

THE ARCHITECTURE OF SECURITY IN THE EURASIAN REGION: IS RUSSIA STILL A GUARANTOR OF REGIONAL SECURITY?

Gaziza Shakhanova

ABSTRACT

Various attempts of Russian political leaders to keep their formerly subordinated nations under a strong influence of regional military-political and economic coalitions headed by Moscow are treated differently by the West, by Russia itself, and by the post-Soviet states. On the one hand, despite the withdrawal of the Warsaw Treaty and the Soviet Union in 1991, and the end of the Cold War between two blocks, the West still depicts Russia as an unfriendly state ready to attack Europe at any time, and calls the allies to more careful watchfulness over the “Russian bear”. On the other hand, Russia itself is more preoccupied with NATO’s enlargement towards the East, the import of “hybrid” wars and “colour” revolutions, and the stirring up of terrorism and religious extremism stemming from Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan. While the post-Soviet states, which are geopolitically located under Moscow’s umbrella, demonstrate loyalty and form alliances with Russia for their own sake, Russia could guarantee the preservation of the existing regimes and their states’ sovereignty and give them political freedom to realise a “multi-factor” foreign policy by balancing the strongest powers in the region. However, Moscow is trying to avoid the role of the “watchdog” of the region, looks for stronger allies to strengthen its global positions, and has already prioritised the global Shanghai Cooperation Organization over the regional one. The article gives a picture of the existing security system in the post-Soviet space in the military-political and economic aspects, and provides tentative suggestions on the main trends and problems in the system.

Keywords: Security Threats in the Eurasian region, post-Soviet states, Russia and Central Asia, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Eurasian Economic Union.

I. THE PATCHWORK QUILT OF "EURASIA"

*“For America, the chief geopolitical prize is Eurasia”
Zbigniew Brzezinski¹*

In his disputable book, the American realist Zbigniew Brzezinski depicted Eurasia as an extended geographical space located on the Eurasian continent, which included both Europe and Asia. His concept is correlated with the earliest geopolitical theories of “Heartland” by Sir Halford Mackinder. It is worth mentioning that both authors stressed the crucial geopolitical importance of the territory of the Russian Empire, later the speech was about the territory of the former Soviet states, which are extremely rich in “black gold”. Although the term “Eurasia” includes plenty of historical, geographical and ideological interpretations and deserves solid academic study, in this article the Eurasian region is taken in a narrow meaning, and means the post-Soviet space headed by Russia. Taking into consideration that the newly joined members of the existing security structures in the Eurasian region are presented by such states as China, India, Pakistan and Iran, it is hard not to mention their role.

After the withdrawal of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia has taken a role of the guarantor of security and stability in the Eurasian region. The architecture of security is presented by the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)² and the

¹ Brzezinski Z.K. (1997). *The Grand Chessboard: American primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives*. New York: Basic Books. p.30.

² The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) was signed as the Collective Security Treaty (in Tashkent, 15/05/1992) by Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan. In 1993, the Treaty was signed by Azerbaijan, Belarus and Georgia. In 1999, Uzbekistan, Georgia and Azerbaijan came out of the Treaty and joined to the GUAM – the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development, in 2005 Uzbekistan left it again. In 2002, the Treaty was reborn into the Collective Security Treaty Organization. In 2017, the CSTO celebrates its 15-year anniversary. Available on the site <<http://www.odkb-csto.org/>>.

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)³. Both are aimed towards the maintenance of security and stability in the region and have functional overlapping, which in certain ways misleads the comprehension of the security system. However, there is a strong differentiation between the organisations: the CSTO is a military-political organisation, while the SCO is more humanitarian or economic, as its activity is related to such issues as the Business Council or Bank Consortium.

It deserves to be mentioned that the post-Soviet states form the membership of different regional initiatives – the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia⁴ (which includes 26 states located in Asia), the Community of Independent States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe⁵, but these are not fully involved in a settlement of regional security problems.

