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Non-Aligned Movement and Its
Perspective in International Affairs

Editorial Office

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Non-Aligned Movement and Its Perspective in International Affairs

Caucasus Strategic Perspectives is a Baku-based semi-academic foreign policy journal that discusses policymaking in and on the Caucasus as well as the region's role in the global context. Each issue of the journal will focus on a global or regional theme and includes perspectives from authors from different countries and backgrounds. The journal focuses largely on the Caucasus neighborhood, but does so with a global outlook. The journal of **Caucasus Strategic Perspectives** is issued by the Center of Analysis of International Relations in Baku.

Editorial Team

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Editor's Note

The current issue of the *Caucasus Strategic Perspectives* (CSP) journal entitled "*Non-Aligned Movement and Its Perspective in International Affairs*" is dedicated to the current dynamics of the NAM, precisely with focus on chairmanship of Azerbaijan within the Movement.

The current authors of the CSP Journal analyzed the cooperation perspectives within NAM, and the relevance of NAM, as well as concept of non-alignment in the foreign policies of members states. While analyzing these topics, the authors also reflected their views on the challenges of these factors for the foreign policies of the NAM member states.

The issue starts with **Ilgar Gurbanov's** commentary of "*Relevance of Non-Alignment for Azerbaijan's Foreign and Security Policy*" discussing the conceptual basis of the country's foreign policy and explaning why non-alignment is relevant in Azerbaijan's foreign policy. Gurbanov thinks, Azerbaijan's non-aligned stance is strongly rooted in a pragmatic understanding of the strategic opportunities embedded in and around the region.

The issue continues with **Mahammad Ibrahimov's** article of "*Unfolding the potential of economic interaction among NAM members*" which tries to unravel the potential for economic interaction among NAM members. Ibrahimov concludes that by organizing a business meeting for the Movement, businesses will get an opportunity to learn about the demands, opportunities, and regulatory environments of the 120 Member countries and to build interactions with their counterparts.

Robert Cutler's article of "*Non-alignment and Azerbaijan's Energy Export Policy*" explains why neorealist and neoliberal theoretical approaches are unsuitable for analysing nascent middle powers such as Azerbaijan in the post-Cold War era. Cutler argues that the concept of 'strategic hedging' unpacks reasons why neorealism and neoliberalism fail to provide a good understanding of Azerbaijani international behaviour.

Nina Miholjcic's commentary of "*The Non-Aligned Movement: In Pursuit of Validity and Relevance in the*

Contemporary Global Order" examines the ways in which the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) could regain its "old" reputation and offer a new agenda that better corresponds to the post-Cold War world order. Miholjcic thinks that the NAM is still functioning and retains important potential for uniting a significant number of countries from the Global South.

Gülşen Şeker Aydın's article of "*South–South Development Co-operation and Venues For North–South Co-operation*" explores the economic dimension of South–South co-operation and North–South dialogue – that is, co-operation and dialogue in the field of development. Aydın addresses why the South–South co-operation and the North–South dialogue failed to deliver effective results until recently and concludes that the weakness of the South vis-à-vis the strong North prepared the ground for the eventual paralysis of the South–South co-operation and North–South dialogue starting with the 1980s.

Yauheni Preiherman's article of "*Non-Alignment Spirit as a Small State's Grand Strategy: The Case of Belarus*" argues that, when structural conditions in international relations are increasingly shaped by great power confrontation and, thus, produce heightened risks and uncertainties for the small states that sit in-between competing great powers, such small states naturally turn to non-alignment ideas, even when existing institutional affiliations prevent them from pursuing fully-fledged non-alignment policies.

Arseny Sivitsky's article of "*Belarus: Between Non-Alignment, Neutrality, and Strategic Autonomy Options*" argues that symbolic significance of membership of the NAM relates to the fact that it contributes to Belarus's strategic intention to become a neutral state, as recorded in national strategic concepts and doctrines. Sivitsky thinks that although the NAM played a significant role in helping to diversify the foreign policy of Minsk with third countries, it did not manage to completely resolve the strategic task of balancing the pressure and influence applied by the West and Russia on Belarus.

Maryna Vorotnyuk's article of "*The Concept of Non-Alignment in Ukrainian Strategic Thinking*" discusses the relationship between Ukraine's policies of Euro-Atlantic integration and the non-alignment concept in a historical perspective. Vorotnyuk narrates that there was clearly a gap

between the ideas of collective security, of which Ukraine has sought to be a part, and neutrality, there was, from the mid-1990s, a pronounced shift towards Euro-Atlantic integration as Ukraine's strategic goal.

Vasif Huseynov's article of "*Vicious Circle of the South Caucasus: Intra-Regional Conflicts and Geopolitical Heterogeneity*" looks into the causes and consequences of the variance in the foreign policy orientation of the three countries in the South Caucasus, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. Huseynov further argues that, as manifestations of their foreign policy orientations, Armenia's alignment with the Russia-led CSTO, Georgia's aspiration to join the Euro-Atlantic military and political structures, and Azerbaijan's commitment to a balanced approach through reinforcing its role within the NAM.

The current issue also includes a comprehensive and critical review of Laurence Broers' book of "*Armenia and Azerbaijan: Anatomy of a Rivalry*" by **Gulshan Pashayeva**. The book contains an overview of historical, territorial and mediation perspectives and aims to be interpretive and analytical without offering a new chronicle or history of the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict.

Last, but not least, the CSP journal presents readers with reviews of recently published books prepared by **Polad Muradli**.

Finally, on behalf of the CSP team, we hope this issue provides food for thought and contributes to and enriches the discussion.

Sincerely,

Farid Shafiyev, Editor-in-Chief

Relevance of Non-Alignment for Azerbaijan's Foreign and Security Policy

Ilgar Gurbanov*

The commentary explains the conceptual basis of and the reasons why non-alignment is still relevant for the Azerbaijan's foreign policy. This commentary conludes that Azerbaijan's non-aligned stance is strongly rooted in a pragmatic understanding of the strategic opportunities embedded in and around the region. This stance was motivated by the fragility of the regional security environment and dictated by Azerbaijan's historical, cultural, and linguistic ties, religious affiliation, and geographical location.

* **İlgar Gurbanov** is an Executive Editor for the Journal of Caucasus Strategic Perspectives.

Introduction

The concept of "non-alignment" is traditionally explained as the condition of a state that involves non-involvement in a conflict between other states and non-involvement in the military alliances of competing blocs. It also stands for a policy of performing autonomously in international relations and taking all decisions in pursuit of the national interest. Different scholars often depict non-alignment in diverse forms, such as isolationism, non-commitment, unilateralism, or non-involvement. In light of the evolving balance of power in Azerbaijan's neighbourhood and beyond, it is necessary to understand the conceptual basis of the country's foreign policy. Since gaining independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Azerbaijan has sought to mitigate regional security risks and to formulate co-operation with different regional actors. The relevance of non-alignment as a cornerstone of Azerbaijan's foreign and security policy increased after the Russia–Georgia war of 2008. In general, Azerbaijan's non-aligned stance is strongly rooted in a pragmatic understanding of the strategic opportunities embedded in and around the region. This stance was motivated by the fragility of the regional security environment and dictated by Azerbaijan's historical, cultural, and linguistic ties, religious affiliation, and geographical location.[1]

Understanding the foreign policy of Azerbaijan

Unlike some other states, Azerbaijan's non-aligned stance is not embodied in the constitution. Rather, the country's National Security Concept, established in 2007, highlights several important points regarding Azerbaijan's foreign policy. First, Azerbaijan implements its security policy in pursuance of its national interest and, ultimately, to achieve a fair resolution of the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict in order to restore the country's territorial integrity. Meanwhile, Azerbaijan actively participates in the work of international organizations to promote its foreign

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1 Azerbaijan's neighbouring countries are Russia (north), Georgia (northwest), Iran (south), Turkey (west via Azerbaijan's exclave of Nakhchivan), Armenia (west, also via Nakhchivan); Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan (eastward through the Caspian Sea).

policy interests as well as uphold international security. Respect for the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, and international borders of other countries is the key principle in building Azerbaijan's foreign relations. In this regard, Azerbaijan prefers a policy of peaceful co-existence with other states and prefers not to interfere in their internal affairs –with the expectation that they, in turn, will not interfere in Azerbaijan's domestic affairs.

Azerbaijan implements its security policy in pursuance of its national interest and, ultimately, to achieve a fair resolution of the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict in order to restore Azerbaijan's territorial integrity.

Azerbaijan is a landlocked country and is dependent on its neighbours for access to world markets. Therefore, Azerbaijan pursues a multidimensional, balanced foreign policy and seeks to establish friendly relations with all countries, including its neighbours (except Armenia, which continues to hold Azerbaijan's internationally recognized territories under military occupation), to ease this geographical hurdle. In pursuing this policy, Azerbaijan nevertheless tries to avoid political, military, or economic overdependence on other states that may potentially impede the realization of the country's national interests. The negative effects of overdependence can be better explained through the case of Armenia, which has mortgaged its strategic independence to its main ally Russia, both in economic and military terms.

Actions defining the non-alignment of Azerbaijan

The practical implications of Azerbaijan's non-alignment are manifested by the following. First, Azerbaijan does not follow an externally imposed ideological path, because the country prioritizes its national interest in making all foreign policy-related decisions. Azerbaijan has hitherto been able to avoid political or ideological affiliations with major power blocs and to preserve its aloofness from military alliances. Azerbaijan's "Law on National Security" defines the involvement of Azerbaijan in military and regional conflicts instigated by other countries as a major threat in the military field. Azerbaijan prefers to maintain strategic neutrality towards inter-state disputes to which the country is not a direct party. The country's position in this context was crystal clear during inter-state disputes between Russia and Turkey, Israel and Turkey, Israel and Iran, and the

confrontations between the Western bloc and Russia and Iran. However, this does not imply that the country is isolationist or equidistant. Azerbaijan is an active participant in international affairs and manifests its position on critical international issues by co-operating with global and regional powers.

The major expression of Azerbaijan's non-alignment can be seen in a policy of military neutrality embodied in non-membership of military alliances. So far, Baku has remained disinclined to become a member of either of the two competing military blocs – the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). Azerbaijan's "Law on National Security" excludes the conclusion of international agreements that could limit Azerbaijan's sovereign rights, lead to a loss of state independence, or harm her national security. However, Baku continues to participate in NATO partnership mechanisms and capacity-building training while cultivating mutually beneficial military cooperation with individual member states of both NATO and CSTO on a bilateral level. The "Law on National Security" considers comprehensive co-operation with foreign countries and international organizations on military-political and military-technical affairs necessary for ensuring national security and strengthening the defence capability of Azerbaijan.

One of the key features of Azerbaijan's military non-alignment is that the country does not accommodate the military bases of third states on her territory.

One of the key features of Azerbaijan's military non-alignment is that the country does not accommodate the military bases of third states on her territory. This is enshrined in Azerbaijan's Military Doctrine (Article 29): "*the Republic of Azerbaijan, except for cases stipulated by international treaties, to which is a party, does not allow the installation of foreign military bases on her territory.*" Azerbaijan does not open up its territories for the use of other states, either for any type of attack or any surveillance activity against its neighbours.

In the political–economic context, Azerbaijan declined to align with the EU as an associate state and therefore disassociated itself from the Union's Association Agreement. Baku has, however, proposed and is currently negotiating the draft of a comprehensive new agreement, which, while opening a new chapter in EU–Azerbaijan relations, will be of a strategic nature that envisages deepening the partnership through a mutually

beneficial format in the areas of economic diversification, trade, energy, and transportation.

Azerbaijan's cooperative alignment

Azerbaijan's commitment to co-operative alignment has been exercised in pursuing full solidarity and active engagement in tackling common challenges and addressing shared interests to ensure international peace and security. Since the 9/11 attacks in the USA, Azerbaijan has collaborated with the concerned international community to combat international terrorism by participating in the US-led peacekeeping mission in Iraq and NATO-led peacekeeping missions in Kosovo (KFOR) and Afghanistan (ISAF). The country is currently engaged in a similar capacity in Afghanistan with NATO's non-combat "Resolute Support" technical-advisory mission.

Baku has also adhered to the primary missions of "bridge-building" and "mediating". On several occasions since 2017, Azerbaijan has hosted mutual meetings between the military chiefs of the US and NATO and those of Russia in its capital city, Baku, in order to contribute to reducing international tension. The choice of Azerbaijan as a strategic dialogue platform was a manifestation of the country's pragmatic foreign policy as well as its reliable reputation and predictable stance in its bilateral and multilateral relations. Azerbaijan's proactive non-alignment policy and conscious non-bloc status enable Baku to present itself as a diplomatic capital for the region. This means that the country is willing to be a platform for co-operation and strategic dialogue, but not a buffer zone between the great powers.

In addition, Azerbaijan underpins voluntary formats such as Azerbaijan–Turkey–Georgia trilateral cooperation in military and security domains. This is done with the aim of maximizing the country's security capability and defence posture in the absence of significant confidence in the availability of external help. The negative impacts of terrorism and separatism on the sovereignty of these countries necessitate pooling capabilities

In addition, Azerbaijan underpins voluntary formats such as Azerbaijan–Turkey–Georgia trilateral cooperation in military and security domains. This is done with the aim of maximizing the country's security capability and defence posture in the absence of significant confidence in the availability of external help.

to confront potential threats and ensure regional security. Azerbaijan has other tri- and quadripartite cooperation formats in different domains with Russia–Iran; Turkey–Turkmenistan; Turkey–Pakistan; and Turkey–Iran, as well as with Turkey–Iran–Georgia and Turkey–Iran–Russia.

Thus, Azerbaijan's non-aligned stance has not changed her loyalty to the concept of regional cooperation. Azerbaijan's unique geographical location makes it an important node for linking transportation points between Europe and Asia through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the Port Baku facilities, the Baku–Tbilisi–Kars railway, and the North–South and South–West transport corridors. Azerbaijan's continuous engagement in the development of the Southern Gas Corridor (SGC) for European energy security is one prime example of Azerbaijan's cooperative alignment policy. Notably, the SGC (comprising the South Caucasus Pipeline, Trans-Anatolian Pipeline, and Trans-Adriatic Pipeline) will be a game changer for the EU's energy map by connecting energy-vulnerable parts of southeast Europe to the Caspian gas producers. With China emerging as an economic power in the South Caucasus, in particular through the BRI project, Azerbaijan is enhancing its attractiveness to Beijing as a transit and economic hub for tying China's trans-regional cargo shipments into the EU.

For Baku, unity in support of the territorial integrity of other states, especially where those are violated or threatened, is among its highest priorities, as Azerbaijan remains subject to the similar situation of an internationally unlawful act committed by Armenia through the latter's occupation of the former's territories. In general, Azerbaijan's Constitution (9.II) "*rejects war as a means of infringement on the independence of other states*". Azerbaijan has made its stance quite clear on the cases of the territorial integrity of Ukraine and Georgia in a number of international platforms, including the UN General Assembly, the Council of Europe, the Eastern Partnership, and the GUAM and NATO Summits.

Relevance of non-alignment for Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan's non-alignment will be relevant as long as the region is subject to the following determinants. First, non-participation

in the competing alliances or blocs enables Azerbaijan to uphold its sovereignty and autonomy in its foreign-policy-making process. That is to say, Baku can freely communicate its foreign policy initiatives and elaborate its national interest without being bound by the institutional commitments of any economic or military alliance. Second, this posture is an indispensable element for ensuring the national security and stability of the country. In general, opting to join any military alliance or integration bloc could hamper the domestic security architecture of the country and lead to the direct or indirect involvement of regional powers, which are sensitive about backyard intrusion. Thus, non-alignment authorizes Azerbaijan to manoeuvre between ideologically hostile camps while staying outside their confrontations. It consequently empowers Azerbaijan to demonstrate a strategic resolve when the interests of great powers clash. Non-aligned, selective, or interests-based engagement is also necessary for sustaining the ability to preserve a pragmatic relationship with the major powers that attributes international credibility to Azerbaijan's foreign policy profile.

In the foreseeable future, Azerbaijan is unlikely to abandon its path of strategic neutrality owing to the following drivers: (1) the country's vulnerable geostrategic location and complex neighbourhood (between Russia and Iran, and in proximity to the Middle East); (2) Azerbaijan's territorial integrity remains violated by Armenia's military occupation; (3) the existence of unending competition between different economic and military integration initiatives in the region; and (4) the ongoing discriminatory stance of the international community towards Azerbaijan's territorial integrity through the selective application of international norms and laws (unlike the similar cases of Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova that are fully supported by the Western bloc in both declarations and actions).

The Non-Aligned Movement and Azerbaijan

In order to institutionalize her non-aligned status, Azerbaijan joined the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in 2011. The reasons for Azerbaijan opting to join the NAM, which is the largest political institution representing world states after the UN General Assembly, are conditioned by two main factors.

First, Azerbaijan decided to build its priorities and activities on the historical Bandung principles, which formed the cornerstone for the NAM's establishment. The Bandung principles include respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries; non-interference in the internal affairs of states; protection of mutual interests; and promotion of co-operation. Such principles coincide with the fundamental principles of Azerbaijan's foreign policy. Second, Azerbaijan seeks to cross-communicate its position in the NAM to elicit the support of the international community for the country's positions on critical issues; every single vote matters in the adoption or rejection of any resolution when these are discussed in the international organizations.

Azerbaijan's foreign policy behaviours

Because of all the reasons discussed above, Azerbaijan's foreign policy in the context of small-state behaviour can be conceptually classified under six key points: (1) *careful bandwagoning* – in which the country partners with dominant powers in the neighbourhood to neutralize their potential threat; (2) *pragmatic balancing* – under which the country partners with powerful actors to balance against a threatening one; (3) *strategic hedging* – behaviour that prioritizes choosing multilateral policies to offset risks and unilateral dependence, and to create interdependence; (4) finding a *balance of interests* – this policy implies creating a symmetric strategic partnership based on reciprocity and mutual recognition of interests; (5) *predictability* – which implies making no abrupt turns or unexpected steps in the foreign policy direction; and (6) *strategic patience* – which implies understanding what a state "should" and "should not" do, and demonstrating strategic resolve when necessary.

Conclusion

In reality, for a small state like Azerbaijan, it is not easy to maintain a balance between non-alignment and solidarity in the contemporary international relations system. Today's international practices show that Azerbaijan has hitherto successfully managed

to sustain that balance. Thus, Baku demonstrates alignment (solidarity) for upholding the international and regional peace and security environment; but the country maintains its non-aligned position in the event of confrontation and competition between belligerents and great powers. In this process, Azerbaijan is using her resources and multi-layered identity in a plausible manner in order to gain recognition of her status in the international relations system. Baku is carefully calculating its potential foreign policy steps in order to assure the sustainability of its performance in the international relations and avoid undesired costs.

Unfolding the potential of economic interaction among NAM members

Mahammad Ibrahimov*

Since the assumption of the chairmanship by Azerbaijan, the relevance of the NAM in the modern world has been increasing. This tendency should be continued in order to make the Movement better fitted to the post-Cold War era. As geopolitical tensions between the two major blocks have ended, it is time to focus on the other vital issues on NAM's agenda, such as promoting economic development. Indeed, several attempts to facilitate trade and investment among member countries were made previously but, because businesses were excluded from the process, these initiatives were doomed to failure. This paper tries to unravel the potential for economic interaction among NAM members. An analysis of the structural framework of the Movement concludes that, despite the mandate given by the heads of state or government, currently there is no successful initiative or permanent structure that can stimulate trade and investment. Research into the economic situation and business environment of NAM countries shows great prospects for co-operation, and the NAM can provide a platform for facilitating such co-operation. By organizing a business meeting for the Movement, businesses will get an opportunity to learn about the demands, opportunities, and regulatory environments of the 120 Member countries and to build interactions with their counterparts.

Keywords: Non-aligned movement, Azerbaijan, economic interaction, trade and investment

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Introduction

The non-aligned movement (NAM) was established as a forum for newly independent states in the wake of decolonization with the aim of preserving their independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and security by not aligning with or against any major power during the Cold War. Its creation dates back to the Belgrade Summit of 1961, which was organized through the initiative of India, Indonesia, Egypt, and Yugoslavia, and drew on the principles agreed at the Bandung Conference of 1955. Those 10 founding principles were: respect of fundamental human rights, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and international obligations; recognition of equality among all countries; non-intervention or non-interference in internal affairs; respect of the right of every nation to defend itself; non-use of the collective defence pacts of the great powers; non-use of pressure by any country against other countries; refraining from carrying out or threatening to carry out aggression; the peaceful solution of all international conflicts; and promotion of mutual interests and co-operation. These principles serve as the main goals and objectives of the Movement and have become the criteria for membership of the NAM. Currently, the NAM has 120 member countries covering almost all of Africa, except for South Sudan; the majority of Latin America and Asia; two countries from Europe; and three from Oceania.

After gaining independence and preserving political stability, economic development has become the top priority for many members of the Movement.

In order to avoid bureaucratic implications, the NAM was founded as a movement of like-minded countries rather than as an institutionalized organization. It does not have a permanent secretariat and is administered on a rotating basis for a fixed period of three years by a chair of the Movement. During 2019–2022, the NAM will be chaired by the Republic of Azerbaijan, which assumed the Chairmanship at the 18th Summit of NAM held in Baku on 25–26 October 2019 under the motto "Upholding the Bandung Principles to ensure concerted and adequate response to the challenges of contemporary world".[1] The Azerbaijani chairmanship could be recognized as a historic period for the NAM. From day one, Azerbaijan

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1 Non-Aligned Movement, *Baku Final Declaration, 18th Summit of Heads of State and Government*, 25-26 October 2019, available at: https://namazerbaijan. org/pdf/BD.pdf (Accessed June 15, 2020)

started its chairmanship with the ambitious goal of increasing the relevance of the Movement in the post-Cold War era and making the NAM more active in global affairs. For the first time in history, a Youth Summit was organized on the sidelines of the 18th Summit and a NAM Youth Network was established. What is more, in response to the global coronavirus outbreak, an online summit-level meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement Contact Group was organized on 4 May 2020, as a result of which a Non-Aligned Movement Task Force was established to co-ordinate the relationships between member countries and donors.[2] In addition, on online meeting of the ministers of health of the NAM Contact Group was held on 29 May 2020 in response to COVID-19.[3]

In recent years, due to international positions of the last four NAM chairs, the Movement has mainly been a forum for voicing anti-Western sentiments and, as a result, was losing its "non-aligned" status in the eyes of international community. During the Azerbaijani chairmanship this tendency is changing, and the NAM is trying to reach out to all multilateral stakeholders. For example, the High Representative of the Commission of the European Union (EU) addressed the online summit,[4] and a joint statement of the NAM and the EU was delivered at the High Level Panel of the Human Rights Council in Geneva on 25 February 2020.[5] As chair of the NAM, Azerbaijan initiated the convening of a special online session of the UN General Assembly on COVID-19 at the level of heads of states or governments, an initiative that was supported by more than 130 countries, including a majority of

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2 Namazerbaijan.org, *NAM Member States adopted the Declaration at the Online Summit level Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Contact Group in response to COVID-19*, News, 5 May 2020, available at: https://namazerbaijan.org/news/37 (Accessed June 15, 2020)

3 Namazerbaijan.org, *Online Meeting of the Ministers of Health of the NAM Contact Group in response to COVID-19 was held on 20 May 2020*, News, 20 May 2020, available at: https://namazerbaijan.org/news/38 (Accessed June 15, 2020)

4 Namazerbaijan.org, *Azerbaijan hosted Online Summit level Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Contact Group in response to COVID-19*, News, 5 May 2020, available at: https://namazerbaijan.org/news/36 (Accessed June 15, 2020)

5 Human Rights Council, *Joint Statement delivered by Azerbaijan on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the European Union at the High-Level Panel on the 25th Anniversary of Beijing Conference*, 43rd Session of the Human Rights Council, 25 February 2020, available at: https://namazerbaijan.org/pdf/Statement31.pdf (Accessed June 15, 2020)

EU Member States.[6] There were also a number of efforts to reach out to the African Union. As can be seen from the above, NAM's relevance is increasing during the Azerbaijani chairmanship. This vital momentum should be utilized to make the Movement even more fit for the post-Cold War era.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the *raison d'être* for the NAM, which was preserving sovereignty by non-alignment, ceased to exist. Now there is a need to focus on other issues that are of importance on the NAM's agenda. After gaining independence and preserving political stability, economic development has become the top priority for many members of the Movement. Even though for many years the NAM's special role in the promotion of mutual economic interests and economic cooperation was recognized in the final summit documents and a number of decisions were taken regarding increasing the facilitation of trade and investment, no real progress was made in this regard. Every three years, during summits, Member countries would meet in the Committee on Economic and Social Issues, reiterate their positions on the international economy, and agree about the urgent need for economic development, but these discussions were not followed by any action. During the almost 60 years of existence of the Movement, only a few initiatives were established with the aim of facilitating trade and investment. These included the New International Economic Order (NIEO), the Action Programme for Economic Cooperation (APEC), and the Standing Ministerial Committee on Economic Cooperation. As there were no real results from any of these initiatives, they cannot be considered as successful.

The reason for the ineffectiveness of these initiatives could be the result of the government-to-government approach that was chosen for economic cooperation among NAM Member countries. A political impetus is fundamental for any international activity, including trade and foreign direct investment, but discussions among governments are not enough; to make real progress in economic co-operation, businesses must also be engaged in the process. A multilateral format such as the NAM can play a crucial role in bringing the businesses of its member countries together

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6 Jafarova E., "Special Session of the UNGA related to COVID-19 to be convened at the initiative of Azerbaijan," *Moderndiplomacy.eu*, 30 June 2020, available at: https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2020/06/30/special-session-of-the-unga-related-to-covid-19-to-be-convened-at-the-initiative-of-azerbaijan/ (Accessed June 15, 2020)

in order to facilitate interaction with one another for assessing trade and investment opportunities.

The aim of this paper is to research the potential for economic interaction among NAM members. It will achieve this by analysing the structural framework of the Movement, unravelling the prospects for economic interaction among members and suggesting one possible way for achieving economic interaction within the NAM framework.

The Structure of the NAM

The working methods of the Movement are enshrined in two key documents: the Document on the Methodology of the NAM, which was agreed during the 14th Summit in Cuba in 2006, and the Cartagena Document on Methodology, which was agreed during the Meeting of the Ministerial Committee on Methodology held in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, in 1996.[7] According to these documents, the structure of the NAM comprises Summit Conferences, Ministerial Conferences, Ministerial Meetings in New York, a standing Ministerial Committee on Economic Cooperation, a Coordinating Bureau, and NAM Chapters, as well as a number of groups, task forces, or committees for the coordination of the stances of the Movement on different issues from the international agenda. All decisions are made by consensus.

The highest decision-making body is the Summit Conference of Heads of State or Government. Summits are held every three years in the member country that assumes the chairmanship of the NAM. The conference adopts a final document that forms the main document of the movement and covers its principled positions and decisions *vis-à-vis* existing, new, and emerging issues of collective concern and interest. During the Senior Officials Meeting, organized in preparation for the Summit, two committees, the Committee on Political Issues and the Committee on Economic and Social Issues, prepare the drafts of the final documents. Ministerial Conferences are held 18 months after the summit with the purpose of reviewing the implementation of the decisions of the preceding

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7 Non-Aligned Movement, *Document on the Methodology, 14th Summit of Heads of State and Government*, 15-16 September 2019, available at: https://namazerbaijan.org/pdf/NAM-Document-Methodology-Havana-2006.pdf (Accessed June 15, 2020)

summit and preparing for the next one. Ministerial Meetings in New York are organized at the beginning of the regular session of the UN General Assembly and adopt a final communiqué covering guidelines regarding the agenda items of the regular session of the General Assembly that are of major importance for the Movement. The Standing Ministerial Committee on Economic Cooperation is tasked with strengthening South–South cooperation, reactivating the dialogue between developed and developing countries, and enhancing the role of the United Nations in international co-operation for development. It meets upon the recommendation of the Coordinating Bureau. The Coordinating Bureau is the focal point for coordination of the Movement. The Permanent Representative of the current chair of the NAM, as head of the Bureau, is responsible for leading and co-ordinating the activities of the Movement within the UN. The Bureau meets on a monthly basis at an ambassadorial level in New York and conducts routine business such as co-ordination, co-operation, and accommodation of the positions regarding any issue that are taken by the Coordinating Bureau and NAM Chapters located in The Hague, Vienna, Geneva, Paris, and Nairobi.

As can be seen from the discussion above, the only structure of the NAM that deals with economic issues is the Standing Ministerial Committee on Economic Cooperation. Other initiatives in the economic domain include the NIEO and the APEC. The NIEO, created in 1973, was an alternative worldview of the NAM countries on existing global, economic, and financial institutions. This initiative ceased to exist and no part of it was implemented.[8] The APEC was created during the Second Summit of the NAM with the aim of removing trade barriers in various sectors.[9] The last mention of this initiative was made in the Jakarta Final Document of 1992, in which heads of state or governments expressed their concern over the inactivity of the APEC.[10] Hence, currently there is no initiative

8 Cox, R. "Ideologies and the New International Economic Order: Reflections on some recent literature," *International Organization*, Vol. 33, No. 2, pp. 257-302.

9 Non-Aligned Movement, *Cairo Final Document, 2nd Summit of Heads of State and Government*, 10 September 1964, available at: http://cns.miis.edu/nam/documents/Official_Document/2nd_Summit_FD_Cairo_Declaration_1964.pdf (Accessed July 10, 2020)

10 Non-Aligned Movement, *Jakarta Final Document, 10th Summit of Heads of State and Government*, 1-6 September 1992, available at: https://www.un.org/

that would enhance economic co-operation among NAM member countries, despite the decisions made at the highest level on numerous occasions. The latest example of this is the Baku Final Document adopted at the Eighteenth Summit of the NAM's Heads of State or Government.[11] At the Summit, the heads of states or governments of the member countries recognized that that solidarity, the highest expression of respect, friendship, and peace among members, among other things, signifies the empowerment of developing countries with the goal of economic and social development. They encouraged the interaction and co-operation of NAM members in various economic sectors, such as food production and agriculture, energy, information and communications, industry, and science and technology. The importance of assessing and identifying the obstacles and ways and means of addressing economic development was reaffirmed. They urged members to take measures to increase investment, particularly foreign direct investment, and encouraged trade among member countries. What is more, the leaders expressed their commitment to supporting and promoting mechanisms aimed at enhancing trade and investment.

At the Summit, the heads of states or governments of the member countries recognized that that solidarity, the highest expression of respect, friendship, and peace among members, among other things, signifies the empowerment of developing countries with the goal of economic and social development.

Unfolding Economic Potential

The 120 NAM member countries represent nearly two-thirds of the globe and contain 55 percent of the world's population. These countries vary significantly in terms of level of overall development. One way to assess development is the Human Development Index (HDI), which was developed by the UN Development Programme to measure, on an annual basis, key human development indicators such as the health, education, and living standards of 189 countries.[12] According to the 2019

unispal/document/auto-insert-179754/ (Accessed July 10, 2020)

11 Non-Aligned Movement, *Baku Final Document, 18th Summit of Heads of State and Government*, 25-26 October 2019, available at: https://namazerbaijan.org/pdf/NAM-Baku-Final-Document.pdf (Accessed June 15, 2020)

12 HDI measures the health dimension by life expectancy at birth, the education dimension by mean years of schooling for adults and expected years of schooling for children, and the standard of living dimension by gross national income (GNI) per

Human Development Report, of 118 NAM member countries, 15 were rated as very high, 44 as high, 24 as medium, and 35 low for human development.[13] Hence, it could be said that 15 NAM member countries are developed, 68 are developing, and 35 represent the least developed members of the Movement.

For assessing purely economic might, the gross income of each country under the classification of the World Bank[14] should be examined. Out of 119 assessed NAM member countries, 16 are classified as high-income, 35 as upper-middle-income, 39 as lower-middle-income, and 29 as low-income economies.[15] According to 2018 World Bank data on the size of national economies,[16] India has the world's seventh largest economy; there are three NAM member countries among the top 20 economies; and 19 members of the Movement are included in the top 50 list.[17]

It is worth mentioning that 14 companies from seven NAM member countries made it into the Global 500, which is the list of the world's 500 largest companies by revenue. The countries are Saudi Arabia, Singapore, India, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the United Arab Emirates.[18] In the Global 2000 list, there are 171 companies from 24 member countries of the Movement.[19]

capita. According to the HDI score, countries are grouped into four categories. Very high development rate: 0.800 and above, high human development: 0.700–0.799, medium human development: 0.550–0.699, low human development: below 0.550.

13 United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2019*, 2019, available at: http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr_2019_overview_-_english.pdf (Accessed June 15, 2020)

14 By calculating GNI per capita (current US$), the World Bank classifies countries into four income groups. High-income economy: $12,376 or more, upper middle-income economy: $3,996–$12,375, lower middle-income economy: $1,026–$3,995, low-income economy: $1,025 or less.

15 The World Bank, *World Bank Country and Lending Groups*, 2020, available at: https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519 (Accessed June 15, 2020)

16 Size of economy is measured by gross domestic product (GDP), which refers to the total market value of all the goods and services a nation produced in a given year.

