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INTERNATIONAL INTERVENTION IN CONFLICTS

UN, OSCE, EU, NATO, CSTO PEACEKEEPING POLICIES

Alexander Nikitin

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Author

Alexander Nikitin

Director of the Center for Euro-Atlantic Security in the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (University) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation; Principal Researcher, World Economy and International Relations Institute (IMEMO) of the Russian Academy of Sciences

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In today's world up to 35–40 international and internationalized regional conflicts involving the use of military force take place every year. World powers, including Russia, as well as international organizations, regularly intervene in these conflicts. However, Russia is subjected to criticism by a number of states and organizations. Moscow is criticized for its peace operations in the post-Soviet space and for its intervention in the Syria conflict, to say nothing about Russia's policy toward eastern Ukraine. Intervention in conflicts is an important foreign policy tool. However, it requires correct prioritization and effective engagement with international organizations and other states that are involved in conflicts.

Russian diplomacy and experts are faced with the following questions: In what

direction should Russia as a permanent member of the UN Security Council promote UN conflict policy? What can be done in terms of conflict resolution by the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and other regional organizations where Russia is a key participant and which so far underuse their peacekeeping potential? Finally, how to ensure that the international efforts between Russia and other powers and organizations concerning the acute conflicts in Ukraine and Syria are more effectively coordinated? To answer these questions, it is essential to compare the policy of the UN, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the EU, NATO, the CSTO and other major organizations in conflict regions.

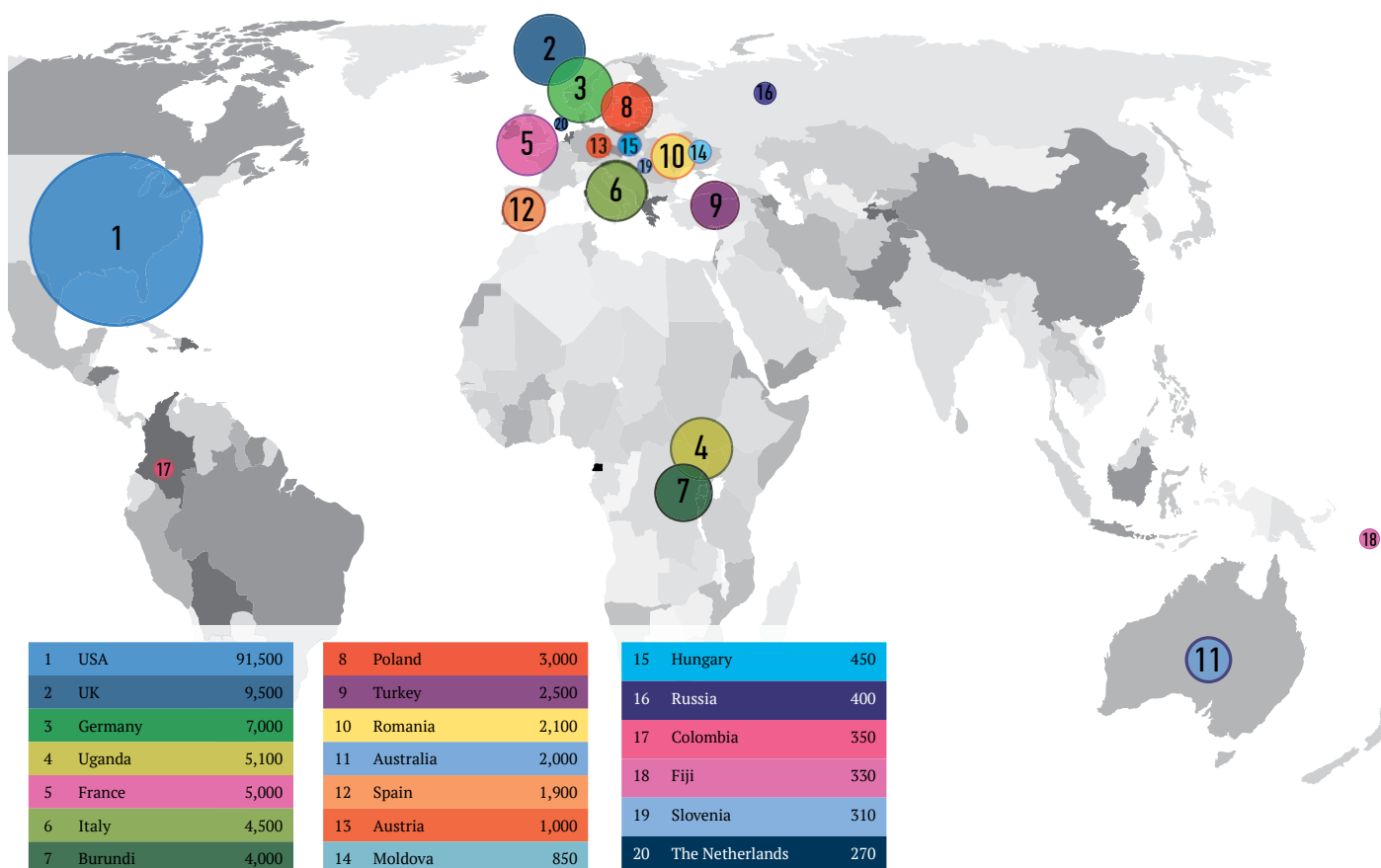
The Scale of International Intervention in Conflicts