The foundation of the Eurasian architecture of security is presented by three key organisations which provide military-political and economic stability in the region – the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU)⁶.

Table 1. The Membership of Eurasian states in military-political or economic organisations

	Country	Collective Security Treaty Organization	Shanghai Cooperation Organization	Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia	Eurasian Economic Union
1.	Armenia	+	-	-	+
2.	Belarus	+	-	-	+
3.	Kazakhstan	+	+	+	+
4.	China	-	+	+	-
5.	Kyrgyzstan	+	+	+	+
6.	Russia	+	+	+	+
7.	Tajikistan	+	+	+	-
8.	Uzbekistan	-	+	+	-
9.	India		+		
10.	Pakistan		+		
-	-	<u>Observer state:</u> Moldova	<u>Observer states:</u> Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran, Mongolia	<u>Other members:</u> Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Bahrein, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Egypt, Israel, India Jordan, Iraq, Iran, Cambodia, Korea, Mongolia, United Arab Emirates, Pakistan, Palestine, Thailand, Turkey	<u>Observer states:</u> Moldova, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan
-	-	<u>Former members:</u> Azerbaijan, Georgia, Uzbekistan	<u>Partners in dialogue:</u> Azerbaijan, Armenia, Cambodia, Nepal, Turkey, Sri-Lanka	<u>Observer states:</u> Belarus, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Sri-Lanka, Ukraine, USA	<u>Cooperation:</u> Vietnam, Egypt, Iran, Serbia, Mongolia, Thailand

Source: <http://odkb-csto.org/>, <http://rus.sectsc.org/>, <http://www.s-cica.org>, <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/>

³ The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is an international intergovernmental organisation (15/06/2001), the members are Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India and Pakistan. There are 4 observer states: Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran, Mongolia. Available on the site <http://rus.sectsc.org/about_sco/>.

⁴ The Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (04/09/1999). There are 26 Asian member states. A part of the state's territory has to be located in Asia. Available on the site <<http://www.s-cica.org/index.html>>.

⁵ The Minsk Group under the OSCE, which is aimed at a peaceful resolution of the Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

⁶ The Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) is the economic integration, which provides four types of freedom – the unified markets of goods, services, capital and labour (29/05/2014). Initially, the Eurasian Customs Union and the Unified Economic Space were presented by Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia, in 2015 – the treaty was signed by Kyrgyzstan and Armenia. Available on the site <<http://www.eurasiancommission.org/>>.

Theoretically, the article follows the realism traditions and aims at highlighting the main regional trends and problems in military-political and economic security threats by analysing the activities of the core organisations, as well as official documents, statements of political leaders and protocols of meetings.

The following are the main trends which characterise the security system in the Eurasian region:

(A) **the CSTO and SCO are based on the pivotal role of Russia.** How Russia pictures the regional and global threats coincides almost with all members of both organisations, but the bilateral relations between the remaining members themselves are less coordinated. The researcher could easily observe the constellation of chronic problems among the states themselves related to the long-standing territorial pretensions.

(B) **On the Eurasian territory, there are processes of regional and global integration which are passing simultaneously.** The CSTO's regional shield is intended to fade off regional threats stemming predominantly from the Central-Asian region (for example, the extremist activities of the Taliban or ISIS), while the initiatives of the SCO have a more globalised impact. The CSTO presents interests of only six states (Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan), while the SCO⁷ is performed by more powerful states – emerging economies (India, China, Russia, Iran, Pakistan). Thus, the picture of regional security could be depicted as having several circles of cooperation – the regional one (in the form of the CSTO headed by Russia) and the global one (in the form of the SCO headed by China and Russia, but expanded by the influential India, Pakistan and Iran).