17 The World Bank, *GDP (current US$)*, 2018, available at: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD (Accessed June 15, 2020)

18 Fortune.com, *Global 500, Rankings*, 2018, available at: https://fortune.com/global500/2018/ (Accessed June 15, 2020)

19 Forbes.com, *Global 2000, Forbes Lists, Companies*, 13 May 2020, available at:

It should also be highlighted that some of the world's most profitable start-ups are based in NAM member countries. In the list of 478 "unicorns", start-up companies valued at over $1 billion, 31 start-ups from 7 NAM member countries are represented. The most successful NAM start-up is India's *One97 Communications*, which is eighth in the Global Unicorn Club with a value of $16 billion.[20] The above-mentioned companies, as well as many others, could potentially be interested in expanding their businesses even further by co-operating with growing economies that are in desperate need of investment. Many such countries are among the NAM members. The latest data from the International Monetary Fund show that the real GDP growth rates of most NAM countries are positive. In 2019, 95 members witnessed growth in their economies; among them Rwanda was the frontrunner, with 10.1% GDP growth.[21]

However, in order to promote trade and attract foreign direct investment, the assessment of overall development, economic might, and GDP growth is not enough. For this, the general business environment and, specifically, the openness to trade of a country also have to be taken into account.[22] The general business environment, including institutional performance, infrastructure, macroeconomic environment, health and primary education, higher education and training, goods market efficiency, labour market efficiency, financial market development, technological readiness, market size, business sophistication, and innovation can be analysed with the help of the Global Competitiveness Report, which is prepared annually by the World Economic Forum. According to the 2019 report, Singapore scored the highest among 141 countries, 10 NAM

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https://www.forbes.com/global2000/#36e99b45335d (Accessed June 15, 2020)

20 Cbinsights.com, *The Global Unicorn Club*, 2020, available at: https://www.cbinsights.com/research-unicorn-companies (Accessed June 15, 2020)

21 International Monetary Fund, *World Economic Outlook Database*, 2019, available at: https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2020/01/weodata/index.aspx (Accessed June 15, 2020)

22 Kumari, K. and Kumar, A. (2017) "Determinants of foreign direct investment in developing countries: a panel data study," *International Journal of Emerging Markets*, Vol. 12, No. 4, September, pp.658-682.

member countries are in the top 50, and 22 members of the Movement are among most competitive 70 countries.[23] The Doing Business Report 2019, prepared by the World Bank to assess the trade openness of 190 countries,[24] ranks Singapore second, eight members of the NAM are in the top 50, and 17 countries are in the top 70.[25] Since start-ups are the new driving force of a modern economy, for economic co-operation it is vital to take into account the start-up-friendliness of a country. The Cities Global Startup Ecosystem Report assesses 1000 cities by measuring the quantity and quality of start-ups, as well as the overall business environment. According to the 2020 report, 12 cities in 9 NAM member countries made it into the top 100 list, and 22 cities from 14 member countries are in the top 200.[26]

As can be seen, the majority of NAM countries are emerging markets, and many of them have favourable conditions for economic co-operation and a desire for trade and investment to further develop their economies and enhance the well-being of their people. A number of their counterparts in the Movement also have the capacity for such development. For example, successful Azerbaijani companies, such as SOCAR, Pasha Holding, Caspian Fish Co, Azersun Holding, etc., can consider investing in the emerging banking, and agricultural sectors of African countries, or the growing petroleum, mining, and financial sectors of Latin America. Major Asian tech companies can consider investing in Azerbaijan owing to the favourable conditions, as Azerbaijan is ranked 34th in the Doing Business Report. For assessing such opportunities, businesses need to meet and interact with one another, and the NAM can play a crucial role as a platform in this regard.

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23 World Economic Forum, *The Global Competitiveness Report*, 2019, available at: http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_TheGlobalCompetitivenessReport2019. pdf (Accessed June 15, 2020)

24 The World Bank collects data on an annual basis via questionnaires that rank each country according to 11 variables (starting a business, labor market regulation, enforcing contracts, resolving insolvency, getting credit, registering property, protecting minority investors, paying taxes, trading across borders, dealing with construction permits, and getting electricity).

25 World Bank Group, *Doing Business*, 2019, available at: https://www. doingbusiness.org/content/dam/doingBusiness/media/Annual-Reports/English/ DB2019-report_web-version.pdf (Accessed June 15, 2020)

26 Startupblink.com, *Startup Ecosystem Rankings Report*, 2020, available at: https://report.startupblink.com/ (Accessed June 15, 2020)

The NAM as a Platform for Economic Interaction

Successful examples of investment promotion suggest that organizing promotional events has a significantly positive effect in the economic development of emerging markets.[27] These events include, but are not limited to, business meetings, forums, fairs and exhibitions. NAM's platform can be utilized in order to establish and develop economic interaction among Member countries.

During a given chairmanship period, members of the Movement meet at least twice, for the Ministerial Meeting and for the Summit. A third event, a Business Meeting of NAM member countries, could be organized before these two high-level meetings with the purpose of discussing government regulations, presenting business demands and opportunities, and building interactions among stakeholders. The Business Meeting can be organized 12 months prior to the Summit, so that countries can assess their takeaways from the meeting, follow up if needed, and prepare proposals for review and decision-making by their respective leaderships. The rationale behind this is, in case of a positive decision regarding a proposal, to provide the time required for preparation of major deals and conclude them during Summit, where a number of bilateral meetings between heads of state of government already take place on the sidelines. This event should be held in the country chairing the Movement and should be attended by senior government officials with responsibilities for the promotion of economic co-operation as well as by representatives of companies, including start-ups. The Business Meeting will consist of sessions dedicated to those areas that were identified in the Baku Final Document, namely, food production and agriculture, energy, information and communications, industry, and science and technology. In addition, in order to get acquainted with available goods and services, a fair or exhibition can be organized during the business meeting.

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27 Mci.ei.columbia.edu, *Tools, Techniques and Resources for Investment Promotion, Initiatives, Private Sector Development*, 2019, available at: http://mci.ei.columbia.edu/initiatives/private-sector-development/overview-of-investment-promotion/ (Accessed June 15, 2020)

A decision about organizing the first Business Meeting at the invitation of current chair, Azerbaijan, can be made through the Coordinating Bureau in New York. According to established practices, this can be done in the form of a communiqué endorsing Azerbaijan's hosting of the Business Meeting. The results of the first Business Meeting can be assessed at the next Ministerial Meeting. According to the results, a decision about establishing a Business Meeting as a permanent structure of the NAM can be made during the next Summit and included in the final document.

Taking into account that it is difficult and time consuming to get information from open sources on the regulations, conditions, and initiatives of a given country, the preparation of an online database that contains such information regarding NAM countries would be beneficial for businesses. What is more, the work of the Standing Ministerial Committee on Economic Cooperation, which has been held only twice since its establishment in 1986, should be revitalized. The portfolio of the Standing Committee includes, *inter alia*, tasks relating to developing dialogue on economic co-operation among countries.[28] Meetings of the Committee can provide good opportunities for government-to-government dialogue, discussion of regulations, and presentation of different national programmes to attract investment and promote exports. A recommendation about convening such a meeting can be sent for consideration by Azerbaijan, as the current chair, to the Coordinating Bureau of the NAM.

Conclusion

The NAM was conceived in 1961 with the aim of preserving the sovereignty of its member countries by agreeing not to join any major blocs during the Cold War. As the Cold War ended with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, those countries came to the realization that, for strengthening sovereignty, there is a need for economic development, which can only be achieved via co-operation. To this end, in line with the 9th Bandung Principle – "Promotion of mutual interests and of cooperation" – several

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28 Non-Aligned Movement, *Harare Final Document, 8th Summit of Heads of State and Government*, 1–6 September 1986, Available at: http://cns.miis.edu/nam/documents/Official_Document/8th_Summit_FD_Harare_Declaration_1986_Whole.pdf (Accessed July 10, 2020)

initiatives were begun, such as the New International Economic Order, the Action Programme for Economic Co-operation, and the Standing Ministerial Committee on Economic Cooperation. Despite being on the front line of economic co-operation, businesses did not become part of these initiatives, and as a result such initiatives could not tap the potential for economic co-operation. For filling this gap and generating real results, businesses from various NAM members should be engaged in the process and brought together. One way to do that is by organizing Business Meetings of the Movement, during which businesses will get a chance to interact with each other, learn about different trade and investment opportunities, assess them, and negotiate deals afterwards. By facilitating economic interaction among member countries and contributing to global well-being, "history's biggest peace movement" will find its new identity in the post-Cold War era.

The only obstacle to this could be the possible hesitancy of some countries, as this initiative could be viewed as duplicating to the activities of the Group of 77 (G77), which is considered a sister organization to the NAM that has an economic portfolio. However, this perception of duplication would be far from the truth, since the G77 is an organization that aims to promote collective economic interests and to enhance joint negotiating capacity via liaison offices at the international economic organizations,[29] whereas the Business Meeting of the NAM would play a role in interactions among businesses. Hence, this initiative will employ a bottom-up approach in terms of economic development, rather than dealing with issues on a macroeconomic level, as the G77 does. What is more, it is crucial to mention that any issue of duplication can be resolved between the Group of 77 and the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Non-Aligned Movement, which was established for this exact purpose in 1992. The Joint Coordinating Committee will enhance collaboration and avoid duplication of the efforts of the NAM and the G77, as well as providing greater efficiency in the attainment of the common goals of the developing countries.[30] It is vital to use these counter-arguments and to build the correct narrative to gain the support of countries that could be hesitant about the establishment of the Business Meeting of the NAM.

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29 G77.org, *About the Group of 77*, 2020, available at: https://www.g77.org/doc/ (Accessed July 10, 2020)

30 NAM's Jakarta Summit Final Document (1992), *op. cit.*

Non-alignment and Azerbaijan's Energy Export Policy

Robert M. Cutler[*]

The question of a relationship between Azerbaijan's role in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and its energy export strategy is examined. The article explains why neorealist and neoliberal theoretical approaches are unsuitable for analysing nascent middle powers such as Azerbaijan in the post-Cold War era. Regime Theory is explored to see if it may offer a better account of Azerbaijani energy policy. To contextualize such an assessment, the article first reviews the NAM's history and its relation to the Group of Seventy-seven (G77). It then discusses the history of Azerbaijan's energy strategy to 2011, when it joined the NAM, and then examines trends in Azerbaijani diplomacy since then. The concept of 'strategic hedging' further unpacks reasons why neorealism and neoliberalism fail to provide a good understanding of Azerbaijani international behaviour. Azerbaijan's international energy policy was set into long-term motion more than a decade before the country joined the NAM. It is directed at economic rather than security goals. Co-operation with Western states and companies does not contradict the pursuit of international prestige and middle-power status that characterize Azerbaijan's participation in the NAM. It is not NAM-based prestige that might affect Azerbaijan's energy policy, but rather energy policy that is put into service to enhance relations with other nonaligned states.

Keywords: Azerbaijan, energy, nonaligned, neorealism, neoliberalism

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Introduction

Azerbaijan is a case study of how the abstract theoretical frameworks developed by Anglo-American international-relations theorists fail to account for the behaviour not only of smaller states today, but even of middle powers such as Azerbaijan and Canada. States like Azerbaijan operate, as Wolfers put it, not 'in limitless space', but conditioned by such 'limitations that external conditions – the distribution of power, geographical location, demography, and economic conditions – place on the choices open to governments in the conduct of foreign relations.'[1]

The present article demonstrates the point by examining Azerbaijan's participation in the Non-aligned Movement (NAM) in relation to its national foreign energy export and development policies. In particular, in the disused theoretical language of Kenneth Waltz's neorealism, these two modalities of Azerbaijani diplomacy are directed at enhancing the country's access to two different kinds of goods: NAM participation is targeted at 'relative gains' (i.e. security goods, such as prestige), whereas the international energy policy is targeted at 'absolute gains' (i.e. economic goods, such as state revenue). The neorealists and neoliberals sought, together, to dominate the erstwhile discourse in international relations theory by synthesizing their perspectives through rational-choice methodology. Contrary to neorealist approaches, however, even – or especially – when complemented by neoliberal considerations, these two categories of 'gains' (or 'goods') are, in practice, incommensurable.[2]

The present article also seeks to assess Regime Theory as an explanatory framework for Azerbaijani energy policy behaviour. An international regime consists of 'implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given area of international relations.'[3] Regimes are 'specialized arrangements that pertain

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1 Wolfers, A. "The Determinants of Foreign Policy," in Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration: Essays on International Politics* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins Press, 1962), p. 45.

2 Cutler, R.M., "Bringing the National Interest Back In: Lessons for Neorealism from the Former Soviet Area," *Cosmos: The Hellenic Yearbook of International Relations*, Vol. 1, 1995, pp. 64–66.

3 Krasner, S.D. "Structural Causes and Regime Consequences: Regimes as Intervening Variables," *International Organization* Vol. 36, No. 2, Spring, 1982, p. 186.

to well-defined activities, resources, or geographical areas.'[4] The approach here synthesizes regime theory with the newer concept of strategic hedging in foreign policy analysis, as applied to Azerbaijan in particular, in order to explain the continuities and changes in the country's foreign and economic policy between the first and second decades of the 21st century.

History of the NAM and Azerbaijan's participation in it

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) has greatly changed since its foundation in 1961 on the basis of the 1955 Bandung Conference. Originally intended as a Third World movement apart from the two blocs of the Cold War system, it turned into the political arm of the global South in North–South dialogue. The South's economic arm was the Group of Seventy-seven (G77), established in 1964 in the context of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which served as an informal secretariat for the global South and was the principal driver behind the push for the New International Economic Order (NIEO). This foundered in the 1980s, after a parallel initiative for a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) failed due to objections against its driving principle that states should govern information flows. The NAM was also significantly weakened after Cuba assumed its leadership in 1979, as Cuba's president Fidel Castro sought to move it away from its original vocation and to align it explicitly with the Soviet Union. This was part of the general Soviet diplomatic strategy whereby the socialist countries were held out as the 'natural allies' of the developing countries against 'international imperialism.'[5]

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4 Oran R. Young, *International Cooperation: Building Regimes for Natural Resources and the Environment* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989), p. 13.

5 The "natural allies" doctrine was part of a general Soviet-led offensive in international law in support of the South's demand against the global North (from which the USSR excluded itself) in multilateral negotiations over global economic issues. The Soviets chose the Nonaligned Movement as the instrument to propagate this doctrine, because at the time it had fewer members than the G77, which had grown to include over 120 developing countries. For details, see: Cutler, R.M. "The Soviet Union and World Order," in *Global Peace and Security: Trends and Challenges*, ed. Wolfram F. Hanrieder (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1987), pp. 88–89.

By the time Azerbaijan joined the NAM in 2011, the organization had been struggling for two decades to renovate its role as a middle way between two Cold War blocs that no longer existed.

By the time Azerbaijan joined the NAM in 2011, the organization had been struggling for two decades to renovate its role as a middle way between two Cold War blocs that no longer existed. It had settled on emphasizing norms of multilateralism, equality, and mutual non-aggression. By the time Azerbaijan assumed the NAM's presidency in 2019, the organization had grown to 120 members, significantly complicating co-ordination on specific policy issues that might touch its members' national interests. Most of the NAM's programmes and declarations since the beginning of the 21st century have been broad statements invoking United Nations documents and principles, and those of other general-purpose international organizations (whether intergovernmental or not) having very large numbers of members, over a large universe of issues and issue areas.

Thus, the Final Document of the NAM's 18th Summit of Heads of State and Government, held in Baku in October 2019, ran to over 150,000 words. Of these, less than 0.1 percent were devoted specifically to energy questions. The shorter Baku Declaration comprised two pages of considerations and five pages of desiderata; it mentioned energy only twice, in passing and only in the most general terms.[6] To examine how the NAM may influence Azerbaijan's approach to energy matters, or vice versa, it is therefore necessary to consider the country's energy policy since it joined the organization in 2011.

Azerbaijan's Energy Policy up until 2011

It is a commonplace that Azerbaijan is an eastern country when viewed from the West and a western country when viewed from the East. It was perceived as Western-oriented during the 1990s and 2000s, when large foreign direct investment (FDI) arrived in the country for the development of offshore hydrocarbon resources that would, in turn, be exported westward. Azerbaijan also worked closely with such international financial institutions

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6 Namazerbaijan.org, *Final Document*, 25–26 October 2019, Available at: https://www.namazerbaijan.org/pdf/BFOD.pdf (accessed 19 July 2020); *Baku Declaration*, 25–26 October 2019, Available at: https://www.namazerbaijan.org/pdf/BD.pdf, (accessed 19 July 2020).

as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to convert her inherited Soviet structures into institutions that would sustain a capitalist market system. This included foresight planning for the development of human resources and the eventual social effects of diversifying the domestic economy beyond the energy sector.

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That original push was possible thanks to many factors, but indispensable was the keen and constant attention of US foreign policy to the Caspian region in general, and to the South Caucasus in particular, through the administrations of President Bill Clinton in the 1990s and President George W. Bush in the 2000s. In September 1994, Azerbaijan signed the 'Contract of the Century' with 11 international oil companies including Azerbaijan's SOCAR and, principally, British Petroleum, Amoco, Lukoil, Pennzoil, Unocal, and Norway's Statoil. The agreement called for investing US$7.4 billion over 30 years in the Azeri, Chirag, and Guneshli offshore oil fields, which were especially valued for the lightness of their crude.

With the signature of the Istanbul Protocol at the November 1999 summit of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the problem of defining a plan for exporting the oil to Western markets was solved. The plan was to construct the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan (BTC) oil export pipeline. The Istanbul Protocol memorialized the intention to negotiate no fewer than four agreements: a cost guarantee accord, an accord between investors and the transit states, the accord for the pipeline itself, and the construction contract. Not least important for investors was the adoption of such commitments into national legislation in all three participating countries: Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey. It is often forgotten what a spectacular feat of political, financial, and technological and engineering achievement the entire process, through to construction and operation, represents.

To create business confidence, Azerbaijan (as well as Georgia and Turkey) incorporated the 1999 Istanbul OSCE agreements into national law through legislative acts. In the case of Azerbaijan, these were adopted as international treaties, effectively placing them on the same authoritative footing as the country's constitution. Azerbaijan's meetings with the IMF under

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the so-called Article IV consultations (whereby IMF economists visit the country to evaluate economic and financial developments and to discuss the relevant policies with government and central bank officials) began only after the BTC agreements were signed and the mentioned national legislation had been approved by parliament. The IMF is the international financial institution most directly involved in the mesoeconomic issue areas. These events set the course that Azerbaijani energy development policy has mainly followed since the 1990s.

In 1995, in reference to the newly independent states of Eurasia, including Azerbaijan, I identified the mesoeconomic level of analysis as 'the ensemble of national legal regimes and the national policies complementing them ... where national legal regimes about foreign trade reform, national systems of banking and insurance, and accounting, inheritance, and property law are the interface between national and international legal regimes in the economic field.'[7] This definition links the mesoeconomic level to microeconomic policy via such issue-areas as the law of privatization of state enterprises (including contract law) and the general price-formation mechanism. It links the mesoeconomic level to the macroeconomic level via the issue-areas of foreign banking, trade, and insurance. Further, I pointed out the three main issues that link the internal and external components that constrain the national solutions that may be found to mesoeconomic-level problems. These are: (1) the coordination of foreign direct investment, including the laws that govern it, (2) the role of international institutions in macroeconomic stabilization, and (3) currency and trade co-operation. These are central because the national systems of law framing mesoeconomic activity must not conflict with dominant international political norms if national policies in the respective areas are to be effective. Azerbaijan would have been unable to develop its energy resources without these regimes (systems of law and norms) well in place.

Most of the 1990s were a period of political and economic instability for the new republic. In addition to the Nagorno-Karabakh War, which ended only in 1994, the decade saw the

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7 Cutler, "Bringing the National Interest Back In," *op.cit.,* p.68.

domestic political mess in the early years of the 1990s which also targeted Heydar Aliyev, the re-election of whom for a second term in 1998 was the domestic prerequisite for institutionalizing the BTC and its agreements into national law. For Azerbaijan, as a newly independent state in the 1990s, the regime-based approach explains its foreign policy choices much better than either neorealism or neoliberalism. The BTC oil export pipeline entered into service in 2006, the same year as the South Caucasus Pipeline (SCP) for natural gas exports. The unexpected discovery of gas rather than oil in the original Shah Deniz explorations opened new perspectives for Azerbaijan's development of its offshore energy resources and, indeed, changed the strategic dynamic of Caspian-region geo-economics into the future. There was enough gas in the Shah Deniz field alone to justify what was first called the Baku–Tbilisi–Erzurum gas pipeline, which, after further development, became referred to, and still is today, as the SCP.

Azerbaijan's energy policy during the 2010s and its geopolitics

Further offshore fields have been discovered and explored over the last 10 years, including Absheron, Babek, Nakhchivan, Umid, Shafag-Asiman, and Zafar-Mashal, either with the co-operation of foreign firms such as France's Total or the UK's BP, or, where possible, independently by Azerbaijan itself. However, these have proven more difficult to develop because international oil and gas companies have not judged investments there to be cost-effective, given their own other possibilities for development in the global perspective. Nevertheless, Umid has started producing small amounts in the last few years, mainly for domestic consumption.

During the 2010s, Azerbaijani energy policy continued along the lines set in the late 1990s and the 2000s. Shah Deniz's stage I expanded into Shah Deniz II, and the Southern Gas Corridor (SGC) was developed. However, further US political support for SGC projects was not to the same extent as it had demonstrated earlier, though the following Washington administrations endorsed the financing of the SGC's components. The US companies' engagement in the Caspian region also decelerated during Barack Obama's years in office, as domestic American oil

and gas production ramped up thanks to technological advances in the development of unconventional oil and gas. In contrast to this, the EU's willingness to soften its natural gas dependence on Russia through the diversification of energy sources and routes maintained the relevance of the SGC together with the Union's perspective on the further development of Azerbaijan's resources.

The focus and intensity of American attention became attenuated during the two administrations of President Barack Obama, from 2009 through to 2016. American attention to Azerbaijan also faded, in part, because of the ethnic Armenian diaspora in California, which remains very important in Democratic Party politics in the state, which is itself so important to the party on a national level. This influential constituency also played a role in decreasing American solicitude toward Azerbaijan. The most public illustration of this influence was the Administration's inability to get the Senate to confirm Matthew Bryza as Ambassador in 2011–2012. The USA's promotion of the failed Turkish–Armenian rapprochement at around the same time is another example.

It is necessary to mention that the 2008 Russian–Georgian war marked a definitive turning point in Azerbaijan's foreign policy. Western diplomacy in general remained for some time in a state of shock regarding the South Caucasus after the Russian invasion and occupation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia in August 2008. This decreased US attention, together with the January 2009 change of administration to President Barack Obama, provided Moscow with an opportunity to pursue its 'milieu goals' more overtly and consistently, especially given Washington's negligence of the region under the Obama Administration.[8] The American and European failure to respond with anything more than words to Russia's occupation of Georgian territory changed the Azerbaijani public's view of the West. It also 'shook Azerbaijan's political establishment and altered their perception of Russia.'[9] Up until then, Baku had 'maintained good relations with Russia while slowly and incrementally moving closer to the West', thereby slowly neutralizing Russia's

8 Wolfers, A. "The Goals of Foreign Policy," in Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration*, pp. 73–76.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 277.

influence by strengthening Azerbaijan's autonomy with the help of FDI and international interest.[10]

An important, related development was the decline in US military aid and financial assistance to Azerbaijan beginning in 2009. At the same time, Russia upgraded its presence in the Caspian Sea and began increasing its arms sales to Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan's 2013 agreement to purchase $4 billion in arms from Russia turned the latter into the former's predominant arms supplier. This decision was associated with a lack of relevant flexibility of military procurement from Western countries.[11] Since Russia is also Armenia's principal arms supplier, this development has increased Moscow's ability to play on the balance in the Armenia–Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Conceptualizing change in Azerbaijan's foreign policy

The concept of strategic hedging explains better than either neorealism or neoliberalism, or the two of them together, the evolution of Azerbaijan's foreign economic, security, and military policy over the last 10–15 years, particularly towards Russia, but also more generally.[12] Strategic hedging is a post-Cold War, relatively new theoretical concept designating the combination of co-operative and confrontational elements in a given state's foreign policy. International relations theories current during the Cold War, such as neorealism and neoliberalism, were dominated by system-level approaches and tended to minimize the relative autonomy of individual state actors, even middle powers such as Azerbaijan and Canada.

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The concept of strategic hedging takes into account such post–Cold War changes as the disappearance of structural

10 Valiyev, A. "Victim of a 'War of Ideologies': Azerbaijan after the Russia–Georgia War," *Demokratizatsiya*, Vol. 17, No. 3, August 2009, p. 271.

11 For details, see: Bashirov, G. "Energy, Security and Democracy: The Shifting US Policy in Azerbaijan," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 32, No. 6, July 2019, pp. 771–98.

12 Valiyev, A. and Mamishova, N. "Azerbaijan's Foreign policy towards Russia since Independence: Compromise Achieved," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 2, January 2019, pp. 269–91.

bipolarity and the multiplication of issues and issue-areas on the international agenda.[13] It is therefore more conducive to explaining foreign-policy evolution in general, and Azerbaijan's in particular. Nevertheless, part of the motive for Azerbaijan's strategic hedging is also to position itself as a 'middle power'. Its participation in and presidency of the NAM fits neatly into this profile. Jafarova suggests that Azerbaijan has used the opportunity to become a 'norm entrepreneur.' Indeed, she points out that one feature of being a middle power is being able to reduce tension and limit conflict among the great powers. She mentions Azerbaijan's hosting of a number of meetings between leading Russian and NATO military figures.[14] This role clearly not only enhances the country's prestige, but also fits directly into a portfolio of instruments for strategic hedging.

Conclusion

In the 1990s, indeed in the early 2000s, Azerbaijan's national interest was still being formed and defined, as the state was also in the process of consolidating its sovereignty. The legislation of the domestic legal regimes mentioned above, together with ensuring their interface with international legal regimes, was crucial to Azerbaijan's state consolidation and its integration into the new, post-Cold War system of international relations. The signature of the BTC agreements in 1999 is what made that possible.

There is no contradiction here with Azerbaijan's membership in the NAM. Baku co-operates with the IMF, the World Bank, and other international institutions that are popularly conceived to be Western-dominated. The great majority of the other NAM members also co-operate with these institutions. Some of them are also players in the international energy markets, even co-operating with the same Western companies. Azerbaijan's

13 That characteristic reflected the fact that the dominant international relations theorists came from systemically dominant state actors, such as the United States. The sociology of the sub-discipline of international relations has changed with the global democratization of access to intellectual resources (and necessary financial resources for theoretical and applied work) following the end of the Cold War.

14 Jafarova, E., "Is Azerbaijan a 'Middle Power'?" *Modern Diplomacy*, 16 May 2020, Available at: https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2020/05/16/is-azerbaijan-a-middle-power/ (accessed 19 July 2020).

international energy policy was set into long-term motion more than a decade before the country joined the NAM. Investment decisions, even in the last 10 years, have been path-dependent on the country's previous foreign economic policy. This means that policy decisions taken earlier condition and constrain the possibilities for policy decisions to be taken later in time.

Even though more players in the global oil and gas sector have access to a wider range of technologies than was the case 30 years ago, it is no surprise, indeed it is to be expected, that Azerbaijan should continue to seek to co-operate with the leading companies, which happen to be mainly Western. These were, moreover, the only ones that had the technological capabilities to undertake the exploration and development of Azerbaijan's offshore energy resources during the first two decades of the country's post-Soviet independence. Azerbaijan's need to build national regimes of domestic law that were able to interface with international economic norms and practices is the first element making regime-theoretic approaches more appropriate for analysis here than either neorealism or neoliberalism, or their methodological marriage consecrated by Rational Choice theory. The second element making them more appropriate is the evolution of the international system away from a bipolar structure. That evolution gives middle powers greater diplomatic freedom, including the freedom to engage in strategic hedging behaviour. These middle powers, such as Azerbaijan, thus become subjects as well as objects of international relations, and therefore able to chart their own diplomatic and political courses, particularly in their own regional international sub-systems.

The Non-Aligned Movement: In Pursuit of Validity and Relevance in the Contemporary Global Order

Nina Miholjcic*

This article examines the ways in which the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) could regain its "old" reputation and offer a new agenda that better corresponds to the post-Cold War world order. Even though the Cold War ended almost three decades ago and the notion of non-alignment has seemingly lost its relevance in the international arena, the NAM is still functioning and retains important potential for uniting a significant number of countries from the Global South. In addition to persistent issues that continue to put pressure on members of the NAM, new challenges have arisen that require the stable existence of meaningful alliances equipped with the necessary organizational flexibility and capability to adjust to the contemporary international environment. The NAM's adjusted agenda for the contemporary world order implies enhanced North South dialogue, improved South South co-operation and a more efficient decision-making process achieved through restructuring its internal institutional framework.

Keywords: NAM, membership, South South cooperation, North South dialogue, institutional reform

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Introduction

The Cold War period (1947−1991), marked by a heightened rivalry between the two then superpowers, the Soviet Union and the USA, also gave birth to the idea of non-alignment, around which many developing countries from the Global South gathered in order to fight against dominance, colonialism, and poverty. A certain balancing of power was necessary in a world where two ideologically opposed blocks were competing ruthlessly and threatening to start another devastating global war.[1] The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was formed by several Third World[2] countries that did not want to formally align themselves with or against any major power bloc, but wanted to remain militarily and politically independent and neutral. Unaligned politics and the fight against colonialism were major revolutionary events in the 20th century that announced the entrance of the countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America as important players in world politics.[3] The origins of NAM date back to the Bandung Conference in 1955, which was co-hosted and initiated by Presidents Sukarno of Indonesia, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia, and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru of India.[4] The principles and objectives[5] adopted during

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was formed by several Third World countries that did not want to formally align themselves with or against any major power bloc, but wanted to remain militarily and politically independent and neutral.

1 The Free Library, *Whatever happened to the non-aligned movement? Martin Evans recalls the 'third way' of Cold War international politics, now all but forgotten*, 2014, Available at: https://www.thefreelibrary.com/Whatever+happened+to+the+non-aligned+movement%3f+Martin+Evans+recalls...-a0172687098 (Accessed: May 18, 2020)

2 Alfred Sauvy, a French economist, formulated the term Third World referring to the group of underdeveloped countries that were "ignored, exploited, despised" and politically non-aligned with either the Communist Soviet bloc (Second World) or the Capitalist NATO bloc (First World) during the Cold War. Sauvy, A. (1952), "Three worlds, one planet," *L'Observateur*, 14 August, n° 118, page 14. Available at: http://www.homme-moderne.org/societe/demo/sauvy/3mondes.html (Accessed: May 18, 2020).

3 Martin, E. and Phillips, J. "Algeria: anger of the dispossessed." *New Haven* [Conn.], (Yale University Press, 2007), Available at: http://public.ebookcentral.proquest.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=3420962 (Accessed: May 18, 2020).

4 Gottschalk, K. "Explainer: The Non-Aligned Movement in the 21st century," *The Conversation*, 28 September 2016, Available at: https://theconversation.com/explainer-the-non-aligned-movement-in-the-21st-century-66057 (Accessed: May 19, 2020).

5 The founding principles of NAM, better known as the Bandung Principles,

the conference are still the guiding basis for the Members and their political activity in international relations.

The Bandung Conference was a prelude to the First Summit Conference of Belgrade (1961), during which the Non-Aligned Movement was officially founded. Topics relating to overcoming the negative consequences of colonialism; boosting the principle of political self-determination, which implies mutual respect to sovereignty and territorial integrity; and developing the socio-economic conditions of Members became leading objectives that dominated the discourse of the NAM summits of the 1970s and 1980s.[6] Those summits became low-cost channels for the new postcolonial political elites to introduce themselves domestically as well as internationally as representatives of new states that were seeking visibility and recognition as reputable agents in world politics.[7] The end of the Cold War brought to a conclusion a quarter-century long bipolar world order and introduced a new global system and novel challenges that significantly affected international relations. The closure of West–East rivalry put the future of the NAM and its relevance in the new world circumstances to the test. Legitimate question arose immediately after the end of two-bloc politics regarding the sustainability of

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were declared during the Afro-Asian Conference of 1955 as the following: 1.- Respect of fundamental human rights and of the objectives and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. 2.- Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations. 3.- Recognition of the equality among all races and of the equality among all nations, both large and small. 4.- Non-intervention or non-interference into the internal affairs of another -country. 5.- Respect the right of every nation to defend itself, either individually or collectively, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations. 6.- Non-use of collective defense pacts to benefit the specific interests of any of the great powers. 7.- Refraining from acts or threats of aggression and use of force in against the territorial integrity or political independence of any country. Non-use of pressures by any country against other countries. 8.- Settlement of all international disputes by peaceful means, such as negotiation, conciliation, arbitration or judicial settlement as well as other peaceful means of the parties' own choice, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations. 9.- Promotion of mutual interest and cooperation. 10.- Respect for justice and international obligations. Archive Non-Aligned Movement, "NAM Principles & Purposes." Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20190331135723/https://mnoal.org/nam-principles/ (Accessed: May 20, 2020).

6 Archive Non-Aligned Movement, "NAM History." Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20190725215620/https://mnoal.org/nam-history/ (Accessed: May 21, 2020).

7 Jurgen D. and Skinner, A., *The non-aligned movement: genesis, organization and politics* (1927-1992), Leiden: Brill, 2019, p.44.

non-aligned ideals. Due to the fact that the reasons for forming the NAM disappeared from the international scene, there was seemingly nothing left for members to be non-aligned to. However, Gottschalk argues that non-alignment to the remaining world power – the USA, along with its Western allies − has become a new gathering point.[8] In addition, the socio-economic issues that remain a considerable part of the NAM's agenda have received ever more emphasis and remain eagerly discussed.

Today, the Non-Aligned Movement represents, after the UN, the largest international organization; it accounts for about 55% of the global population.[9] Moreover, the NAM has managed to maintain its cohesion despite all the differences, diversity, and internal disputes among the Members, which illustrates one of the unique features of this movement; its resourcefulness, which makes the idea of nonalignment durable and keeps it alive. That is why relevant contemporary issues relating to the environment, security, and human rights, as well as persistent socio-economic issues, can be addressed through an improved NAM agenda that promotes the establishment of a permanent Secretariat, special committees, and a stronger platform for the further development of South−South and North−South cooperation. Moreover, the NAM could act as a vocal representative of the developing nations of the Global South that are still lagging behind the industrialized North. Therefore, the Movement remains a relevant international actor that gathers together a considerable number of developing states and provides them with a platform for promoting their national interests as NAM members. The idea of non-alignment is still valid, especially in the contemporary unipolar world order in which the unprivileged countries of the Global South need a stronger institutional framework for promoting and protecting their own interests against the US hegemony and Western dominance in international relations.