In recent years, the UN has been conducting 16–17 parallel peace operations a year plus another two dozen so-called political missions in conflict regions. In addition to UN operations, over the past few decades conflict intervention by regional interstate organizations has gradually become an established practice. These organizations include the African Union and other African sub-regional organizations on the African continent and the Organization of American States (OAS). In Europe interference in conflicts has been undertaken by the European Union, NATO and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The Collective Security Treaty Organization has now created its own collective peacekeeping forces, signing framework agreements with the UN

on the possibility of using its peacekeeping capability in operations under UN mandate.

In 2014–2015, a total of 243,000 military, political and civilian personnel took part in all peace operations and political missions in conflict regions. Only half of them are overseen by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The other half consists of operations conducted by regional organizations and various political non-UN missions. Thus, in terms of personnel, the scale of regional interstate organizations' involvement in conflict resolution is comparable to the UN's own peace operations. In addition, periodically, operations with the use of armed forces are carried out by some world powers and their coalitions, often without any mandate from the UN or another international organization.

LARGEST PERSONNEL CONTRIBUTORS TO OPERATIONS BY INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS OTHER THAN THE UN



According to Global Peace Operations Annual Review 2011–2015

Source: Никитин А.И. Международные конфликты: вмешательство, миротворчество, урегулирование. М.: Аспект-Пресс, 2017.

The Principles of External Intervention

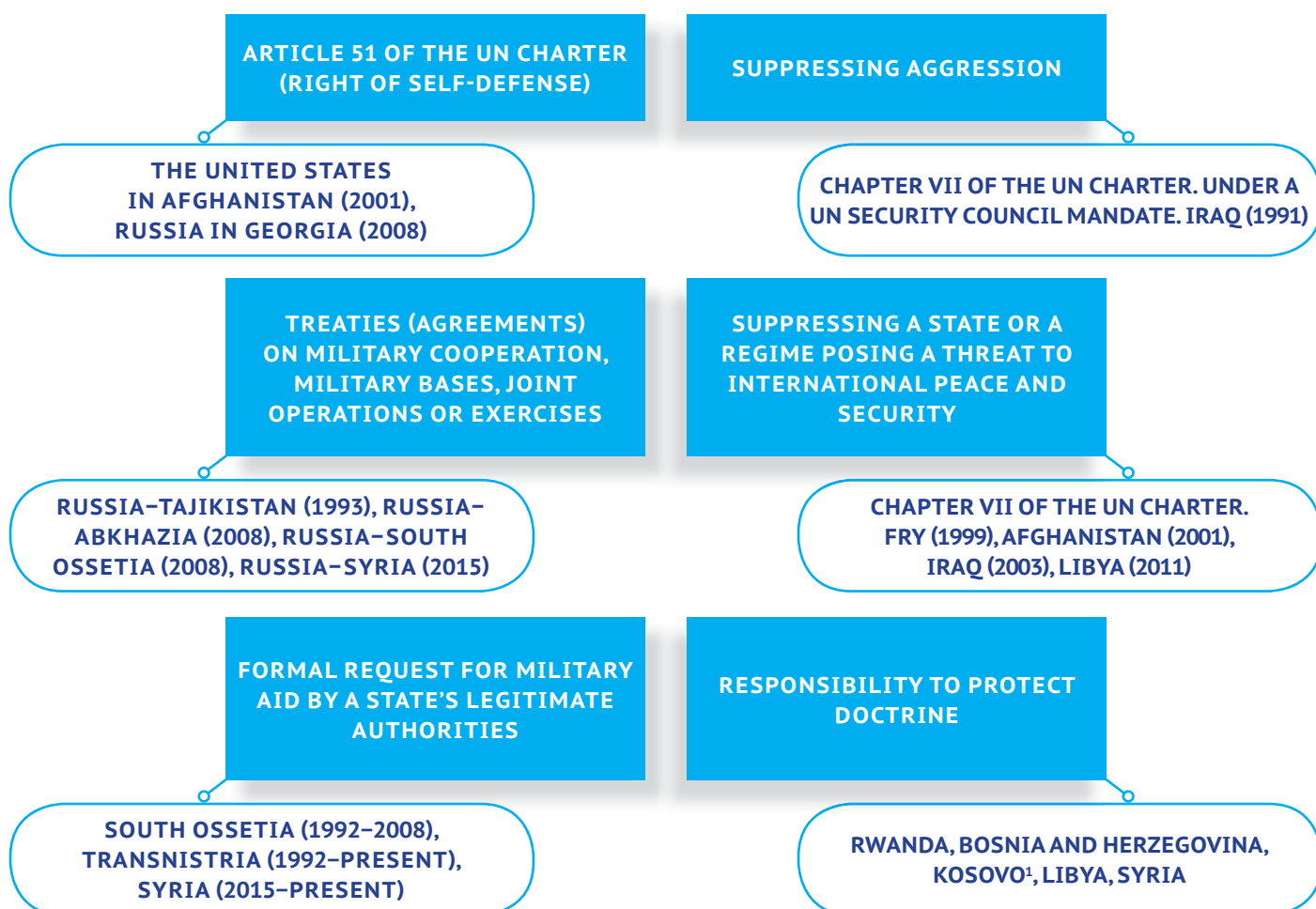
At least six types of international legal grounds exist in international law for the legitimate use of armed forces by one state

