to deal with areas where security relations were 
terdependent in important ways. This was further acknowledged and addressed at a meeting 
in Kiev in March 1992, where the members further specified their individual and common 
boundaries and border troops, and where they agreed to the creation of CIS peacekeeping forces 
for dealing with conflicts in the former Soviet states. Finally, on the 15th of May 1992 in 
Tashkent, a subset of the CIS members states\(^1\) signed a Treaty on Collective Security, which 
declared that if one of the participating states is the object of aggression by any state or group 
of states, this would be aggression against all participating states, which are committed to 
giving necessary assistance, including military.

The importance of these agreements is twofold. First, they demonstrate that early on, 
some of the former Soviet states perceived security issues and problems which they felt it 
important to have the capacity to address multilaterally. Second, at least in principle, the basis

---

\(^1\) The signatories to the Tashkent treaty on collective security were Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, 
Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. They were subsequently joined by Azerbaijan and Georgia. The notable holdouts 
remain Moldova, Ukraine, and Turkmenistan. Turkmenistan has signed a bilateral mutual defense treaty with 
Russia.
exists in terms of international law and norms for multilateral peace operations in the countries of the former Soviet Union.

At the same time, the states of the former Soviet Union joined international and regional institutions, many of which have rules and resources for dealing with political-military conflict. The states of the former Soviet Union joined these institutions by one of three routes. First, Russia joined all the organizations in which the Soviet Union had been a member automatically as a result of the decision by the international community to recognize Russia as the legal successor state to the Soviet Union. Second, the other former Soviet republics joined open institutions such as the United Nations, CSCE/OSCE, and NACC virtually automatically. For these types of institutions, there is a presumption that barring egregious violations of international norms, all states of all types have a right to membership and are included. Third, institutions which have stricter performance criteria and conditions for membership accepted post-Soviet states on a case-by-case basis. Thus, for example, membership in the Council of Europe requires certain strong commitments from aspiring members on provisions for democratic institutions and rules about human rights, such as abolishing the death penalty. Consequently, not all the former Soviet states are members: Russia, for example, was accepted into the Council of Europe only in 1995. And in contrast to NACC, which accepted all the former Warsaw Pact states and former Soviet republics, membership in Partnership for Peace requires the negotiation of an explicit treaty which commits each member to meet certain obligations in terms of military cooperation, transparency, and progress toward democratic control of military forces. In this regard, one could see NATO as merely one of the more selective limited membership institutions, along with the European Union. Its "performance criteria" include not only qualities such as democratic control of military forces, but also that new members contribute to the security of the membership as a whole.

The first, and in many regards typical, post-Soviet conflict in the newly independent states was the civil war in Nagorno-Karabakh. The population of this autonomous region was Armenian but entirely within the republic of Azerbaijan. Armed conflict between the local population -- aided by Armenia -- and Azeri government began in 1988. Soviet forces remained in the region, although they did not play an active role in preventing conflict. In February 1992, the remaining Soviet forces were withdrawn, and various Russian government proposals advanced for UN and CIS peace operations. By that time, Nagorno-Karabakh's objective of joining Armenia changed to one of a new independent state.

Meanwhile, Azerbaijani President Abulfaz Elchibey was working to reduce rather than permit Russian military presence in his country and involve the CSCE in resolving the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. Consequently, from May 1992 to June 1993 when he was overthrown in
a coup, Russia contributed to the conditions which weakened his hold on power. Military forces from both Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia occupied the narrow band of Azerbaijan's territory which had divided the two. With a pro-Russian government in power in Baku, Azerbaijan joined the CIS and Russian troops were deployed once again in Azerbaijan. However, the Azerbaijani government has proven somewhat less malleable than at first glance and has since resisted a purely Russian or CIS peace operations. In December 1994, Russia agreed to a CSCE peacekeeping force, but this has never been implemented. Instead, now-OSCE involvement has been limited to observer missions and mediation.

The conflict in Tajikistan began as a civil war among distinct regional groups. An uneasy power-sharing developed in the late-Gorbachev and immediate post-Soviet periods as an arrangement between the groups which had traditionally held power as republic leaders in the Soviet Union and opposition groups broke down in March 1992 and quickly escalated to full-scale internal war by that summer. While a multilateral decision to use foreign (Russian and Uzbek) troops came first in September 1992, that is somewhat misleading, since Soviet troops controlled by the Russian government never left. Both the 201st Motorized Rifle Division and the (formerly KGB) border troops has transferred to Russian control when the Russian military forces were formed in May 1992. These forces were increasingly focused on defending the border with Afghanistan, from which Tajik opposition forces sometimes launched attacks. Although the presence of some 25,000 troops under Russian command on the border has not enabled the government to eliminate the opposition, the amount of internal fighting in Tajikistan decreased and has leveled out. Since 1994, Russia has with little success pressed the Tajik government to negotiate in good faith and compromise with opposition forces.