Moreover, the NAM has managed to maintain its cohesion despite all the differences, diversity, and internal disputes among the Members, which illustrates one of the unique features of this movement; its resourcefulness, which makes the idea of nonalignment durable and keeps it alive.

8 Gottschalk, *op. cit.*

9 Rauch, C., *Farewell Non-Alignment? Constancy and change of foreign policy in post-colonial India*, (Frankfurt: Peace Research Institute Frankfurt., 2008), p.3.

Why do we need NAM?

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the binary Cold War world order, the USA, as the remaining superpower, began dominating world affairs and entrenching an unchallenged "Western imperialism" on the global stage. Concurrently, the NAM has openly criticized the hegemony of the single superpower as well as the dominance of Western ideas and ideology within international political circles.[10] Such resistance and assertive criticism highlight the anti-Western stance of the movement, which offers an alternative perspective on international relations that have become increasingly Western-oriented. Even though some Members are more reluctant to discuss political issues associated with the US-led global order than to challenge economic arguments that are directed towards exploitative global capitalism, NAM continues to channel the genuine aspirations of many developing countries to challenge the Western-made rules that regulate contemporary international society and their eagerness to strengthen their own political autonomy, that is, their ability independently to set priorities and make decisions in matters of foreign policy and security.[11] On the other hand, the post-Cold War international order will not remain unipolar forever, especially as the USA has been showing signs of weakening and other states, such as China and Russia, have become more active and influential in the international system.[12, 13] One could argue that the NAM's opposition to mainstream politics, its promotion of political, economic, cultural and ideological heterogeneity, as well as the constantly changing nature of the international system have remained a powerful justification for the NAM's continued existence and relevance.

On the other hand, the post-Cold War international order will not remain unipolar forever, especially as the USA has been showing signs of weakening and other states, such as China and Russia, have become more active and influential in the international system.

10 Tharoor, S., "Viewpoint: Is the Non-Aligned Movement relevant today?" *BBC News*, 30 August 2012, Available at: https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-19408560 (Accessed: May 25, 2020).

11 *Ibid*.

12 Keethaponcalan, S.I., "Reshaping the Non-Aligned Movement: challenges and vision", *Bandung J of Global South 3, 4*, 4 October 2016, Available at: https://doi.org/10.1186/s40728-016-0032-3 (Accessed: May 28, 2020).

13 Singh, B., "Non-Alignment Movement: It's Relevance in Present Context", *International Journal of Research - Granthaalayah, 5(6)*, 2017, p. 276. Available at: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.820965 (Accessed: May 28, 2020).

Another relevant feature of the movement concerns the geopolitical commonality of most of its members. Almost all member states are from the Global South and share common colonial histories and socio-economic settings.[14] Therefore, there is potential for further fostering of much-needed South–South cooperation. Many developing countries from the Global South face serious challenges regarding economic sustainability and growth. Improved South–South collaboration could help to alleviate many economic issues, thereby bringing development and prosperity to all members. Developing nations of the South possess huge economic potential and their favourable demographics, demand, and location[15] provide a solid base for fruitful economic progress. However, the Global South lacks the enhanced co-ordination and co-operation that could otherwise improve its challenged socio-economic situation.

The NAM's agenda is permeated with the "Southern solidarity" that continues to play an important binding role within the Movement. Keethaponcalan argues that it was precisely this sense of solidarity and co-operation that inspired the gathering of 29 countries at the Afro-Asian Conference in 1955 that was an important initial step in establishing the Non-Aligned Movement.[16] The idea of solidarity, as a beacon of unity and partnership within the Movement, could further enhance South–South cooperation and enable the overall economic empowerment of the South. It was recognised at the NAM's highest levels that "South–South and triangular cooperation has the potential to enhance capacity-building, strengthen human resources and leverage the catalytic role of education and human development in the creation of employment opportunities"[17] and this could eventually lead to a stronger economy with improved production of high-value goods and services.

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14 Keethaponcalan, *op. cit.*

15 Non-Aligned Movement, *Drishti*, 24 April 2019, Available at: https://www. drishtiias.com/to-the-points/Paper2/non-aligned-movement-nam (Accessed: May 28, 2020).

16 Keethaponcalan, *op. cit.*

17 Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, Caracas, Venezuela, 18-21 July 2019, p.174 (para.782). Available at: https://www. namazerbaijan.org/pdf/Caracas-Final-Document-(2019).pdf (Accessed: May 30, 2020).

Apart from South−South cooperation, there is space and need for the encouragement of North−South dialogue in the future. In order to tackle the issue of the North−South divide, the NAM must act as a strong platform for protecting and promoting the interests of its members that, in most cases, are too weak and small to compete individually with the developed, powerful countries of the North.[18] As part of a larger movement, developing countries have better channels to communicate their own national interests and a stronger position at the negotiating table. Regular international meetings and conferences are recognized as productive spaces where "the interests and concerns of developing countries including middle-income countries, and countries in special situations"[19] could be taken into account and discussed. Such international gatherings help in fostering the North−South dialogue and co-operation that are crucial for effectively solving current economic issues. The Chair of the Movement has identified the need for further deepening and expanding the increasingly dynamic relationships with the G8, the European Union, the Group of 77, and China in order to intensify collaboration between developing and industrialized countries and thus overcome, or at least alleviate, the gap between the South and the North.[20] It is important that the NAM continues developing institutionalized channels of communication and co-operation with industrialized countries through which it can more constructively advocate for the interests and ideas of its members.

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While one of NAM's founding ideologies, anti-colonialism, seemingly lost its appeal and underwent a kind of transformation, other socio-economic struggles continue and new challenges, such as widespread poverty, ecological crises, excessive foreign debt, terrorism, and religious and ethnic clashes, have arisen as leading contemporary issues of the Movement. These relevant concerns require more international attention and a proper institutionalized framework for their advocacy and resolution.

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18 Keethaponcalan, *op. cit.*

19 Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, *op. cit.* p.109 (para 377.5).

20 Ibid, p. 109, para (377.1,2,3,4).

Even though colonialism, in its traditional meaning, has almost disappeared from the international political scene, different forms of neo-colonialism persist, such as economic control and the hegemony of external forces, and these continue to press upon the underdeveloped countries of the South.[21] Nevertheless, Strydom argues that the demise of colonial rule left the majority of members vulnerable and unable to independently resolve their own problems owing to inherited weak and undemocratic institutional systems that still generate internal problems and necessitate the extended "protection" of powerful states.[22] As the debate around the post-colonial heritage and the reasons for the perpetuated weak position of most members continues, the NAM needs to entrench itself as a powerful neutralizer of unilateral military intervention and economic coercion and to become a stronger representative of the Global South.

Institutional Reform and Organizational Change

For an organization, especially an international one, to sustain its effectiveness and keep pace with contemporary ideas and the current environment, it is very important to remain open to continuous institutional reform and organizational modification. The NAM should show a degree of institutional flexibility in order to respond more successfully to novel global challenges. Although the Movement has demonstrated an exceptional achievement just in the fact that it has managed to gather together a considerable number of heterogeneous countries from different parts of the world,[23] it still lacks a proper institutional framework that would otherwise give the NAM a strong unified platform for effective decision making. Keethaponcalan points out that the absence of a permanent secretariat of the organization, which could act as an international representative of the 120 Member states, is an unacceptable structural flaw that prevents further development

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21 Keethaponcalan, *op. cit.*

22 Strydom, H., "Non-aligned movement and the reform of international relations", *Max Planck Yearbook of United Nations Law Online*, 2007, Vol.11, pp.6,7, Available at: https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/5a0d/a00a60bb214db2ee265890340af5cc04dcce.pdf (Accessed: June 7, 2020).

23 Singh, J., *Emerging International Order and Non-Aligned Movement*, (New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers, 1996), pp. 327-28.

of the organization.[24] Such institutional weakness leads to a perpetual state of ineffectiveness and indecisiveness, thus reducing the Movement to a merely figurative organization without real international power to act upon its members' requests and interests.

Critics point out that the NAM lacks clear rules and a strong institutional framework. Structural defects prevent the organization from becoming a relevant international actor with a powerful agenda that projects relevance and validity to the international community. Koechler (2009) accurately refers to the core of the NAM`s institutional struggles when stating that "the NAM has no charter. It has no statute unlike other international organizations. It is an informal structure of cooperation without any permanent secretariat so there is no obligation in strictly legal terms to adhere to any policies or allegiances but only that member states should support each other under the principles of non-alignment."[25] Establishing a permanent secretariat could bring more unity and assist in enabling the Movement to respond more reliably to the current global issues that, more than ever before, require partnership and united institutional action.

Some critics believe that the Movement's activity is unjustifiably reduced to occasional summits of Heads of State or Government of the non-aligned countries that merely indulge in long speeches and manufacture pompous, unimplemented resolutions.[26] These summits are still considered to be "the highest decision making authority of the Movement" with "a rotating three year duration chairmanship of the Ministerial Committee on Methodology".[27] Not having a strict organizational culture damages the international image of NAM and prevents the Movement from acting in a concrete and well-defined manner. Leadership on

24 Keethaponcalan, *op. cit.*

25 See Amies, N., "Non-Aligned Movement struggles for relevancy in post-Cold War world," *Deutsche Welle*, Bonn, Germany, 13 July 2009, Available at: https://www.dw.com/en/non-aligned-movement-struggles-for-relevancy-in-post-cold-war-world/a-4475706 (Accessed: June 15, 2020).

26 Kochan, R., "Changing emphasis in the Non-Aligned Movement." *The World Today* 28(11), 1972, pp. 501–508.

27 "Meeting of the Ministerial Committee on Methodology of the Movement of the Non-Aligned Countries, Caratagena de Indias, May 14–16, 1996, Head of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Countries. Government of Zaire, 14–16 May 1996. Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20110402173236/http://www.nam.gov.za/background/methodology.htm#a (Accessed: June 15, 2020).

global issues requires a strong institutional structure that includes a respectful permanent secretariat, better coordination among members, more frequent meetings, and an agenda with a more concrete scope of action.

In terms of further internal organizational reform, the NAM could establish an environmental commission that would scrutinize the issue of ecological degradation and provide advice on the course of action that could be taken by developing countries and other international bodies in the fields of environmental protection and the alleviation of ecological disasters in the Global South.[28] Furthermore, NAM could form a specialist Human Rights Committee that could assess the state of human rights in the developing world and, accordingly, set an agenda with proper actions and solutions.[29] Establishing a variety of different committees within the organization that could individually respond more appropriately to a range of relevant issues could bring not only greater effectiveness and productivity, but also democracy and equality, to the organization.

The NAM is aware of how organizational restructuring could help in democratizing and improving the efficiency of decision-making processes because it has been a vocal critic of the UN's conservative institutional framework. In this regard, the Movement points out that the UN has been misused by powerful countries that often overlook the interests of the developing world and continue to impose their own rules and ideas. Even though UN membership has grown immensely over the years, the UN Security Council has remained highly exclusive and is still controlled by a small number of powerful countries that can easily overrule even a much larger group of co-operating weaker states. The UN's current decision-making system does not meet, or care about, the needs of developing nations.[30] It is undeniable that restructuring the UN could bring more democracy and transparency to the organization.

The Movement continues to advocate for meaningful UN

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28 "Relevance of Non-aligned Movement in the New World Order: A Critical Analysis," (n.d), Chapter 6, p.291. Available at: https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/111049/11/11_chapter%206.pdf (Accessed: June 15, 2020).

29 *Ibid.*, p.291.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 292.

institutional reforms because it perceives the UN as "the central and indispensable forum for addressing issues relating to international cooperation for economic development and social progress, peace and security, peaceful settlement of disputes, human rights and the rule of law, based on dialogue, cooperation and consensus-building amongst States."[31] For the NAM, the main aim of UN reform would be to transform "the UN development system [to become] more responsive, efficient and effective in its support to developing countries to achieve the internationally agreed development goals."[32] Much-needed UN reform could reshape and democratize the Security Council, a body that is still considered to be the most undemocratic and conservative organ of the UN. Reform could bring adequate expansion, democratization, transparency, accountability, and improved working methods to the Security Council.[33]

> *The Movement continues to advocate for meaningful UN institutional reforms because it perceives the UN as "the central and indispensable forum for addressing issues relating to international cooperation for economic development and social progress, peace and security, peaceful settlement of disputes, human rights and the rule of law, based on dialogue, cooperation and consensus-building amongst States."*

Advantages of NAM Membership

Even though the membership criteria are obsolete, liberal, and often violated,[34] the developing nations from the Global South could nevertheless gain greater political and economic power by being part of the second largest international organization in the world. The membership standard for joining the NAM has remained almost unaltered since the Movement's inception. To become a member, a state has to respect and foster the following criteria: an independent, non-aligned foreign policy; non-membership in multilateral military alliances; support for national liberation movements; and the absence of bilateral military agreements or foreign military bases.[35] During the

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31 Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, *op. cit*. p.41 (para 119.1.)

32 *Ibid*., p.41, para 119.2.

33 *Ibid*., p.41, para 119.6.

34 Shukla, S., "Non-Alignment in the New World Order", *India Quarterly*, 1995, Vol. 51, No. 1. (January-March), p. 50.

35 Amies, *op. cit.*

course of the NAM's history there have been many challenges regarding its membership policy. The size of the Movement has increased immensely over the years but the enlarged membership has not been followed by proper institutional reform, which has led to vaguer and less effective NAM action plans.[36] However, apart from loose membership criteria and the large number of members, many unprivileged nations from the South could gain much more as members of a large international grouping such as the NAM than they could ever do individually.

There is "strength in numbers", and that is precisely what many developing countries are aiming for when joining large alliances. Weak countries are aware of their limitations and bandwagoning does not always deliver the desired results but, rather, leads to distress, control and dominance by powerful hegemons. Being part of a larger grouping with members in the same or a similar situation could bring more decision-making power to each state individually. Moreover, an organization with more equal members is usually more democratic and tolerant. Enhanced equality based on common characteristics that the majority of members share could reinforce and strengthen the whole organization. The large size and diverse composition of the NAM should not be an issue if the decision-making process undergoes the necessary reforms in addition to the implementation of UN reform that might bring more democracy and power to weaker, neglected member states.

Although it might seem that the NAM has lost its relevance and validity in the contemporary world since the era of fierce antagonism between the USA and Soviet Union ended in 1991, and there is seemingly nothing left to be non-aligned to anymore, the need for a vocal representative of many developing nations from the Global South is needed today more than ever.

Concluding remarks

Although it might seem that the NAM has lost its relevance and validity in the contemporary world since the era of fierce antagonism between the USA and Soviet Union ended in 1991, and there is seemingly nothing left to be non-aligned to anymore, the need for a vocal representative of many developing nations from the Global South is needed today more than ever. Especially in times when novel relevant challenges require united, global actions and

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36 "Relevance of Non-aligned Movement in the New World Order," *op. cit.*, p. 278.

unresolved issues from the past continue to put pressure on many developing countries, the need for a large international grouping of states is even more evident. Before the Cold War came to an end, the NAM had acted as "the vehicle for developing countries to assert their independence from the competing claims of the two superpowers."[37] In the current unipolar world order that has been affected with a range of new challenges regarding ecology, security, and peace, as well as old issues relating to widespread poverty, inequality and the powerlessness of the Global South, the NAM could act as a beacon of renewed Southern solidarity and an outspoken representative of unprivileged nations. Historically, the Movement has proved that it possesses a valuable ability to overcome internal differences and focus on the mutual interests and values of its members. For instance, it has managed to gather together ideologically opposed countries such as conservative Columbia, leftist Venezuela, pro-Western Malaysia and socialist Cuba.[38] Such solidarity within the NAM reinforces partnership and cohesion among its members, which is an important organizational feature in resolving existing and new issues.

The Non-Aligned Movement might have started as a political association in a bipolar world where maintaining and reinforcing hard-won political independence was the primary goal for the post-colonial, undeveloped nations of the South. However, today it has been transformed into a multiplex organization with a broad agenda that targets, in addition to political and socio-economic issues, environmental and security ones, and seeks global collaboration. Further development of South−South cooperation and the North−South dialogue requires a powerful organization that will represent and advocate for developing countries that have been unjustifiably neglected and perceived as less valuable by strong, industrialized nations. With certain institutional changes, NAM could gain more decision-making power within international relations and provide its members a stronger voice in the North−South dialogue. Establishing a permanent Secretariat and special committees that target specific

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37 Tharoor, S., "Viewpoint: Is the Non-Aligned Movement relevant today?" *BBC News*, 30 August 2012, Available at: https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-19408560 (Accessed: June 17, 2020).

38 Gottschalk, *op.cit.*

areas such as ecology and human rights could reinforce and democratize the NAM's institutional framework.

Membership in a large international organization is beneficial for developing countries that would otherwise be more exposed to the pressure and control of powerful countries. Even though some argue that the membership criteria of NAM need reforming and that the considerable number of members makes this organization ineffective, still many nations from the South are too weak and impoverished to negotiate their own interests individually. The Movement provides more effective channels for these nations to express specific challenges and values that otherwise would be discarded if presented separately. The NAM's relevance and validity lies in its incredible size, composition, and tireless struggle for a world order that is based on equality and equity rather than the dominance and control of the few. Institutional reform that introduces a clearer organizational structure and rules; includes and promotes relevant new and existing topics; and improves internal and external cooperation would establish a path along which NAM could concurrently regain its "old" reputation and respond effectively to the new challenges of the post-Cold War world order.

South–South Development Co-operation and Venues For North–South Co-operation

Gülşen Şeker Aydın*

This article explores the economic dimension of South–South co-operation and North–South dialogue – that is, co-operation and dialogue in the field of development. After introducing the significance of the issue, the study first explores South–South co-operation at bilateral, regional, and global levels. Second, the study examines North–South dialogue within the framework of the New International Economic Order (NIEO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the Group of 77 (G-77). As the main research question, the study addresses why the South–South co-operation and the North–South dialogue failed to deliver effective results until recently. The study concludes that the weakness of the South vis-à-vis the strong North prepared the ground for the eventual paralysis of the South–South co-operation and North–South dialogue starting with the 1980s. With the strengthening of the Southern actors such as China and the weakening of the Northern development ideology of the Washington Consensus, South–South co-operation has gained momentum and the North has experienced difficulties in repelling the new development discourses of the South, including the Beijing Consensus of China.

Keywords: South–South Co-operation, North–South Dialogue, Development, UNCTAD, NIEO, G-77

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Introduction

Early efforts towards South–South co-operation date back to the First World War. As colonial powers intensified their oppression and exploitation of Africa and Asia for their war effort, this created an incentive for organizing to end colonialism. The Anti-Imperialist League and the Association of Oppressed Peoples (AOP) came to represent the early South–South co-operation efforts to emancipate the Global South. With the greater destruction it caused, the Second World War delegitimized colonial power even more and intensified the efforts at South–South co-operation for ending colonialism.[1] When twenty-nine African and Asian states convened to reflect on venues for the post-colonial world in Bandung, this came as a turning point for South–South co-operation.[2] The conference created the solidarity required for gaining real self-determination. It opened new diplomatic horizons for challenging the international order and creating a more equal and just one. The South was set to protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity through co-operation.[3]

Unleashed by the Bandung Conference, the dynamics of South–South co-operation had political and economic dimensions. Although the political dimension of co-operation included the Non-Aligned Movement, the economic co-operation developed over time to encompass the Group of 77 (G-77), named after the number of states present at the establishment of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The South would demand a New International Economic Order (NIEO) in its search for its demands to the North.[4] As a result, in addition to the East–West division, a North–South divide came to prevail in the world. Whereas the East–West division disappeared

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1 Assie-Lumumba, N. D. T., "Behind and beyond Bandung: Historical and Forward-Looking Reflections on South–South Cooperation," *Bandung: Journal of the Global South*, Vol. 2, No. 11, 2015, p. 3.

2 C. J. Lee, "Between a Moment and an Era: The Origins and Afterlives of Bandung," in Christopher J. Lee (ed.) *Making a World after Empire: The Bandung Moment and Its Political Alternatives* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010), pp. 2–3.

3 Hongoh, J., "The Asian–African Conference (Bandung) and Pan-Africanism: The Challenge of Reconciling Continental Solidarity with National Sovereignty," *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol 70, No. 4, 2016, p. 375.

4 Gray, K. and Gills, B. K. "South–South Cooperation and the Rise of the Global South," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No. 4, 2016, p. 558.

with the end of the Cold War, the split between the affluent and industrialized North and the less advantaged, developing South tended to survive.[5]

Without ignoring the interaction between politics and economy, this article focuses on the economic dimension of South–South co-operation, or co-operation in the field of development. That South–South co-operation is difficult to understand in the absence of an examination of the North–South dialogue. Therefore, the study will also shed light on the venues for that North–South dialogue. This issue is quite important because, as the South realized from the start, economic development is a sine qua non for giving substance to formal independence, and economic co-operation is an essential way of realizing it. As reflected by the rising number of studies on the issue, the subject has even grown in importance today owing to the re-emergence of Southern actors in development and the challenge they pose to Northern actors and their economic development frameworks. The hegemonic decline of the USA in the face of the challenges posed by southern actors such as China will boost the salience of South–South co-operation and force the North to open up to Southern proposals and criticisms. As the main research question, the paper aims to shed light on why South–South co-operation stopped short of delivering effective outcomes until the late 2000s, and what has led to its recent success. To this end, South–South development co-operation at bilateral, sub-regional, and regional levels and the North–South development dialogue within the scope of UNCTAD, the G-77, and NIEO will be explored.

South–South co-operation

South–South development co-operation comprises the transfer and exchange of resources, technology, and experience among developing countries. It also includes aid or aid-like activities such as humanitarian assistance, scholarships, technical assistance, debt relief, grants, and loans.[6] The scope of co-operation, which initially centred on trade, has widened since

The scope of co-operation, which initially centred on trade, has widened since the early 1960s to include money, finance, production, and marketing.

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5 Weiss, T. G. "Moving Beyond North–South Theatre," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 2, 2009, p. 271.

6 Mawdsley, E. "Queering Development? The Unsettling Geographies of South–South Cooperation," *Antipode*, Vol. 52 No. 1, 2020, p. 227.

the early 1960s to include money, finance, production, and marketing. South–South co-operation has been carried out in different formats. It evolved from forming regional and sub-regional integration frameworks to the formulation of global co-operation.[7]

When some of the political aims of the Non–Aligned states had been satisfied or seemed no longer urgent in the 1960s, these countries shifted their attention to economic issues. The aim of self-reliance, previously followed in the political realm, was carried over to the economic area. Consequently, the meetings concentrating upon economic issues increased remarkably.[8]

South–South economic relations soon started to be formed at bilateral, sub-regional, and regional levels to explore alternative development opportunities free of Northern command.[9] In the early 1960s, Latin America and the Caribbean took the lead in this orientation, and Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay established the Latin American Free Trade Association in 1960. The sub-regional organizations such as the Central American Common Market, the Caribbean Free Trade Association, the Andean Group, and the East Caribbean Common Market followed this. In Africa, the East African Economic Community, the Maghreb Permanent Consultative Community, and the Central African Customs Union were founded in the same decade. While the Association of South East Asian Nations was in the process of establishment, the League of Arab States was trying to formulate development schemes. There were attempts to forge links among states in different regions. The Tripartite Trade Expansion and Economic Cooperation by Egypt, India and, Yugoslavia is a case in point.

The UN Economic Commission for Latin America and its chair, Raul Prebisch, laid the foundations of South–South co-operation

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7 G. Corea, "Foreword," in Breda Pavlic, Raul R. Uranga, Boris Cizelj, and Marjan Svetlicic (eds.), *The Challenges of South–South Cooperation* (New York and Oxon: Routledge, 2019), p. IX.

8 K. P. Sauvant, "Organizational Infrastructure for Self-Reliance: The Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of 77," in Breda Pavlic, Raul R. Uranga, Boris Cizelj, and Marjan Svetlicic (eds.), The Challenges of South–South Cooperation (New York and Oxon: Routledge, 2019), p. 45.

9 The South Commission, *The Challenge to the South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 144–145.

at the global level.[10] Following their lead, developing countries started to show their solidarity at various UN platforms and, in 1962, they adopted the Resolution on the Permanent Sovereignty over Natural Resources at the UN General Assembly. In 1964, UNCTAD was also founded, despite the uneasiness of the North.[11] UNCTAD became a turning point in the institutionalization of South–South co-operation that would eventually create the G-77. The conference turned into the main forum for developing countries to coordinate their policies in their dialogue with the North.[12]

The South initially advanced its co-operation within the framework of already existing UN technical co-operation assistance programmes. Following the declaration of the NIEO at the UN General Assembly, the UN Conference on Technical Co-operation Among Developing Countries (TCDC) was convened in 1978 in Buenos Aires and a TCDC unit was established within the UN Development Programme (UNDP). This unit played a critical role in enhancing South–South co-operation.[13] It focused on improving the self-reliance and the capacity of developing countries to solve problems. At the end of the conference, Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA), which used the concept of 'horizontal co-operation' for the first time, was adopted. This concept would be used to differentiate the South–South co-operation from the 'vertical' North-South co-operation under the auspices of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).[14]

Despite the optimism created by BAPA, the dept crisis overshadowed South–South co-operation in the 1980s. The developing countries' search for solutions moved them away

10 Gosovic, B. "The Resurgence of South-South Cooperation," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol 37, No. 4, 2016, p. 732.

11 Venzke, I. "Possibilities of the Past: Histories of the NIEO and the Travails of Critique," *Journal of the History of International Law*, Vol 20, 2018, p. 277.

12 De Renzio, P. and Seifert, J. "South–South Cooperation and the Future of Development Assistance: Mapping Actors and Options," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 10, 2014, p. 1862.

13 Gosovic, B. "On the Eve of BAPA+40-South–South Cooperation in Today's Geopolitical Context," Vestnik RUDN: *International Relations*, Vol. 18, No. 3, 2018, p. 462.

14 Esteves, P. and Assunção, M. "South–South Cooperation and the International Development Battlefield: between the OECD and the UN," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol 35, No. 10, 2014, p. 1779.

from international organizations such as UNCTAD and towards a focus on financial ones such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The formidable economic challenges that the developing countries faced forced them to give up their solidarity with the other countries of the South and strengthen their bilateral ties with creditors.[15] The Caracas G-77 High Level Conference on Economic Co-operation Among Developing Countries (ECDC) in 1981[16] and the emergence, in the late 1980s, of the G-15, comprising Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Senegal, Peru, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, and Zimbabwe, were exceptions to this rule. The 1990s were also far from being conducive for multilateral action for the South, since many developing countries were wrestling with economic and fiscal crises.[17]

The new millennium ushered in a new era for South–South co-operation. In 2004, the Special Unit for TCDC was renamed the Special Unit for South–South Co-operation. This new name has become a sign of increased significance and widened scope of co-operation among developing countries. The Group of 8 (G–8) Summit in 2005 drew attention to the changing geography of trade, investment, and intellectual connections that included southern countries such as Brazil, China, India, Malaysia, South Korea, South Africa, and Thailand. These developing countries' leaders tacitly accepted that the UN Millennium Development Goals could not be attained without the intensification of South–South links and assistance, even under the conditions of increased levels of official development assistance (ODA) and debt relief from the North.[18]

China, India, and the big oil-exporting powers of the Middle East have co-operated with other developing countries for a long time.[19] As early as 1964, China offered an important amount of development aid to Tanzania and undertook the financing and

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15 Sridharan, K. "G-15 and South–South Cooperation: Promise and Performance," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol 19, No 3 1998, p. 358.

16 Gosovic, B. *op. cit. in footnote 11*, p. 734.

17 De Renzio, P. and Seifert, J. *op. cit.*, p. 1862.

18 For a broader discussion of this development please see The United Nations Office for South–South Cooperation (UNOSSC), "About UNOSSC", 2020, Available at: https://www.unsouthsouth.org/about/about-unossc/ (Accessed: June 27, 2020).

19 Quadir, F. "Rising Donors and the New Narrative of 'South–South' Cooperation: What Prospects for Changing the Landscape of Development

building of the Tanzam Railway.[20] The Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation programme has sought to enhance the skills and capacities of Third World people since 1964 by assisting 158 countries. Saudi Arabia has been an important aid donor and provider of ODA since 1973.[21] However, the 2000s saw an intensification of South–South co-operation in the field of development. The global financial crisis of 2008 further strengthened this trend, as providers in the North suffered budgetary constraints.[22] Some countries of the South that used to be net recipients of aid have turned into net providers. Brazil, South Africa, Thailand, and Turkey joined the Southern donors discussed above.[23] The countries from the South have both improved their presence in other countries of the South with an increasing number of new development projects and boosted their influence in traditional development co-operation fields.[24]

The formidable economic challenges that the developing countries faced forced them to give up their solidarity with the other countries of the South and strengthen their bilateral ties with creditors.

The OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC), which has formulated a range of norms, principles, and procedures, is challenged by Southern actors.[25] Southern donors do not abide by the rules of traditional hierarchical donor–recipient relations.[26] A new development regime is emerging, and global development policy is not being exclusively directed by Northern states

Assistance Programmes?", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No.2, 2013, p. 323.

20 Bailey, M. "Tanzania and China," *African Affairs*, Vol. 74, No. 294, January 1975, pp. 40–41.

21 Reality of Aid Network, "South–South Development Cooperation: A Challenge to the Aid System?" in *South–South Cooperation: A Challenge to the Aid System?* ed. The Reality of Aid (RoA) Network (Manila: The Reality of Aid (RoA) Network, 2010), pp. 3–6.

22 Abdenur, A. E. and Da Fonseca, J. M. E. M. "The North's Growing Role in South–South Cooperation: Keeping the Foothold," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol 34, No. 8, 2013, p. 1476.

23 Emma Mawdsley, *From Recipients to Donors: Emerging Powers and the Changing Development Landscape* (London: Zed Books, 2012), p. 1.

24 Alvaro Moreira, "From The Paradigmatic to the Practical Battlefield: Southern Development Cooperation Practices in a Traditional Aid Hosting Context," *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional*, Vol. 63, No. 2, 2020, p. 1.

25 Abdenur, A. E. and Da Fonseca, J. M. E. M. *op. cit.*, "The North's Growing Role in South–South Cooperation: Keeping the Foothold," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol 34, No. 8, 2013, p. 1475.

26 Quadir, F. *op. cit.*, p. 323.

anymore, or by international organizations including the IMF and the World Bank.[27]

China's overwhelming economic growth in the 2000s has made its development model, which is known as the Beijing Model, attractive. Its main building blocks are a free market instead of a planned economy, an export-driven economy, and technology and foreign capital imports. Since the Beijing Consensus is different from the Washington Consensus, which was promoted by international organizations such as the IMF and World Bank, it is perceived as a threat to the North's approach to development.[28]

China's overwhelming economic growth in the 2000s has made its development model, which is known as the Beijing Model, attractive. Its main building blocks are a free market instead of a planned economy, an export-driven economy, and technology and foreign capital imports.

Most of the South–South development co-operation schemes, except for China's Tanzam Railway, were small in scale, only symbolically important, and limited to localized or individualized settings. From the 2000s, this started to change. A remarkable growth in funds, projects, and international presence has been observed.[29] Southern actors, among which China is the most prominent, increased the amounts they devoted to debt relief, loans on favourable terms, technical and humanitarian aid, and investment. While the Northern donors follow this change with varying degrees of admiration, surprise, anxiety, and bitterness, the Southern recipients welcome the new resources, ideas, methods, and approaches.[30] New institutions and high-level meetings – for example, the India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) facility, the BRICS grouping composed of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, The Forum on China–Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), and the India–Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) – accompanied this growth. While many such forums existed previously, as discussed, this time South–South co-operation was more result-oriented and pragmatic.[31]

Most of the South–South development co-operation schemes, except for China's Tanzam Railway, were small in scale, only symbolically important, and limited to localized or individualized settings.

27 DeHart, M. "Remodelling the Global Development Landscape: the China Model and South–South Cooperation in Latin America," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 33, No. 7, 2012, p. 1363.

28 *Ibid*., p. 1364.

29 Mawdsley, E. "South–South Cooperation 3.0? Managing the Consequences of Success in the Decade Ahead," *Oxford Development Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 3, 2019, p. 261.

30 Mawdsley, E. "Queering Development? The Unsettling Geographies of South–South Cooperation," *Antipode*, Vol. 52, No. 1, 2020, p. 230–232.

31 Mawdsley, E. *op. cit. in footnote 30*, p. 261.

Venues for North–South co-operation in the development area

Having different economic needs than the North, the developing states tended to question the suitability of liberal economic development programmes. Starting in the 1950s, the dependency school argued that, if the Southern countries embraced liberal economic policies, they would be trapped in endless dependency. The South called for an alternative development model defined by UNCTAD, the G-77, and the NIEO to overcome its dependency.[32] This section will first examine UNCTAD and the G-77, and then the NIEO.

UNCTAD and the G-77

The South had important development problems related to trade. Developing countries suffered from insufficient export earnings and weaknesses in importing essential capital goods and technical services. Their export earnings were rising very slowly compared with their import needs. Moreover, the terms of trade were unfavourable to these countries. Although the prices of primary products were decreasing, the prices of industrial goods were on a steady rise.[33]

Following the abortive efforts to ratify the Havana Charter and establish the International Trade Organization, many Southern countries were discontented with the provisional setting for negotiating trade matters, namely, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). In 1957, GATT established a group to identify the trade problems of the developing countries. The report emphasized that developed countries' tariffs and other protective measures were creating problems for developing states. As a result, it became harder to neglect the trade-related problems of developing countries.[34]

In the early 1960s, the increasing anxieties of developing countries over their position in international trade led them to organize a

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32 M. P. Karns and K. Mingst, *International Organizations: The Politics and Processes of Global Governance* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2010), p. 393.