on the territory of another state; notably, not all of them are universally recognized:

- *A state's right of self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter.*
- *Collective efforts by the international community to suppress acts of aggression by one state against another (collective use of force by an international coalition under a UN mandate in keeping with Chapter 7 of the Charter).*

- *Collective efforts by the international community to suppress a state or a political force posing a threat to international peace and security (under a UN mandate, in keeping with the principles of Chapter VII of the UN Charter; remains the subject of conflicting political interpretations).*
- *Treaties (agreements) on military cooperation, military bases, joint operations or exercises.*
- *A formal documented request for military aid by the legitimate authorities of one state addressed to the authorities of another state.*
- *The responsibility of the international community to protect civilians, social and ethnic groups against genocide on the part of other groups or against the criminal policy of the authorities of their own state – an emerging doctrine that has not yet been universally recognized.*

INTERNATIONAL LEGAL GROUNDS FOR THE USE OF FORCE BY ONE STATE AGAINST ANOTHER STATE



Source: Никитин А.И. Международные конфликты: вмешательство, миротворчество, урегулирование. М.: Аспект-Пресс, 2017.

¹ Due to the peculiarities of the international legal status, hereinafter referred to as the territory. – **Ed. note.**

It is noteworthy that Russia voted application of the Responsibility to Protect principle at the UN Security Council in 1999 with regard to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and in 2003 it voted against using the formula “suppressing a regime that poses a threat to peace and security” regarding the introduction of international forces to Iraq. In 2011, Russia also abstained from a UNSC vote on applying this formula to Libya.

The past two decades have seen a trend toward the formation of coalitions of states, which, on behalf of international organizations (or at their own discretion), have carried out an international mandate for mediation,

settlement or intervention. A number of states, including both Western countries and Russia, began to use the “peacekeeping” concept even if these actions are not backed up by a mandate from the UN or a regional international organization. Thus, none of the operations in newly independent states with the participation of the Russian Armed Forces in the 1990s (Tajikistan, Moldova/Transnistria, Georgia/South Ossetia, Georgia/Abkhazia) had a UN mandate, and only two (in Tajikistan and Abkhazia) had a mandate from a regional organization (CIS). As for the operations in Moldova/Transnistria (1992–present) and Georgia/South

OPERATIONS WITH RUSSIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE POST-SOVIET SPACE



Source: Никитин А.И. Международные конфликты: вмешательство, миротворчество, урегулирование. М.: Аспект-Пресс, 2017.

Ossetia (1992–2008), they were based on inter-presidential agreements while their status can be described as legitimate intervention

in the internal affairs of another state at its own request with the documented consent of both parties to a conflict.

UN Peacekeeping

UN peacekeeping operations have proven to be one of the most effective conflict intervention tools. Over the past seven decades, the UN has conducted 70 operations in many configurations. There are currently 16 ongoing peacekeeping operations. As of 2015, 122,696 personnel were involved in UN current operations, including 103,912 military and police personnel from 128 countries.

UN contingents include 89,642 military and 12,529 police personnel and 1,741 military observers. Compared to previous decades, not only the police but also the civilian component has increased significantly: In addition to 5,271 international civilian and diplomatic personnel, it includes 11,700 local civilian personnel from conflict regions. Civilian personnel in UN missions come from 166 countries. During the almost seven decades since the first UN operations began, 3,277 UN military and civilian personnel have been killed in missions.

The approved budget for UN peacekeeping operations for the fiscal year 2015–2016 was \$7.87 billion. As previously, a separate budget for operations in conflict regions significantly exceeds the UN's own budget. However, it should be compared to another figure. The UN peacekeeping budget is less than half of one percent of world military expenditures, estimated at \$1.747 trillion.

Another problem is that peacekeeping expenses are apportioned to specific operations. Financing provided, say, for operations in the Middle East cannot be promptly rerouted to operation in Afghanistan, and vice versa.