The conflict in Moldova centers on the secessionist attempts of ethnic Russians living in a section of the country east of the Dniestr river (thus the self-proclaimed name of "Pridniestrovye" or Transdniestr). Claiming to be acting to defend themselves against Moldova's intentions to merge either politically or culturally with Romania, local Russians created their own militia armed with equipment from the Soviet 14th Army, which was deployed in the region. Ethnic Russians were in fact a minority in Transdniestr and Moldovans a majority, but the former were concentrated in key urban areas. In late 1991 and early 1992, the Transdniestr militia carried out military operations to extend its control over the entire territory, which entailed military operations against Moldovan towns and villages. In March 1992 the Moldovan government committed its military forces to suppressing the conflict, but its forces were inferior to those of the "militia" which was clearly supplied and supported by the 14th Army. In April 1992, President Yeltsin subordinated the 14th Army to Russian command, and thus its conduct became Russian responsibility. Despite Russian government
statements calling for a peaceful settlement and non-interference, the 14th Army continued to aid the separatists until June 1992, when they officially took on the role of separating the Transdniestr military and Moldovans force. By this time, however, the Transdniestr political and military authorities had gained control over their entire region. In July 1992, Yeltsin and Moldovan President Mircea Snegur signed a bilateral agreement establishing a peacekeeping force of Russian, Moldovan, and Transdniestrian forces and establishing a negotiation process. Although a long-term political settlement has not been reached, Russia has on several occasions repeated its commitment to withdraw the Russian remains of the 14th Army from Moldova. A Russian promise to live up to this commitment was one of the conditions it accepted in order to achieve Council of Europe membership in 1995.

Georgia has been the location of two post-Soviet ethnic/territorial conflicts. A separatist movement in South Ossetia (seeking to join North Ossetia in the Russian Federation) was stabilized in July 1992 with a trilateral agreement and deployment of Russian, Georgian, and South Ossetian peacekeeping troops. although at the cost to Georgia of greater Ossetian autonomy. More serious has been the separatist war in Abkhazia, which had briefly been a union republic in the 1920s but at the time of Georgian independence in 1991 was an autonomous republic within that country. In the summer of 1992, the Abkhazian soviet declared its independence. The military conflict began in August when Georgian military forces under command of the defense minister entered the regional capital Sukhumi on orders from Georgian president Shevardnadze to find government officials who had been kidnapped by overthrown Georgian president Zviad Gamsakhurdia. Instead of dealing only with that mandate, Georgian forces engaged in fighting with Abkhazian forces. In the ensuing conflict from 1992-93, the small Abkhazian forces defeated and drove out the numerically superior Georgian forces. This led to early speculation and now substantial evidence that the Abkhazian forces benefitted from not only Russian supplies and training, but active and direct Russian military support, especially from combat aircraft and helicopters. Russia clearly used Georgia’s vulnerability to de-stabilize the country in order to force Georgian concessions, including joining the CIS and permitting Russian military bases. In May 1994 the parties signed a ceasefire agreement which provided for a CIS peacekeeping force (which in practice has been entirely Russian) monitored by UN observers.

It is important to note as well, however, that many political security conflicts in the former Soviet Union which could have become militarized have not escalated. First and

---

foremost, the security interdependence created by the deployment of strategic nuclear weapons in three of the newly independent states (Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus) which were not nuclear successor states according to international law (Russia alone held that designation). Following intense diplomatic activity and given genuine doubts about the wisdom of unilaterally disarming, all three states have lived up to their commitments to become nonnuclear states. Similarly, a political and military conflict between Russia and Ukraine over the division of the Black Sea Fleet and the status of Crimea within Ukraine, while not as of this writing entirely settled, has been handled by intensive negotiations, rather than a resort to force. And despite lingering resentment and Russian presence, all Russian military forces have been withdrawn from Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia and all three Baltic states have made compromises in their citizenship policies to accommodate Russians living in their states.

Clearly the demise of the Soviet Union did not eliminate the interrelated nature of security among the post-Soviet states. The common borders, mixed populations, instabilities of transition from communism, and division and deployment of Soviet forces among multiple countries created common as well as competing security interests. At the same time, Russia’s power and increasingly assertive definition of its national interests and "sphere of influence" in Eurasia just as clearly favored Russian unilateralism and coercion. Under these conditions, what role could there be for international institutions in post-Soviet conflicts?

II. Security relations and institutional theory

Strategic and security interdependence create the conditions under which states may find it in their interests to cooperate, and thus make use of security institutions, rather than act unilaterally to achieve their objectives. Strategic interdependence is a situation in which outcomes are determined by the choices of two or more states, while security interdependence obtains when states can be jointly better or worse off -- that is, when security interests are not zero-sum. These interdependencies mean that national decisionmakers make choices based not only on their preferences, but also based on their assessments of the intentions and likely choices of other states.

Therefore, a fundamental problem in security relations is that there is uncertainty about the likely intentions and policy choices of other states. If a decisionmaker knew the preferences and intentions of others, she could confidently choose multilateral cooperative security strategies when dealing with states which shared common security interests and intentions, and

---

could avoid being exploited by expansionist or hostile states. In particular, if decisionmakers could confidently identify jointly acceptable solutions short of war and knew ahead of time who would prevail in a military conflict, we would expect them to always reach a political bargain short of war.⁶

In reality, of course, decisionmakers know neither the true intentions of other states, nor the precise costs and outcomes of military conflict. This uncertainty makes strategic choice difficult, and the problem is to get information in order to choose a strategy most effectively. Choosing security strategies, therefore, entails assessing not merely "the balance of power." Since outcomes will be affected by the choices of others, states need to take the interests, preferences, and likely strategies of other states into account.