(C) **The states-members of the CSTO, SCO and EEU have uncompromising contradictions,** which give us a solid reason to presuppose the uncompromising disputes on how they perceive the external threats. Under the SCO, such pairs of states as “India-Pakistan”, “China-India”, “Uzbekistan-Tajikistan”, “Armenia-Azerbaijan” have longstanding unsolved conflicts on disputed territories, trans-boarded rivers and ethnical pretensions. That lets us to postulate the thesis that the main stimuli for states' unification under the umbrella of CSTO, SCO and EEU are the following: (1) Russia, India, China, Pakistan joined their efforts within the SCO activity in order to claim their distinctiveness and disagreement with the political paradigm of the West; (2) the less developed Central-Asian states, Belarus and Armenia have been motivated by Russian military umbrella, which is able to preserve the states' political regimes and provide a strong economic support.

(D) **In comparison to the CSTO, the SCO is the more authoritative organisation.** In the mid-term, the SCO combines the interests not only of the leaders among the developing countries of the world, but the members of the Nuclear Club (Russia, China, India, Pakistan) as well, which increases the importance of the organisation.

(E) **the post-Soviet states are highly dependent on military and economic support from Russia.** In particular, the former allies are highly dependent on supplies of energy and mineral resources (oil, gas, metals). But the most striking is the dependence on military and defence features. Many post-Soviet states spend more than 80% of their defence budget on supplies from Russia.

⁷ Membership of India and Pakistan in the SCO is dated by June 2017. Iran is among of the states-observers.

Table 2. International Comparison of Defence Expenditure (US \$ mln) and Military Personnel (in thousands)

Russia & Eurasia	Defence spending Current US \$ mln			Defence spending % of GDP			Active Armed Forces	Estimated reservists	Active Paramilitary
	2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015			
Armenia	461	469	414	4.15	4.03	3.90	45	210	4
Azerbaijan	1,951	2,092	1,738	2.65	2.82	2.72	67	300	15
Belarus*	681	n.k.	n.k.	0.93	n.k.	n.k.	48	290	110
Georgia	411	390	307	2.55	2.36	2.23	21	0	12
Kazakhstan	2,292	2,026	1,945	0.99	0.94	1.00	39	0	32
Kyrgyzstan	103	92	80	1.40	1.25	1.12	11	0	10
Moldova	25	28	23	0.32	0.35	0.38	5	58	2
Russia	66,073	64,480	51,605	3.18	3.47	4.18	798	2,000	489
Tajikistan	195	195	152	2.29	2.11	1.89	9	0	8
Turkmenistan*	612	n.k.	n.k.	1.49	n.k.	n.k.	37	0	0
Ukraine	2,421	3,386	3,916	1.35	2.59	4.34	204	900	n.k.
Uzbekistan*	1,593	n.k.	n.k.	2.79	n.k.	n.k.	48	0	20
Total	76,819	76,284	62,682	2.76	3.03	3.48	1,331	3,757	701

Source: The Military Balance (2016). Chapter 5 “Russia and Eurasia”. The International Institute of Strategic Studies. p.163-210.
*-information insufficient.

The above are the general trends in the system of collective cooperation in terms of military-political and economic aspects. Below is the information on existing contradictions on the level of all three organisations (CSTO, SCO, EEU).

II. THE COLLECTIVE SECURITY TREATY ORGANIZATION: INTERNAL PARADOXES

Being often compared with NATO, the Eurasian regional military-political organisation CSTO, formed by Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Russia celebrates its 15-year anniversary in 2017. The most salient feature of the CSTO is that it has a defensive character and is aimed at the unification of six states in the face of external threats. Among the external threats are border conflicts, the penetration of terrorism, religious extremism, foreign-lead special operations, and narcotics trafficking from Afghanistan. The more proactive position of the CSTO could be mentioned on the southern boundaries of Central Asia⁸ (predominantly, in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan) against terrorism and narcotics trafficking from Afghanistan .