Russia's contribution to the UN peacekeeping budget has increased 50 percent in recent years, but still, accounts for just a little over 3 percent. The top three contributors to peacekeeping operations are the US (28 percent), Japan (11 percent) and France (7 percent). Russia's contribution, which is at the same level as one of Spain, clearly does not measure up to the status of a large geopolitical power claiming a global role.

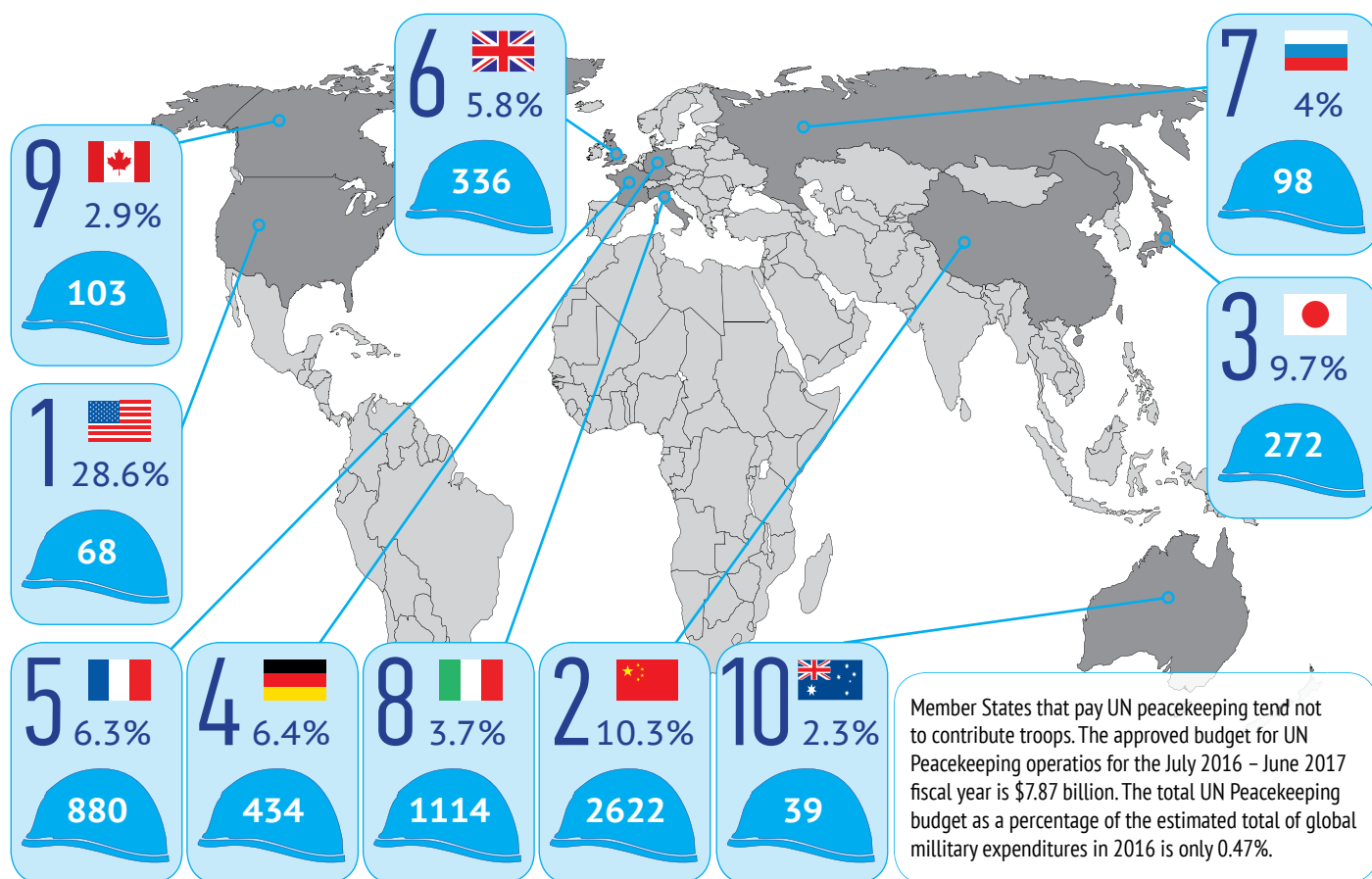
Last year, Russia contributed only 89 personnel to the UN's 100,000-strong peacekeeping force, including 27 police, 58 military observers and four military personnel.

Generally, the trend toward a reduction in Russian participation is in line with participation trends observed in other permanent members of the UN Security Council (except China, which has demonstrated its increasing interest in joining peacekeeping operations over the past five years, contributing about 2,500 personnel to UN operations a year).