33 Gosovic, B. "UNCTAD: North–South Encounter," *International Conciliation*, No. 568, May 1968, p. 6.

34 Toye, J. "Assessing the G77: 50 Years after UNCTAD and 40 Years after the NIEO," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 10, 2014, p. 1759.

conference to discuss their problems and find solutions to them. The first UNCTAD was held in Geneva in 1964. In the face of the broad scope and complexity of the problems, the conference was institutionalized to convene every four years.[35]

The first meeting of UNCTAD was important for two reasons. It created a new chapter on trade and development in GATT, which for the first time acknowledged that the South needed benefits on non-reciprocal terms.[36] At this very first session, the G-77 was also founded by 77 developing countries through signing the Joint Declaration of the 77 Developing Countries. Starting with the first Ministerial Meeting of the G-77 in Algiers, the group acquired a permanent institutional structure. Although its membership eventually reached 134, its original name has been kept because of its historical importance. The G-77 has proved to be the biggest intergovernmental organization of the Southern countries in the UN. It has aimed to offer developing states the means to voice and defend their economic interests and strengthen their negotiating capacity at the UN.[37]

The G-77 had no programme of its own and, instead, rested on the guidance that Raul Prebisch provided for UNCTAD. This programme was based on three essential pillars.[38] The first was a general structure for international commodity treaties. The second was new types of supplementary finance – supplementary, that is, to the Compensatory Finance Facility of the IMF available at that time. The third were the provisional preferences for the industrial exports that the South exported to the North. All these were viewed as remedies to the balance of payments problems that the developing countries suffered.

Until 1977, UNCTAD remained a central issue in the North–South dialogue. The negotiations under the auspices of UNCTAD can be regarded as the first important attempt to build NIEO. The South's search for a greater share of the income and wealth from

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35 UNCTAD, "History", 2020, Available at https://unctad.org/en/Pages/About%20UNCTAD/A-Brief-History-of-UNCTAD.aspx (Accessed: June 29, 2020).

36 Venzke, I. *op. cit.*, p. 277

37 The Group of 77, "About the Group of 77", 2020, Available at https://www.g77.org/doc/ (Accessed June 29, 2020).

38 Toye, J. op. cit., p. 1762.

trade was the main motivation for the negotiations. The reaction of the North to these demands represents its understanding of the entirety of North–South relations.[39]

In the years between the first and second UNCTAD, the United Nations General Assembly established UNCTAD as a new international organization and its first Secretary General, Raul Prebisch, formed an independent secretariat for the organization.[40] Prebisch's views became quite influential in setting the trajectory of the organization. His focus on declining terms of trade that were to the detriment of the South led the developing countries to demand reforms in international trade to help their development. Following his guidance, developing countries tried to enhance their import competitiveness, export manufactured goods in addition to primary products, and to improve their chances of access to the Northern markets.[41]

UNCTAD became a platform for the South to express its demands from the North, which it sought to have accept that it was responsible for creating and maintaining the unfairness in the economic order. The first UNCTAD (Geneva, 1964) stated the South's expectations from the North as the stabilization of product prices, alongside the amount of and conditions on assistance and preferences. The hopes for the realization of these expectations were largely dashed, however, and the gap between North and South continued to widen.[42]

Convened in these circumstances in New Delhi in 1968, the second UNCTAD became the scene of disagreement between the developed and the developing countries on preferences. The North accepted the lifting of the high tariffs that blocked the entrance of goods from the developing world into the markets of developed states only after the extended negotiations that followed the conference.[43] However, through employing a lot of restrictions and

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39 Rothstein, R. L. *Global Bargaining: UNCTAD and the Quest for a New International Economic Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 3.

40 Robertson, C. L. "The Creation of UNCTAD," in *International Organisation: World Politics*, ed. Robert W. Cox (London: MacMillan, 1969), p. 258.

41 Blake, D. H. and Walters, R. S. *The Politics of Global Economic Relations* (New Jersey: 1987), pp. 39–49.

42 Mehta, S. S. "Non-Alignment, and New International Economic Order", *Foreign Trade Review*, Vol 15, No. 2, 1980, pp. 140.

43 *Ibid.*, 140–141.

formalities, those preferences were made meaningless.[44]

At the third UNCTAD, which was held in Santiago in 1972, the G-77 called for sweeping changes in the monetary system. It urged linking monetary issues to general trade problems, such as trade deficits, and utilizing the Special Drawing Rights of the IMF as a new reserve for impoverished countries. A reform in the decision-making structure of the IMF was also demanded. As it avoided granting any important concessions to the South on these matters, the third UNCTAD was a victory for the North.[45]

Because of the intransigent attitude of the United States and other leading countries of the North, the North–South negotiations on

> *Because of the intransigent attitude of the United States and other leading countries of the North, the North–South negotiations on reforming the world economic order turned out to be largely futile.*

reforming the world economic order turned out to be largely futile. While the nature of the economic relations remained intact, the South still lacked decision-making power. To give momentum to the dialogue between the North and the South, the developing countries suggested, in 1979, opening a new round of negotiations in the UN to reach a consistent and well-organized approach to North–South economic relations in the fields of raw materials, energy, trade, development, money, and finance. To this end, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution. However, to a great extent, the efforts of the developing countries did not bear fruit, and even the North–South Summit in Cancun in 1981 fell short of revitalizing the North–South Dialogue.[46]

The frustration that the Cancun Summit created was just the beginning of the hard times for the South. The debt crisis weakened the negotiating power of the South considerably. This change characterized the trade negotiations between the North and the South in the 1980s. In the Uruguay Round, the North was still calling shots to advance its global interest. The developing countries were not able to voice their development concerns.[47]

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44 Hveem, H. "UNCTAD III: The Victory of Continued World Injustice and the Need for a New Approach," *Bulletin of Peace Proposals*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 1972, p. 266.

45 *Ibid.*, p. 268.

46 Xiu-Ying, C. "North–South Negotiations and the New International Economic Order," in *The Rich and the Poor: Development, Negotiations and Cooperation-An Assessment*, ed. Altaf Gauhar (New York and Oxon: Routledge, 2019), p. 70.

47 Therien, J. P. "Beyond the North–South Divide: The Two Tales of World Poverty," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No.4, pp. 725–726.

The early 1980s also saw a striking change in the development discourse. That promoted by Prebisch and the dependency school throughout the two earlier decades came to be overwhelmed by an international development discourse shaped by free-market approaches that proposed a minimal role for the state in the economy. Slow growth in the North in that decade also decreased the North's contribution to critical development co-operation areas such as the ODA.[48]

The collapse of the Soviet Union, the weakening of solidarity within the G-77, the ascent of neoliberalism, the boosted domination of the USA in international organizations, and the establishment of World Trade Organization in 1994 ushered in a challenging era for UNCTAD.[49] At the Cartagena (1992) and Midrand (1996) Conferences, the authority and functions of UNCTAD were dramatically weakened.[50] The organization lost its negotiating power and its role was limited to consensus building, not only in the field of trade, but also in money, finance, restrictive business practices, and transfer of technology. Its research and analysis capacity waned as its resources were reduced and its ideological framework became exposed to outside interference. It is not allowed to formulate an alternative development approach anymore. For the sake of coherence, it is required to agree with the conventional approaches of the developed countries and the international organization controlled by them, such as the IMF and the World Bank. As a result, its role has been limited to helping developing countries to integrate with the international organizations controlled by the North.[51]

The New International Economic Order

The South also tried to establish a dialogue with the North for its development objectives through its call for an NIEO. The

48 Ghaebi, M. R. "The Role of South–South Cooperation in Realization of the Right to Development: The Way Forward," *International Studies Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 4, Spring 2018, p. 172.

49 R. Bielschowsky and A. C. M. e Silva, "The UNCTAD System of Political Economy," in Erik S. Reinert, Jayati Ghosh and Rainer Kattel (eds.), *Handbook of Alternative Theories of Economic Development*, (Cheltenham and Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2016), p. 297.

50 B. Boutros-Ghali, *Reinventing UNCTAD* (Geneva: The South Centre, 2006), p. 5.

51 *Ibid.*

developing countries demanded NIEO because they were of the opinion that the existing economic order and their contacts with developed countries worked to their disadvantage.[52]

The call for an NIEO was made at the Sixth Special Session of the General Assembly in 1974, and a Declaration and Programme of Action for its formation was accepted. While the International Development Strategy for the Second Development Decade had been adopted in 1970, it proved to be largely ineffective. The economic predicament of that time, illustrated by monetary chaos, rising inflation, and food and energy crises, blocked the chances for developing countries to attain the objectives set out in the International Development Strategy and motivated them to search for new solutions.[53]

As a commodity cartel trying to ensure general and commodity-specific changes in trade relations between the North and the South, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) became a source of inspiration in the search for an NIEO.[54] The success of OPEC in increasing and keeping oil prices high emboldened the developing countries to believe that solidarity among countries producing primary products could deliver changes in terms of trade. Moreover, it helped to overcome the fears that the North would retaliate by using military and financial measures.[55]

At the centre of the NIEO concept, there were certain interconnected reform demands: an exclusive right of developing countries to manage the extraction and sale of their domestic natural resources; the creation and recognition of state-controlled cartels to stabilize (and increase) the prices of commodities that the developing countries sell on international markets; regulation of the activities of transnational companies; non-conditional technology transfers from the North to the

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52 Mehta, S. S. *op. cit.*, pp. 138–140.

53 Corea, G. "UNCTAD and the New International Economic Order," *International Affairs*, Vol. 53, No. 2, April 1977, p. 177.

54 I. W. Zartman, "Introduction: North–South Relations," in I. William Zartman (ed.), *Positive Sum: Improving North–South Negotiations* (Oxon and New York: 1987), pp. 2–3.

55 Gilman, N. "The New International Economic Order: A Reintroduction," *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism and Development*, Vol. 6, No. 1, Spring 2015, p. 3.

South; the granting of preferential (non-reciprocal) trade preferences to the developing countries; more foreign aid and better terms and conditions; and the cancellation of some debts that the South owed to the North.[56] The South also tried to gain more power in the decision-making structures of the international organizations that governed the economic order, such as the IMF and the World Bank.[57]

Among these demands, the South was able to realize the adoption of the Generalized System of Preferences by GATT in 1971. However, this success would eventually be meaningless, as discussed. The developing countries were also successful in ensuring some favourable terms in commodity price stabilization, but the North rejected negotiating most of the other issues.[58] As far as reforms in the decision-making structures of the IMF are concerned, the latest IMF quota review bringing about changes in quotas, the 14th General Quota Review, was concluded in 2010, and the quota changes became effective in 2016. More than six percent of quota shares have been channelled to four rising economies: Brazil, China, India, and Russia. As a result, these countries are now among the 10 ten largest members of the IMF alongside the USA, Japan, France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom.[59]

The strengthening position of developing countries in the world economy has led to a debate on the future of global governance, and the role of the South in shaping international organizations and norms. The developing countries, which were regarded as norms takers previously, have come to attract attention thanks to their role in framing new ideas and norms.[60] People from the developing world have articulated some of the most significant recent ideas in the field of development. Pakistan's Mahbub ul Hak and India's Amartya Sen introduced the concept of human

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56 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

57 I. W.. Zartman, *op. cit.,* pp. 2–3.

58 M. P. Karns and K. Mingst, *op. cit.*, p. 394.

59 IMF, "Press Release: Historic Quota and Governance Reforms Become Effective," 27 January 2016, Available at: https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2015/09/14/01/49/pr1625a (Accessed: August 8, 2020).

60 Fukuda-Parr, S. and Muchhala, B. "The Southern Origins of Sustainable Development Goals: Ideas, Actors, Aspirations," *World Development*, Vol. 126, 2019, p. 1.

development, and Kenya's Wangari Maathai received a Nobel Prize for her studies on sustainable development.[61]

Conclusion

The examination of South–South co-operation at bilateral, regional, and global levels has shown that the South–South co-operation gave birth to many conferences, declarations, and international organizations at the global level, along with the emergence of an alternative development discourse thanks to UNCTAD and its chair, Raul Prebisch. However, beginning in the 2000s, South–South co-operation has experienced a real resurgence with the strengthening of Southern actors such as China. Therefore, the study concludes that the real momentum in South–South co-operation has been created by the strengthening of Southern actors vis-à-vis Northern actors in terms of supplying credits, carrying out major development projects, and formulating and defending their development discourses with the international organizations, which have shown some early signs of restructuring in the face of the rise of the South.

The study also examined North–South dialogue within the framework of the NIEO, UNCTAD, and the G-77. It concludes that it is evident that the South fell short of ensuring the reforms in the economic order it demanded from the North, apart for a brief period following the Oil Crisis of 1973–74. As the North had nothing to lose by rejecting the demands of the South, the North–South dialogue produced no important gains for the South. With the triumphant of the Washington Consensus and neoliberalism all over the world, the alternative development discourse of the South was overshadowed in the late 1980s, the 1990s, and the 2000s. However, thanks to the financial crisis of 2008, the new development discourses of the South, including the Beijing Consensus of China, today enjoy more chances of gaining success.

61 Acharya, A. "Idea- Shift: How Ideas from the Rest are Reshaping Global Order," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No. 7, 2016, pp. 1157–58.

Non-Alignment Spirit as a Small State's Grand Strategy: The Case of Belarus

Yauheni Preiherman[*]

This paper argues that, when structural conditions in international relations are increasingly shaped by great power confrontation and, thus, produce heightened risks and uncertainties for the small states that sit in-between competing great powers, such small states naturally turn to non-alignment ideas, even when existing institutional affiliations (i.e., membership of collective security organizations) prevent them from pursuing fully-fledged non-alignment policies. In that case, their overall foreign and security policy behaviour tends to be driven by the non-alignment spirit – that is, the concept of the 'non-use of collective defence pacts to benefit the specific interests of any of the great powers.' The non-alignment spirit thus effectively becomes the foundation of their grand strategy, even as small states might remain formally aligned. The paper analyses Belarus's foreign and security policies in the context of two post-Cold War structural shifts as a case study.

Keywords: grand strategy; small state; non-alignment; Belarus's foreign policy

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Introduction

The concept and praxis of non-alignment appeared to have lost their attractiveness after the end of the Cold War. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) certainly preserved its historical stature, but its mission no longer seemed equally relevant as the world was living through the 'unipolar moment'. However, the past decade has seen structural developments in the international system that are undermining unipolarity and reviving great power rivalry.[1] Under these conditions, it is only logical to expect the ideas that used to drive the NAM to resurface in the foreign policy portfolios of certain categories of states.

One such category, in which this expectation already appears to be gaining traction, is represented by small states that find themselves between geopolitical centres of gravity and thus experience their competing pressures. In other words, these small states geographically sit between great powers and their security and well-being depend to a significant extent on the ability to sustain co-operative relations with both of them. Hence, as geopolitical tensions rise, the positions of such small in-between states become particularly precarious.

Most interestingly, this logic works not only for formally non-aligned states, but also for those that happen to be part of defence alliances. As a result, we can often observe institutionally aligned states demonstrating patterns of international behaviour typical of non-aligned states. Belarus serves as an example. Minsk is officially aligned with Russia through bilateral and multilateral security arrangements, but it appears to pursue a foreign policy increasingly rooted in the non-alignment spirit. The latter is reflected in Article 6a of the Bandung Principles, which were agreed at the Afro–Asian Conference held in Bandung in 1955. They prescribe the 'non-use of collective defence pacts to benefit the specific interests of any of the great powers.'[2] More broadly, the non-alignment spirit can be defined as 'a counter-hegemonic critique of contemporary world order or a rhetorical justification

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1 See, for example: Kroenig, M., *The Return of Great Power Rivalry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020); Russell Mead, W., "The Return of Geopolitics: The Revenge of the Revisionist Powers," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June, 2014.

2 Namazerbaijan.org (2019) *Bandung Principles*, available at: https://www.namazerbaijan.org/founding-principles (accessed July 15, 2020).

for the maximization of national interest.'[3]

This paper addresses the following research question: what accounts for the recurrent patterns of non-alignment behaviour in the foreign policies of small aligned states? It argues that the non-alignment spirit can form the contours of a grand strategy of a small in-between state, even when the state is formally aligned. In that case, a small state does not give up its alliance commitments, but its day-to-day foreign and security policy behaviour is driven, to a large extent, by the non-alignment logic. The ultimate goal of such behaviour is to make sure that, as geopolitical tensions rise, alliance partners do not limit the small state's room for international manoeuvre to the detriment of its national interest and do not entangle the small state in conflicts not of its own choosing. The paper applies a neoclassical realist model of grand strategy to explore the non-alignment elements in Belarus's foreign and security policies.

In what follows, the first section discusses grand strategy as a concept and whether it is analytically helpful for dealing with small states' foreign policy behaviour. The second section looks at how Belarus's structural conditions changed after the end of the Cold War – that, is after the country gained independence. The final section interprets Belarus's responses to the structural shifts and identifies the contours of its grand strategy rooted in the non-alignment spirit.

A grand strategy for a small state?

The very idea of a small state's grand strategy may sound artificial. There has long been a tacit understanding that only great powers are capable of grand-strategizing, due to the multiple and diverse resources they possess and can operationalize.[4] Moreover, it is widely believed that the structural pressures of the international system actually require that a great power should develop its own grand strategy in order to be more effective and efficient

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3 Abraham, I. "From Bandung to NAM: Non-alignment and Indian Foreign Policy, 1947–65," *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, Vol. 46, No. 2, 2008, p. 195.

4 Murray, W. "Thoughts on Grand Strategy," in *The Shaping of Grand Strategy*, eds Murray, W., Sinnreich, R. H. and Lacey, J. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012) 1.

Moreover, it is widely believed that the structural pressures of the international system actually require that a great power should develop its own grand strategy in order to be more effective and efficient in its foreign policy. Small states, in contrast, lack resources and capabilities and thus, it can be argued, have no reason to think about a grand strategy.

in its foreign policy. Small states, in contrast, lack resources and capabilities and thus, it can be argued, have no reason to think about a grand strategy. Their systemic 'destiny', according to this line of thinking, is to permanently adapt to changing realities in international relations that are shaped by great powers. As small states have no effective control over important developments in world politics, they simply cannot plan and strategize, the argument goes.[5]

Furthermore, in today's world, where data are multiplying at a bewildering pace and information flows are unparalleled, there is a growing belief that grand strategies, as such, are becoming relics of the past.[6] As Barack Obama famously put it in 2014, 'I don't really even need George Kennan right now.'[7] However, from a realist standpoint, globalization and modern advances in technology do not really change the fundamental essence of inter-state dealings. States remain the centrepieces of international affairs and face the same challenge of providing for their own survival, security and well-being, even though the manifestations of this challenge look increasingly complex and multifaceted. Hence, in the words of Allison, 'coherent strategy does not guarantee success, but its absence is a reliable route to failure.'[8]

This argument is germane to small states to no lesser extent than to great powers. The former's place in the international system is characterized by multiple vulnerabilities and uncertainties stemming from sources beyond their immediate control. In order to navigate such an environment, they need to maximize the efficiency of their scarce resources, which is a function of

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5 *Ibid*.

6 Sinnreich, R. H. (2012) "Patterns of Grand Strategy," in *The Shaping of Grand Strategy*, eds Murray, W., Sinnreich, R. H. and Lacey, J. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 261.

7 Remnick, D. (2014) "Going the Distance. On and Off the Road with Barack Obama," *New Yorker*, 27 January, available at: http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/01/27/going-the-distance-david-remnick (accessed July 13, 2020).

8 Allison, G. (2017) "The Thucydides's Trap," *Foreign Policy*, 9 June, available at: https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/06/09/the-thucydides-trap/ (accessed July 9, 2020).

strategy. As Gaddis phrased it, 'danger is a school for strategy.'[9]

In part, the problem of applying the concept of 'grand strategy' to the analysis of small states seems to do with the variety of meanings that the term is used to imply in the literature. It is one of those widely employed buzzwords that is supposed to carry a universally accepted definition, but, in reality, international relations scholars do not share a single understanding of it.[10] British military scholar Liddell Hart is known to have coined the term back in the mid-1900s. He used it as a way to refer to an overarching objective that should direct the thinking of statesmen – 'grand strategy should control strategy.'[11] He observed that even a victory in a war often leaves a country more vulnerable and weaker than it was before the war. Liddell Hart maintained, therefore, that, during a war, statesmen must be concerned about the kind of peace their country is likely to get and be smart in ensuring the best conditions of peace, even if this might go against the logic of fighting on the battlefield. And it is the task of grand strategy to serve this end: to be a 'state's overall plan for providing national security by keeping national resources and external commitments in balance.'[12]

a victory in a war often leaves a country more vulnerable and weaker than it was before the war.

Thus, several ideas are central to the concept of grand strategy. First, it is meant to take account of multiple processes and factors affecting the state and assess them through the lenses of the national interest.[13] Second, states and their leadership need to have a set of principles and priorities, which should help to structure and guide their policy making. This set should address the fundamental concerns about the state's security and well-being in a more comprehensive way than is usually needed to react to daily events.[14] Here, a clear understanding of the

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9 Gaddis, J. L. (2009) *What Is Grand Strategy?*, Keynote address for a conference on 'American Grand Strategy after War' at Duke University, 26 February, available at: http://indianstrategicknowledgeonline.com/web/grandstrategypaper.pdf (accessed July 13, 2020).

10 Kitchen, N. "Systemic Pressures and Domestic Ideas: A Neoclassical Realist Model of Grand Strategy Formation," *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 36, 2010, p. 119.

11 Liddell Hart, B. H., *Strategy* (New York: New American Library, 1967), p. 353.

12 Dueck, C. *Reluctant Crusaders: Power, Culture, and Change in American Grand Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), pp. 9-10.

13 Kitchen, *op.cit.*, p. 133.

14 Murray, *op.cit.*, p. 1.

In this respect, grand strategy is also about balancing and mitigating existing and potential risks and making sure that no critical mistakes are made under unexpected circumstances because policy makers might miscalculate the balance.

principles and priorities, and informed flexibility in applying them, might be more important than setting specific goals.[15] Third, grand strategy has to address an inherent tension between ends and means. In other words, it is 'more often than not about the ability to adjust to the reality that resources, will, and interests inevitably find themselves out of balance in some areas.'[16] In this respect, grand strategy is also about balancing and mitigating existing and potential risks and making sure that no critical mistakes are made under unexpected circumstances because policy makers might miscalculate the balance.

Finally, as Lobell et al. point out, in addition to the correlation between strategic aims and the resources available to pursue them, a grand strategy has to factor in 'the anticipation of likely reactions of one or more potential opponents.'[17] The interests and potential calculations of all relevant actors (allies as well as opponents) need to be kept on the strategic radar. Otherwise, a grand strategy can fail where least expected. Thus, in essence, grand strategy is 'the organizing principle or conceptual blueprint that animates all of a state's relations with the outside world.'[18]

All these definitions, while outlining important elements of the concept, still remain quite broad. This reflects the very function of grand strategy – to be an overarching strategy for a state's other strategies – but this also leaves a feeling of an unsatisfactory delineation of the concept and makes it difficult to operationalize. Hence, an analytical model is needed that will serve as a mechanism to identify a grand strategy. For this, this paper utilizes Kitchen's neoclassical realist model of grand strategy formation (see Figure 1).[19]

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15 Jones, M., "Strategy as Character: Bismarck and the Prusso-German Question, 1862-1878," in *The Shaping of Grand Strategy*, eds Murray, W., Sinnreich, R. H. and Lacey, J. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 108.

16 Murray, *op. cit*, 2.

17 Lobell, S. E., Taliaferro, J. W. and Ripsman, N. M. "Introduction: Grand Strategy Between the World Wars," in *The Challenge of Grand Strategy*, eds Taliaferro, J. W., Ripsman, N. M. and Lobell, S. E. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 14-15.

18 Ibid., 15.

19 Kitchen, *op. cit.*, pp. 134-136.

Kitchen singles out three major tasks that a grand strategy has to perform. The first one is *strategic assessment aimed at defining national security threats*. The scholar stresses that 'different assessments may follow from particular historical, ideological, political or ideational biases.'[20] He maintains that facts on the ground usually make it well-known to a state the exact structural conditions in which it finds itself, but the ideas of policy makers still can interfere in the process when they assess the actual strategic situation and take foreign policy decisions as a result. The second major task of grand strategy, according to Kitchen, is to identify appropriate and optimal *means of strategy*. Importantly, from a neoclassical realist perspective, this 'involves consideration of both what means are available, which will work most effectively, and whether their use can be justified.'[21]

Finally, Kitchen talks about *auxiliary goals* as another task of grand strategy. He contends that whether a state entertains any tertiary goals (and if yes, the scope of such goals) normally depends on the availability of resources to concentrate on something other than the primary goals of security and survival.[22] Some states may not have such auxiliary goals at all, and this paper assumes that Belarus does not hold any such auxiliary goals, as all its relatively limited resources are directed entirely at pursuing the primary goals.

Figure 1. Kitchen's neoclassical realist model of grand strategy formation.

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20 Ibid., 134.

21 Kitchen, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

22 Ibid., 136.

The following sections will use the two components of Kitchen's model – strategic assessment and means of strategy – to evaluate the place of non-alignment ideas in Belarus's foreign and security policy.

Strategic assessment: Facts on the ground and what Minsk makes of them

The structural conditions (or facts on the ground) under which Belarus has had to operate have changed twice since the country gained independence in 1991.

After the end of the Cold War and with the USSR's collapse, the 'unipolar moment' ensued and the centre of world power shifted to the 'unchallenged superpower, the United States, attended by its Western allies.'[23] At that time, the development of international politics seemed to point to a qualitatively new era in history – that of an unprecedented, peaceful order based on co-operative security and globalizing economies. Many believed that growing economic interdependencies would cement unprecedentedly strong incentives for state and non-state actors to cooperate rather than conflict. That appeared particularly true for Eastern Europe, where the post-Cold War international environment quickly decreased overall tensions and facilitated a new quality of a co-operative atmosphere beyond the formerly existing dividing lines. The new Russian leadership appeared, at least initially, enthusiastic about developing close partner relations with former opponents in Washington and the European capitals. It was symbolic of the new opening in Russian–Western relations that Russian President Boris Yeltsin received 13 standing ovations from the joint meeting of the US Congress in June 1992.

Yet, even in that relatively benign situation, one problem – NATO's eastward expansion – started to loom large in Russian–Western relations. As Waltz argued, it produced a structural impulse: it gave Moscow reasons to fear that NATO would not stop at absorbing former Warsaw Treaty Organization members, but would continue its expansion closer to Russia's borders by welcoming former Soviet republics.[24] This naturally made

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23 Krauthammer, C. "The Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, No. 1, 1990, p. 23.

24 Waltz, K. "Structural Realism after the Cold War," *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 1, 2000, p. 21.

Moscow think about possible countermeasures, even as Russia was struggling with multiple domestic problems and the overall relationship with the West looked rather promising.

Those facts on the ground established a generally favourable situation for Belarus. As an in-between small state, it was not exposed to heightened competing pressures from the two centres of geopolitical gravity, Russia and the West. In fact, there was now only one such centre, and its relations with Moscow were largely non-confrontational in the 1990s and beginning of the 2000s. Thanks to that, Minsk felt quite 'relaxed' as to the geopolitical environment in which it operated. Even NATO expansion did not appear to pose a significant security problem. Belarus could even capitalize on it to an extent by positioning itself as a vehement opponent of NATO and using that rhetoric to extract more benefits from its alliance with Russia (see the next section for more details).[25] That was a safe policy line, given that Russia's relations with the West in general and NATO in particular were much better and more co-operative than Belarus's own relations with Western capitals (the latter suffered owing to disagreements over the domestic political situation in Belarus).

However, the geopolitical environment started to change. On 27 June 2006, in an address at the meeting of Russian ambassadors, President Putin stated that Russia's political influence in world affairs should be brought into accordance with its growing economic power and stressed Moscow's resolve to secure the status of an indispensable nation in a multipolar international system.[26] That speech marked the beginning of a turning point in Russian foreign policy and in great power relations. Putin's famous address at the 2007 Munich Security Conference confirmed the trend, as the Russian leader argued that 'the unipolar world that had been

Those facts on the ground established a generally favourable situation for Belarus. As an in-between small state, it was not exposed to heightened competing pressures from the two centres of geopolitical gravity, Russia and the West.

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25 Pravo.levonevsky.org (2001) *Kontseptsiya natsional'noi bezopasnosti Respubliki Belarus [National Security Concept of the Republic of Belarus]*, available at: (accessed July 15, 2020).

26 Kremlin.ru (2006) *Vystuplenie na soveschanii s poslami i postoyannymi predstavitelyami Rossiiskoi Federatsii [Address at the Meeting with Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives of the Russian Federation]*, available at: http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/23669 (accessed 15 July 2020).

proposed after the Cold War did not take place.'[27]

Before too long, the rhetorical confrontation started to spill over into the military realm, which resulted in the 2008 Russo–Georgian war. The five-day war carried serious structural implications for Belarus. Qualitatively new facts on the ground were emerging and, as an immediate result, Minsk could no longer take geopolitics easy. In other words, Belarus started to realize the drawbacks of its position between the two centres of geopolitical gravity, which suddenly meant growing security risks and shrinking room for manoeuvre. The short-lived rapprochement ('reset') in Russian–Western relations that took place after Presidents Barack Obama and Dmitry Medvedev assumed office in their respective countries did ease tensions a little and, thus, relaxed the geopolitical environment for

To make matters worse, rising tensions between Russia and the West came across as being further aggravated by the Trump administration's policies towards China, which triggered the gradual demise of the post-Cold War arms control and strategic stability arrangements.

Belarus for a while. However, the 2013–14 events in and around Ukraine reignited the confrontation and Russian–Western relations dropped to the lowest point since the end of the Cold War.

To make matters worse, rising tensions between Russia and the West came across as being further aggravated by the Trump administration's policies towards China, which triggered the gradual demise of the post-Cold War arms control and strategic stability arrangements. The latter were of particular importance to Belarus's security, given where the country sits geographically. The assessment of the developments by the Belarusian government revealed that it quickly realized the multiple risks and threats that the situation implied and that the new facts on the ground required that Minsk adapt its foreign and security policies. According to the Belarusian Foreign Minister, Vladimir Makei:

> Unfortunately, today we are placed between two major geopolitical players — Russia on one side and the European Union on the other side. In other words, we are now between two large fires, which are, so to speak, in a state of enmity.[28]

27 Kremlin.ru (2007) *Speech and the Following Discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy*, available at: http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24034 (accessed 13 July 2020).

28 Belta.by (2018) *Foreign minister about situation around Belarus: We happened to be between two large fires*, available at: https://eng.belta.by/politics/view/

President Lukashenko put it even more emphatically: 'if we take at least one incautious step, we will collapse under the rubble of disagreements, conflicts and empires.'[29]

Thus, Belarus has experienced two major structural shifts since it became a sovereign state. The first one was about the 'unipolar moment' and the waning of geopolitical tensions, whereas the second carried the opposite implications – growing geopolitical confrontation between Russia and the West. In other words, the second shift re-emphasized Belarus's in-between position and confronted it with the utmost challenge of finding the most effective policy to provide for its national security and, if possible, maximize its international opportunities. In what follows, the paper offers an account of Belarus's responses to the structural shifts and shows how the non-alignment spirit became the cornerstone of the country's grand strategy amid growing geopolitical tensions.

Means of strategy: from an alignment to a non-alignment spirit

In response to the first structural shift – the 'unipolar moment' – Minsk concluded a strategic deal with Russia whereby the two countries essentially pooled their exclusive resources: Belarus provided its geopolitical resources in exchange for Russia's economic resources. In other words, the strategic bargain meant that Belarus, given its crucial geostrategic significance for Russian security, committed to being Moscow's loyal military and political ally, whereas Russia offered highly beneficial economic conditions to Minsk (in particular, low oil and gas prices, and privileged access to the Russian market for Belarusian producers, as well as to loans and other financial instruments). Guided by that logic, Minsk joined two collective security arrangements with Moscow. On the bilateral track, an advanced level of defence cooperation was established within the framework of the Union State of Belarus and Russia. And multilaterally, Belarus joined the Collective Security Treaty, which later became the Collective Security Treaty Organization.

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foreign-minister-about-situation-around-belarus-we-happened-to-be-between-two-large-fires-110733-2018 (accessed 12 July 2020).

29 Belta.by (2020) *Lukashenko: One wrong move can get Belarus buried under rubble of international conflicts*, available at: https://eng.belta.by/president/view/lukashenko-one-wrong-move-can-get-belarus-buried-under-rubble-of-international-conflicts-131353-2020/ (accessed 12 July 2020).

It would still be wrong to say that, within that bargain, Belarus started to bandwagon with Russia on all international issues and yielded effective control of its security and foreign policies to Moscow, as the shelter theory would expect.[30] Several constitutional amendments that were enacted in the 1990s and early 2000s did not alter Article 18 of the Constitution, which pledges to make Belarus a neutral and nuclear-free state.[31] Somewhat ironically, in the 2001 edition of the National Security Concept, only two lines separated the following, seemingly opposing, aims: 'creating conditions for […] achieving the long-term goal – obtaining of the neutral status' and strengthening 'military and political cooperation in the frameworks of the Union State Treaty and the Collective Security Treaty.'[32] On top

While the Belarusian leadership realized the urgent need to adapt its foreign and security policies, it was equally obvious that a militarily allied nation has no easy and linear options for that.

of that, in 1997, Belarus became an observer and then in 1998 joined the NAM, whereas the 2002 military doctrine seemed to have departed from neutrality and put an overwhelming emphasis on the alliance with Russia.[33]

After the 2008 Russo–Georgian war and the 2014 crises in and around Ukraine, the structural pressures changed dramatically – and so did Minsk's policy responses. While the Belarusian leadership realized the urgent need to adapt its foreign and security policies, it was equally obvious that a militarily allied nation has no easy and linear options for that. One option – leaving the bilateral and multilateral security arrangements with Russia – was off the table, as it would immediately destroy Belarus's relations with Russia and, thus, have highly detrimental effects for the country's security and economic well-being. Another seemingly effortless option, bandwagoning with Russia with a view to ensuring a

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30 Bailes, A. J. K., Thayer, B. A. and Thorhallsson, B. "Alliance Theory and Alliance 'Shelter': The Complexities of Small State Alliance Behaviour," *Third World Thematics: A TWQ Journal*, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 9-26.