The military forces of the CSTO are stationed in the following regions of collective security⁹:

- 1) **“The Eastern European” collective forces** – have the unified regional air defence system of Belarus and Russia, and the regional group of unified armed forces of Belarus and Russia;
- 2) **“The Caucasus” collective forces** – have the unified regional air defence system of Armenia and Russia, and the regional group of unified armed forces of Armenia and Russia;
- 3) **“The Central Asian”** – have the unified regional air defence system of Kazakhstan and Russia, the unified air defence system on the Central Asian region, and the Rapid Military Reaction Forces of the Central Asian region.

The CSTO’s military forces are divided into following:

- A) the Rapid Military Reaction Forces - **17 000**;
- B) the Peacekeeping Forces - **3 600**;
- C) the Aviation Forces;
- D) the Rapid Military Reaction Forces of the Central Asian region – **5000**.

⁸ Turkmenistan declared about its neutrality.

⁹ More detailed information is available at <http://odkb-csto.org/js_csto/voennaya-sostavlyauschaya-odkb/forces.php>.

As well as in NATO, one of the key principles of the organisation is the claim that “If one of the Member States undergoes aggression (armed attack menacing to safety, stability, territorial integrity and sovereignty), it will be considered by the Member States as aggression (armed attack menacing to safety, stability, territorial integrity and sovereignty) to all the Member States of this Treaty. In case of aggression commission (armed attack menacing to safety, stability, territorial integrity and sovereignty) to any of the Member States, all the other Member States at request of this Member State shall immediately provide the latter with the necessary help, including military one, as well as provide support by the means at their disposal in accordance with the right to collective defence pursuant to article 51 of the UN Charter”.¹⁰

Notwithstanding the fact that in the form of an organisation the CSTO works for more than 15 years, it remains more as a training military centre; real activation of the CSTO’s mission has not happened yet. Despite the number of interregional crises in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Armenia, the CSTO demonstrated an aloofness towards the situations. One of the first expressions of dissatisfaction with the CSTO’s activity came from the side of Kyrgyzstan, which had an unstable situation provoked by ethnic clashes in 2010. The collective forces of the CSTO did not recognise it as a call for their mission due to Article 5 of the CSTO’s Charter: “The Organization shall operate on the basis of strict respect of independence, voluntariness of participation, equal rights and duties of the Member States, non-interference in the affairs falling within the national jurisdiction of the Member States”.¹¹ Thus, the CSTO is concentrated on fading off just the external threats by diminishing the importance of the internal.

The second example of CSTO’s members raising questions about its efficiency was regarding the situation related to the chronic conflict between Armenia (the member of the CSTO and EEU) and Azerbaijan (which left the CSTO in 1999)¹². Although the special OSCE Minsk group set out to bring the parties to reconciliation, none of the CSTO or EEU members expressed solidarity with the Armenian side. The political attitude of Moscow also remained unchanged – Russia continued supplying arms to both sides of the conflict – Armenia and Azerbaijan.

It is worth mentioning that the sympathies of leaders of the post-Soviet states go against the official position of Moscow; as a rule, these sympathies are based on the religious or personal preferences of political leaders. In July 2016, a well-known hyped-up notion propagated by Russian mass media about the resentment regarding Turkey and followed by anti-Turkish sanctions was not supported by Kazakhstan (Russia’s closest ally), due to their cultural commonness Kazakhstan preferred to ignore the inimical rhetoric of Moscow. A similar neutrality was expressed in the case of Crimean events. In May 2014, upon Armenia’s entrance into the Eurasian Economic Union the President of Kazakhstan N. Nazarbayev, while speaking to the President of Armenia S. Sargsyan, recalled that Armenia entered the WTO having territorial boundaries recognised by the United Nations, which essentially meant without the Nagorno-Karabakh region, and that in fact implied Kazakhstan’s support for Muslim Azerbaijan. Following this topic, in April 2015 the President of Russia V. Putin has shown his support to the Armenian orthodox people by giving them a visit in memory of a genocide carried out during the rule of Ottoman Empire.