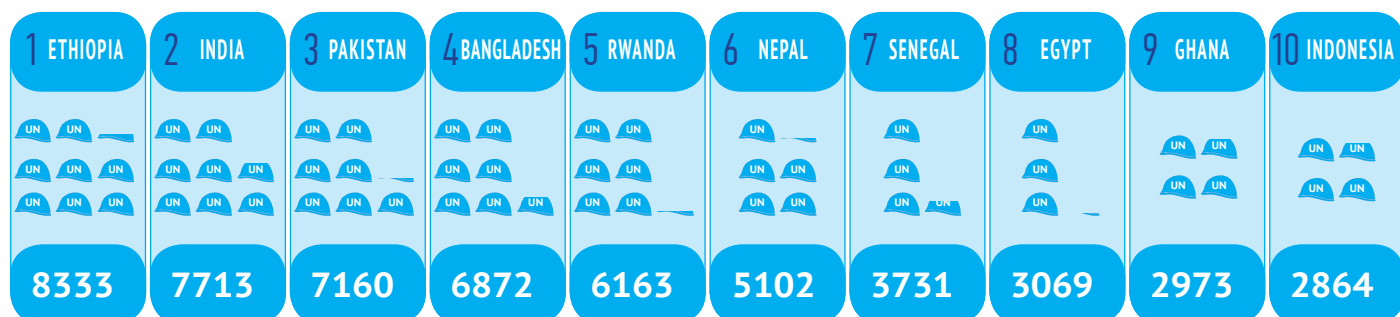
As is the case with Russia, at the UN Security Council the US, France and

TOP CONTRIBUTORS TO UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS BUDGET

Top 10 financial contributors to UN peacekeeping budget



Top 10 contributors to UN peacekeeping operations



UN = 1000 troops, police or UN military experts

Source: Global Peace Operations Annual Review 2016 (peaceoperationsreview.org).

the UK concentrate on the political aspects of peacekeeping: coordination of general decisions on operations, their focus and mandates. The near 90,000 US contingent in Afghanistan, which was withdrawn (except for under 10,000 personnel) in early 2015, stands apart. However, other than Afghanistan, Washington contributed only 132 personnel to other UN operations; the UK – 291 and France – 915.

Different powers and continents demonstrate different levels of participation in UN operations. Important contributors

today (as in recent decades) are India, Pakistan and Bangladesh (up to 8,000–9,000 personnel a year each) and a number of developing nations (Ethiopia, Ghana, Rwanda, Senegal and Chad, among others), as well as countries such as Brazil, South Africa, Jordan and Indonesia. Meanwhile, the UN Security Council has to respond to complaints from third countries about the unfairness of the situation where some (developed) countries make all political decisions concerning operations while other (developing) countries provide the soldiers who participate and who pay the ultimate sacrifice.

Reviewing Conflict Intervention Approaches

One of the main problems of peacekeeping today is the growing divide between the international community's expectations and the failure of a large number of operations to ensure the political resolution of conflicts. Many peacekeeping operations are conducted under conditions where there is no or almost no peace that can be kept. The disengagement of parties to conflicts or the freezing of hostilities may not be sufficient. Parties to conflicts often lack political will for compromise. The leaders of conflicting groups change continuously and stable infrastructure, a prerequisite for successful talks, is lacking. The resumption of hostilities easily wipes out emerging agreements.

It is high time for the UN to adopt a more proactive leadership position in the political peace process, not so much in supporting

the emerging weak elements of reconciliation as in assuming leadership in conducting talks, forging compromises and achieving a political settlement in a consistent and focused manner. In other words, the UN should not waste its forces and assets on conflicts where parties prevent it from assuming the role of a leading force in the peace process.² If the UN does not assert its role as the leading mediator, then the terms of a ceasefire can be easily violated. An unresolved conflict can drag on for years and decades amid general uncertainty, as the UN spends enormous resources but is unable either to see the parties to a conflict achieve a settlement or to scale back the operation in an appropriate manner.

² For more details, see: *Uniting Our Strengths for Peace – Policy, Partnerships, People. Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations*. UN Document, New York, 2015, p.103.

The idea essentially is to treat the entire arsenal of UN measures (from soft mediation and preventive measures to the tough use of force) as an aggregate array of tools. Rapid change in the configuration of an operation contingent in a rapidly changing situation should be regarded as the norm. For example, if the UN intervened at a stage when they are expected to assist in the implementation of a ceasefire agreement and the ceasefire is then broken by one party and hostilities resume, then the UN should not scale back its operation to keep the “disappearing” peace but rather should commit new forces and impose a new peace agreement on the parties to the conflict.

Another problem necessitating a review of UN peacekeeping mechanisms is the polarization of interests in a conflict region, where different countries of the region (as is the case in Libya, Syria and Yemen) and sometimes even permanent members of the UN Security Council have conflicting interests in achieving a peace settlement. In particular, the collective operation with US and Russian participation to destroy Syrian chemical weapons was possible only because the interests of the great powers in removing the lethal

arsenal from the conflict zone temporarily coincided. However, as soon as the destruction of chemical weapons (with the involvement of the UN in the format of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons) mission was over, the differences between the great powers, which were supposed to formulate a mandate for ending the civil war in Syria, flared up with new intensity.