31 Law.by (2004) *Constitution of the Republic of Belarus of 1994*, available at: http://law.by/document/?guid=3871&p0=V19402875e (accessed 12 July 2020).

32 Pravo.levonevsky.org (2001) *Kontseptsiya natsional'noi bezopasnosti Respubliki Belarus [National Security Concept of the Republic of Belarus]*, available at: http://pravo.levonevsky.org/bazaby11/republic42/text232.htm (accessed July 15, 2020).

33 Main, S. J. (2002) "The Military Doctrine of the Republic of Belarus", *Conflict Studies Research Centre*, available at: https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/155595/Belarus%202002.pdf (accessed 5 July 2020).

security shelter from Moscow, was equally unacceptable. Under the circumstances of escalating Russian–Western military and political tensions, it would amount to placing Belarus at the geographical forefront of that confrontation without having a say, let alone control, over what Moscow does vis-à-vis the West, even when the ally's actions implied direct consequences for Belarus's security.[34] As a result, it would inevitably lead to the erosion of Belarusian sovereignty.

Drawing on that assessment, Minsk was looking for non-linear ways of adapting its foreign and security policies. As Makei put it, 'Belarus would like to find a wise positive balance in relations with Russia and the European Union as well as other Western nations.'[35] This very wording originated from a clearly non-aligned analysis of the core causes of Belarus's geopolitical problems. Exactly as was the case within the NAM in the 1960s,[36] Minsk identified those causes in the struggle of great powers for dominance.[37] And, also similar to the NAM's positions during the Cold War, Belarus offered a vision of a 'wise positive balance' that rested on its de-facto non-aligned stance on the Russian–Ukrainian conflict and a large number of initiatives in the spirit of non-alignment.

It took Minsk a while, and some trial-and-error learning, to work out a holistic stance on the Russian–Ukrainian conflict and the geopolitical confrontation it triggered. Over time, Belarus's adaptation efforts evolved into a policy that can be defined as 'situational neutrality.'[38] Beyond the conflict in Ukraine,

34 Preiherman, Y. (2020) "Pandemic Heightens Need to Reset Belarus-Russia Ties", *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, available at: https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/05/27/pandemic-heightens-need-to-reset-belarus-russia-ties-pub-81909 (accessed 13 July 2020).

35 Belta.by (2018) *Foreign minister about situation around Belarus: We happened to be between two large fires*, available at: https://eng.belta.by/politics/view/foreign-minister-about-situation-around-belarus-we-happened-to-be-between-two-large-fires-110733-2018 (accessed 12 July 2020).

36 Abraham, *op.cit*, p. 211; Harshe, R. "India's Non-Alignment: An Attempt at Conceptual Reconstruction," *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 25, No. 7/8, 1990, p. 399.

37 Belta.by (2020) *Lukashenko: One wrong move can get Belarus buried under rubble of international conflicts*, available at: https://eng.belta.by/president/view/lukashenko-one-wrong-move-can-get-belarus-buried-under-rubble-of-international-conflicts-131353-2020/ (accessed 12 July 2020).

38 Melyantsou, D. (2019) *Situational Neutrality: A Conceptualisation*

the policy was supplemented by multiple peace-making and bridging initiatives. In particular, Belarus used bilateral and multilateral platforms to actively promote neutrally leaning ideas and a bridging agenda and tried to turn them into the trademark features of its international image.

A typical example is the article by President Lukashenko in Russia's *Izvestiya*, in which, while discussing the future of the Eurasian economic integration, he laid out the 'integration of integrations' concept, which would later become a 'red thread' in Belarus's international talking points.[39] At its heart is the idea that the Eurasian Economic Union and the EU should develop a close economic partnership with a view to creating a Greater Eurasia from Lisbon to Vladivostok, which would ensure security and prosperity on the continent. Belarus promoted a similar grand vision for the Eastern Partnership: 'the EaP should help build a prosperous and secure Europe without dividing lines and spheres of influence' where Belarus could serve as a 'bridge linking the Customs Union of Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan and the EU.'[40] Minsk fostered the same ideas during its 2017 chairmanship in the Central European Initiative under the overarching slogan *Promoting Connectivity in a Wider Europe*.[41] Belarus promoted the same types of ideas in the military security realm. There, it went as far as to decline Russia's requests to establish a military airbase on Belarusian territory, citing, inter alia, concerns that a base would undermine stability and security in the region.[42]

Attempt, Minsk Dialogue Council on International Relations, available at: http://minskdialogue.by/en/research/opinions/situational-neutrality-a-conceptualization-attempt (accessed 15 July 2020).

39 Lukashenka, A. (2011) "O sud'bakh nashei integratsii" [About the Fate of Our Integration], *Izvestiya*, available at: https://iz.ru/news/504081 (accessed 14 July 2020).

40 Korosteleva, E. "Belarusian Foreign Policy in a Time of Crisis," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol. 27, No. 3-4, 2011: 575.

41 Mfa.gov.by (2017) *Presidency Agenda*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus, available at: http://mfa.gov.by/upload/17.02.24_Presidency_priority_eng.pdf (accessed 18 July 2020).

42 Naviny.by (2019) *Makei o rossiiskoi aviabaze: nokakogo smysla v nei net [Makei on the Russian airbase: It is pointless]*, available at: https://naviny.by/new/20191001/1569905103-makey-o-rossiyskoy-aviabaze-nikakogo-smysla-v-ney-net (accessed 15 July 2020).

Conclusions

The application of Kitchen's model of grand strategy formation to analysing Belarus's foreign policy highlights a clear switch of gears by Minsk in response to the structural shift that undermined the 'unipolar moment' and brought back great power confrontation. Importantly, as a neoclassical realist model, it demonstrates that the change was not just automatically imposed by the new facts on the ground, but rather became reality after a strategic assessment by Belarusian policy makers.

In light of this dilemma, Minsk had no other option but to pursue a policy with multiple non-linear elements rooted in the non-alignment spirit, which in the end turned into a grand strategy streamlining all foreign and security policy thinking.

The post-2008 structural shift exposed Belarus's multiple geopolitical vulnerabilities as a small in-between state and thus necessitated a cautious policy aimed at minimizing security risks and maximizing international opportunities. Ideally, this implied the need to create room for an independent foreign policy, but Belarus's alliance with Russia naturally imposed certain limits on this aspiration, whereas leaving the alliance would be highly impractical and even dangerous. In light of this dilemma, Minsk had no other option but to pursue a policy with multiple non-linear elements rooted in the non-alignment spirit, which in the end turned into a grand strategy streamlining all foreign and security policy thinking.

In this regard, Belarus's engagement with non-alignment ideas went through a noteworthy evolution, similar to the experience of the NAM's founding members in the 1960s. When Belarus joined the NAM in 1998, its rationale was about a newly sovereign state strengthening its voice in the international system.[43] But, after 2008, the rationale, to use Abraham's wording, transformed into a 'conceptual frame that took as its first priority the need to overcome the bipolar division of the world.'[44]

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43 Antanovich, I. (2017) "Shagi k suverenitetu: kak Belarus 25 let nazad obrela nezavisimost" [How Belarus gained independence 25 years ago], *SB. Belarus Segodnya*, available at: https://www.sb.by/articles/uverenno-idti-svoim-kursom.html (accessed 15 July 2020).

44 Abraham, *op.cit*, p. 198.

Belarus: Between Non-Alignment, Neutrality, and Strategic Autonomy Options

Arseny Sivitsky*

After Belarus obtained independence in 1990, the evolution of the country's foreign policy identity has passed through several stages depending on the geopolitical environment around the country; in particular, the state of relations between the West and Russia. By the end of the 1990s, Belarus already appeared to be in a geopolitical deadlock. Its relations with the West deteriorated dramatically. Minsk also lost the battle for its strategic vision of the architecture and leadership role in the Union State of Belarus and Russia. Against this background, in 1998 Belarus took the decision to join the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in order to assess other foreign policy options. What the NAM's role should be in the evolution of Belarus's foreign policy identity, in comparison with alternative foreign policy options, forms the main research question of this article. Although the NAM played a significant role in helping to diversify the foreign policy of Minsk with third countries, it did not manage to completely resolve the strategic task of balancing the pressure and influence applied by the West and Russia on Belarus. The symbolic significance of membership of the NAM relates to the fact that it contributes to Belarus's strategic intention to become a neutral state, as recorded in national strategic concepts and doctrines. In practical terms, Europe's current security environment – determined by the 2008 Russo-Georgian war, the Russia–Ukraine conflict since 2014, and the subsequent political and military confrontation between Russia and the West – has become a testing ground for Belarus's foreign policy identity that can be characterized as de facto neutrality or non-alignment, even though Belarus takes part in political-military alliances together with Russia. However, these circumstances do not prevent Belarus from exercising independent foreign and military policies, as these are based on the phenomenon of the strategic autonomy of Belarus vis-à-vis Russia.

Keywords: Belarus, Russia, non-alignment, neutrality, strategic autonomy, Non-Aligned Movement

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At the Geopolitical Crossroads: Between the West and Russia

The adoption by the Supreme council of the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic on 27 July 1990 of the 'Declaration on the State Sovereignty of the Republic Belarus', and giving it the status of a constitutional law on 25 August 1991, marked the beginning of a qualitatively new stage in the country's development. Realizing its natural right to self-determination as a nation, the Republic of Belarus began to pursue an independent foreign policy, the final goals of which included making the country's territory a nuclear-free zone and the republic itself a neutral state.[1] The Constitution of Belarus of 1994 and its new editions of 1996 and 2004 also proclaimed these strategic foreign policy goals as main priorities.[2]

However, when Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko came to power in 1994, Belarus proclaimed political-military and economic integration with the Russian Federation as a new strategic foreign policy priority. This integration did not occur immediately, however. Rather, Belarus's geopolitical pivot to Russia occurred only after changes in Belarusian domestic politics and the reaction of Western states to them.

Initially, Belarus was quite open to co-operating with the West. In the early 1990s, Minsk surrendered its Soviet-legacy nuclear arsenal to Russia and, in December 1994, Belarus signed the 'Budapest Memorandum' in exchange for security assurances and guarantees from the United Kingdom, the United States, and Russia not to use economic and political sanctions. In March 1995, President Lukashenko visited Brussels, where he signed a Partnership Cooperation Agreement, which he claimed was the first important step on Belarus's path to joining the European Union.[3] The agreement foresaw the formation of a free trade area

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1 National Legal Internet Portal of the Republic of Belarus, *Declaration of the Supreme Council of the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic on the State Sovereignty of the Republic Belarus, Article 10*, 27 July 1990, available at: https://pravo.by/document/?guid=3871&p0=V09000193 (Accessed June 27, 2020).

2 National Legal Internet Portal of the Republic of Belarus, *Constitution of the Republic of Belarus, Section 1, Article 18*, 15 March 1994, available at: https://pravo.by/pravovaya-informatsiya/normativnye-dokumenty/konstitutsiya-respubliki-belarus/ (Accessed June 27, 2020).

3 Fedorov, A., "Belarus – EU. One step forward, all others – stumbling into a place," *Naviny*, 3 December 2015, available at: https://naviny.by/rubrics/eu/2015/12/03/ic_articles_627_190398 (Access date: June 27, 2020).

in 1998 if Belarus met the political, economic, and democratic criteria. Then an Association Agreement between the EU and Belarus would follow, which would provide a basis for potential future membership.

However, by the end of 1994, a serious economic crisis caused Lukashenko's approval rating to fall sharply. The opposition accused him and his close circle of corruption. As domestic political problems accumulated, Belarus began pursuing integration with Russia to gain the latter's support.[4] In February 1995, the two countries signed the Treaty of Friendship, Neighbourhood and Cooperation. This document marked the beginning of integration between the two countries. Belarus received energy resources at preferential prices and access to the Russian market.

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At the same time, Lukashenko announced his first referendum on integration with Russia, official status for the Russian language, and swapping the country's then white-red-white state flag and *Pahonya* national emblem to slightly altered symbols from the Belarusian Soviet Socialistic Republic (BSSR). Lukashenko easily won the referendum in May 1995, having stirred up strong pro-Soviet nostalgia within Belarusian society (just four years prior, 83% of Belarusians voted to preserve the USSR). One year later, a new Treaty on the Community of Belarus and Russia was signed. In 1996, Lukashenko initiated another referendum that proposed transforming Belarus from a parliamentary presidential republic into a super-presidential state with full concentration of powers in the hands of the president.

The West did not recognize the results of the 1996 referendum owing to its incompatibility with democratic standards. The EU immediately froze the ratification procedure for the Belarus–EU Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. Then, in 1997, the EU and USA imposed restrictions against Belarus for the first time, prohibiting high-level official contacts and cancelling technical assistance apart from for the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone. These restrictions launched almost 20 years of Belarus's isolation

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4 Shraibman, A., "'I will not lead my country following the civilized world'. How Lukashenko has been changing foreign policy for 25 years," *TUT*, 12 July 2019, available at: https://news.tut.by/economics/643435.html (Access date: June 27, 2020).

from the West. They also prompted a turning point in Belarus's relations with Russia.

Therefore, from the mid-1990s, Minsk signed a number of economic, political, and military treaties with Moscow, culminating in the agreement establishing the Union State of Belarus and Russia in 1999. The essence of this strategic deal was that Belarus, in contrast to other post-Soviet states, renounced its Euro-Atlantic aspirations to integration with the EU and NATO and agreed to take part in Russia-led integration processes. Afraid of NATO's eastward expansion and distracted by its Chechen wars, Moscow, in return, guaranteed preferential energy supplies and privileged access to financial resources and of Belarusian goods to the Russian market.

In 1997, then Vice Prime Minister Anatoly Chubais and the Russian tycoon and Deputy Secretary of the Security Council of Russia, Boris Berezovsky, did their best to block a draft joint constitution that hypothetically could allow Lukashenko to become the leader of the Union State. Anatoly Chubais suggested a model of integration of two countries based on the principles of federalization, while Lukashenko insisted on the equality of two countries. Ironically, in response to Lukashenko's ambitions to become a leader of a new integrated union, they started to promote Vladimir Putin as the successor for then-President Boris Yeltsin. At the beginning of December 1999, Lukashenko and Yeltsin signed the Union State Treaty, but several weeks later Yeltsin announced Vladimir Putin as his successor. The Treaty document included an ambitious agenda of further integration of the two countries and contained clauses on a single constitution, parliament, joint defence and foreign policy, currency, customs, taxes, symbols, and much more. In many ways, it was at the time and remains today a symbolic declaration owing, in part, to contradictions in its perception by Moscow and Minsk, but, more importantly to Russia's geopolitical ambitions to incorporate Belarus into Russia under the guise of a deeper integration within the Union State.[5]

Already by the end of the 1990s, Belarus appeared to be in a geopolitical deadlock. On the one hand, relations with the West

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[5] Sivitsky, A., "Belarus-Russia: From a Strategic Deal to an Integration Ultimatum," *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, December 2019, available at: https://www.fpri.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/rfp3-sivitsky.pdf (Access date: June 27, 2020).

had deteriorated dramatically. On the other hand, Minsk lost the battle for its strategic vision of the architecture of the Union State of Belarus and Russia. This was especially evident in 2002 when Russian President Vladimir Putin suggested that Belarus join Russia as a federal district, also proposing that the Union State be put on a legal basis under the Russian constitution.[6]

Belarus and the Non-Aligned Movement

Against this background, in 1998 Belarus took a decision to join the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in order to test another foreign policy option. Minsk regarded the NAM as an international organization that was aspiring to occupy a niche as a political gathering that sought to oppose the West's unilateral approaches and actions on the global stage. From the Belarusian side it was important that the NAM built its work on the ten Bandung principles, including respect for the sovereignty, equality, and territorial integrity of all states; rejection of the possibility of an unconstitutional change of government, as well as external attempts to change the regime of government; the preservation of the inalienable right for each state freely, without interference from outside, to determine its political, social, economic, and cultural system; rejection of aggression and direct or indirect use of force; and non-application of any unilateral economic, political, or military measures.[7]

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Harsh criticism of Alexander Lukashenko's policies by the West, as well as the first gas and oil wars, accompanied by political tensions between Belarus and Russia in the early 2000s, pushed Minsk to seek options to balance this pressure. The NAM could provide such an opportunity.

In September 2006, Alexander Lukashenko delivered a speech at the 14th Summit of the NAM in Havana, Cuba, in which he called on the Movement to become an independent global centre

6 Kremlin.ru, *Answers to journalists' questions at the end of the Russian-Belarusian negotiations*, 14 August 2002, available at: http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/21684, (Access date: June 27, 2020)

7 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus, *Non-Aligned Movement*, available at: http://mfa.gov.by/en/mulateral/organization/list/bc1f7d8446a445ed.html (Accessed June 27, 2020).

of political force. According to him, the unipolar world order of those days was demonstrating its failure and non-viability. Thus, the NAM should work more actively to create a new, fairer world order. To achieve this goal, he said, a clear programme of action was needed for the gradual, but irreversible, formation of a multipolar world. President Lukashenko especially emphasized the need for reviving the principle of solidarity in the NAM – the most important tool for upholding the interests of all, especially small and vulnerable states. According to President Lukashenko, the movement had to decisively stand up for the political protection of its members that had been subjected to external pressure or aggression. The Belarusian leader also drew attention to the need for increasing the active economic co-operation of the NAM member states, maximizing the use of preferences for fellow members, and proclaiming that this would form a powerful economic component of the movement.

Speaking about attempts of the West to put pressure upon Belarus and interfere in its domestic affairs, President Lukashenko assumed that they were motivated by the country's independent policy aimed at protecting the country's sovereignty and interests, and its important geopolitical position at the centre of Europe, which interested both the USA and the EU.

Although he connected the Western pressure on Belarus with the country's course regarding co-operation with Russia, Alexander Lukashenko also noted that Belarus was creating a so-called 'external arc' of its foreign policy, from Cuba through the countries of Latin America, Africa, the Persian Gulf, Iran, China, Vietnam, and Malaysia.[8]

However, the potential for Belarus's cooperation with the NAM member states within the framework of the movement was not fully implemented. The Non-Aligned Movement was more a platform for discussing the most common global problems rather than an instrument for resolving specific tasks on a multilateral basis. Belarus had to switch to other regional organizations, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, or bilateral formats

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8 President of the Republic of Belarus, *Non-Aligned Movement Should Become an Independent World Political Power Center*, 16 September 2002, available at: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/dvizhenie-neprisoedinenija-dolzhno-stat-samostojatelnym-mirovym-tsentrom-politicheskoj-sily-2510/ (Accessed June 27, 2020).

of co-operation with some of the other NAM member states within the concept of the 'external foreign policy arc'; these included China, Venezuela, Iran, and others.

Only in 2019 did Belarus recommence its interest in co-operation with the NAM. In October 2019, at the 18th Summit of the Movement in Baku, the Belarusian side suggested holding a conference on a new world order in 2021. The NAM member states must first of all clearly articulate their collective vision of a new world order, built on the principles of peace, justice, and prosperity for all. Belarus, in this context, offered a number of ideas and urged the chairman of the Movement to consider holding a conference in 2021 that would lead to the adoption and subsequent implementation of a long-term strategic document. According to the Belarusian vision, this conference will be of great symbolic significance because, in September 2021, the NAM celebrates its 60th anniversary.[9] This initiative should be considered in the light of another one that Minsk has been promoting since 2016 – a new grand peacekeeping initiative, the so-called Helsinki 2.0 Process.

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Towards neutrality: Conceptual basis and geopolitical factors

Europe's present security environment – determined by the 2008 Russo–Georgian war, the Russian–Ukrainian conflict of 2014, and the subsequent political and military standoff between Russia and the West – has become a testing ground for Belarus's foreign policy identity. The *modus operandi* applied by Belarus in this geopolitical environment is that usually associated with the behaviour of neutral states. Moreover, the Belarusian side has been claiming neutrality as the 'new normal' of its foreign policy.[10]

In September 2015, President Lukashenko, speaking at a conference dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the acquisition of permanent neutrality by Turkmenistan, compared the multi-vector foreign policy of Belarus with the neutrality of that country.

9 Belta.by, *Belarus offers the Non-Aligned Movement to hold a conference on the new world order,* 26 October 2019, available at: https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-predlagaet-dvizheniju-neprisoedinenija-provesti-konferentsiju-o-novom-miroporjadke-367146-2019/ (Accessed June 27, 2020).

10 Chupris, O. and Smirnova, S. "The Neutrality of the Republic of Belarus as

Belarus, like Turkmenistan, supports the unconditional priority of political and diplomatic methods in resolving any international conflicts, including those that have erupted in the Eastern European region. Belarus, like Turkmenistan, in a framework of positive neutrality, has a constructive position regarding maintaining peace, security, and stability, and developing relationships of friendship and co-operation with all countries. Belarus, in its foreign policy, proceeds from the principles of the equality of states, non-use of force or threat of force, inviolability of borders, peaceful settlement of disputes, non-interference in internal affairs, and other generally recognized principles and norms of international law.[11]

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Indeed, from the very beginning of the Russia–Ukraine conflict, Belarus abstained from engaging in the crisis despite its formal status as Russia's strategic military and political ally. In addition, the Belarusian side immediately provided neutral negotiating venues in Minsk for the Customs Union–Ukraine–European Union summit in August 2014, then for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's (OSCE) Trilateral Contact Group, and finally for the Normandy Four's (Ukraine, Russia, Germany, and France) summit in February 2015, thereby facilitating the adoption of the Minsk I and Minsk II ceasefire accords.

Since late 2016, the Belarusian leadership has been actively promoting a new grand peacekeeping initiative, similar to the Helsinki Process of the 1970s that resulted in the adoption of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, for fostering pan-European dialogue on measures to strengthen trust, security, and co-operation. According to Belarusian officials, such a broad dialogue could be aimed at overcoming the existing contradictions in relations between the countries in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regions, including the United States, the EU, Russia, and China. Although

Legal Provision," *Moscow Journal of International Law*, No. 4, 2017, pp.107-115.

11 President of the Republic of Belarus, *Speech at the International Conference "Neutrality Policies: International Cooperation for Peace, Security and Development",* 12 December 2015, available at: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/uchastie-v-mezhdunarodnoj-konferentsii-politika-nejtraliteta-mezhdunarodnoe-sotrudnichestvo-vo-imja-mira-12705/ (Accessed June 27, 2020).

Minsk's ambitious initiative still lacks substance and is irrelevant to current geopolitical tendencies or ongoing informal discussions within the framework of the OSCE Structured Dialogue, it clearly demonstrates Belarus's intention to avoid involvement in Russia's confrontation with the West.[12]

Today, Belarus is widely associated with being a neutral platform for diplomatic negotiations, and the country has far-reaching ambitions to become a new Switzerland or Finland in Europe's East. Nevertheless, it remains problematic to call Belarus a 'neutral state', especially because of its formal membership of military and political alliances with Russia, such as within the frameworks of the Union State and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). Minsk keeps open the options of establishing new military coalitions or asking for military assistance from countries other than Russia and CSTO or CIS member states, including countries that have signed bilateral strategic partnership agreements with Belarus (for instance, China).[13]

Instead, Belarus can be defined as a donor of regional stability and security because this concept accurately represents a composite element of Belarus's foreign policy identity. Its roots date back to the National Security Concept of 2010, but it continues to play a decisive role in determining Belarus's *modus operandi* within the current geopolitical environment.

According to the 2010 National Security Concept, Belarus considers itself a responsible and predictable partner as well as a contributor to international and regional security. The country is identified as a successful, independent, and sovereign European state that does not belong to any of the world's power centres, adopts a peaceful foreign policy, and intends to set up conditions for acquiring neutral status. Furthermore, the document notes that Belarus seeks to develop a 'belt of good neighbourliness' along its external border in all dimensions: military, political,

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12 Sivitski, A., "Belarus – From crisis to new initiatives," in *Perceptions of the OSCE in Europe and the USA,* Alexandra Dienes and Reinhard Krumm (eds), Vienna: FES Regional Office for Cooperation and Peace in Europe, 2018, pp. 19-28.

13 National Legal Internet Portal of the Republic of Belarus, *Military Doctrine of the Republic of Belarus, Chapter 5, Article 15*, 20 July 2016, available at: https://www.pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=H11600412&p1=1 (Accessed July 1, 2020).

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cultural, informational, social, and economic.[14]

Thus, Belarus's contributions to regional stability and security do not end with initiatives aimed at facilitating diplomatic negotiations on the Russia–Ukraine conflict or Russian–Western tensions. The most important contribution relates to its so-called security guarantees, which aim at preventing foreign countries from establishing military bases on Belarusian territory or using it to commit acts of aggression against third states. Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenka formulated these guarantees in Kyiv, immediately after the start of the Russia–Ukraine war in 2014. In accordance with them, Minsk will not permit the Russian Armed Forces to use Belarusian territory to attack Ukraine from the northern direction, but in 'extreme cases' the Belarusian side will warn Kyiv 24 hours in advance if Russia tries to do this illegally.[15] Later, similar security guarantees were reaffirmed to all neighbouring countries, including Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia.

In September 2015, Moscow unilaterally announced plans to deploy a Russian military airbase, directly subordinate to Moscow, on Belarusian territory without Minsk's prior consent.[16] Moscow's decision in 2015 was completely provocative and unacceptable to Minsk. President Lukashenko expressed his refusal to host the base in a tough manner, emphasizing that there were no relevant geopolitical or military-technical motivations for such a step. Thereby, Belarus confirmed its commitment to regional security guarantees in a practical way. The most evident reason for the refusal of the Russian base was that it would have

14 National Legal Internet Portal of the Republic of Belarus, *National security concept of the Republic of Belarus, Chapter 1, Article 6; Chapter 8, Article 49*, 9 November 2010, available at: https://pravo.by/document/?guid=3871&p0=P31000575 (Accessed July 1, 2020).

15 Gordonua.com, *Turchynov: When the seizures of our military units began, I tried to fly to the Crimea by helicopter to organize the defense of the airfield. Avakov kept me (Interview),* 11 April 2018, available at: https://gordonua.com/publications/turchinov-kogda-nachalis-zahvaty-nashih-chastej-ja-pytalsja-na-vertolete-vyletet-v-krym-chtoby-organizovat-oboronu-aerodroma-menja-uderzhal-avakov-239748.html (Accessed June 28, 2020).

16 State system of legal information of the Russian Federation, *Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus about the Russian air base on the territory of the Republic of Belarus*, 7 September 2015, available at: http://pravo.gov.ru/proxy/ips/?docbody=&nd=102378121&intelsearch

compromised Minsk's status as a peacemaker and intermediary in negotiations. In addition, it would have provided Russia with direct and uncontrolled access to Belarusian territory, thereby threatening neighbouring countries, primarily Ukraine. However, the Belarusian leadership also took lessons from the Russian–Ukrainian conflict, observing how Russia had used its pre-deployed Black Sea Fleet military bases to attack Ukraine and undermine its sovereignty and territorial integrity.[17]

Nevertheless, Moscow's plans clearly indicated a strategic intention to establish a permanent military presence on and maintain access to Belarusian territory, thus transforming Belarus into its military outpost at the centre of Europe. However, although Minsk and Moscow are formally strategic military allies according to defensive pacts within the Union State and the CSTO, Russia still does not have military bases in Belarus (there are two non-combat military-technical facilities leased by Russia). Furthermore, during peacetime, Russia is not allowed to use Belarusian territory without an official invitation and permission from Minsk. Without such official authorization, any Russian unilateral military activity in Belarus could be considered an act of aggression.[18]

On the other hand, if Belarus had agreed to deploy a Russian military airbase in 2015, the Russian military build-up would not have stopped there. It would most likely have resembled the Syrian model, whereby the deployment of a Russian Air Force Group was soon followed by the appearance of other military units, including air-defence, special operations, and ground forces. In both cases (Syria and Belarus), Russia proposed signing a very general framework agreement that would allow it to deploy additional forces under the umbrella of the extraterritorial

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=%E2%EE%E5%ED%ED%E0%FF+%E1%E0%E7%E0+%E2+%E1%E5%EB%E0%F0%F3%F1%E8 (Accessed June 28, 2020).

17 Delo.ua, *Occupation of Crimea: events digest*, 14 April 2014, available at: https://delo.ua/econonomyandpoliticsinukraine/konflikt-v-krymu-lichnyj-sostav-aviacionnoj-brigady-v-novofedoro-229338/ (Accessed July 1, 2020).

18 Interfax.ru, *Arrangement of the border zone on the border of the Russian Federation and Belarus is possible only after demarcation, without it the situation is fraught with conflict – Lukashenko*, 2 February 2017, available at: https://interfax.by/news/policy/vnutrennyaya_politika/1219742/ (Accessed July 1, 2020).

airbase.[19] Moscow was able to actually follow through on these plans in Syria; but not, so far, in Belarus.

Thus, intentions to behave in a neutral way have deep roots in Belarus's strategic culture.

Strategic Autonomy vis-à-vis Russia

Although a strategic military and political ally of Russia, Belarus preserves enough checks and balances to block any unilateral decision by Moscow within their joint political and military alliances. That is how Belarus has managed to abstain from Russia's conflicts with Georgia (2008), Ukraine (2014), its operation in Syria (2015), and the geopolitical standoff with the West.

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Treaties and agreements signed by Minsk and Moscow provide a basis for a so-called strategic deal: Belarus accepted an obligation to join the various ongoing integration processes with Russia and agreed to renounce its Euro-Atlantic aspirations, in contrast with several other neighbouring post-Soviet states that had already decided to join NATO and the European Union. In light of NATO and the EU's eastward enlargement, Belarus suddenly began to play a significant role for Russia's national security in the western strategic direction, particularly with respect to the Kaliningrad exclave. In turn, Russia agreed to provide trade, economic, and military-technical support in exchange for a certain level of geopolitical loyalty from Belarus. Security and military integration became one of the cornerstones of this bilateral strategic deal.[20]

However, despite this deep level of integration, Belarus has managed to preserve a considerable degree of strategic autonomy within its political-military alliance with Russia. The Belarusian

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19 Electronic Fund of Legal and Normative Technical Documentation Konsortsium Kodeks, *Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Syrian Arab Republic on the deployment of an aviation group of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation on the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic*, 14 October 2016, available at: http://docs.cntd.ru/document/420329053 (Accessed July 1, 2020).

20 Sivitsky, A., "Belarus — Russia: from a strategic deal to an asymmetric dependence," *Center for Strategic and Foreign Policy Studies*, 28 May 2019, available at: https://forstrategy.org/en/posts/20190528 (Accessed June 29, 2020).

government succeeded in ensuring that the institutional architecture of the joint military components were all designed in a way that gives Minsk the option to exercise veto power over any of Moscow's decisions inconsistent with Belarus's national interests. This is one of the main reasons why Belarus never became involved in any recent Russian military adventures, including the war with Georgia (2008), the ongoing conflict with Ukraine, or the operations in Syria and Libya.

However, despite this deep level of integration, Belarus has managed to preserve a considerable degree of strategic autonomy within its political-military alliance with Russia.

For instance, all political and military decisions within the Union State framework are taken and approved by the Supreme State Council, the main collective decision-making body. This consists of the presidents, prime ministers, and heads of the lower and upper chambers of the parliaments of both states; all decisions are taken on the basis of consensus. The Supreme State Council is responsible for co-ordinating joint plans for the development and use of Russia and Belarus's armed forces and military infrastructure.

According to the 1998 Joint Defence Concept of Belarus and Russia and the 2001 Military Doctrine of the Union State, joint military components and action plans are activated only by a consensus decision of the Belarusian and Russian leaderships within the Supreme State Council in wartime.[21] The same rules apply during a period of growing military threat ('threatened period').[22]

Currently the Union State consists of two joint military components: the Regional Group of Forces (RGF) and the Unified Regional Air-Defence System (URADS). Both are usually trained during *Zapad* ('West') joint strategic exercises as well as during *Schit Soyuza* ('Union Shield') joint operational exercises. *Zapad* exercises take place every four years (most recently held in 2009, 2013, and 2017) on the territory of Belarus and partially Russia; whereas *Schit Soyuza* drills, carried out on the territory of Russia, are held two years after each *Zapad* exercise (2011, 2015, and 2019).

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21 Conventions.ru, *Joint Defense Concept of Belarus and Russia, Article 18, 21*, 22 January 1998, available at: http://conventions.ru/view_base.php?id=16792 (Accessed June 30, 2020).

22 State system of legal information of the Russian Federation, *Military Doctrine of the Union State, Chapter 1, Article 1.12, 1.13*, 26 December 2001, available at: http://docs.cntd.ru/document/456089527 (Accessed July 1, 2020).

The Regional Group of Forces comprises all ground and special operations units of the Belarusian Armed Forces as well as the 1st Guards Tank Army (military unit 73621, Moscow region, Bakovka) of the Russian Western Military District.[23] The RGF does not exist in peacetime. During a threatened period, however, the force's Joint Command is formed on the basis of the Ministry of Defence (General Staff of the Armed Forces) of Belarus. In practical terms, this means that the position of RGF Commander is permanent (non-rotational) and is always occupied by the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Belarus; under his command and control is the Belarusian Army and the Russian 1st Guards Tank Army. In turn, he is subordinate and reports directly to the Supreme State Council of the Union State.

The URADS includes all air forces and air-defence forces of the Belarusian Army as well as the 6th Air Forces and Air-Defence Forces Army, located on the territory of the Western Military District of the Russian Federation (military unit 09436, St Petersburg).[24]

In contrast to the RGF, which is organized and deployed only during a threatened period, the URADS exists and functions on an ongoing basis in peacetime. The position of the URADS commander is rotational but must still be approved by a consensus decision of the presidents of Belarus and Russia. During a period of growing military threat (threatened period) or in wartime, the URADS becomes a composite part of the Regional Group of Forces (RGF). From a practical point of view, this means that the URADS commander subordinates to the RGF commander, represented by the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Belarus.