Strategic and security interdependence create the possibility for cooperative security strategies, but they do not guarantee that states will have identical or substantially compatible security interests. If security interests vary, then the underlying obstacles to cooperation and the ways in which those obstacles may be overcome will vary as well. Even when states can see substantial common security interests they may not be able to realize them. The most commonly recognized obstacle to cooperation in security relations is the fear of being exploited, or the temptation to exploit others' cooperation. For example, the risk in entering into a ceasefire arrangement is that other warring parties might violate the ceasefire in order to use an advantageous military situation and achieve territorial gains which cannot be easily reversed.⁷

However, it is a serious mistake to assume that these kinds of obstacles are the only or even the most important reasons why states may find it difficult to pursue cooperative and multilateral security strategies. In many instances, states do not have exploitative intentions and would not diverge from a multilateral arrangement even given the opportunity once they were confident that the other parties had similar intentions. The obstacles to cooperation can be severe nonetheless, and political and military conflicts may not be resolved. First, there always remains an underlying uncertainty about the degree to which other states see it in their short and long term interests to refrain from unilateral or military solutions to security problems. This uncertainty can be reduced, but it can never be eliminated.⁸ Second, while agreements may be self-enforcing and reliable once achieved, they are often extremely difficult to achieve.

---

⁷ The underlying strategic situation and obstacle to cooperation thus described are called "collaboration games." See Lisa L. Martin, "Interests, power, and multilateralism," *International Organization*, vol. 46, no. 4, (Autumn 1992), at p. 776.
⁸ These are known as problems of "transparency."
in the first place. Even conflicting sides which genuinely seek a peaceful and negotiated settlement should be expected to bargain for the best terms they can get, and it is likely that different provisions have different advantages and disadvantages for all the different parties. Bargaining always entails a mix of common and competing interests: a common interest in reaching an agreement does not preclude competing interests over the precise terms of the agreement. This is likely to be especially true in security relations which involve a mix of political and military issues, such as election procedures and disarmament schedules. This creates the possibility that the parties to such a conflict resolution process will begin to suspect that the other parties are not committed to a multilateral solution. It is extremely difficult to distinguish between states which are bargaining in good faith but are actively seeking their best deal, and those which are bargaining with no intention of abiding by an agreement at all.

Thus, returning to the example of observing a ceasefire, we can see that there can be genuine obstacles to security cooperation and conflict resolution even if the parties do not intend to exploit one another. Parties to a conflict may genuinely wish to extricate themselves, but may find it difficult to do so because they cannot be certain about the intentions of the other states, and because the establishment of a ceasefire itself is part of a bargaining process in which decisionmakers are seeking to achieve advantageous terms in the agreement.

Finally, an assessment of conflict resolution and security cooperation is complicated by the fact that states are often not merely concerned with reducing uncertainty, guarding against exploitation, and overcoming negotiation dynamics to achieve an agreement. Quite often, and perhaps nearly always, parties to such a process are concerned with altering the costs and benefits associated with different options and outcomes. Getting parties in a civil war to agree to a schedule of free and fair elections, for example, may entail not merely monitoring for transparency and sanctions for violating the rules, but it may require the promise of financial assistance to a government freely and fairly elected. It certainly entails the long-term task of establishing and maintaining institutions which encourage previously warring parties to continue to play by the political rules of the game because they are confident that others will also remain committed to cooperative and political means.

If it is the case that all of these situations are possible, states are in an even worse position with respect to security cooperation than any of these problems individually would

---

8 I follow the standard practice in the theoretical literature in calling these types of obstacles to security cooperation "coordination problems."

pose. If you have to worry not only that it may be difficult to negotiate the terms of a ceasefire because the different parties want different things, and you have to at least allow the possibility that one or more of the parties may seek to enter the agreement only in order to exploit it, security cooperation becomes very complicated indeed. If you are trying to structure a peace settlement to encourage free and fair elections and minority rights, while at the same time entertaining the option of military sanctions against parties who may resort to force or commit war crimes, it is difficult to play the role of an honest and neutral broker.

So it is not merely complexity which makes it difficult to approach conflict resolution and peace operations in political-military conflicts, but the fact that different underlying problems call for different policy solutions and instruments. Solving the problem created by the attempts by one or more parties to exploit cooperation or restraint -- as the Bosnian Serbs did repeatedly from 1992 to 1995 -- requires monitoring and a credible commitment to retaliate and sanction those who violate agreements. Solving the problem created by competition over the precise terms of a political and military settlement requires sustained and neutral good faith negotiations. Solving the long-term problem of creating a political and economic framework in which the parties can see and are confident of the benefits and safety of future cooperation requires substantial political and military resources and a long-term commitment by third parties.

The simple response to this problem might be simply to layer all of the alternative strategies. However, there are two problems with this idea. First, it is very expensive to deal with all the contingencies, as it would require substantial military forces, economic sanctions, sustained diplomacy, the involvement of development and international financial agencies, and so on. While there may be instances when the stakes of a conflict are deemed sufficiently great to warrant a comprehensive commitment of international resources, those instances are few. Even today there remains substantial doubt about whether such a commitment in Bosnia is worth it. It would be truly tragic, however, to avoid all conflict resolution efforts because all conflicts do not inspire a full-scale, layered strategy. Sometimes, conflict resolution can be quite successful by addressing a more limited set of problems.\(^9\)

Second, a layered or comprehensive approach will fail when the multiple instruments and policies are contradictory or even mutually destructive. As I will discuss in the next section, peacekeeping missions are qualitatively different from those of peace enforcement in such a

\(^9\) See studies of UN peacekeeping such as Virginia Page Fortna, "Success and failure in southern Africa: peacekeeping in Namibia and Angola," in Beyond Traditional Peacekeeping, edited by Donald Daniel and Bradd Hayes, (New York: Macmillan, 1995) and John Stedman, "UN intervention in civil wars: imperatives of choice and strategy," in Beyond Traditional Peacekeeping.
way that peacekeeping can contribute to conflict resolution only if all the parties are confident that its real role or mission is not peace enforcement. This will be very difficult, if not impossible, to accomplish if a "comprehensive" approach includes a mix of instruments. The troubled story of UNPROFOR in Bosnia -- which mixed humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping, and peace enforcement missions -- provides a stark lesson.