One principle of the new approach is that the UN should not provide assistance to regional organizations without securing a leading role in the peace process or at least without establishing close political cooperation with the regional organization. This requirement is necessitated by the fact that regional organizations, in particular the African Union and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), have more than once begun operations to resolve African conflicts without appropriate consultations with the UN or without developing and coordinating a clear-cut plan, including an exit plan, then “ditching” the operation, hastily handing it over to the UN while also demanding compensation for the costs sustained at the regional stage of the operation.

Reform of UN Peacekeeping

It should be said in all fairness that both the organization and infrastructure of peacekeeping operations have undergone a certain measure of modernization in recent years. For example, the UN standing police

capacity has now been created to be used in peacekeeping operations. Another new development is the establishment of regional infrastructural hubs (manning and training centers) for operations on different continents.

Such centers were created in Central America and West Africa with intermediate centers in Europe. The technical arsenal for use in operations was also upgraded. Unmanned aerial vehicles began to be used for information gathering and surveillance purposes. Integrated information gathering and processing centers, equipped with modern communication equipment, were also created.

However, despite this technological modernization, the main peacekeeping problems remain; first, political and second, infrastructural. Countries providing military and police personnel are often insufficiently informed about the actual mandate of a particular operation (especially if it has undergone revision). Contingents are often

deployed at the epicenter of hostilities without the adequate provision of arms, equipment, logistical support or communication facilities.

Politically, there are growing tensions stemming from the inequality in the distribution of peacekeeping functions among states. Some countries, above all permanent members of the UN Security Council, assess conflicts in political terms and formulate the goals and mandates of peacekeeping operations while providing only limited contingents to ensure the implementation of their own decisions. However, other countries have to use their own military and police personnel to implement operation mandates that were formulated without proper consultation with them or even without their participation.

OSCE Peacekeeping

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is currently conducting one and a half dozen observer

missions in conflict regions. The organization has a number of advantages, including:

- *Universal representation of states (on the regional scale).*
- *An established political image as mostly impartial organization.*
- *An unquestionable right as a regional organization to formulate its own mandates for peacekeeping operations and conduct them independently.*
- *Recognition of the OSCE's right to delegate powers to conduct peacekeeping operations to other regional organizations or groups of states.*
- *Full recognition and confirmation by the UN of the OSCE's peacekeeping powers and functions; the complementary nature of OSCE and UN missions.*

- *Ability (among other things, due to the universal nature of regional membership, as well as the well-established system of monitoring human rights and the potential for conflict) to identify conflict-prone situations at early stages.*
- *A high level of intergovernmental ties, direct access of OSCE agencies to the heads of state and government and official circles in all countries of the region.*

The OSCE's operations in conflict regions fill the niche that serves as a link between military operations under UN or NATO flags, on the one side, and the activities of humanitarian organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, on the other. The OSCE ensures the political

legitimacy of international intervention in a conflict, gathers information from a region of tension for years and decades (pre-conflict monitoring), fosters negotiating processes, works with refugees and internally displaced persons and restores the fabric of political life and state governance during the post-conflict period.

OSCE Missions in the Post-Soviet Space

Despite the OSCE's obvious advantages, its peacekeeping operations have suffered a series of failures. The first failure is related to the peacekeeping operation in Nagorno-Karabakh (1993). The decision to act provided for the step-by-step deployment, first, of 200, then 400 and then 600 military observers in Nagorno-Karabakh, to be followed by the deployment of military contingents to ensure the disengagement of the parties to the conflict. However, the operation in its classical peacekeeping format failed for a number of reasons, including the escalation of confrontation in the conflict area, slow preparation and delays in financing and the provision of military contingents. However, the main reason was the doctrinal pattern of CSCE/OSCE peacekeeping operations *per se*,