To date, no Russian troops are stationed on the territory of Belarus, either on a permanent or rotational basis; nor is there any

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23 The 1st Guards Tank Army was established in 2014 and substituted the 20th Combined Arms Army (military unit 89425, Voronezh) after the latter was deployed on the border with Ukraine to assist Russia-backed separatists in the military conflict in Donbas.

24 Sivitsky, A., "New Union State Military Doctrine Will Not Change Status Quo in Belarusian-Russian Military Alliance," *Eurasia Daily Monitor, The Jamestown Foundation*, 11 December 2018, available at: https://jamestown.org/program/new-union-state-military-doctrine-will-not-change-status-quo-in-belarusian-russian-military-alliance/ (Accessed June 29, 2020).

pre-deployed Russian military equipment in storage in Belarus. It can be brought into the Union State only in a threatened period and in wartime, but still requires the Supreme State Council to first ratify this decision on the basis of consensus.[25]

Thus, there is in no way a military 'Schengen zone' between Belarus and Russia: Moscow is not legally permitted to use Belarusian territory for military purposes without Minsk's authorization.

Today, the only form of Russian military presence inside Belarus consists of two Soviet-era military-technical facilities, owned by the Belarusian government but rented out to Russia: the 43rd Communications Centre of the Russian Navy (Vileika), with 350 officers and midshipmen, and the Gantsevichi early-warning radar station of the Volga-type UHF range (Kletsk district), with 600 military personnel. They do not possess combat capabilities and are not considered military bases according to agreements signed in 1995 and set to expire in 2021.

To date, no Russian troops are stationed on the territory of Belarus, either on a permanent or rotational basis; nor is there any pre-deployed Russian military equipment in storage in Belarus.

Since at least 2015, however, Russia has been demonstrating that it is no longer satisfied with the *status quo* regarding the Union State. In particular, by preserving its considerable veto power within this supranational format, Belarus actually constrains the Kremlin's strategic intentions. The constraints come from not allowing Russian military bases on its soil and abstaining from involvement in Russia's conflict with Ukraine and confrontation with the West.

Nevertheless, Russia continues its attempts to push the issue of a military base in Belarus. In September 2015, the commander of the troops of Russia's Western Military District, Anatoly Sidorov, proposed including the joint Regional Group of Forces within the structure of the group of forces in the Western strategic direction.[26] In other words, he proposed, in effect,

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25 National Center for Legal Information of the Republic of Belarus, Agreement on joint technical support of the Regional Group of Troops (Forces) of the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation, Article 7, 12 December 2017, available at: http://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=A01600091&p1=1&p5=0 (Accessed Jul 1, 2020).

26 Ria.ru, *ZVO: The Union Shield exercises showed the need for contacts between Russian Federation and Belarus*, 21 October 2015, available at: https://ria.ru/defense_safety/20151021/1305697600.html (Accessed June 29, 2020).

reassigning the Armed Forces of Belarus, which are part of the RGF, to the command of the Russian Western Military District (Joint Strategic Command 'West'). It is worth pointing out that, in 2016, Russia implemented this model in its relations with Armenia. The Russian-Armenian Joint Group of Forces (JGF) is included in and assigned to the Southern Military District (Southern Joint Strategic Command) and the commander of the Southern Military District can exercise command and control over the JGF in a threatened period.[27]

At the end of 2015, Russian Minister of Defence Sergei Shoigu proposed completing the formation of a joint military organization of the Union State by 2018.[28] Specifically, he suggested an in-depth integration of the military and security apparatuses of Belarus and Russia, with a joint decision-making centre in the Kremlin. Such a model has already been implemented with regard to Russia's military relations with the separatist (and Moscow-backed) Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, in 2014[29] and 2015,[30] respectively.

Collectively, the above-mentioned Russian proposals to Belarus demonstrate that Moscow no longer considers Minsk an equal partner from a formally institutional point of view and intends to reshape their military-political alliance by undermining Belarus's strategic autonomy. From this perspective, Moscow's so-called 'integration ultimatum' to Lukashenka's government, explicitly declared at the end of 2018, actually dates back to at least 2015. It clearly shows Russia's geopolitical intention to subordinate Belarus – politically, militarily, and economically – within the Union State framework. Integration models already tested by Moscow in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and to some degree Armenia,

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27 The Russian Government, *Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Armenia on a Joint Group of Troops (Forces), Article 6; Appendix 1, Paragraph 1, 3*, 3 November 2016, available at: http://static.government.ru/media/acts/files/0001201611080006.pdf (Accessed June 30, 2020).

28 Bsblog.info, *Moscow is interested in, Minsk is not*, 26 October 2015, available at: https://bsblog.info/moskva-zainteresovana-minsk-net/ (Accessed June 30, 2020).

29 President of Russia, *Treaty between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Abkhazia on Alliance and Strategic Partnership, Article 6, 7, 8*, 24 November 2014, available at: http://kremlin.ru/supplement/4783 (Accessed June 30, 2020).

30 President of Russia, *Treaty between the Russian Federation and the Republic of South Ossetia on Alliance and Integration, Article 1, 2, 3, 4*, 15 March 2015, available at: http://kremlin.ru/supplement/4819 (Accessed July 1, 2020).

give some idea of Russia's final goals regarding Belarus.

However, in response to these Russian efforts, Minsk is seeking to reassert and enhance its commitments to regional and international security, thereby preserving and expanding Belarus's strategic autonomy within the alliance with Russia, especially in light of the latter's coercion towards deeper integration.[31] However, in a short-term perspective, there is no chance for Minsk to withdraw from the Russia-led integration institutions owing to the potential harsh reaction from Moscow. Thus, the only available option is to strengthen the country's strategic autonomy *vis-à-vis* Russia.

Conclusions: A de facto Neutrality

The Belarus government's failure to play a leading role in the new integration alliance with Russia, the Union State, and its isolation by the West, impelled Belarus to seek an alternative foreign policy option through joining the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) at the end of the 1990s. Although the NAM played a significant role in helping to diversify the foreign policy of Minsk, it did not help to completely solve the strategic task of balancing the pressure and influence applied by the West and Russia on Belarus. Membership in the NAM has a primarily symbolic significance in contributing to Belarus's intention to become a neutral state.

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In practical terms, Belarus has been widely associated with a neutral platform for diplomatic negotiations over the Russia–Ukraine conflict of 2014, rather than progressing this through formal membership of the NAM. Moreover, the country's major contribution to regional security and stability is related to the so-called security guarantees that Minsk formulated towards all neighbouring states in the immediate wake of the Russia–Ukraine conflict and the subsequent Russia–West geopolitical standoff. The security guarantees assert that Belarus will not

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31 Sivitsky, A., "Belarus's Contribution to Security and Stability in Central and Eastern Europe: Regional Safeguards, Strategic Autonomy and National Defense Modernization," *The Jamestown Foundation*, 2 March 2020, Available at: https://jamestown.org/program/belaruss-contribution-to-security-and-stability-in-central-and-eastern-europe-regional-safeguards-strategic-autonomy-and-national-defense-modernization/ (Accessed July 1, 2020).

voluntarily allow its territory to be used by third countries to commit military aggression against neighbours and other foreign states. Regardless of its strategic political and military alliance with Russia, Belarus has managed to abstain from engaging in the conflict with Ukraine or Moscow's confrontation with the West. Moreover, Minsk has so far withstood Moscow's growing geopolitical pressure aimed at compromising these security guarantees by deploying Russian military bases and transforming Belarus into a source of security challenges and threats to other countries. Thus, the *modus operandi* of Belarus resembles the model of behaviour of a neutral state.

The intention to become a neutral state is contained in conceptual documents of Belarus relating to security and foreign policies and is a component part of its strategic culture. However, it is still problematic to consider Belarus a neutral country in a traditional sense owing to its formal membership in political-military alliances with Russia and the CSTO. However, Minsk's considerable level of strategic autonomy *vis-à-vis* Russia enables Belarus to carry out independent foreign and military policies even against the background of a significant level of geopolitical pressure from Russia's. From these perspectives, Belarus can be considered as a *de facto* neutral or non-aligned country.

The Concept of Non-Alignment in Ukrainian Strategic Thinking

Maryna Vorotnyuk*

This article showcases the relationship between Ukraine's policies of Euro-Atlantic integration and the non-alignment (neutrality or the non-bloc status) concept in a historical perspective. Being interwoven in the fabric of public discussions about the state's strategic orientation, both concepts have maintained their conflicting presence in the official discourse. The state's official course has oscillated between the two in a pendulum swing under the gravity of concrete political circumstances, calculus and timing. Initially, neutrality was a reflection of the quest of the newly independent state to safeguard its statehood. Because there was clearly a gap between the ideas of collective security, of which Ukraine has sought to be a part, and neutrality, there was, from the mid-1990s, a pronounced shift towards Euro-Atlantic integration as Ukraine's strategic goal. Later, non-bloc status was shown, on many occasions, to have been instrumentalized by the political class. It served as an escape strategy for a leadership disgruntled with the democratization pressure from the West or as an appeasement against Russian assertiveness. After the start of the Russian–Ukrainian war in 2014, the idea of neutrality lost its ground in the official discourse and was marginalized as it was seen as a product of Russian coercion.

Keywords: Ukraine, non-alignment, neutrality, Russia

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Introduction

The Ukrainian case is an embodiment of the conundrums posed by neutrality as a security option. Ukraine's precarious position between two antagonistic security systems since its independence has invited speculation that the country's own security interests and those of Russia and the West would be best served if Ukraine opted for neutrality and abstained from joining the Euro-Atlantic structures. Some commentators have regarded Ukraine's size, ethnic diversity, multi-layered national identity, and its being a 'phantom pain' for Russia as a natural prescription for neutrality. The Russian aggression against Ukraine since 2014 has reinvigorated the international debate on the relevance of neutrality, the repercussions of the changing security environment for European neutral states in general, and the applicability of neutrality as a problem-solving model for Ukraine in particular.

Ukrainian strategic thinking since early 1990s was nourished by the concepts of neutrality and non-alignment, or non-bloc, status (used interchangeably) alongside the ideas of multi-vectorism, Eurasianism and Euro-Atlanticism.

Ukrainian strategic thinking since early 1990s was nourished by the concepts of neutrality and non-alignment, or non-bloc, status (used interchangeably) alongside the ideas of multi-vectorism, Eurasianism and Euro-Atlanticism. From the early 2000s, when NATO membership became a tangible option on Ukraine's security agenda, up to 2014, one could witness a struggle of strategic narratives in a Ukrainian society that was oscillating between neutrality and a pro-Western orientation. The neutrality debate was a condensed representation of the identity struggles, fears, and apprehensions of a fragile, emergent democracy.

This paper sets out to describe the place of the neutrality concept in the strategic thinking of Ukraine. The aim of this study is to explore the relationship between the concepts of neutrality (non-alignment or non-bloc status) and Euro-Atlantic integration in Ukrainian public discussions. It explores the reasons for the oscillation of the official political course between the two in the past and the main pro and con arguments behind the domestic and international debate on neutrality as a security-enhancing model for Ukraine.

Oscillating between neutrality and the West, 1991–2005

Because of the divisive nature of the 'neutrality versus Euro-Atlantic integration' debate from the early 1990s, a clear-cut

definition of Ukraine's strategic goals was absent and there was general conceptual confusion around the issue. The record of the use of the neutrality concept in official discourse was quite patchy. The declaration of state sovereignty of 1990 positioned Ukraine as a neutral state.[1] However, the neutrality posture evolved: the initially declared permanent neutrality had to be reconciled with the elite's desire to promote Ukraine as a constituent part of the European security system. The tension between the two ideas was apparently recognized at the time. Symptomatically, in the early independence years, the Ukrainian leadership did not rule out the abandonment of neutral status and accession to NATO, should the international environment change.

The neutrality option represented a difficult balancing act between two conflicting pressures: that of Ukraine's desire to integrate with Europe, on one side, and its dependence on Russia, on the other.[2] After 1991, owing to the ties of interdependency, foreign policy and security thinking of its elite naturally turned around cooperation with Russia and within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), even though there were apprehensions about Russia's assertiveness. Ukraine was striving to obtain international support (hence its denuclearization policy), to have its borders recognized by its neighbours, and to settle the conflict issues with Russia.

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In the initial years, Ukraine's neutrality underwent significant changes. Only seven years passed from proclaiming permanent neutrality to agreeing on a distinctive partnership with NATO in 1997. According to the former Foreign Minister, Anatoliy Zlenko, this was a natural shift for a newly established state 'from initial, somewhat idealistic views to the understanding of realities and designing of the pragmatic policies on their basis.'[3] He opined that the declaration of permanent neutrality had played a positive role in the first

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1 Декларація про державний суверенітет України. (Відомості Верховної Ради УРСР (ВВР), 1990, N 31, ст.429 [Declaration on State Sovereignty of Ukraine, Statements of Verkhovna Rada of USSR (VRU)]

2 Larrabee, F.S. "Ukraine's Balancing Act", *Survival*, Vol. 38, No. 2, 1996, p. 143.

3 Зленко, А., "Нейтралітет чи позаблоковість: чи це в інтересах України?", Віче, квітень 2009 [Zlenko, A. "Neutrality or Non-bloc Status: Is This in Interests of Ukraine?", *Viche*, April 2009], Available at: http://veche.kiev.ua/journal/1418/ (Accessed: July 9, 2020)

years of Ukrainian independence, since it enabled avoiding Russian pressure to join a new military alliance on the territory of the former Soviet Union. However, this policy has evolved towards greater engagement with NATO. The major concern at that moment was not to let Ukraine turn into a buffer or 'grey zone'.[4] Thus, neutrality served important political purposes when Ukraine gained its independence, but later was believed not to reflect the Ukrainian strategic realities.

The evolution was fast and pronounced: the 'Main directions of foreign policy of Ukraine' resolution adopted by Ukraine's Verkhovna Rada in July 1993 stated that neutrality should not interfere with Ukraine's participation in the all-European security system.[5] Ukraine's Constitution of 1996 did not incorporate the neutrality clause; on the contrary, the National Security Concept from 1997 stated Ukraine's willingness to enter 'the existing and new systems of universal and regional security' and the Law on the National Security of 2003 stated, for the first time, the need to join the EU and NATO while maintaining good relations with Russia.[6]

From the early 1990s, Ukraine acknowledged the central role played by NATO in the European security architecture and, unlike Russia, did not see the organization's activities or enlargement as inconsistent with its national interests. It welcomed the signing of the 'Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security' between Russia and NATO (1997) as it considered normalization of their relations as a contributing factor to its national security.

Ukraine joined NATO's Partnership for Peace programme in 1994 and became an active participant in almost all NATO

4 Zlenko, A., "Foreign Policy Interests and Problems of European Security", *Fordham International Law Journal*, Vol. 21, November 1997, No 1, pp.55-56.

5 Про Основні напрями зовнішньої політики України (Відомості *Верховної Ради України (ВВР), 1993, N 37, ст.379)* [About the Main Directions of Foreign Policy of Ukraine, Statements of Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine]

6 Про Концепцію (основи державної політики)національної безпеки України (Відомості Верховної Ради України (ВВР), 1997, N 10, ст.85) [On the Concept (Fundamentals of the State Policy) of the National Security of Ukraine, Statements of Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine],Закон України Про основи національної безпеки України (Відомості Верховної Ради України (ВВР), 2003, № 39, ст.351) [Law of Ukraine On the Fundamentals of National Security of Ukraine, Statements of Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine]

exercises. After signing of Charter on a Distinctive Partnership between Ukraine and NATO in 1997, Ukraine took pride in seeing this as a signal that it was among the founding states of the new European security system.[7]

In the mid-1990s, alongside the lack of full normalization of Ukrainian–Russian relations, Ukraine increasingly leaned towards the Western institutions. The lack of a final settlement of the Russian Black Sea Fleet issue and Russia's stance in not recognizing the Ukrainian borders until the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership was signed in 1997 are believed to have pushed the Ukrainian authorities to seek independent security arrangements outside of the Russia-led integration projects.

In the mid-1990s, alongside the lack of full normalization of Ukrainian–Russian relations, Ukraine increasingly leaned towards the Western institutions.

The CIS was regarded by Ukraine as a playground for Russian hegemonic practices. Ukraine sought to approach the organization as a discussion club rather than as a new integration entity and, by not ratifying its charter, became not a member, but only a participant. Ukraine's abstention at that time was a key factor 'holding back the emergence of a new Russian-led military bloc that could once again plunge Europe into a Cold War.'[8]

Integration into Europe in all realms was seen as a reinstatement of a separate, non-Russian identity for Ukraine, and strengthened its newly acquired status against the former empire. However, in Ukraine's case, unlike those of other Central European members of the former Warsaw pact, the security policies seemed to be not underpinned by the idea of 'returning to Europe' as an existential choice. The majority of Ukrainians did not perceive Russia as a threat and, in the public imagination, moving towards Europe did not preclude maintaining 'brotherly' relations with Russia. Moreover, the idea of joining NATO occupied the minds of only a small part of the political elite and society at large. At a time when Ukraine's Central European neighbours were not part of the EU and NATO and the creation of some sub-regional security groupings was considered plausible, neutrality seemed to be one of the more or less legitimate ideas.

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7 Zlenko, A., "Foreign Policy Interests...", p.58.

8 Kuzio, T., "A Way with Words: Keeping Kiev Secure", *The World Today*, Vol. 52, No. 12, December 1996, p.319.

During Leonid Kuchma's two terms (1994–2005), Ukraine maintained its signature multi-vector policy. This policy was regarded as a pragmatic instrument for benefitting from not staking all on co-operation with one partner and a way for a disoriented new state to come to terms with its foreign policy identity while building its statehood. It has also been continuously criticized by advocates of European orientation as an ambivalent policy that kept Ukraine in a gray zone of estrangement from European partners.

In 2002, then-President Kuchma announced, in a first ever statement of this kind, that Ukraine's eventual goal is NATO membership. The NATO-Ukraine Action Plan was adopted at a meeting of the NATO–Ukraine Commission at the level of Foreign Ministers. This turn was apparently a reflection of the fact that Kuchma's second term was blemished by controversies[9] and he attempted to go out of international isolation. On this and many other occasions, the vulnerability of the Ukrainian political clan was skillfully utilized by Russia, which led to anxiety that this would reorient the country 'from carefully measured, Western-oriented neutrality, to being openly Moscow dominated'.[10]

The commitment to Euro-Atlantic integration turned out to be a declaratory figure of speech rather than a strategic narrative for reform. The democratic deficit and the superficial nature of the reforms made both European and Euro-Atlantic integration a hostage of political mimicry and simulation. A dubious and politically motivated approach to NATO membership manifested itself in July 2004 when, after the meeting of the NATO–Ukraine Commission at the Istanbul NATO Summit, then-President Kuchma amended the Military Doctrine by decree. The initial text of the Doctrine, which had been adopted a month before, included a clause about the European and Euro-Atlantic integration of Ukraine, with EU and NATO membership as the final goal. The updated version excluded the provision about membership. The rationale voiced was that both EU and NATO

9 The murder of the opposition journalist Giorgi Gongadze in 2000 and the following 'Kuchmagate'; Kolchuga scandal in 2002.

10 "Ukraine at the Crossroads: Ten Years After Independence", Hearing Before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, One Hundred Seventh Congress, First Session, 2 May 2001, Vol.4, U.S. Government Printing Office.

were in 'crisis' because of enlargement and the war in Iraq.[11]

The clause about Ukraine preparing for fully fledged membership in the EU and NATO was reinstated to the Doctrine, though, after the Orange Revolution in April 2005by then-President Viktor Yuschenko, who ran on a slogan of Ukraine belonging to the West. In 2005, an Intensified Dialogue on Ukraine's aspiration to NATO membership was launched. This post-Maidan period was crucial for elevating the idea of EU and NATO membership to the level of a strategic narrative for the first time in Ukrainian history. The idea did not take root and the programme was never fully implemented because of internal political divisions. In the 2006 parliamentary elections, the pro-Russian Party of Regions came to power and Viktor Yanukovych, elected as Prime Minister, famously declared that Ukraine was not ready for NATO membership.

The experience of non-bloc status, 2010–2014

In President Yanukovych era (2010–2014), the strategic documents of Ukraine were amended with a clause about non-bloc status. At the same time, Ukraine declared that its commitment to be a part of the European system of collective security remained unwavering, which raised doubts among Ukrainian experts who saw these two vectors as irreconcilable.[12]

Non-bloc status in this period was camouflaging policies that were gravitating towards Russia. In 2010, in open contradiction to the neutrality principle, then-President Yanukovych signed the so-called 'Kharkiv agreements' with the then Russian president, Dmitry Medvedev, which allowed for the prolongation of the stationing of the Russian Black Sea Fleet in Crimea for an additional 25 years.

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11 "Кучма пояснив, чому він виключив з Військової доктрини положення про вступ України до НАТО і ЄС" [Kuchma explained why he had excluded the clause about Ukraine's accession to NATO and EU from the Military Doctrine], *Korrespondent.net*, 6 August 2004, Available at: https://ua.korrespondent.net/ ukraine/249165-kuchma-poyasniv-chomu-vin-viklyuchiv-z-vijskovoyi-doktrini-polozhennya-pro-vstup-ukrayini-do-nato-i-es (Accessed: 9 July 2020)

12 S.Glebov, "The Black Sea Security Space in Perspective: Ukraine's Non-alignment as a Challenge to the 'New' Euro-atlanticism", in Ayca Ergun and Hamlet Isaxanli (eds.), *Security and Cross Border Cooperation in the EU, the Black Sea Region and Southern Caucasus* (Amsterdam: IOS Press, 2013), p.99.

According to the official narrative, the abstention from joining military alliances would enable focusing efforts and resources on comprehensive social and economic reforms. The reasoning was also that NATO membership was divisive for the society and would escalate tensions in regional security. Conflictual relations with Russia were portrayed as harming Ukraine's national interests and European integration efforts. At the same time, the Ukrainian leadership was ruling out the idea of joining the Russia-dominated Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) – notwithstanding the latter's pressure that had been exercised from the early 2000s when Vladimir Putin ascended to power in Russia.[13]

The intra-Ukrainian debates on neutrality in those years reflected the dynamics within Russian–Ukrainian relations as well as Russia–West antagonisms. The main argument in favour of neutrality was the belief that neutrality would solve the Ukrainian 'geography curse' and help it to benefit from staying equidistant from two conflicting blocs– an idea which has had a long tradition in Ukrainian strategic thinking.[14] The narrative of the 'bridge between the civilizations' transmitted this vision.

The intra-Ukrainian debates on neutrality in those years reflected the dynamics within Russian– Ukrainian relations as well as Russia–West antagonisms.

References to historical precedents were at the centre of this discourse: the neutrality advocates talked about the Swiss model as the one that Ukraine needed to pursue. They also pointed to the fact that Ukraine had not been welcomed into NATO and referred to the 'unwilling West' as a justification for becoming neutral.[15] At a time when parts of the population and the political establishment were maintaining the image of NATO as a hostile bloc (especially the case after the NATO operation in Serbia in 1999 and the

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13 Greene, J., "Russian Responses to NATO and EU Enlargement and Outreach", Chatham House Briefing Paper, June 2012, p.6, Available at: https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/public/Research/Russia%20and%20Eurasia/0612bp_greene.pdf (Accessed: 1 August 2020)

14 *Between Russia and the West. Foreign and Security Policy of Independent Ukraine*, Derek Müller, Kurt.R. Spillman, and Andreas Wenger (eds.), (Berne, Berlin, Brussels, Frankfurt a. M., New York, Oxford, Vienna: Peter Lang, 1999), p.22.

15 Тарасюк, Б.,"Членство в НАТО? Час визначатися!" [Tarasiuk, V., "NATO Membership? Time to decide!"], 11 October 2014, Available at: https://dif.org.ua/article/boris-tarasyuk-chlenstvo-v-nato-chas-viznachatisya (Accessed: 28 July 2020)

US-led operation in Iraq in 2003), neutrality had a solid base in Ukrainian society.

In a situation in which NATO membership remained highly contentious, neutrality was portrayed as a tool for eliminating a divisive issue for Ukrainian society and directing its undivided attention and resources to internal transformation. It was also argued that this would have a pacifying effect on Russia, as it would be vivid proof that Ukrainian policy was not anti-Russian. Taking into account certain apprehensions that Ukraine had about the Russian reaction, there was also an idea that some type of international treaty should be signed with Russia, and potentially with NATO or other states as well, that would grant some security guarantees to Ukraine. In a milder version, proponents of neutrality were advocating a short- or medium-term period of neutrality for the time during which Ukraine was conducting reforms and approaching NATO and EU standards.

In a situation in which NATO membership remained highly contentious, neutrality was portrayed as a tool for eliminating a divisive issue for Ukrainian society and directing its undivided attention and resources to internal transformation.

The critics of non-bloc status pointed to the fact that Ukraine was opting for neutrality against the backdrop of a general decline in its economic and military potential, which rendered it very vulnerable. The argument went that neutrality could bring benefits only if it was reinforced with a set of necessary legal and institutional mechanisms, as opposed to being merely a product of political conjuncture or pressure from neighbouring states.[16] It was contended that the environment had changed and, unlike at the beginning of the 1990s, when there was hope for a more peaceful and conflict-free future, it was unnatural for Ukraine to stay neutral.

It was argued that neutral status strips the state of its deterrence potential. References to a lack of resources as a rationale for neutrality were criticized by an informed analysis that showed that the defence expenditures of neutral states, on average, exceeded those of NATO members. Some research suggested extremely high costs for operationalizing Ukraine's neutrality

16 Федуняк, С., "Перспективи позаблоковостіУкраїни у контексті сучаснихтенденцій у сфері безпеки", Актуальні проблеми міжнародних відносин 2012 [Fedunyak, S., "The Perspectives of Ukraine's Non-bloc Status in the Context of the Contemporary Trends in the Security Sphere", *Topical Problems of International Relations 2012*], p.34.

and implementing a different force structure and military organization able to repel aggression from all directions.[17]

From non-alignment to a pro-NATO defence posture: Post-2014 debate

After the change of power in Ukraine as a result of Maidan (2013–2014), Russia's annexation of Crimea and the start of the war in Donbas, a strategic shift occurred from a non-aligned to a pro-NATO defence posture. In December 2014, the Ukrainian parliament passed, and President Petro Poroshenko signed, a law abolishing the country's neutral, non-aligned status on the basis that Ukraine needed 'to seek better safeguards of its independence, sovereignty, security and territorial integrity' given Russia's hybrid war.[18] All strategic documents were updated to reinstate NATO membership as the country's foreign policy objective. In February 2019, the Constitution was amended with clauses about integration with the European Union and NATO as the country's strategic choice.

After the change of power in Ukraine as a result of Maidan (2013–2014), Russia's annexation of Crimea and the start of the war in Donbas, a strategic shift occurred from a non-aligned to a pro-NATO defence posture.

The issue of neutrality was traditionally linked to the Budapest memorandum (1994) that provided for what Ukraine perceived as security guarantees from Russia, the USA, and the UK after it went nuclear free. With the aggression of Russia – one of the guarantors of the Memorandum – the neutrality principle was significantly compromised. In the eyes of the majority of Ukrainians, the argument that Russia would get sufficient assurances if Kyiv abandoned its Euro-Atlantic aspirations but continued with European integration stood no criticism. The pressure that the Russian leadership put on then-President Yanukovych not to sign the Association Agreement with the EU in November 2013 was an outright and unacceptable manifestation of Russian veto power.

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17 Mychajlyszyn, N., "Civil-Military Relations in Post-Soviet Ukraine: Implications for Domestic and Regional Stability", *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol. 28, Spring 2002, No 3, p. 467.

18 "Ukraine's Parliament Drops Non-aligned Status", *VOA News*, 23 December 2014, Available at: https://www.voanews.com/europe/ukraines-parliament-drops-non-aligned-status (Accessed: 9 July 2020)

At a time when some high-profile international experts (e.g. John Mearsheimer, Stephen Walt, Zbigniew Brzezinski, and Henry Kissinger) seemed to be contemplating neutrality as a solution to the 'Ukrainian crisis', for the Ukrainian political establishment, and for the majority of its population, neutrality, in general, ceased to exist as a political category. There is a widely supported recognition that being a part of the Euro-Atlantic security system, which provides for clear mutual defence commitments, would serve Ukraine's interests much better than relying on neutral status, which is never likely to be respected by Russia or to tame its further expansion.[19]

Against the backdrop of the ongoing conflict on Ukrainian soil, when the adoption of neutrality became irrelevant, this concept has been considerably marginalized from mainstream political discourse and is maintained mainly by pro-Russian forces. In the latest (2019) parliamentary elections, the neutrality concept featured in the manifestos of only two out of twenty-two parties that ran in the elections; the rest supported Euro-Atlantic integration, and a majority of those also supported NATO membership.[20] Those two pro-Russian forces, 'Opposition Platform – For Life' and 'Opposition Bloc', received 13% and 3% of the vote, respectively.

Public opinion polls after 2014 displayed a radical increase in support for NATO accession across the country. At the all-Ukrainian level, the numbers show clear support for accession to NATO. In December 2019, a majority of the population (51%) believed that the best option for guaranteeing security for Ukraine would be accession to NATO. Non-aligned status was supported by 26%, and the support for a military union with Russia and other CIS countries was 5.5%. In comparison, in 2012, only 13% of Ukrainians were in favour of NATO accession, 31% supported the idea of a military alliance with Russia and the CIS countries,

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19 **"**Is Neutrality a Solution for Ukraine?", *Institute of World Policy Memo*, January 2017, Available at: http://iwp.org.ua/en/publication/chy-ye-nejtralitet-vyhodom-dlya-ukrayiny-2/ (Accessed: 1 August 2020)

20 Шелест, Г., Герасимчук С., "Зовнішній курс у новій Раді: аналізуємо обіцянки партій", Європейська Правда [Shelest H., Gerasymchuk S.,. "Foreign Policy in new Rada: analyzing the parties' promises", *Yevropeyska Pravda*], 18 July 2019, Available at: https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/articles/2019/07/18/7098622/ (Accessed: 9 July 2020)

and 31% would choose non-aligned status.[21]

The idea of neutrality resonates most strongly in the east and south of Ukraine, where support for joining Russia-led unions was traditionally prevalent before. While NATO membership is supported in the western (80%) and central (54%) regions, respondents in the south (41%) and east (42%) prefer a neutral status for Ukraine. A military alliance with Russia is supported by 7% of respondents in the south and 14% in the east.[22]

Russian aggression reinforced the idea that the only feasible way to guarantee the security of the country is through self-help and an increased deterrence potential. The armed forces reforms have been carried out to meet NATO standards and to achieve interoperability with the armed forces of allied states. NATO has endorsed Ukraine's security and defence sector reforms through the Comprehensive Assistance Package (since 2016). In June 2020, the North Atlantic Council recognised Ukraine as an Enhanced Opportunities Partner, given Ukraine's significant past and present contribution to NATO operations (peace-support operations in the Balkans, the ISAF and Resolute Support missions in Afghanistan, the NATO Training Mission in Iraq, Active Endeavour, Ocean Shield, and Sea Guardian operations, and NATO Response Force).

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The administration of the incumbent President, Volodymyr Zelensky (from 2019), has maintained continuity in foreign and security policy and endorses the pro-EU and NATO strategic course, even though Zelensky's beliefs on the subject initially seemed to be obscure.[23] The pro-

21 "Підтримка громадянами вступу України до НАТО з 2012 року зросла майже на 30%" [Citizens' support for Ukraine's NATO accession has risen for 30 % since 2012], Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, 23 August 2019, Available at: https://dif.org.ua/article/pidtrimka-gromadyanami-vstupu-ukraini-do-nato-z-2012-roku-zrosla-mayzhe-na-30 (Accessed: 9 July 2020)

22 "Підсумки-2019 й прогнози на 2020-й: громадська думка" [The results of 2019 and the forecast for 2020: public opinion], Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, 26 December 2019, Available at: https://dif.org.ua/article/pidsumki-2019-gromadska-dumka (Accessed: 9 July 2020)

23 Vorotnyuk, M., "In Inauguration Address, Ukrainian President Zelensky Gives Hints About His Policies at Home and Abroad", *Jamestown Foundation EDM*, Vol.16, Issue 75, May 22, 2019, Available at: https://jamestown.org/program/

NATO course is maintained even though there is a feeling that relations with the organization have been somewhat simplistically reduced to the idea that Ukraine should follow NATO standards in its armed forces reforms.[24] The concerns about the continuity of this course have caused active political mobilization of civil society and it is likely that this will not allow the neutrality option to resurface on a mainstream political level.

'Neutralization' of Ukraine: Problem-solving model or impasse?

In 2014, Ukraine appeared at the centre of the reinvigorated international neutrality debate. The proposition to 'neutralize' Ukraine has been prescribed by some international experts and decision-makers as a problem-solving model and a safeguard against Russian expansionist policies. Critiques of this approach entail arguments about the inadmissibility of the existence of veto power by any state against another state's sovereign decisions. The abandonment of Ukraine under Russian pressure would mean a surrender of Western values and could backfire by weakening the international system.[25]

The international supporters of Ukrainian neutrality point to what they believe to be Russia's legitimate security interests. The argument goes that Ukraine's survival is directly related to its acceptance by Russia.[26] The options offered include Ukraine dropping the idea of joining NATO or, in a more far-reaching variation, abandoning integration with the EU altogether.

in-inauguration-address-ukrainian-president-zelensky-gives-hints-about-his-policies-at-home-and-abroad/ (Accessed: 9 July 2020)

24 Vorotnyuk, M. "No reason to believe that Russian strategic calculus as to Ukraine has undergone substantial change", *UAinFocus*, May 10, 2020, Available at: https://www.uainfocus.org/post/no-reason-to-believe-that-russian-strategic-calculus-as-to-ukraine-has-undergone-substantial-change (Accessed: 9 July 2020)

25 Ash, T., Gunn, J., Lough, J., et al., "The Struggle for Ukraine", Chatham House Report, (London: Latimer Trend, 2017), p.2, Available at: https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/publications/research/2017-10-18-struggle-for-ukraine-ash-gunn-lough-lutsevych-nixey-sherr-wolczukV5.pdf (Accessed: 24 July 2020)

26 Mearsheimer, J.J., "Getting Ukraine Wrong", *The New York Times*, 13 March 2014, Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/14/opinion/getting-ukraine-wrong.html (Accessed: 28 July 2020)

The idea of the 'Finlandization' of Ukraine as a concrete modification of neutrality has made a comeback and become widely resonant. According to this proposition, Ukraine should follow the example of Finland, which is an EU but not a NATO member. As opposed to appeasement, Finlandization is described as an 'ultimate expression of realpolitik' and the most applicable solution for a country to defend its sovereignty next to a more powerful neighbour. In this reading, Russia will need to respect the fact that Ukraine's neutrality is limited only to a military dimension; meanwhile, Ukraine can have good economic relations with the EU, and Ukraine will need to accept the loss of Crimea.[27] The idea of Ukraine serving as a 'bridge' and bringing Russia and Europe into cooperative international arrangement is central to the Finlandization argument. Ukraine should not serve as either side's outpost against the other, this argument contends.[28]

The idea of the 'Finlandization' of Ukraine as a concrete modification of neutrality has made a comeback and become widely resonant. According to this proposition, Ukraine should follow the example of Finland, which is an EU but not a NATO member.