Given this rather daunting discussion of obstacles to security cooperation, it is perhaps not surprising that security analysts tend to discount the potential for cooperation in security relations. That however, overlooks two factors which make security cooperation more likely: the often quite substantial benefits arising from security interdependence, and the availability and role of international institutions in security affairs.

Institutions are "persistent and connected sets of rules (formal and informal) that prescribe behavioral roles, constrain activity, and shape expectations."\(^2\) International institutions by and large have no enforcement powers, although the European Union and United Nations Security Council are partial exceptions. They generally affect social behavior by altering states' strategic environment, rather than through strict enforcement in the sense of domestic political institutions.\(^3\) Institutions serve as monitoring mechanisms, provide negotiating structures and focal points in cases of distributive bargaining, enhance the information available to states assessing their choices of strategies, and allow states to credibly signal threats, promises, intentions, and capabilities. Although there has been little study of the role of institutions in security relations, there is no reason why international security institutions cannot exist and have substantial effects.\(^4\)

The realities of strategic and security interdependence mean that states might be able to pursue more ambitious security objectives through multilateral security strategies if international institutions help them reduce uncertainty about others' capabilities, intentions, actions, and strategies. When states abide by informal institutions such as respect for


\(^3\) Even institutions which operate on the domestic level, and therefore have enforcement power, affect social behavior largely as strategic constraints. See Ron Rogowski (1995) "Institutions as constraints on strategic choice," paper prepared for the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago IL, 30 August - 3 September 1995.

sovereignty and diplomatic immunity, they signal that their intentions are not in conflict with fundamental operating assumptions under which other states operate. Modern formalized institutions such as the United Nations, OSCE, or NATO provide for regular contact among states. As ongoing arenas for multilateral discussion, these organizations can allow states to exchange information and provide a framework for assessing the reliability of that information. An established framework of negotiation makes it easier for states to evaluate patterns of policies, and thus intentions.

Institutions also enhance the credibility of threats and promises, both of which are important in security relations. For members, an institution can support promises to cooperate by permitting monitoring of behavior and by enmeshing the members in an ongoing process that reduces the chances of a single devastating act of noncooperation. Institutions also reinforce the credibility of threats to retaliate for violating agreements among members because potential exploiters know that their actions are less likely to go undetected. In general, by establishing monitoring and information, institutions guard against the problem of opportunistic behavior.  

The obstacles to conflict resolution are substantial under any circumstances. Fear, distrust, and uncertainty are great. Further complicating matters is the issue of Russian interests and strategies. The question of conflict resolution and the role of institutions in post-Soviet international and internal conflicts is not only whether those institutions provide resources, but whether Russia will use them.

There are therefore three crucial variables in the effectiveness and extensiveness of security institutions in managing security conflict and cooperation among the post-Soviet states. The first dimension is whether there are sufficient common interests among both the states involved, including of course Russia, and the outside parties through their involvement in international security institutions to create a cooperative bargaining space. The second dimension is whether the nature of the stakes and opportunities offer Russia a reasonable policy instrument through international institutions. Institutions are effective only insofar as they are seen as legitimate and valuable by nation-states. Since institutions have little enforcement power and depend ultimately on the willingness of states to work within their rules, they are effective only at the discretion of their members. Therefore, the legitimacy and efficacy of institutions also enhance the credibility of threats and promises, both of which are important in security relations. For members, an institution can support promises to cooperate by permitting monitoring of behavior and by enmeshing the members in an ongoing process that reduces the chances of a single devastating act of noncooperation. Institutions also reinforce the credibility of threats to retaliate for violating agreements among members because potential exploiters know that their actions are less likely to go undetected. In general, by establishing monitoring and information, institutions guard against the problem of opportunistic behavior.

The obstacles to conflict resolution are substantial under any circumstances. Fear, distrust, and uncertainty are great. Further complicating matters is the issue of Russian interests and strategies. The question of conflict resolution and the role of institutions in post-Soviet international and internal conflicts is not only whether those institutions provide resources, but whether Russia will use them.

There are therefore three crucial variables in the effectiveness and extensiveness of security institutions in managing security conflict and cooperation among the post-Soviet states. The first dimension is whether there are sufficient common interests among both the states involved, including of course Russia, and the outside parties through their involvement in international security institutions to create a cooperative bargaining space. The second dimension is whether the nature of the stakes and opportunities offer Russia a reasonable policy instrument through international institutions. Institutions are effective only insofar as they are seen as legitimate and valuable by nation-states. Since institutions have little enforcement power and depend ultimately on the willingness of states to work within their rules, they are effective only at the discretion of their members. Therefore, the legitimacy and efficacy of institutions also enhance the credibility of threats and promises, both of which are important in security relations. For members, an institution can support promises to cooperate by permitting monitoring of behavior and by enmeshing the members in an ongoing process that reduces the chances of a single devastating act of noncooperation. Institutions also reinforce the credibility of threats to retaliate for violating agreements among members because potential exploiters know that their actions are less likely to go undetected. In general, by establishing monitoring and information, institutions guard against the problem of opportunistic behavior.