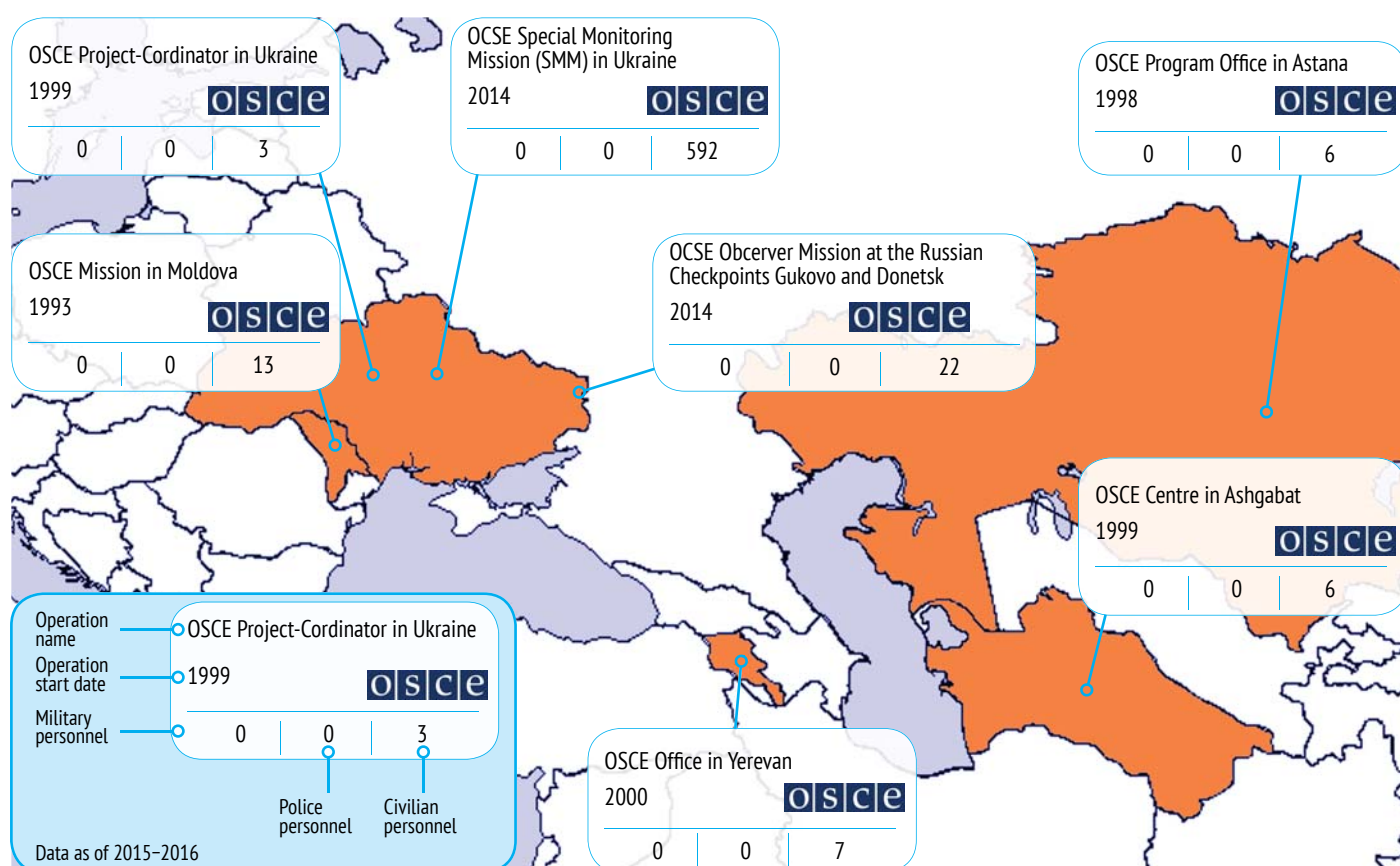
which brought the organization to a standstill every time the actual conditions in a conflict area turn out to be far from the ideal conditions that are enshrined in OSCE peacekeeping principles.

The CSCE/OSCE mission in Abkhazia was launched in 1992. Its composition varied but did not exceed 60 observers. The mission continuously provided European powers with information on Georgia's separatist territories (although formally, the mission dealt with Abkhazia, it was gathering indirect information also on the situation around South Ossetia and Adzharia, as well as on ongoing operations conducted by Russia (in South Ossetia) and the CIS (in Abkhazia)). The mission was still present in Abkhazia during the 2008 Russia-Georgia war, and there are question marks over its effectiveness, to say the least.

The OSCE Observer Mission in Moldova began in February 1993. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, the OSCE repeatedly tried to play a leading role in the Transnistria settlement. The OSCE mission dissuaded the Moldovan leaders at the very last moment from signing a peace plan put forward by Russia in 2003, promising a better European plan. Soon afterward, the OSCE initiated the 5+2 negotiating format, which, in addition to the Moldovan government and the Transnistrian leadership as parties to the conflict, included the OSCE, Russia and Ukraine as mediators, as well as the European Union and the United States as observers. The upshot is that the conflict is still frozen and unresolved.

Finally, the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine was deployed in keeping with OSCE Permanent Council Decision No. 1117 of March 24, 2014. The SMM was tasked with gathering information and reporting on the security situation in the area of operation; establishing and reporting facts in response to specific incidents, monitoring and supporting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and facilitating the dialogue on the ground in order to reduce tensions and promote normalization of the situation. However, here, too, the results of the mission's activity proved extremely modest and its impact on conflict resolution marginal.

OSCE OPERATIONS AND MISSIONS IN CIS



Source: Никитин А.И. Международные конфликты: вмешательство, миротворчество, урегулирование. М.: Аспект-Пресс, 2017.