In another reading, Ukraine should follow the analogy of Austria, which adopted a neutrality law and a special law precluding its unification with Germany. In this vein, Ukraine can guarantee its statehood through a neutrality status and a law preventing it, or parts of its territory, from joining Russia. Russia, in this case, would be expected to respect this arrangement.[29]

The Western realist tradition sometimes portrays Ukraine's neutrality and it serving as a buffer between the West and the East as a desirable geostrategic arrangement. Russia's aggressive actions against Ukraine are interpreted as 'extreme defensive actions' caused by US incursive behaviour in the Russian

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27 Cohen, J.,"Here's How Ukraine Can Take Charge of its Fate: By Declaring Neutrality", *Foreign Policy*, 28 March 2014, Available at: https://foreignpolicy.com/2014/03/28/heres-how-ukraine-can-take-charge-of-its-fate-by-declaring-neutrality/ (Accessed: 9 July 2020)

28 Kissinger, H.A., "To Settle the Ukraine Crisis, Start at the End", *The Washington Post*, 5 March2014, Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/henry-kissinger-to-settle-the-ukraine-crisis-start-at-the-end/2014/03/05/46dad868-a496-11e3-8466-d34c451760b9_story.html (Accessed: 9 July 2020)

29 H.*Gärtner,* "The Model of Neutrality: The Example of East-Central European States," in Herbert R. Reginbogin and Pascal Lottaz (eds.), *Permanent Neutrality: A Model for Peace, Security, and Justice* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2020), p.100.

neighbourhood.[30] In general, advocates of Ukrainian neutrality tend to speak about processes in Ukraine as Western-engineered. There is no genuine belief that pro-NATO sentiments would be the same had the West not supported pro-Western politicians and given massive support to Ukraine.[31]

Criticism of the neutrality option for Ukraine cites neutrality's historically poor track record (cases when neutrality was violated) and the changing nature of neutrality. There is a school of thought claiming that regional integration and the transnational character of threats erodes neutrality in its primary understanding and that the term 'post-neutrality' better conveys contemporary realities. Even though neutral states remain outside of collective defence provisions, their foreign and security policies are intertwined with NATO.[32] Both Sweden and Finland enjoy the benefits of close co-operation with NATO and enjoy the status of Enhanced Opportunities Partners. Neutral states are an integral part of the West; they are politically aligned with their Western partners and have full allegiance to shared norms. Moreover, EU membership also rests on solidarity and mutual defence, as Article 42(7) of the Treaty on European Union provides that, if an EU member is subjected to armed aggression on its territory, other EU countries have an obligation to aid. Thus, pure neutrality on the European continent is non-existent and absolute 'neutralization' of Ukraine is unrealistic.

There are also Ukraine-specific parameters, both international and domestic, that make the Ukrainian case stand out. There should exist a set of factors for the external recognition of neutrality, otherwise neutrality might remain mere wishful thinking. These include sufficient military capabilities to deter or repel aggression, having reliable security guarantees from powerful partners, avoiding antagonizing the great powers, and

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30 "Professor Stephen Walt on the Crisis in Ukraine", 25 March 2014, Available at: https://bostonglobalforum.org/news-and-events/events/professor-stephen-walt-on-the-crisis-in-ukraine/ (Accessed: 9 July 2020)

31 John Mearsheimer, speech at the panel "Russia, Ukraine and the West: Is Confrontation Inevitable?", Chatham House, 25 June 2014, Available at: https://www.chathamhouse.org/event/russia-ukraine-and-west-confrontation-inevitable (Accessed: 9 July 2020)

32 A.Cottey, "Introduction: The European Neutral States." in Andrew Cottey (ed.), *The European Neutrals and NATO: Non-alignment, Partnership, Membership?* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), p.8.

location in a strategically unimportant or secure environment in the midst of a collective defence system.[33] All of these factors are problematic for Ukraine. Moreover, neutrality, in historical perspective, proved to be costly in terms of the need for permanent accommodations, compromises, and the search for acceptance by the great powers.[34]

It is also argued that the 'benign' geographic positioning of Austria, Switzerland, and Ireland allowed them to maintain an unchanged understanding of neutrality, while Sweden's and Finland's turbulent security environments in the Baltic sea have incited them to move from a wider, classical neutrality to a more narrow military non-alignment.[35] Ukraine, from this perspective, is destined to be searching for safeguards for its security within the Euro-Atlantic security system in order to withstand Russian military probing and intimidation. No other country has such a geostrategic and even spiritual significance for Russia's self-perception as does Ukraine. The proposed classical model of neutrality for Ukraine falls short of recognizing this inherent limitation. While European neutral states are surrounded by like-minded democratic partners and the probability of military conflict is non-existent, Ukraine faces different realities.

the argument, externally imposed neutrality would carry a negative connotation of the 'neutralization' of Ukraine to the benefit of external powers at the expense of its own interests.

The example of neutral countries providing an important bridge for East–West dialogue during the Cold War is instructive, but there is no evidence to indicate that Ukraine could effectively serve as a connecting link between the two. Ukrainian neutrality would not be driven by some sort of moral purpose – which is a part of neutral states' identity – but, rather, would be a defensive introvert posture aiming to pacify a regional hegemon. To sum up the argument, externally imposed neutrality would carry a negative connotation of the 'neutralization' of Ukraine to the benefit of external powers at the expense of its own interests.

33 A.Hyde-Price, "*Geopolitics* and the *Concept* of *Neutrality* in *Contemporary Europe*," in *Heinz Gärtner (ed.), Engaged Neutrality: An Evolved Approach to the Cold War* (Lanham: *Lexington, 2017*), p.127.

34 *Ibid.*, p.128.

35 *Ibid.*, p.123.

Conclusion

The neutrality (or non-alignment) security option and ideas of integration with NATO have, for years, maintained their conflicting presence in the public discourse of Ukraine. After the early neutrality years, often characterised as a 'romantic' period in Ukrainian self-identification, there followed a period of a more critical appraisal of its strategic realities, as seen through the country's 'special relations' with NATO. Integration with the West was deemed to be conducive to the post-Communist transit and democratization of Ukraine, as well as for ameliorating relations with Russia by pragmatizing the bilateral dialogue and remedying Ukraine's security vulnerabilities. The Euro-Atlantic integration course, which has established itself as a political mainstream since 2002, has seen periodical disruptions. Non-bloc status was instrumentalized by the political class under President Kuchma, at the end of his tenure, during the post-Orange revolution period, owing to the internal political divisions, and continued under President Yanukovych. It served as an escape strategy for a leadership disgruntled with the democratization pressure of the West and as an appeasement against Russian assertiveness.

After the start of the Russian–Ukrainian war in 2014, the neutrality option was definitively taken off the agenda for the Ukrainian leadership and the largest share of society. Among the results of Russian aggression has been the creation of a foreign policy and security consensus on NATO membership as a strategic goal. Non-alignment might have seemed a prudent approach when Ukraine was striving to avoid becoming collateral damage of the Russia–West confrontation and the idea of Russia attacking Ukraine militarily was practically inconceivable. Perceptions have now changed remarkably and neutrality, instead of being a legitimate component of the security debate or a useful commodity for maximizing security, was, in the end, marginalized and seen as a product of Russian coercion.

Vicious Circle of the South Caucasus: Intra-Regional Conflicts and Geopolitical Heterogeneity

Vasif Huseynov[*]

This article looks into the causes and consequences of the variance in the foreign policy orientation of the three countries in the South Caucasus, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. The article discusses, as manifestations of their foreign policy orientations, Armenia's alignment with the Russia-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), Georgia's aspiration to join the Euro-Atlantic military and political structures, and Azerbaijan's commitment to a balanced approach through reinforcing its role within the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Tracking the evolution of the status quo to the beginning of the post-Soviet independence of the three states, the article argues that regional ethno-territorial conflicts, combined with the intervention of external great powers in this process, has served as the causal variable behind the genesis of the region's geopolitical diversification. This situation, in turn, has aggravated the disputes between the regional states, expanded the gap between them, and significantly complicated the resolution process. Describing this process as the vicious circle of the region, the article poses the questions, what are the main characteristics of this vicious circle? And how does it affect regional peace and security? The analysis concludes that the territorial conflicts of the South Caucasus erupted from relatively similar conditions in the wake of the fall of the Soviet Union in early 1990s, but their trajectories diverged markedly owing to a wide range of factors but, in particular, the foreign policy strategies of the respective states.

Keywords: South Caucasus, vicious circle, conflicts, geopolitics.

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Introduction

The South Caucasus, in spite of its relatively small geographic size, has obtained remarkable geopolitical complexity since the Soviet Union ceased to exist in 1991. The three internationally-recognized states of the region, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, have gradually developed largely contradictory orientations in foreign policy, opting to align with one of the often-conflicting geopolitical centres or not to align with any of them. Azerbaijan has sought to maintain a balanced approach in foreign policy and has avoided developing relations with one foreign power at the expense of the country's relations with others. In complete contrast, Armenia and Georgia have demonstrated clear-cut choices in their foreign policies by, respectively, joining Russia's regional military and economic integration projects as a full-member and, following suit in another form, by seeking admission into the Euro-Atlantic military and political structures.

The states of the South Caucasus region drew their external patrons into their conflicts with neighbouring states in order to strengthen their hands and leverage international pressure on their adversaries.

This geopolitical heterogeneity of the South Caucasus gained momentum as each side in the region's conflicts refused to make any concessions: either in the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict that resulted from the occupation by Armenia of Azerbaijan's Nagorno-Karabakh region and adjacent districts, on the one hand, or Georgia and its occupied territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, on the other. The states of the South Caucasus region drew their external patrons into their conflicts with neighbouring states in order to strengthen their hands and leverage international pressure on their adversaries. Intervention in, and occasionally abuse of, these disputes by the extra-regional powers exacerbated the conflicts. As a result, the external dimension of the conflicts gradually transformed into a bigger obstacle to their resolution as relations between the involved external great powers worsened. The war between Georgia and Russia in the wake of the deterioration of Russia–West relations presents an apt example of this process.

This situation, described in this article as the 'vicious circle of the South Caucasus', has generated insurmountable impediments to the settlement of the territorial conflicts and thus keeps international tensions strained and prone to sudden escalation. This article is an attempt to explore the nature of this vicious

circle, oriented around two guiding questions: what are the main characteristics of the vicious circle in the region? And how does it affect regional peace and security?

The article differentiates two phases of the regional conflicts in the formation of the vicious circle. First, its breakout in the post-Soviet area, accompanied by military clashes and humanitarian tragedies; and second, the period that started with ceasefire agreements in the first half of the 1990s. The article concludes that the three territorial conflicts of the South Caucasus erupted from relatively similar conditions in the wake of the fall of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, but their paths diverged markedly in the second phase owing to a wide range of factors but, in particular, the foreign policy strategies of the respective states. While in the case of Georgia this led to the restart of military collusion in August 2008, Azerbaijan's restrained manoeuvres in foreign policy prevented the formation of a vicious circle and maintained a prospect for eventual conflict resolution.

The article consists of two sections in addition to the introductory and concluding parts. The following section looks into the origins of the vicious circle, which the article argues to have emerged with the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s. The second part sheds light on the characteristic elements of this circle. This part also attempts to analyse the implications of the synthesis of the regional and external factors in the conflicts of the South Caucasus for peace and security in the region. The article ends with a concluding part that sums up the main arguments of the previous two sections.

Collapse of the Soviet Union and Formation of the Vicious Circle

During its existence, for over seventy years, the Soviet Union was a major unifying factor in its territories, although not always peacefully, as it blocked nationalist sentiments and separatist initiatives. As it disintegrated in the early 1990s, not only did the republics that once constituted the Union gain independence, but also autonomous entities within some of them strove to seize the opportunity and become independent. This situation particularly affected the South Caucasus and led to the emergence of at least three major conflicts in the region. South Ossetia and Abkhazia

warred against the central government in Tbilisi and, in the southern part of the region, another armed conflict broke out between Armenia and Azerbaijan as the former waged a full-scale war to separate the Nagorno-Karabakh region from Azerbaijan.

The hostilities reborn with the disintegration of the Soviet Union affected Georgia dramatically as they pushed forward two wars with ethnic minorities and a civil war. The country's conflicts with its ethnic minorities have a history dating back centuries before the Soviet era. Georgia's structure in the Soviet period similarly contained the seeds for a potential war as it caused disputes even during this period. Abkhazia and South Ossetia, along with Adjara, had autonomous status within Soviet Georgia until the fall of the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, while Abkhazia and Adjara had the status of Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR), South Ossetia had a lower level of autonomy called Autonomous Oblast. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the ensuing political turmoil in the region encouraged the local authorities in these areas to launch an independence movement. The nationalistic rhetoric of the Georgian leaders of that time, in particular that of then president Zviad Gamsakhurdia, caused alienation of those ethnic minorities, which was used by third parties to propel conflicts. Georgia reached volatile ceasefire agreements with its breakaway regions, South Ossetia and Abkhazia, in 1992 and 1993, respectively, which brought the Russia-led peacekeeping troops of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) into the region.[1]

The conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan also ended up in an armed conflict as the Soviet Union fell into dissolution. Armenians saw this as a unique opportunity to materialize their historical claim to the south-western part of Azerbaijan and launched a full-scale war to get the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast of Soviet Azerbaijan separated and unified with Armenia.

The conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan also ended up in an armed conflict as the Soviet Union fell into dissolution. Armenians saw this as a unique opportunity to materialize their historical claim to the south-western part of Azerbaijan and launched a full-scale war to get the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast of Soviet Azerbaijan separated and unified with Armenia. This led to a war between the two sides between 1988 and 1994 that was accompanied by ethnic cleansing and genocide of Azerbaijanis living in the Nagorno-Karabakh region and adjacent

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1 Svante Cornell, *Small Nations and Great Powers: A Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus*, Routledge, London 2005, pp. 334-342.

districts. As in the case of the conflicts in Georgia, a ceasefire agreement was possible through Russian mediation. After the loss of around 30,000 people and displacement of up to a million, Azerbaijan and Armenia signed a ceasefire agreement in 1994, although this is broken almost every day, albeit limitedly.

The Russia-brokered ceasefire agreements in the three conflicts of the South Caucasus put an end to the period that can be classified as the first phase of the conflicts in the post-Soviet era, a period marked by violent clashes and massive human losses. It was followed by a period in which the ceasefire agreements, although broken frequently, stayed in force. This second phase of the conflict has been crucial as it could transition to a sustainable peace if handled prudently, or to a renewed escalation. This is also a period in which the geopolitical extension of the regional conflicts started to develop.

As the successor of the Soviet Union, Russia was involved in the conflicts of the region from the very beginning. The separatist forces in Abkhazia and South Ossetia relied on Russian help to put forward their agenda and prevail over the Georgians. Compared with the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict, Russia's involvement in these two conflicts was dramatically higher.[2] The geographic proximity and ethnic linkage with South Ossetia through North Ossetia made Russia hypersensitive to the post-Soviet developments in Georgia.[3]

Having reached a ceasefire agreement with Azerbaijan through Russia's assistance, Armenia also relied on Moscow to preserve the status quo and consolidate its control over the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. This is the reason why, unlike Georgia and Azerbaijan, Armenia did not quit the Collective Security Treaty, but instead reinforced its military alliance with Russia by becoming a fully-fledged member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) when it was established on 14 May 2002. Although it has never been tested, Article 4 of the CSTO stipulates that, "If one of the Member States undergoes aggression, it

Armenia also relied on Moscow to preserve the status quo and consolidate its control over the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

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2 Gerrits, A. and Bader, M. "Russian patronage over Abkhazia and South Ossetia: Implications for Conflict Resolution," *East European Politics*, Vol. 32, No. 3, 2016, 297-313, available at: tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21599165.2016 .1166104 (Access date: July 8, 2020).

3 Cornell, *Small Nations and Great Powers*, *op. cit.*, pp.157-160.

will be considered by the Member States as aggression to all the Member States of this Treaty".[4]

Russia's alignment with Abkhazians and South Ossetians on the one side, and with Armenia on the other, confronted Azerbaijan and Georgia with a dilemma. They would have to either look for other external powers to balance Russia's influence in the region or pursue a neutral foreign policy, seeking, *inter alia*, to neutralize Russia's role in their conflicts. This turned out to be a decisive moment in the second phase and determined the future development of the conflicts.

Georgia had already made its decision in favour of the former option during the regime of Gamsakhurdia, who unsuccessfully attempted to draw the Western powers into his war over the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Eduard Shevardnadze, Georgia's second president, pursued a more pragmatic foreign policy by developing friendly relations with Russia and concurrently seeking to get a seat in the Euro-Atlantic military and political institutions. Calling Russia Georgia's 'strategic partner', Shevardnadze was also pursuing his country's desire for NATO membership, although not as conspicuously as his successor. Mikhail Saakashvili, who came to power following the overthrow of President Shevardnadze in 2003, did not follow this cautious diplomacy. Abandoning the 'strategic partnership' with Russia, he mobilized all available resources to enter the EU and NATO as soon as possible that intensely irritated Russia and dramatically complicated the country's conflict over the breakaway territories. The negative implications of this strategy for Georgia–Russia relations soared dramatically against the background of deteriorating relations between the West and Russia. Saakashvili erroneously believed that the EU and the US would stand with Georgia in a military clash with Russia over the breakaway regions. Tbilisi's attempt to westernize the conflict exploded the fragile ceasefire, pushed the two countries into a military clash in August 2008, and ended with a tragic loss for Georgia.

In contrast to Georgia, Azerbaijan opted for a balanced approach in dealing with the surrounding power centres. Azerbaijan's then

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4 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, *International organizations: Collective Security Treaty Organization*, 2020, available at: https://www.mfa.am/en/international-organisations/1 (Access date: July 8, 2020).

president, Haydar Aliyev, the founder of this approach in the country's foreign policy, sought to balance Russia and the West and reap maximum benefits from Azerbaijan's strategic location and from the export of the country's rich hydrocarbon resources. Thanks to Aliyev's strategy, Russia brokered the ceasefire agreement and withdrew its objection to Azerbaijan's deal with Western energy companies. President Ilham Aliyev chose to maintain this foreign policy course after he took over the presidency of the country in 2003.

However, there was still some uncertainty in this respect as Azerbaijan still had an eye on the Western bloc and occasionally declared its interest in deeper integration into the Euro-Atlantic community. Georgia's experience on this path, which encountered troublesome challenges in the August War of 2008, was a wake-up call for the Azerbaijani government. For some observers, following this event, Azerbaijan started to apply the principles of "Finlandization" in foreign policy more cautiously and more consistently.[5] The Military Doctrine of the country, adopted in June 2010, did not list integration into the Euro-Atlantic community as a priority of Azerbaijan's foreign policy.[6] Baku's subsequent decision to join the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in May 2011 was of symbolic importance in this context. This decision was meant to send a message to both Russia and NAM member Iran that Azerbaijan was not planning to ally with any geopolitical bloc, including the Euro-Atlantic alliance. Azerbaijan put a strong emphasis on its NAM membership and even took over its chairmanship for three years from 2019 in order to reinforce the image of non-alignment in global politics, among other objectives.[7]

In contrast to Georgia, Azerbaijan opted for a balanced approach in dealing with the surrounding power centres. Azerbaijan's then president, Haydar Aliyev, the founder of this approach in the country's foreign policy, sought to balance Russia and the West and reap maximum benefits from Azerbaijan's strategic location and from the export of the country's rich hydrocarbon resources.

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5 Valiyev, A. "Finlandization or Strategy of Keeping the Balance? Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy Since the Russian-Georgian War," *PONARS Eurasia*, Policy Memo No. 112, October 2010, available at: https://www.ponarseurasia.org/memo/finlandization-or-strategy-keeping-balance-azerbaijans-foreign-policy-russian-georgian-war (Access date: July 8, 2020).

6 RFE/RL, *Azerbaijan Adopts Military Doctrine at Long Last*, 9 June 2010, available at https://www.rferl.org/a/Azerbaijan_Adopts_Military_Doctrine_At_Long_Last/2066758.html (Access date: July 8, 2020).

7 Huseynov, V., "Azerbaijan sets to take over the chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement", *New Eastern Europe*, 1 August 2019, available at: https://

Azerbaijan had to pursue its fight for the restoration of its territorial integrity against the backdrop of the adoption of non-alignment as the foreign policy course of the country and under the geopolitical constraints of its location. The facts that Azerbaijan did not attempt to westernize its conflict with Armenia in the way President Saakashvili attempted to and did not launch a military operation to liberate the occupied territories have prolonged the second phase of the conflict. This has a number of implications for the future development of the conflict.

Implications for Regional Security

The three territorial conflicts of the South Caucasus erupted from relatively similar conditions in the wake of the Soviet collapse in the early 1990s, but their paths diverged markedly owing to a wide range of factors, some of the major ones of which were discussed in the previous section. The Georgian leaders' mishandling of the ceasefire period by internationalizing their conflict and attempting to draw in NATO as a balancing force against Russia reignited the conflict and thus formed a vicious circle. This transformed the conflict from its original nature into a matter of Russia–West relations while also preserving the original hostilities. The breakout of another similar conflict in the region, the crisis in Ukraine, further complicated the geopolitical situation around Georgia. Consequently, the territorial conflicts in Georgia ended up in a stalemate on two levels: first, on the local level between the conflicting parties; and second, on the geopolitical level between Russia and the West.

The framework established with the ceasefire agreement of 1994, however, remains valid in the case of the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict. Unlike Georgia, Azerbaijan has downplayed its Euro-Atlantic aspirations and gradually drifted away from European integration as an objective of its foreign policy, and therefore the geopolitical nature of the conflict did not evolve into the confrontational phase seen in Georgia's conflict. By adhering to a balanced approach between the global powers, the Azerbaijani government sought to prevent the geopolitical escalation of its conflict with Armenia. This situation affected the evolutionary

neweasterneurope.eu/2019/08/01/azerbaijan-sets-to-overtake-the-chairmanship-of-the-non-aligned-movement%EF%BB%BF/ (Access date: July 8, 2020).

trajectory of the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict and prevented it from becoming a vicious circle as in the case of the conflicts in Georgia. The 'incomplete evolution' of the conflict has had a number of implications for its subsequent development and for the role of external powers.

Above all, unlike the conflicts in Georgia, the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict is not deadlocked on two levels. Although external intervention is also a factor in the case of the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict, it has not become a matter of Russia–West rivalry. In fact, there was the strong potential for the rapid emergence of a complete vicious circle in this conflict as well, thanks to Armenia's alignment with Russia in military and other spheres. Had Azerbaijan followed its Euro-Atlantic aspirations in the way Georgia did, we would most likely now have a much more complex situation between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The troubled experience of Georgia in 2008 convinced the Azerbaijani leadership of the advantage of a balanced approach, which eventually led Azerbaijan to full membership of the Non-Aligned Movement in 2011.

Unlike Georgia, Azerbaijan has downplayed its Euro-Atlantic aspirations and gradually drifted away from European integration as an objective of its foreign policy, and therefore the geopolitical nature of the conflict did not evolve into the confrontational phase seen in Georgia's conflict.

As the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict is not deadlocked at the geopolitical level, a breakthrough in the foreseeable future is more attainable compared with Georgia's conflict. This is often reflected in two aspects. On the one hand, the two conflicting parties, that is, Armenia and Azerbaijan, sometimes make initiatives for downscaling military confrontation, thereby generating hope for a breakthrough.[8] Although these initiatives have failed to deliver a lasting positive outcome over the last three decades, there is at least an internationally-mediated negotiation process and quest for a settlement. The conflict over Georgia's breakaway regions is, in contrast, at a complete stalemate in the wake of Russia's recognition of the 'independence' of the separatist entities. Although the representatives of Abkhazia and South Ossetia take part in the Geneva International Discussions co-chaired by the Organization for Security and Co-operation

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8 Huseynov, V., "New Hope for a Breakthrough in the Nagorno-Karabakh Deadlock?" *The Central Asia – Caucasus Analyst*, 6 April 2020, available at: https://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/13611-new-hope-for-a-breakthrough-in-the-nagorno-karabakh-deadlock?.html (Access date: July 8, 2020).

in Europe, the European Union and the United Nations, there are no negotiations between the conflicting parties for a peace agreement or on the status of the breakaway regions.[9] The existing formats for negotiation between the sides, the Geneva International Discussions and the Prague Format, formerly known as Abashidze–Karasin talks, are only focused on the political, economic, trade, and similar types of issues between the sides and do not include negotiations on the future status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

On the other hand, Russia's approach to the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict is different from its approach to the conflict in Georgia. It is true that, having established a military base in Armenia and exerting significant influence over its political leadership, Russia is Armenia's closest ally and its guarantee of security and even of existence.[10] To many observers, the conflict serves as a useful instrument for the Kremlin to preserve Armenia's dependence on Russia.[11] This is the reason why the occasional statements by Russian leaders about the prospects for a resolution and potential resolution formats of the conflict are taken by political experts with a grain of salt.[12]

However, the fact that the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict has not transformed into a matter of geopolitical confrontation in the way that the conflicts in Georgia have also affects Russia's engagement with this region. Russia plays a formal mediating role in the negotiation process and is even a co-chair of the main international mission to coordinate these negotiations, the OSCE Minsk Group. Russia does not seem interested in a military escalation and is not willing to recognize the illegal separatist

9 Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, (2020), "Geneva International Discussions," available at: https://smr.gov.ge/en/page/26/geneva-international-discussions (Access date: July 22, 2020).

10 Euronews, *Russia signs deal to guarantee Armenia's security*, 21 August 2010, available at: https://www.euronews.com/2010/08/21/russia-signs-deal-to-guarantee-armenia-s-security (Access date: July 22, 2020).

11 Abushov, K., "Russian Foreign Policy Towards the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: Prudent Geopolitics, Incapacity or Identity?" *East European Politics*, Vol. 35, No. 1, March 2019, pp. 72-92.

12 Rahimov, R., "Russian Foreign Minister Reignites Conflict Debate in Armenia, Azerbaijan," *The Jamestown Foundation, Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 17, No. 61, 4 May 2020, available at: https://jamestown.org/program/russian-foreign-minister-reignites-conflict-debate-in-armenia-azerbaijan/ (Access date: July 8, 2020).

regime established in Azerbaijan's occupied territories. Russia formally supports the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and the two sides are co-operating in a wide-range of spheres, including in the purchase of military equipment.[13] This provides further grounds for arguing that it is still possible to reach a settlement in the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict, peacefully or militarily.

However, the fact that the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict has not transformed into a matter of geopolitical confrontation in the way that the conflicts in Georgia have also affects Russia's engagement with this region.

Conclusion

This study on the main characteristics of the so-called vicious circle of the ethno-territorial conflicts in the South Caucasus and its implications for regional peace and security produced the following analytical results. It has been found that two phases can be differentiated in the conflicts between Georgia and its breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, on the one hand, and between Armenia and Azerbaijan, on the other hand. The breakout of these conflicts in the wake of the disintegration of the Soviet Union, which was accompanied by violent clashes and humanitarian tragedies, was presented as the first phase; this ended with the establishment of Russia-mediated ceasefires by the mid-1990s. The second phase was considered to have started after this period but was handled differently by the conflicting parties. The attempt of Georgian leaders to westernize their conflict by drawing in the Euro-Atlantic bloc with a false hope that it would join Tbilisi's war against Russia ended the second phase and returned the parties to the situation at beginning of the 1990s. Hence, it is argued that a vicious circle was formed in Georgia's conflict with the breakaway regions and is not clear when, or if, it will be broken as presently there are no international negotiations whatsoever towards this end.

The article has revealed that there was also a high probability for the development of a similar scenario in the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict. However, the fact that Azerbaijan refused to westernize its conflict in the way Georgia's leaders did prior to the 2008 war and decided to pursue a balanced approach in foreign policy played a decisive role in the prolongation of the

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13 TASS, "Putin says Russia, Azerbaijan building relations based on balance of interests," 27 September 2018, available at: https://tass.com/politics/1023339 (Access date: July 22, 2020).

second phase. By joining the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and undertaking a leading role in this institution, Azerbaijan has reinforced its image as a non-aligned country in global politics and has sought to build friendly relations with Russia and other power centres. From this point of view, it has been argued that, unlike the doubly deadlocked conflicts in Georgia, Azerbaijan's conflict with Armenia is not geopolitically deadlocked, though it seems to be so at the regional level. Having prevented the formation of a vicious circle in this conflict, Azerbaijan has succeeded in avoiding a dead end and preserved its chance to liberate its occupied territories and restore the territorial integrity of the country.

BOOK REVIEW:

Armenia and Azerbaijan: Anatomy of a Rivalry (authored by Laurence Broers)

reviewed by Gulshan Pashayeva

**Review of "*Armenia and Azerbaijan: Anatomy of a Rivalry*"
book authored by Laurence Broers.**

By Dr. Gulshan Pashayeva

Armenia and Azerbaijan: Anatomy of a Rivalry, Laurence Broers,
(Edinburgh University Press, 1st edition, September 1, 2019; 352 pp.)

This book is a product of Dr. Laurence Broers's experience as a
practitioner of Armenian–Azerbaijani peace-building initiatives
gained while he worked for the London-based peace-building
organization, Conciliation Resources (2005–2015).

The monograph contains an overview of historical, territorial and
mediation perspectives and aims to be interpretive and analytical
without offering 'a new chronicle or history of the Armenian–
Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh' (p.8).

Each of its nine chapters is devoted to a specific issue, such
as a review of the various explanations for the outbreak of
the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict in and around the Nagorno-
Karabakh region of the latter country in 1988–1994; different
traditions of the concept of 'homeland' in 20th century Armenian
and Azerbaijani geopolitical cultures; the geopolitical visions
accumulating around the Karabakh region from the late 1980s
to the present; the multiple types and theatres of, and motives
for, forced displacement, both in the late 1980s and during the
1992–1994 war; the relationship between the rivalry and the
regime types in Armenia and Azerbaijan; the truncated power
asymmetry between Armenia and Azerbaijan; the international
diffusion of the Armenian–Azerbaijani rivalry and its implications
for that rivalry's stability and longevity; the evolution of the
unrecognized reality developed in Nagorno-Karabakh since the
1994 ceasefire; and the OSCE-mediated peace process between
Armenia and Azerbaijan.

According to Broers, the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict in and
around the Nagorno-Karabakh region presents an entirely
different picture to other Eurasian conflicts dating from the
1990s. Taking this conflict's outlier status, he examines it
through two conceptual frameworks: first, through the lens of
critical geopolitics (pp. 8–10), and then reframing the conflict as
'rivalry' (pp. 10–16).

Looking through the prism of geopolitical cultures, the author
labels the current narrative in Armenia 'augmented Armenia',

which is based on the indivisibility of Armenia with the occupied Nagorno-Karabakh region and the adjacent districts of Azerbaijan (pp. 98–104). This differs from the 'compliant Armenia' narrative of the 1990s (pp. 94–98), according to which the occupied Azerbaijani districts adjacent to Nagorno-Karabakh region were considered a bargaining chip during negotiations with Azerbaijan. It was envisaged that they, or some of them, would have to be returned to Azerbaijan on securing Armenian demands (p. 98). In contrast, Broers proposes that 'wide Azerbaijanism' has been dominating in Azerbaijan since the mid-2000s; this presupposes that Armenia is an imperial project located on historic Azerbaijani lands (pp. 105, 114–120). It replaced the 'Azerbaijanism' narrative of the Heyday Aliyev era, which concentrated on Azerbaijan's internationally recognized borders (pp. 112–114) and, in turn, took over from the 'Greater Azerbaijan' concept that had risen through the efforts of the Azerbaijani Popular Front (pp. 60–64).

In reframing this conflict as an enduring rivalry, the author aims to avoid the 'dichotomies of "war/peace" and "hot/cold conflict"' and shift 'the analysis from an event-centred focus on war to a process-driven focus on the sustainability of rivalry' (p. 11). When touching upon the core set of territorial issues and their violent contestation in 1988–1994, he refers to this case as the 'Armenian–Azerbaijani *conflict*'. However, Broers talks about the Armenian-Azerbaijani *rivalry* when referring to broader competitive dynamics building up between Armenia and Azerbaijan since then (p. 12). He thinks that 'the Armenian–Azerbaijani enduring rivalry cannot be understood through single-factor analysis. Rather, its persistence needs to be explained by the convergence of international, strategic, domestic and leadership factors" (p. 308).

The author goes on to explain the special role that Russia plays, both as 'an aspiring regional hegemon and a global entrepreneur of authoritarian conflict management' that 'is embedded within the deep structure of the rivalry because of the power asymmetry' and is 'a key stakeholder in the tactical consensus with Euro-Atlantic partners on deterring renewed Armenian–Azerbaijani war' (p. 309). Broers also thinks that the regional policy landscape regarding this territorial conflict is highly fractured: 'There are inconsistent approaches by both Russia, which recognizes some – but not other – de facto states as independent states, and by the Euro-Atlantic powers, which enact sanctions in support of some parent states – but not others' (p. 310).