The obstacles to conflict resolution are substantial under any circumstances. Fear, distrust, and uncertainty are great. Further complicating matters is the issue of Russian interests and strategies. The question of conflict resolution and the role of institutions in post-Soviet international and internal conflicts is not only whether those institutions provide resources, but whether Russia will use them.

There are therefore three crucial variables in the effectiveness and extensiveness of security institutions in managing security conflict and cooperation among the post-Soviet states. The first dimension is whether there are sufficient common interests among both the states involved, including of course Russia, and the outside parties through their involvement in international security institutions to create a cooperative bargaining space. The second dimension is whether the nature of the stakes and opportunities offer Russia a reasonable policy instrument through international institutions. Institutions are effective only insofar as they are seen as legitimate and valuable by nation-states. Since institutions have little enforcement power and depend ultimately on the willingness of states to work within their rules, they are effective only at the discretion of their members. Therefore, the legitimacy and efficacy of institutions also enhance the credibility of threats and promises, both of which are important in security relations. For members, an institution can support promises to cooperate by permitting monitoring of behavior and by enmeshing the members in an ongoing process that reduces the chances of a single devastating act of noncooperation. Institutions also reinforce the credibility of threats to retaliate for violating agreements among members because potential exploiters know that their actions are less likely to go undetected. In general, by establishing monitoring and information, institutions guard against the problem of opportunistic behavior.

---

security institutions is a valuable asset which cannot be squandered. Third, the form of institutions varies, and it matters. This means that in thinking about the potential role of institutions in conflict resolution in the former Soviet Union, we have to distinguish between different problems and instruments.

III. Peace operations and conflict resolution

The scholarly and practical analysis of different peace operations, their characteristics, and requirements has become quite well-developed in the aftermath of the Cold War. In the years since 1991, distinctions between different types of political and military peace operations have become the focus of study and proposals for policy change, while the practical and real-case distinctions remain often very difficult to make.

The crucial distinction which is at the heart of recent discussions is that between "Chapter VI" and "Chapter VII" operations. These terms refer to the UN Charter. Chapter VI authorizes the General Secretary and member states to employ peaceful means for preventative diplomacy and what has been called "peacemaking" through active diplomacy in existing conflicts. Chapter VII provides for classic collective security operations whereby the UN Security Council is empowered to pass resolutions calling upon members to use any means, including military coercion, to impose peace settlements and enforce them. The best known UN peace operation is "peacekeeping" but it does not directly appear in the UN charter. Instead, as practice and policy it has evolved over time from the UN's Chapter VI powers and responsibilities for contributing to the peaceful settlement of disputes. In particular, the instrument of peacekeeping arose because the Security Council was largely paralyzed by U.S.-Soviet hostility and could not conduct more pro-active and forceful peace operations as provided for under Chapter VII. It was therefore always a limited tool meant for use under circumscribed conditions to achieve limited objectives.

Thus, in his major post-Cold War policy statement An Agenda for Peace, UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali clearly distinguished among these different peace operations. During the cold war, the clarity of these distinctions was not terribly important, because traditional peacekeeping was basically all the UN could hope to accomplish, given the effect of U.S.-Soviet rivalry on the effectiveness of the Security Council. Traditional peacekeeping (first employed to monitor the end to hostilities in Israel in 1948) is based on three principles: consent of the parties to the conflict, impartiality of the peacekeeping forces, and non-use of military force -- except in case of self-defense. Because it involves more than diplomacy and

---

political negotiations, peacekeeping missions are sometimes referred to as "Chapter VI-and-a-half" operations. However, although certainly a military operation, peacekeeping functions precisely because they are sought and valued by all the parties to the conflict, and because the actual military forces deployed are seen as neutral and impartial. The fundamental purpose of peacekeeping operations is to give the warring parties confidence that their desire for a political solution is genuinely held by the other parties as well, and that their military restraint will not be disastrously exploited. Peacekeeping operations, therefore, fall under the category of security problems in which the disputants are not determined to achieve their objectives through force but face obstacles of uncertainty and competitive bargaining incentives which make reaching an agreement difficult, as discussed in the previous section. Peacekeeping forces have neither the mandate nor capacity to punish ceasefire violations, because at the point of punishing one party they might no longer be seen as impartial. Peacekeeping operations, therefore, depend for their effectiveness on two assets: the fundamental desire of warring parties to seek a negotiated solution, and the system of consent, strict impartiality, and self-defense which makes the peacekeeping forces not at all a threat and only an asset to those parties.

Peacekeeping is distinct from conflict prevention (or preventive diplomacy) and peacemaking in that the former is a military operation while as Chapter VI operations the latter two are diplomatic and political. Obviously, any reasonable hope for a peace settlement and lasting peace will have to join a peacekeeping operation with political mediation and diplomacy, as well as "peacebuilding" which is a long-term commitment to create the political, economic, and social conditions for lasting peace. Furthermore, peacekeeping operations may co-exist with and even make possible humanitarian assistance missions.

But just as clearly, peacekeeping operations must be kept distinct from peace enforcement, or even humanitarian intervention, which fall under Chapter VII. If consent, impartiality, and self-defense are what make peacekeeping work, use of force against any one of the parties undermines and may destroy this foundation. Even if one of the parties to a conflict is much deserving of sanctions and the Security Council agrees to authorize such missions -- as it did against Iraq in 1990 -- the sanctioned party is hardly likely to see such

---

20 On the similarity of peace enforcement and humanitarian intervention (as distinct from humanitarian assistance), see Forster. "U.S. peace operations," p. 4.
operations as justified. This would all be academic were these distinctions unrelated to practice, but there is a qualitative difference between Chapter VI and Chapter VII operations which changes both the military and political terms of conflict resolution. As we have learned so tragically in Somalia and Bosnia, the military requirements and political processes of the two types of missions differ fundamentally.