Not surprisingly, the events that happened in Crimea in February 2014 made many of the post-Soviet states envision how Russia, under the pretence of protecting Crimean Russian-speaking population at first, and then under the pretence of guarding their right to self-determination, had annexed its neighbouring country’s territory. To a lesser degree, the situation in Abkhazia or South Ossetia, to a higher degree the events in Crimea in 2014 made, for example, the Central Asian states re-evaluate their external priorities and demonstrate their “Asian-like” subtle politics against Russia.

Based on the above, several aspects could be formulated which depict the activity of the Regional military organisation:

1. The CSTO is predominantly a regional security structure, which is intended to protect the Central Asian

¹⁰ Article 4, the CSTO’s Treaty (15/05/1992) <http://www.odkb-csto.org/documents/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=1897>.

¹¹ Article 5, the CSTO’s Charter (07/10/2002) <http://www.odkb-csto.org/documents/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=1896>.

¹² The conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan is considered within the OSCE Minsk Group.

states' interests¹³ (predominantly, of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan) against terrorism stemming from Afghanistan and narcotics trafficking control. Thus, it has a more specified and regional dimension. Under the CSTO, primary attention is given to the Central Asian region in terms of the latest claims of the ISIS group to unify Afghanistan and Central Asia.

2. **The old Soviet traditions of pathological dependence of the post-Soviet states on the political approval of Moscow.** While in foreign politics the post-Soviet states are striving to demonstrate their sovereignty and independence, inside the society there are processes of emulation and catching-up with Russian accomplishments in different fields, as well as a hardly explainable eagerness of the elites for recognition. Despite having 26 years of independence, the post-Soviet states still highly depend on the former-Soviet centre – Moscow.
3. **The calibre of member states, as well as the scope of their interests is extremely heterogeneous,** which brings specificity into the CSTO's activity. Not the complexity of interests, but their heterogeneity presents the main difficulty, as there is little common in the concept of security threats between its members. While NATO acts in the name of the common aim, the Eurasian military block pursues two aims: first, to unify the collective forces to fade off external threats in Central Asia, the Caucasus and the far-west boundaries of the block; second, to recreate the former Soviet power balance and resist NATO's enlargement.
4. **The CSTO has not proved its necessity for its members, and remains more as a centre for military training.** In 2010, the appeals of Kyrgyzstan to suppress the unrest related to ethnical clashes was not supported by the CSTO¹⁴. *De jure*, such aloofness was justified by the terms of the CSTO's Charter on non-interference in the internal affairs of its members. *De facto*, the CSTO proves the presupposition that the CSTO plays the role of a mirror reflection to balance NATO.
5. **The CSTO's members demonstrate loyalty in relations with Moscow.** On the one hand, post-Soviet states need the guarantees for internal stability given to them by Moscow. On the other hand, the price for loyalty is a benevolence to the membership in other regional organisations headed by Russia.

1. **The Shanghai Cooperation Organization: a Club of Disagreeing States or the Alliance against Western Dominance**

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is often called the second Warsaw Treaty, which is absolutely wrong. The SCO is not a military block. However, while the SCO strives for stability and security in the region, it does not allocate any collective forces – the only legitimate way in which the SCO acts is a dialogue and cooperation on the most challenging threats in the region, such as terrorism, separatism and extremism¹⁵. The SCO's members are China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, as well as India and Pakistan.

According to its main declaration, the SCO is not an alliance directed against other states and regions.¹⁶ The SCO aims at strengthening mutual trust, friendship and good neighbourliness between the member states, making joint efforts to maintain and ensure peace, security and stability in the region, as well as encouraging effective political, trade, and economic cooperation.¹⁷ Besides the political councils on the level of heads of states, governments, foreign affairs ministries and national coordinators, there are economic structures, such as the Business Council or the Bank Consortium.

Once again, there are no collective military forces under the SCO. However, this goes against the SCO's aims, as the strongest accent is given to the struggle against terrorism and religious extremism stemming from Afghanistan, Syria, and Iraq. One of the challenging threats for China is religious separatism proclaimed by "Eastern Turkestan", while for Iran, Russia and

¹³ Uzbekistan left the CSTO in 1999.