Thus, the book mainly focuses on the specific features of the Armenian–Azerbaijani rivalry, which the author considers 'neither frozen nor pliable, by the standards of some enduring rivalries' and that 'may still be relatively "young"' (p. 316). Broers also makes sound judgments on various issues. For example, he suggests that the 'bookending of references to a dispute between "mainly Christian Armenia" and "mostly Muslim Azerbaijan"' in Western media has not accurately conveyed the nature of Armenian-Azerbaijani cultural differences (p. 40). However, some factual errors are also present in the book. For example, the date of the occupation of the Zangilan district of Azerbaijan, which the author states was the winter of 1993–94 (p. 38), is misleading, as this district was occupied by Armenian forces on 29 October 1993.

In our opinion, this book is rather more theoretical than practical and argues that something 'is true' – that it is truly the case. The author makes several generalizations which are not convincing and perhaps need further elaboration.

In the first place, it seems rather questionable to describe the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict as an enduring 'rivalry'. This is a new term that been used in connection with this conflict by the author for the first time and, despite the fact that he tries to persuade the reader that this new reading of the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict is reasonable and relevant, the truth is it comes up short.

One of the important reasons contributing to the author's understanding of, and presenting this conflict as, a rivalry between Armenia and Azerbaijan may perhaps be his faulty assumption that Nagorno-Karabakh is a 'disputed territory' between the two states (p. 1). However, if the author had truly assumed that this territory is an integral part of the internationally recognized territory of Azerbaijan, as Abkhazia and South Ossetia are of Georgia, Transnistria is of Moldova and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol are of Ukraine, then there would be no need to differentiate this conflict from other post-Soviet territorial conflicts and frame it as an enduring rivalry. In addition, seemingly, Broers also does not distinguish Azerbaijan's host-state and Armenia's kin-state status in this conflict. However, it is apparent that, without Armenia's close involvement as a kin state from the outset, this conflict could not have had such impact and longevity. If Armenia could come to a settlement with Azerbaijan – compromising or withdrawing its territorial claims, as did other kin-states such as Sweden,

Austria, and the Republic of Ireland in the cases of the Äland Islands, South Tyrol, and Northern Ireland, respectively – then this conflict could be solved very easily.

At the same time, we are inclined to think that the rationale behind the author's decision to refer to this case dually (p. 12) as the 'Armenian–Azerbaijani conflict' (1988–1994) and 'Armenian-Azerbaijani rivalry' (1994–present) is based on the assumption that this conflict has already achieved its end and can be set aside without further resolution. However, the recent outbreak of violence that happened in the Tovuz district of Azerbaijan along the international border between Armenia and Azerbaijan on 12–16 July 2020 proves, once more, the dangerous, destructive potential of this unresolved conflict.

Furthermore, the consideration of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict as a significant exception to the competitive geopolitics of post-Soviet Eurasia also seems unconvincing. According to the author, this case is less common among the other conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia or Transnistria compared with those between India and Pakistan or the Arab states and Israel. Relying on six distinguishing features, he differentiates the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict in and around Nagorno-Karabakh region from the other conflicts in post-Soviet Eurasia. Let us take a closer look at some of these features.

First, the author underlines that this conflict was 'the first territorial dispute to appear in the Soviet Union's twilight years', at the beginning of 1988 (pp. 5–6). However, other ethno-territorial conflicts in Georgia[1] and Moldova[2] started almost simultaneously at the end of the 1980s. Thus, both the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict in and around Nagorno-Karabakh region and the conflicts in South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Transnistria broke out before the dissolution of the Soviet Union; these were directly related to the late 1980s Gorbachov reforms of *glasnost*

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[1] Sammut, D. and Cvetkovski, N. "The Georgia—South Ossetia Conflict," *Confidence Building Matters*, No. 6, VERTIC, London, March 1996, p.10. Available at: http://www.vertic.org/media/Archived_Publications/Matters/Confidence_Building_Matters_No6.pdf; Stewart, S. "The Role of the United Nations in the Georgian-Abkhazian Conflict," *JEMIE Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe*, Issue 2, 2003, p. 7. Available at: https://www.ecmi.de/fileadmin/redakteure/publications/JEMIE_Datens%C3%A4tze/Stewart_SC_final.pdf (Accessed 6 August 2020)

[2] Vacaru, C. "Resolution mechanisms of the Transnistrian conflict", *Studia Politica: Romanian Political Science Review*, 6(4), 2006, p. 906. Available at: https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-56253-8(Accessed 6 August 2020)

and *perestroika*. They triggered the emergence of national movements in the respective Union Republics, which eventually led to the collapse of the USSR.

Second, Broers indicates that, in contrast to other post-Soviet territorial conflicts, which ended in standoffs between secessionist entities and the internationally recognized states, the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict has an atypical structure; it became embedded at the interstate level between Armenia and Azerbaijan and is not directly associated with the unrecognized entity set up by Armenia in the occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan. According to the author, such a situation makes it difficult for international organizations to take sides between two member-states and alleviates the pressures on an unrecognized entity (p. 6). However, in our opinion, the current conflicts in Georgia and the Ukraine have similar characteristics to the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict. Russia's military intervention and, later, recognition of the self-declared 'independences' of the Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia in August 2008,[3] as well as the annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol in February 2014, along with Russia's continued destabilization of the eastern and southern regions of Ukraine,[4] have transformed these conflicts from intrastate to interstate conflicts. Moreover, although the international organizations were able to impose sanctions on Russia because of its armed aggression against Ukraine, a similar approach has not, so far, been implemented with respect to Armenia's armed aggression against Azerbaijan.

Third, there is a discrepancy in the author's argument in regard to Russia's atypical role (pp. 6–7). According to Broers, although Russia brokered ceasefire agreements and inserted Russian-led peacekeeping forces into the post-war context in Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transnistria, it was not able to deploy Russian peacekeepers in the conflict area between the armed forces of Armenia and Azerbaijan, despite introducing a ceasefire in the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict. However, an important point is that, after the August 2008 war and unilateral withdrawal of Georgia

3 Reliefweb.int, "Georgia: State Strategy on Occupied Territories: Engagement through Cooperation", 27 January 2010, p.3. Available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/7BB542FC48439241492576ED0012729F-Full_Report.pdf (Accessed 6 August 2020)

4 Mfa.gov.ua, "10 facts you should know about Russian military aggression against Ukraine", 19 December 2019, Available at: https://mfa.gov.ua/en/10-facts-you-should-know-about-russian-military-aggression-against-ukraine (Accessed 6 August 2020)

from the Moscow agreement on a ceasefire and the separation of forces, Russia is no longer involved in peacekeeping operations in the conflicts in Georgia. According to the 'Law on Occupied Territories' adopted by the Georgian Parliament in 2008, a new legal regime applies to the Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/ South Ossetia[5].

Finally, the comments on the idiosyncratic nature of the conflict's mediation structure seem rather incomplete. Although, according to Broers, the OSCE's Minsk Group Co-chairs of France, Russia and the United States have been locked in geopolitical competition in Georgia, Ukraine and the Middle East, but cooperate and generate 'what is perhaps the sole moment of consensus between Armenia and Azerbaijan today' (p. 7), it is wrong to overstate the role of cooperation among the Minsk Group Co-chairs; especially as the conflict still remains unresolved. At the same time, although they more than once declared that the status quo is unacceptable, they have focused their efforts on preventing an escalation of the conflict, rather than on searching for a resolution. Therefore, it is unsurprising that, in his interview on 9 July 2020, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, while giving a broad insight into the settlement process for the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict, condemned the OSCE Minsk Group for its inaction on Armenia's illegal occupation of Azerbaijani lands.

We would also like to take note of the author's point about the 'wide Azerbaijanism' that has ostensibly been rooted in Azerbaijan since the mid-2000s.

According to the author, 'wide Azerbaijanism' is the meeting point of two previously subdued geographies made relevant by both sovereignty and the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict (p. 116). The first is related to the notion of Azerbaijani khanates appearing north and south of the Aras River after 1747; these are reframed as precursors of modern Azerbaijani statehood in contemporary Azerbaijani scholarship. The second building block of 'wide Azerbaijanism' is associated with the notion of western Azerbaijan, specifically 'a wide-ranging fetishization of the Erivan (Irevan) khanate as a historically Azerbaijani entity' (p. 117). At the same time, the author assumes that 'wide Azerbaijanism' replaced the 'Azerbaijanism' narrative

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5 Reliefweb.int, "Georgia: State Strategy on Occupied Territories: Engagement through Cooperation", 27 January 2010, p.4. Available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/7BB542FC48439241492576ED0012729F-Full_Report.pdf (Accessed 6 August 2020)

of the Heydar Aliyev era that concentrated on Azerbaijan's internationally recognized borders (pp. 112–114).

In our opinion, there are two different perspectives that should be distinguished from one another in this context. From the political perspective, Azerbaijan has never laid official claim to the internationally recognized territory of Armenia; an approach that, so far, has never been reciprocated. Moreover, according to existing historical perspectives, Armenians did not constitute an ethno-demographic majority in the territory of modern Armenia and used to live alongside a substantial Muslim population in the 19th and 20th centuries. Thus, even when Azerbaijan refers to Armenia as a part of historical 'western Azerbaijan', this merely points out that, until the end of the 1980s, there was a substantial Azerbaijani minority living on those territories. This population subsequently was forced out of their native lands owing to the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan and, therefore, it is obvious that they believe that they will return home one day. It is wrong to assume that, currently, 'the theatre of contested space is shifted from Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia itself' (p. 118). Azerbaijan has never mixed historical and political perspectives, whereas Armenia's greatest mistake is precisely this.

CAUCASUS UNDER REVIEW

(Recently Published Books)

reviewed by Polad Muradli

China's Western Horizon: Beijing and the New Geopolitics of Eurasia

By Daniel S. Markey

As Beijing's wealth, power and influence have grown under Xi Jinping's rule, an increasing volume of academic research has been conducted on China's expanded ambitions for continental Eurasia. Western analysts have largely emphasized the component projects of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), analysing their viability, risk and potential security implications while seeking to understand how this broadened reach will affect China's rise through the lens of great-power competition. Daniel Markey's *China's Western Horizon: Beijing and the New Geopolitics of Eurasia*, in its turn, distinguishes itself by spotlighting how China's economic, security and legal instruments interact with local conditions across the Eurasian political space. Through a well-researched and informed analysis of recent Chinese engagement in South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East, the book reveals how governments and political actors use such engagement to advance their own interests and agendas, often with messy and unintended consequences for China, and also assesses the political implications of these developments for Eurasia and the United States.

In order to make his case, Daniel S. Markey, a scholar of international relations and a former member of the US State Department's policy planning staff, describes how perceptions of China vary widely within the respective focal states of the three abovementioned regions: Pakistan, Kazakhstan and Iran. To achieve this, he draws on extensive interviews, travels and historical research. According to the author, 'the multifarious forces of domestic politics within these states across Eurasia, from separatist movements and special interest groups to opposition political parties, constitute the ground realities within which Chinese initiatives like BRI must operate.' Much will remain outside China's control, although Beijing is exporting tools of political repression throughout its neighbourhood. While China will find some circumstances fraught with hazard, and others will prove more welcoming, Markey also believes that even unpredictable changes through democratic elections or other,

more violent, turns of events might make a substantial difference in this respect.

The opening chapter of the book leads with the history of China's involvement in Pakistan's Gwadar port, and then identifies ways in which Eurasia's powerful and privileged groups often expect to profit from their connections to China, through energy purchases, arms sales and infrastructure investments, in order to outdo strategic competitors, while others fear commercial and political losses. Chapter 2, in turn, offers a summary of Beijing's strategic objectives in Eurasia and how, since the end of the Cold War, they have evolved, driven by China's growing energy needs, thirst for markets and investment projects, concerns about Islamic extremism along its western border, and its emerging strategic competition with India, Russia, and the United States, all of which have motivated China's increasingly ambitious global policies, including the BRI. Although China's involvement in the region tends to start with economic and trade relations, the author emphasizes how, in recent years, the country has moved from 'keeping a low profile' to 'striving for achievement' in ways that stray from 'non-interference'. To accomplish its global aims, China is developing new tools of economic statecraft, security, and diplomacy. These are described in detail, including the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the China International Development Cooperation Agency, a modernized military with greater power projection capabilities, the port facility in Djibouti, private security contractors, the China Global Television Network, and new technologies for political repression.

The following chapters examine the domestic political contexts and consequences of Chinese involvement along its western horizon, and explain why Beijing's ambitions and policies are an insufficient guide to understanding developments on the ground in Eurasia. Chapter 3, in this respect, describes the intersection of Chinese, Pakistani, and Indian economic, political, and security interests in South Asia. It introduces a brief history of China's interaction with South Asia and explains how China now perceives its economic, security, and diplomatic goals in the region. It shows how Pakistanis are divided in their perceptions of China and the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor, and explains how the military and other establishment groups are likely to gain from closer ties, while liberals and opposition groups stand

to lose. It details how Pakistan benefits from its military ties to China, especially in the areas of nuclear weapons, missiles, and drone technologies, and how China's diplomatic support shields Pakistan from international pressure. The chapter evaluates that, on balance, China's deepened regional presence and economic, military, and diplomatic assistance to Pakistan will tend to raise tensions with India.

The next chapter discusses the intersection of Chinese, Russian, and Central Asian interests in the context of China's expanding Eurasian presence. It introduces a brief history of China's relations with Central Asia and Russia. It describes how China has deepened its economic ties, especially with respect to the energy trade and overland transportation infrastructure. The chapter explains how Kazakhstan's political economy is defined by illiberal, strongman rule, patronage politics, and the influence of ethnic cleavages, and how it is likely to be influenced by China's involvement. It describes how China and Russia share similar global aims, not least in resisting aspects of US leadership, which has contributed to the unusually close ties between presidents Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin. However, it also finds that the increasing power asymmetry between China and Russia, along with Moscow's reduced influence in Central Asia, will likely introduce tensions between them over time.

Chapter 5 discusses the intersection of Chinese, Iranian, Saudi (and, to a lesser extent, American and Russian) interests in the Middle East. It introduces a brief history of China's links with the Middle East and explains how Beijing's regional role has, until recently, tended to be relatively limited. However, China's ties to the region have grown significantly, especially in terms of energy trade and investment. The chapter explores how Iranians perceive economic and strategic value in China as a means to sustain the ruling regime, resist pressure from the United States, and compete with Saudi Arabia. It explores Saudi–China ties as well, finding that the monarchy sees China as essential to its strategy for economic development. The chapter concludes that both Tehran and Riyadh will continue to court Beijing, and that the Middle East is primed for greater Chinese involvement, less reform, and more geopolitical competition.

The final chapter summarizes the interplay between China

and South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East, then assesses the geopolitical implications for America and offers recommendations for US policy. It finds that, across Eurasia, China's involvement tends to undercut healthy pressure for economic and political reform within states, and appears to be exacerbating or rekindling tensions among them. The chapter evaluates current US policy in the context of global competition with China and identifies a range of strategies for Eurasia, including 'benign neglect', 'peaceful accommodation', 'critical publicity', 'selective competition', and 'militarized competition'. The author here advocates for more attention to local political-economic conditions and strategic competition, and promotes selective engagement drawing on American strengths. All in all, the book provides a comprehensive and timely insight into the deepening post-Cold War profile of China on the Eurasian continent.

The Long Telegram 2.0: A Neo-Kennanite Approach to Russia

By Peter Eltsov

Inspired by the well-known telegram that the American diplomat and historian George F. Kennan sent from Moscow to Washington in February 1946, *The Long Telegram 2.0: A Neo-Kennanite Approach to Russia*, by Peter Eltsov, assistant professor of international security affairs at the US National Defense University, provides an original explanation of contemporary Russia, exploring its resurgent imperial character and predicting its forthcoming disintegration.

As Russian President Vladimir Putin manoeuvres to remain in power after 2024, the perennial questions about his goals and effective Western responses continue to preoccupy researchers observing Russia. 'Some political thinkers lay the blame for the current standoff between the United States and Russia on Vladimir Putin and the FSB,' asserts the author, 'the belief being that given a different leadership, Russia could have become a peaceful democratic state. Another group blames the United States and its allies, essentially replicating the Kremlin's grievances − the extension of NATO to the East and the alleged orchestration of uprisings, known as "color revolutions," in the former Soviet republics.' This book, in turn, attempts to avoid simplistic essentialist models and provide an explanation centred on overarching themes that differ greatly from the opposing arguments above. Fundamentally, the author claims that, given Russia's current borders, it is incapable of becoming a democracy. Unless it disintegrates into several independent states, it is destined to remain an autocratic empire. 'In this sense,' the author goes on, 'Putin's supporters are correct in thanking their president for saving their country from disintegration. Had Putin not cracked down on the Chechen insurgency, Russia would have followed the fate of the Soviet Union.'

In order to justify his claims, the author bases his historical analysis of Russia on the tripartite dictum 'orthodoxy, autocracy, nationality', formulated in 1833 by Count Sergey Uvarov, and argues that these traits 'have kept the Russian Empire alive for centuries, repeatedly resuscitating it during times of crisis. Even when the first Bolsheviks decided to break this system by ban-

ning the church, executing the czar, and introducing affirmative action for non-Russian nationalities, the miraculous triad somehow returned with a different ideological sauce. Church was substituted with Marxism-Leninism, the czar with the general secretary, and the Russian-centered nationality policy with Stalin's campaign against Western sympathizers. Today, under the Putin regime, Uvarov's triad is being implemented in nearly pristine form. The church has become an innate part of the state, the president has acquired dictatorial powers, and the Russian-centered nationality policy has taken a new form – the ideology of the Russian World.' The author explores Uvarov's triad in the context of modern Russia, adding five more traits: exceptionalism, expansionism, historical primordialism, worship of the military, and glorification of suffering, and thoroughly analyses each of them in a distinct chapter of the book.

Chapter 1 presents autocracy as 'the singular defining trait of Russia's political system since the sixteenth century'. Demonstrating, through historical analysis, how all attempts to change the political system have failed while much of the Russian population has supported and still supports an autocratic form of government since that time, and supporting his theories with examples from Russian history, art, culture and literature, the author contends that this political system is doomed to maintain the status quo. 'The true democratization of Russia is unlikely to happen without one final revolution that would involve the disintegration of Russia as an empire.' 'In this sense,' the author concludes, 'paradoxically, the renowned film director Nikita Mikhalkov may be not that far off the mark when he says that monarchy is the most appropriate political system for Russia, certainly in its current borders and national composition.'

Chapter 2 compares Russian and American exceptionalisms, ultimately concluding that they are drastically different: 'American exceptionalism is based on liberalism and individualism. Russian exceptionalism – whether past or present – promotes authoritarianism and collectivism. In the nineteenth century, Slavophiles wanted to unite Slavic nations under the rule of Moscow. In the twentieth century, communists wanted to "liberate" the whole world. Today, under the pretext of maintaining a multi-polar and multicultural world, Russia stands for authoritarianism, bigotry, and fundamentalism, once again all over the world... Dostoevsky

wanted Constantinople to come to Russia's orbit. Dugin has recently suggested that Russia should conquer Europe.' Another crucial difference between American and Russian exceptionalisms, to the author, is that one side has adjusted to the realities of the modern world and abandoned direct annexations of foreign lands. Meanwhile, Russian exceptionalism has always justified territorial acquisitions, either as serving the interests of the empire, or as 'brotherly help' to other countries.

Chapter 3 describes how Putin-led Russia, in an attempt to avoid its disintegration, has arrived at a new ideology that purports to provide a global alternative to liberalism. This ideology, in turn, combines the traits of fascism, socialism, and nationalism, and is largely in line with Dugin's fourth political theory: 'What Russia's politicians and commentators call multi-polarity, in reality, is the burning desire to project power, supporting and promoting authoritarian and populist regimes around the world. This agenda is not limited to the Middle East, Central Asia, and Africa – regions with long traditions of authoritarianism. It also applies to Europe, South America, and even the countries of North America.' The author goes on to contend that, in the context of the political reality of the modern world, where globalization and postmodernity produce counter-reactions, expressed through nationalism, fundamentalism, and populism, Russia's new ideology may find appeal in some countries, including democratic ones.

Chapter 4 touches upon the trait of expansionism, claiming that the only Eurasian entity that replicated the Mongol Empire is the Russian Empire: 'The latter still exists, and more frequently than ever, defiantly lays claim to its Asian heritage.' According to the author, the official Russian propaganda follows an old imperial paradigm, in which the history of Russia begins with Kyivan Rus in the ninth century. 'In the wake of Ukrainian independence, the regime of Vladimir Putin requires similar historical manipulation.' Meanwhile, Chapter 5 asserts that the narrative, which modern Russia has been pushing throughout recent years, 'that asserts Russia's eternal, nearly God-given innocence with respect to all wars that it has waged' is the furthest from reality it has ever been in its history. To the author, 'Even Soviet propaganda was more realistic… This behavior displays both blatant and deliberate misrepresentation of historical facts.'

Chapter 6, in turn, explains how faith is interwoven with all the other traits of Russia's exceptionalism and 'helps to explain all of Russia's triumphs, misfortunes, setbacks, and even atrocities'; most importantly, it enables people to carry the cross of oppression without questioning their political system. 'Today,' according to the author, 'the Russian idea is being revived in accordance with the symphony of church, state, and society.' In this respect, Chapter 7 demonstrates how 'Russia continues to foster holy foolishness in all spheres of life.' The author believes that such a romantic self-flagellation is not going to transform Russia into a more humane place: 'The veneration of holy folly and suffering has been an impediment rather than a conduit to civil society in Russia.' The author contends that unless Russians – both the intelligentsia and the people – conceive of a more positive, practical, and, most importantly, implementable attitude to life, no substantial changes will ever occur.

Chapter 8 touches upon the measures the Kremlin has been taking in order to thwart separatist movements in the country, such as introducing yet another set of administrative divisions – eight federal *okrugs* – regional units defined geographically as Central, Southern, Northwestern, Volga, North Caucasian, Uralian, Siberian, and Far Eastern. Yet, these efforts may backfire, according to the author, as the existence of federal *okrugs* is likely to stimulate the most promising form of separatism – independence movements that unite all of the nationalities of a given territory under a common goal: 'Indeed, if the residents of Russia's resource-rich regions decided to fight for their independence based on federalist and ethnically inclusive principles, their endeavors would become increasingly viable, and pose a deadly threat to Russia's oneness.' The author demonstrates how, despite all the legal bans, separatism in Russia is far from eradicated; on the contrary, abundant grievances towards Moscow in Russia's numerous regions demonstrate that it is very much in the air. The author believes that Russia's territorial integrity can be maintained only by brute force: 'As soon as the czar unclenches his fist, his kingdom will crumble.'

Throughout the final part of the book, the author asks such questions as whether or not achieving the universal application of democracy is worth the price. Do we prefer an autocratic and imperialist Russia or a fragmented, and largely unpredictable,

political order in Eurasia? Would it be more beneficial for this immense territorial empire to maintain the status quo for another 100, 200, or 300 years in solitude, or for it to cease to exist for the betterment of its citizens and the rest of the world? Would the disintegration of Russia lead to Armageddon – a series of bloody wars that could ruin not only Eurasia, but the whole world?

Ultimately, Eltsov argues that, unless the current US policy changes dramatically, the autocratic nature of the Russian regime will only get worse, to the point where it could even eventually break up. Following these assessments, the author recommends that the best current policy for the United States towards Russia is a combination of strategic patience and offensive realism that acknowledges the simple truth: Russia is not, as presently constituted, going to become a democracy. Unless and until it disintegrates, it will maintain its autocratic and expansionist identity. Working with Russia's leadership regularly and in a pragmatic manner is more beneficial and does not prevent NATO from standing up for its allies and containing Russia's potential expansion: 'Neither is it appeasement. It is realpolitik.'

All in all, this book provides a valuable analysis of Russian cultural identity and its exceptionalism and expansionism that make it profoundly different from the West, and thereby advocates a patient and realistic policy towards Moscow. This thought-provoking study should become required reading for decision-makers and scholars, all across the world, who deal with Eurasia.

Power and Conflict in Russia's Borderlands: The Post-Soviet Geopolitics of Dispute Resolution

By Helena Rytövuori-Apunen

In *Power and Conflict in Russia's Borderlands*, Helena Rytövuori-Apunen studies Russia's approach to establishing a presence beyond its territory, focusing particularly on the settlement of frozen conflicts in the post-Soviet space. Drawing upon a range of empirical research and historical concepts across separatist conflicts in Georgia (South Ossetia and Abkhazia), Moldova (Transnistria and Gagauzia) and Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh), and the 2014 annexation of Crimea from Ukraine, her book provides a balanced assessment and critique of the assumptions and misunderstandings that inform mainstream discussions, as well as placing the conflicts in their proper and complex historical contexts.

Helena Rytövuori-Apunen has recently retired from the University of Tampere, Finland, where she was a Senior Researcher at the Tampere Peace Research Institute and a Professor in Politics and International Relations, and from where she also received her PhD.

According to the author, often, when discussing the post-Soviet frozen conflicts in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Transnistria and Nagorno-Karabakh, the expert communities either completely leave aside Russia's security interests, or the attention given does not go beyond a common re-emphasis of Russia's geopolitical conflict with the United States and NATO. This book, however, aims to present an alternative perspective by examining how borders come into being through Russia's policies and actions in these conflicts, how these processes take place in interplay with its security interests, and its relations with the normative international community. It asks how such zonal borders, called 'deep borders', come into being with a variety of policy arrangements – both formal-institutional and non-formal and habitual – and the different ways in which the legitimacy of this action is argued in Russia's official international communications and domestic discussions.

The pragmatism-inspired idea of the book can be encapsulated in three key concepts: deep borders, vertical power, and interna-

tional community. Through these thematic questions, the author attempts to explore how Russian policies intertwine with local interests and why decision-makers in Moscow pursue certain policies, and how these policies emerge in interaction with both other regional states and the external powers active in the region. According to the author, Russia's long-term interest is not an a priori assumption, but rather a matter of enquiry, and the pursuit of power is not synonymous with the intent to establish domination over territory. Instead, the book demonstrates it to be a capability to control outcomes of events in specific situations.

The analysis focuses on the three aforementioned facets of this process. First, it examines Russian policies and action in the specific conflicts, doing so with a particular eye on the practices of conflict settlement that bring together instances of action. Second, it asks how the borders set up or pursued in this way also represent something that is suggested by their immediate relation or denotation. The third facet emerges from the tension between horizontal and vertical international relations and brings into focus the various courses of action and the discourses that are used to legitimize them in international and domestic Russian contexts, and speak to Russia's participation in the normative international community.

Accordingly, the book is structured such that each chapter applies each of the facets of analysis to a specific case. Three cases are studied: the Russo-Georgian war of 2008 and the status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia; relations with Moldova and Transnistria; and the regulation of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. In this respect, the first chapter demonstrates how Georgia's separatist regions became a symbol of Russia's troubled relations with the Western international community after August 2008.

In the meantime, throughout the examination of Moldova's conflict with Russia over separatist Transnistria in Chapter 2, the major thematic dimension that dominates the conflict covers the question of 'how Moscow can affect developments outside the formal processes of the government' – that is, use its vertical power in a series of issues that range from elections and the organization of popular votes to pension support and energy subsidies in Transnistria. The second chapter then provides in-

sight into Russia's efforts to participate in the regulation of the conflict while maintaining influence with the local population and advocating for Moldova's neutrality when it comes to EU or NATO membership. One concept explored in this case study is vertical power, whereby the Russian government tries to support Russians living outside of the country and establish connections with them. It is a way of using soft power, including cultural and religious ties, but also includes socioeconomic benefits such as receiving Russian passports – a policy also adopted in relation to the eastern parts of Ukraine last year.

The third case, analysed in Chapter 3, can be distinguished from the aforementioned ones, as Nagorno Karabakh is, to the author, 'very different from either of [the] conflicts' mentioned above. 'It never hosted a Soviet military base and its society does not have any habitual basis for considering a future in close connection with Russia… However, Russia is continuously present there through the military, political and economic support that Moscow provides to Armenia… Although Nagorno-Karabakh out of all three aforementioned conflict areas has least to do with Russia's formal borders, it is an illustrative example of the complexities of Russia's deep borders in their wider regional context.' The author here believes that 'Moscow can maintain its deep borders by "tightening the knot from both sides" and support a balanced relationship with both post-Soviet countries as well as an influential role in the resolution process, with the overall goal of maintaining influence in the Caucasus region.'

The concluding chapter, in turn, examines how the historical, religious, linguistic, and cultural links between Russia and the three aforementioned regions might influence the conflict resolution process in the future, thereby also providing some significant implications with regard to the conflict in eastern Ukraine. All in all, the book effectively demonstrates the practices that the current Russian government has been implementing to meet its security-related interests around its direct borders.

Energy Transitions and the Future of Gas in the EU: Subsidise or Decarbonise

By Gökçe Mete

Energy Transitions and the Future of Gas in the EU provides an experiential assessment of the impact of energy transitions on the future of natural gas in the EU energy mix. In the context of the EU transition to a low-carbon economy, the gas industry will face significant transformation over the next decades, up to 2050 and beyond. A substantial number of studies on the future of gas have been published recently, with each of them arriving at different outcomes and projections, and, in some cases, even coming to radically different conclusions. But what does such change mean? To address this question, the author critically analyses the EU's evolving natural gas market policy and law.

Dr Gökçe Mete is an energy-sector professional, academic and consultant who has a decade of experience focused on climate change and energy and natural resources law and policy. Previously the Head of the Knowledge Centre at the International Energy Charter, she is currently a Fellow at Stockholm Environment Institute. Her research focuses on how to support industry sectors in navigating their way towards a sustainable future. Gökce is a part of the Leadership Group for the Industry Transition initiative that explores how policy, finance, and business practices in hard-to-abate industry sectors can be aligned to achieve climate neutrality consistent with the Paris Agreement and the latest scientific evidence from the IPCC.

The book explores whether the EU will continue to subsidize natural gas projects or will decarbonize the gas grid before 2050, and at what cost. Clearly structured throughout, the book explores the following questions: how can we maximize the potential of gas infrastructure to reduce carbon emissions? What are the lessons learned from decision-making experience in the natural gas sector? Is the EU moving towards or away from a climate-neutral gas sector? How will green and low-carbon gas technologies be supported? And, are proposals to drive a growing share of hydrogen, biomethane, and synthetic methane to the system just an excuse to prolong fossil fuel operations?

Accordingly, following the introductory chapter, Chapter 2 sets the scene by discussing the importance of the research and familiarizing readers with the evolution of the EU regulatory framework for natural gas, and provides an initial analysis of the EU's natural gas markets' attractiveness for suppliers. Chapter 3, in turn, provides a detailed analysis of the EU's energy mix and past, present, and future trends of natural gas consumption, production, and storage in the EU. Through a study of gas prices, unconventionals potential, and gas storage capacity in the EU, this analysis demonstrates the important role that natural gas infrastructure plays in the context of EU energy security. The chapter also discusses how different fuels contribute to the energy mix, CO_2 equivalents, and the status quo of technological advancements and investment levels on hydrogen, synthetic gas, and biomethane, and around carbon storage, its transportation and use, which inevitably involves a discussion on planned decommissioning activities. Recommendations are proposed for a new regulatory and policy framework for the development and operation of hydrogen pipelines, injection of biomethane into the existing gas grid, and for pipelines carrying CO_2. The chapter concludes with initial thoughts on the expected 2020 gas package.

Chapter 4 carries out a mapping exercise of natural gas subsidies and natural gas project finance in light of the Energy Transition in the EU. Acquainting the reader with principles of project finance through assessing the ability of investors to commission gas infrastructure projects based on the market, this chapter also introduces how the new Sustainable Finance Package could impact future gas sector investment. Carbon pricing and fossil fuel subsidy reform recommendations are also carried out in this chapter. Chapters 4 and 5 build their arguments around a dozen different project case studies including, inter alia, cross-border pipelines (built within and outside Eurasia), natural gas interconnectors within the EU, and liquefied natural gas.

Chapter 5 also explores the potential challenges facing hydrogen and renewable gas infrastructure, a discussion which is developed further in Chapter 6 on the decision-making framework for natural gas projects in the EU and on the future role of gas. This final chapter preceding the conclusion focuses on the legislative and regulatory aspects of the EU energy architecture. It offers both historical and forward-looking critical accounts of the ener-

gy acquis. This is where the details of the Third Energy Package, Network Codes, Gas Target Model, Energy Union, and the 2019 Gas Directive Amendment are discussed. Chapter 6 describes the decision-making framework under EU natural gas market rules as an altering journey to an unknown destination. However, it delivers a number of recommendations on the successful implementation of the sector, coupling together the electricity and gas sectors to enable gas to play an important role in the EU's ambition to reach a net-zero-carbon economy by 2050. The ongoing public discussions on a prospective 2020 Gas Package provide a timely opportunity to make decarbonization of the gas sector a reality.

In conclusion, Chapter 7, while acknowledging that gas infrastructure will continue to be important, notes that a carbon-free EU will not come cheap. Nor will any of the pioneering technologies, including carbon capture and storage, hydrogen, biogas, etc., offer a silver bullet to solve all issues. These are all long-term, complex technologies, and considering that it took nearly two decades to establish an internal natural gas market (and it is still neither complete, nor free from problems), investment decisions must be taken now. The concluding chapter therefore recommends that the limited public resources currently being allocated to strategic, uncommercial natural gas projects be redirected to provide market incentives for a decarbonized European gas grid of the future.

Filling an important gap in the literature, this book aims to develop an understanding and clarify the complex range of legislation involved within a single analytical framework. Although the focus is mainly on the future of gas in the EU, the findings and recommendations are relevant for a much wider geography. This book will be an invaluable reference for policy makers and practitioners as well as researchers and students, across the social sciences, who are interested in the future of energy.

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• Illegal economic and other activities in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan
• Legal assessment of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict
• Role of international organizations on the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict
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