Finally, we should note that "peacemaking" and "peace enforcement" are different concepts and different policies, although they are often used interchangeably. Peacemaking refers to diplomatic activity in the course of a conflict which is meant to get the parties to agree to a settlement. It does not imply the use or even threat of military force, in contrast to peace enforcement. Peace enforcement as envisioned by the UN in Chapter VII derives directly from the UN’s role as an institution of collective security. In collective security systems, members commit themselves to the peaceful and political solutions of disputes and pledge to take multilateral action against any member which violates that pledge. Thus collective security systems are based on some authority and provision for peace enforcement operations. This is an important distinction for analyzing Russian thinking and policy on peace operations, as I will explain in the following section.

Although I have explained the definitional and operational distinctions among different peace operations, it is important to recognize that the trend since the end of the Cold War has been to mix missions and operations in practice. Greater visibility of international and internal conflicts has created stronger motives for humanitarian missions which sometimes require enforcement elements, while the explosion of post-communist internal conflicts has strongly extended both the number and ambitions of peace operations. UNPROFOR and IFOR operations in Bosnia exemplify this mixing of missions, as they have combined peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, and enforcement.

Thus, it would be misleading to claim that there was a single international system or norm for peacekeeping as distinct from other peace operations, and judge Russian behavior against that. To a certain extent, the mixing of Russian doctrine and practice which I will discuss in the next section reflects that of the international community at large.

---


Nevertheless, the analytical distinctions are important for thinking about conflict resolution in the former Soviet Union because they are related to the effectiveness and legitimacy of international security institutions. The political terms of Chapter VI and Chapter VII conflict resolution are fundamentally and qualitatively different. In Chapter VI operations, the objective is to create and support a process in which the parties can achieve a self-enforcing agreement. This may entail offering incentives for honest bargaining and constructive proposals and well as support for long-term peacebuilding, but the focus remains mediation and facilitation.

In peace enforcement situations, there are roughly speaking two options. Either a settlement will be chosen multilaterally within the bounds of international laws and institutions such as the UN, or it will be chosen and enforced according to the interests of the predominant state. One of the achievements of the international community in the 20th century has been the creation of a system for the former, and its greatest failing has been how rarely multilateral enforcement according to international laws, norms, and procedures has been used.

So the question for peace operations and conflict resolution in the former Soviet Union is first whether Russia can and does serve as an honest and neutral mediator in those situations which are amenable to Chapter VI type peace operations. If so, the use and effectiveness of international institutions which are based upon and reinforce preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding should be both possible and desirable. The second question is whether in those situations which appear to require Chapter VII type solutions -- that is, where conflict arises not from competition, uncertainty, instability, and the like but from aggression by one party -- can and do international institutions encourage multilateral and rule-based enforcement and intervention, or are Russian power and interests the basis for solutions?

IV. "Peacekeeping" and conflict resolution in the former Soviet Union

The obstacles to assessing Russian policy and practice in peace operations becomes immediately apparent when one tries to distinguish concepts, instruments, and policies as I have done in the preceding section. The first problem is simply one of language. Russian officials and political analysts have often used two different terms in referring to peace operations. podderzhanie mira (peacekeeping) and mirovorchestvo (usually translated as peacemaking, but literally "peace creation"). Russian policy and doctrine also recognizes and uses the concept kollektivnaya bezopasnost (collective security). As the preceding section discussed, at least in terms of theory and international law, the first two terms refer to two
different policies, such that podderzhanie mira should refer to the interposition of invited, neutral forces (voiska po podderzhaniyu mira) for monitoring an established ceasefire to facilitate associated peace negotiations. In the same framework, mirotvorchestvo should then refer to diplomatic and political efforts to achieve peace settlements.

In Russian usage and policy, however, there is considerable confusion. First is the tendency of Russian officials and political analysts to use the two interchangeably. This would not be terribly problematic, since as I have explained, both peacekeeping and peacemaking derive from the UN's Chapter VI and are reasonable complementary policies: maintaining a ceasefire without proactive policies to reach a settlement is not very helpful, though better than continued fighting.

Indeed, the conclusion that some observers have drawn that Russian policy in the near abroad is duplicitous and insidious because "peacekeeping" and "peacemaking" are used interchangeably betrays a certain lack of understanding. A Russian presidential declaration signed in September 1995 on security relations among the CIS states lists three national security tasks of the CIS: collective security, security of state borders, and resolution of conflicts on the territory of the CIS. In discussing the third policy, the document uses the term mirotvorchestvo to refer to "the settlement and prevention of conflicts in the CIS states preferably by peaceful political-diplomatic means." It goes on to state that this should be accomplished with the cooperation and participation of the UN and OSCE, although with the understanding that this region is of primary interest to Russia.

Thus, the problem is not in the interchangeability of terms in which Russia seeks to blend "peacekeeping" and "peacemaking" against international laws and norms. The two are quite related in international usage and practice as well. The real problems with Russian policy and practice in peace operations lies elsewhere: with the mixing of peacekeeping and collective security operations, the strong military element in Russian "peacemaking" practice, the refusal to accept international standards of peacekeeping (neutrality and impartiality in particular), and the claim to a special Russian role by right of its national security interests.