¹⁴ Article 5, the CSTO's Charter on non-interference into the affairs falling within the national jurisdiction of the States.

¹⁵ The SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (15/05/2001) <<http://eng.sectsco.org/structure/#6>>.

¹⁶ The Declaration on the SCO's establishment (15/06/2001) <<http://eng.sectsco.org/documents/>>.

¹⁷ The Declaration on the SCO's establishment (15/06/2001) <<http://eng.sectsco.org/documents/>>.

Central Asian states it is ISIS, as well as the Taliban.

The following are the main trends of global security cooperation:

1. **The diversity of the Member States' interests and the uncompromising nature of chronic conflicts** between them (China-India, India-Pakistan). Despite the commonality of the aims declared by the SCO, its members have mutual pretensions, which could congeal the development of multi-level cooperation, the formation of the SCO's agendas, and negatively influence comprehension of the "Shanghai spirit".
2. **De facto, the SCO is a more economic organisation.** However, the organisation positions itself as the one which strives for stability and peace in the region, its intentions are not supported by any strong collective military forces. The SCO's institutions and tools, as well as agendas are limited to general political and economic issues.
3. Unfortunately, the **attempts of both Eurasian organisations to resist terrorism have not been unified.** Taking into account their diversified strategic functionality (the CSTO is the military regional alliance, while the SCO is the global economic initiative), the realisation of the common goal has been impeded. In the short-run, the membership of India, Pakistan and Iran jointly with Russia and China could strengthen the role of the SCO in the struggle against terrorism.
4. **Russia and China are competing for the pivotal role in the region.** China strives for leadership in the Eurasian region. Its last "One Belt One Road" initiative, which includes the enormous geographical space from Pakistan to Africa, gave the strongest powers concern about saving their first ranks. By leading the Foundation on Infrastructure Investments and the Silk Road Fund, China attracts attention and makes the Central Asian states compete for Chinese money. However, despite the fact that China and Russia have strong bilateral relations, which have been reflected in the 30-year agreement on gas supplies (the "Sila Sibiri" pipeline) and their partnership under the BRICS organisation, these two states are political competitors in the Eurasian region.
5. **The SCO should rather be considered a Club of Disagreement with the West** or the Alliance against Western dominance. Being unified under the SCO, Russia, India, China, Pakistan do not have to march to the same Western civilization's drums, and have a solid tribune to claim their own political picture of the world.

2. The Romantic Eurasian Integration

In December 2012, US Secretary Hillary Clinton commented on the perspectives of the Eurasian Union by saying, "There is a move to re-Sovietise the region ... but let's make no mistake about it. We know what the goal is and we are trying to figure out effective ways to slow down or prevent it."¹⁸ Right after Crimea, in May 2014, the events were followed by a quick signing of an international treaty – the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Community between three countries (Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia), which came with an abundance of sociological research conducted on an absolute approval of such economic unification by the general public. Despite an overabundance of mass media information that strongly supports the Eurasian unification, which does not prove its economical rationality, the realm of such unification from the very first days and up to this moment cannot justify hopes in the area of trade and economy: the internal trade within the Eurasian economic community decreases gradually (2012 – 67,8 bln \$, 2013 – 64,5 bln \$, 2014 – 61,1 bln \$, 2015 – 45,6 bln \$, 2016 - 42,5 bln \$)¹⁹.

The converse effect on the regional trade could be explained by the following factors. First, the Eurasian Project was created to balance the US-EU trade agreement, which puts the rational calculations on the backside of the project. Second, the EEU is still negatively perceived by its small members (as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan or Belarus) as a loss of economic sovereignty, with some of the fiscal functions having been passed to the supranational organs. Third, the Russian proposals on the EEU's priorities go against the interests of other members. With the imposing of reciprocal sanctions against European goods, the official position of Moscow lobbied for the implementation of "European-like" production sites on the territory of the EEU's members. Finally, it deserves to be mentioned that the EEU is an attempt to recreate the production cooperation of the Soviet Union headed by Moscow and resist the processes of globalisation.