This blending is apparent in all the militarized conflicts in the former Soviet Union, but is most apparent in peace operations in Tajikistan. Although many Russians and western analysts refer loosely to operations in Tajikistan as "peacekeeping" they operate actually as

---

23 Maxim Shashenkov, "Russian peacekeeping in the 'near abroad'," Survival vol. 36, no. 3 (Autoumn 1994), pp. 46-69, see esp. p. 65, fn. 1.
24 "Strategicheskiy kurs Rossii s gosudarstvami-uchastnikami Sodruzhestva Nezavisimykh Gosudarstv," 14 September 1995, ukaz no. 940, 8pp. at pp. 3-4
25 Ibid. p. 4.
collective security and border defense forces. The latter were authorized in January 1993 when the civil war in Tajikistan had become extended to conflicts across the Afghan border. The former were authorized in September 1993 through an agreement among Russia, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. The form and legal basis for this agreement was the May 1992 Tashkent agreement on Collective Security. As forces for collective defense, therefore, the operations would not have to meet criteria for peacekeeping forces such as impartiality and deployment after the achievement of a ceasefire, conditions which they clearly do not meet. The problem is that at the last moment, the wording of the agreement was changed to provide for "peacekeeping forces" although neither the purpose nor form of the operations were changed. The agreement on the deployment of "collective peacekeeping forces" is of further significance because it serves as a precedent for subsequent peace operations.

This became clear in the negotiations on a CIS peacekeeping force for Abkhazia. The UN was involved in seeking an end to the conflict as early as 1993 and was active both in seeking a ceasefire and in sending observers. But UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali held back on sending a peacekeeping force even after a Russian-brokered ceasefire agreement in December 1993 because the agreement on the terms of such a force and the likelihood of movement to a political settlement were so weak. Meanwhile, Russia had obtained a CIS agreement to deploy peacekeeping forces under the March 1992 CIS agreement and the September 1993 agreement’s provisions. The parties agreed that if the UN did not supply a force, then the CIS force would be sent. In practice a contingent of Russian peacekeepers was sent in June 1993.

Reluctant to bow out of a crisis in which the UN had been so involved, the UN took the apparent middle ground (which was in fact a qualitatively new step) of approving of the CIS peacekeeping force on the condition that UN observers would monitor the operation. In doing so, the UN has now approved of a peacekeeping force which clearly violates the norm of neutrality and impartiality. That said, however, one should note that Russia appears to be taking seriously some of the constraints which an internationally mandated peacekeeping force implies. Most recently, Russia has refused to take on an active peace enforcement role in

returning Georgian refugees to Abkhazia by pointing out that such operations would exceed the peacekeeping mandate and would require a UN decision.\textsuperscript{28}

Despite the fact that both Russian peacemaking and peacekeeping clearly violate fundamental rules and norms of international security institutions such as the UN and OSCE, Russia has consistently sought to obtain legitimacy and even funding for its peace operations efforts in conflicts in the former Soviet Union while trying to insure that international involvememt will not substantially constrain Russian options. For example, although Russia has allowed and participated in ongoing OSCE conflict resolution efforts in Nagorno-Karabakh (states involved in these efforts are known as the "Minsk group") including an agreement in principle in December 1994 for the deployment of an OSCE peacekeeping force, Russia has prevented the actual deployment of such a force. At the same time, however, OSCE observers have remained active in Nagorno-Karabakh and UN observers in Abkhazia. Similarly, although the Russian military attack in Chechnya has clearly violated important OSCE rules (including those on notification of military movements and on non-use of military forces for internal security), Russia subsequently permitted substantial OSCE observer and assistance missions, even when the result was a blisteringly critical report on Russian human rights violations.\textsuperscript{29}

This conjunction of substantial violations yet consistent involvement of international institutions by Russia in peace operations indicates that Russian leaders do see institutions as instrumental for security objectives. This is exemplified by Russia's efforts to have the CIS recognized as a "regional organization" under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. Although the UN decision to endorse the CIS operation in Abkhazia might appear to open the door to CIS legitimacy in peace operations, recognition as a regional organization permits a greater and more active scope of peacekeeping activities, as well as the right to recommend enforcement measures. This is problematic because if at a regional level there is a dominant power, it is too easy for a regional recommendation to be a thinly disguised legitimization of that dominant power's use of force to get its security interests. As one authority on international law writes:

\begin{quote}
Unlike the UN, regional organizations could be dominated by a single state or an ideological bloc; they could, in other words, be coterminous with a great power and its closest allies. In such cases, the distinction between the action by the organization and the action taken by certain member states with the blessing of the organization makes no difference....the regional organization, although no more
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{28} "Russia again rejects police powers for troops in Abkhazia." \textit{Jamestown Monitor} (electronic version), vol. II, no. 67, (4 April 1996).
\textsuperscript{29} "Chechnya: the OSCE excoriates Moscow." \textit{Prism} (electronic version), vol. II, no. 7 (5 April 1996).
than a thinly disguised power bloc, could legitimate military action against a geographically proximate member.\textsuperscript{30}

This is, then, an important distinction. The UN and other international security institutions have been used by their members and international staffs to remain quite involved in conflict prevention, observation, and mediation in CIS conflicts. In this regard, it is deemed more valuable to be involved than to completely disavow conflict resolution in the area. In order to preserve the value of its legitimacy, however, the UN in particular has limited the degree to which Russia can claim a UN mandate in its operations. The cost of this balance between engagement and distance has been a more proactive Russian role in peace operations and a substantial reduction in the legitimacy and value of peacekeeping in the region.