¹⁸ Financial Times (07/12/2012) <<https://www.ft.com/content/a5b15b14-3fcf-11e2-9f71-00144feabdc0>>.

¹⁹ <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/act/integr_i_makroec/dep_stat/tradestat/tables/intra/Pages/default.aspx>.

III. CONCLUSION

By attempting to depict Russia's nation, Edward Luttwak, the American geopolitical thinker, said in an interview, "Drunk they defeated Napoleon. Drunk they beat Hitler. Drunk they could win against NATO"²⁰. Hardly ever could that kind of characterisation be taken seriously, however, it reflects the Western dominant opinion of Russia. The sad truth about this story is that Russia still has been perceived through the old prism of Soviet accomplishments – both disputable and remarkable, and as an enemy who needs to be won.

Undoubtedly, Russia continues to play a dominant role in the post-Soviet space. By assessing critically, the main institutions of the regional security architecture (the CSTO, the SCO, and the EEU) are the political projects of Russia, and in many ways it was Russia that made them succeed. Despite its dominance in the region, one could not avoid mentioning the balancing and defensive role that Russia plays in the region – the role of the guarantor on the regional scale (for the sake of the Central Asia under the CSTO) and the role of the partner and competitor on the international scale (among China, India, Iran and Pakistan under the SCO). How Russia is perceived by the international community depends on how the international order is formulated, as "unipolar" or "multipolar". The former concept gives a short-sighted picture where Russia is demonised, while the latter tells us that "Russia is just one among the strongest states", and the confrontation will not bring any benefits. It happened once in the history of international relations, when the United States and China confronted the Soviet Union, with the weakening of the Soviet threat, China turned out to be the next enemy to the world order. Despite the fact that the Eurasian Architecture of Security has its own contradictions and weaknesses, Russia continues to play the role of the security guarantor in the region challenged by terrorism. Thus, it is time to speak not about confrontation, but about joining efforts in the face of common threats.

-
1. The Charter of the United Nations <www.un.org>
 2. The Collective Security Treaty Organization (1992) <http://www.odkb-csto.org/documents/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=126>
 3. The Collective Security Treaty Organization, "Strategy-2025" <http://www.odkb-csto.org/documents/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=8382>
 4. The Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Declaration (2002) <<http://eng.sectsc.org/documents/>>
 5. The Tashkent Declaration by the Heads of the Shanghai Cooperation Declaration (2010) <<http://eng.sectsc.org/documents/>>
 6. The National Security Strategy of Russia (2015) <<http://www.scrf.gov.ru/security/international/document25/>>
 7. The Military Doctrine of Russia-2020 <<http://www.scrf.gov.ru/security/military/document129/>>
 8. The Naval Doctrine of Russia-2020 <<http://www.scrf.gov.ru/security/military/document34/>>
 9. The Law on the Kazakhstan's National Security (1998) <www.legislationline.org.ru>
 10. The Concept of Kazakhstan' External Policy 2014-2020 <[ww.mfa.gov.kz](http://www.mfa.gov.kz)>
 11. The Charter of the NATO <<http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/57772.htm>>
 12. The Organization for Co-operation and Security in Europe <<http://www.osce.org/>>
 13. The Eurasian Economic Union <<http://www.eurasiancommission.org/en/Pages/default.aspx>>
 14. The Military Balance (2016). Chapter 5 "Russia and Eurasia". The International Institute of Strategic Studies. p.163-210.
 15. Brzezinski, Z.K. (1997). The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives. New York: Basic Books. p.30.
 16. Neumann, I.B. (1999). Uses of the Other. The East in European Identity Formation. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press. p.104.

²⁰ Neumann, I.B. (1999). Uses of the Other. The East in European Identity Formation. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press. p.104.