How did this situation arise? There is of course the well-documented shift to a more nationalist definition of Russian interests and assertion of Russian preferences in relations with the 'near abroad.'\textsuperscript{31} In this regard, the mixing of peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peace enforcement serves Russian interests by lending a cast of international legitimacy to policies which permit Russia to either impose its own preferred solutions or achieve concessions from CIS countries. At the same time, however, two other factors contributed to the mixing of peace operations and Russia's ability to make unilateral use of the leverage they afford. First was the fact that these political-military conflicts did increase in number and scope over time. On a political level, these threatened upheaval and refugees.\textsuperscript{32} On a military level, they raised the real and numerous possibilities of escalation from "local wars." During the Cold War, escalation from local wars was one of the major threat scenarios in Soviet military planning, and this potential plays an very significant part in current Russian military doctrine.\textsuperscript{33} Since 1992, therefore, conflicts in the CIS have risen to the top of Russian national security concerns.


\textsuperscript{32} Shashenkov. "Russian peacekeeping," p. 49.

\textsuperscript{33} On the role of local wars and conflict in Soviet military doctrine, see Michael McCGwire, Military Objectives in Soviet Foreign Policy, (Washington DC: Brookings, 1987), especially chapters 2, 3, and 10. The Russian military doctrine's discussion of escalation and local wars is in "Osnovnyye polozheniya voyennoy doktriny Rossiiskoy Federatsii", 34 pp., at pp. 17-18.
Second, while Russian interests at stake grew, the willingness of the international community to become involved in militarized conflicts remained tightly constrained.\textsuperscript{34} While the UN and OSCE have been active in conducting conflict prevention and observer missions in the former Soviet Union, and have offered to provide peacekeeping forces when requisite preconditions are met (especially given the establishment of a ceasefire), the ability of these institutions to operate in the murky areas between peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peace enforcement remained limited and problematic.\textsuperscript{35} Thus it should be recognized that it is not at all clear that the international community could have handled all these conflicts any more cleanly or effectively with reference to its own repertoire of peace operations.

Although Russia's style of peace operations may have been more "effective" in stabilizing conflicts and getting peace settlements, there is very little question that these have not been effective multilateral solutions to security threats and that international institutions have played a very limited role.

The significant role of international institutions has not been at the peace enforcement or peacekeeping end of the peace operations spectrum, however. That is, we have to recognize that their role has been minimized by Russian preferences and power when it comes to robust functions such as sanctioning and military oversight. But increasingly since 1994, the UN and OSCE in particular have played a significant role in facilitating transparency, conflict prevention, and negotiations in not-yet-militarized political disputes in the former Soviet Union. The importance of political compromises in Russia's relations with the Baltic states and Ukraine should not be ignored.

Given that Russia has since 1994 appeared to increase the value it places on pressing parties toward a settlement in Moldova, Tajikistan, Georgia, and Nagorno-Karabakh. UN and OSCE strengths in these more political and facilitative institutional functions might become significant in the next period of post-Soviet conflict resolution.

V. Conclusion

As my outline of an institutional approach to security issues expects, the existence of substantial security interdependence among the post-Soviet states does create the potential that


\textsuperscript{35} This remains a crucial problem in Bosnia, with gray areas on whether IFOR should become actively involved in enforcing the terms of the Dayton agreement. See Mike O'Connor, "New refugee conflict points up flaw in Bosnia pact," \textit{New York Times}, 29 April 1996, p. A3.
multilateral strategies to cope with political and military conflicts may be valuable to states. Even Russia, with its strikingly predominant power in the post-Soviet space, has pursued multilateral solutions to security problems.

Two limitations to the role of institutions become immediately apparent, however. First, in cases where the stakes are high or Russian preferences are strong, Russia is not going to be substantially or directly constrained by prevailing international rules or norms. Peace operations which are primarily military in character or which entail elements of enforcement will not be directly affected by institutional rules or procedures, and certainly not to the same degree as they are affected by unilateral Russian policies. The Russian government’s view of institutions remains primarily instrumental and practical, rather than normative and comprehensive. Russian leaders seek to use the legitimacy of international institutions, but they are not particularly bound by a long-term commitment to the maintenance of the norms and rules of post-cold war security institutions. The greater impact of institutions on countries such as Germany arises from precisely this normative, comprehensive, and long-term stake in the legitimacy and functioning of western-based security institutions.36

The second limitation on the role of international security institutions in conflicts in the former Soviet Union arises because, ironically, the form and functions of institutional rules and procedures do matter and are taken seriously by their members. In particular, the rules and understanding of the role and effectiveness of peacekeeping missions has constrained their usefulness in the former Soviet Union. Effective multilateral instruments are valuable and are not to be squandered in situations where their legitimacy will be undermined. It is precisely because member states and the institutions themselves take seriously both the value of different kinds of peace operations and the role of their legitimacy in contributing to their effectiveness that international institutions have played so little a role in Russian peacekeeping and peace enforcement. Given the mixing of instruments and missions which Russia has preferred and for the most part successfully implemented, international reticence was the right policy. It has preserved the legitimacy and effectiveness of the political and facilitative roles of the UN and OSCE, which may prove a more long-lasting and valuable asset.

Yet institutional functions and legitimacy do matter. No one believes that the CIS is a legitimate forum for multilateral security cooperation: it is too dependent on Russian policies and power.

---

36 This comparison is documented in Wallander, Balance and Institutions.