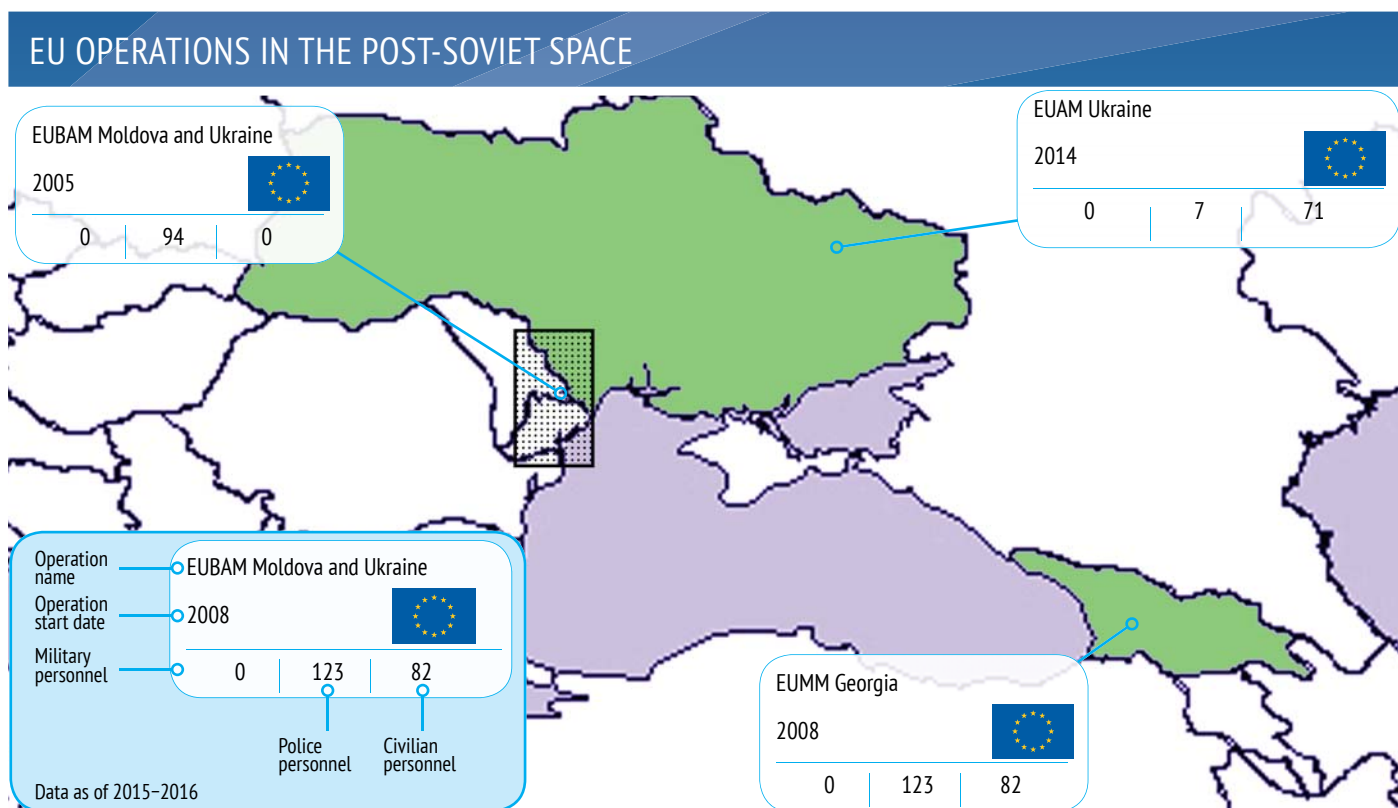
The past two decades of OSCE peacekeeping have shown that as a general rule, the organization cannot be the main, let alone the sole organizer of peacekeeping operations in conflict regions in Eurasia. That said, alongside other international

organizations acting in Eurasian conflicts (the UN, the EU, NATO, the Council of Europe and others), the OSCE has effectively assumed the role of a conflict monitor, negotiating mediator and political reconciliation mechanism in conflict regions.

The EU in Conflict Resolution

The European Union has already conducted over 30 operations, and is involved in a dozen and a half ongoing operations. The EU's contribution was especially notable in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia and Kosovo, as well as in the South Caucasus (Nagorno-Karabakh, Georgia), Moldova/Transnistria and a number of African countries. The EU actively collaborates

with the UN, the OSCE, the African Union and ASEAN. Sometimes it finances joint operations with these organizations or simply supports the operations of other organizations. The EU features a well-developed material and financial basis, and in the past decade it has also created rapid financing mobilization mechanisms to resolve specific conflicts.



Source: Никитин А.И. Международные конфликты: вмешательство, миротворчество, урегулирование. М.: Аспект-Пресс, 2017.

Closer analysis of EU practice shows that:

- *Right from the start the EU adopted a comprehensive interpretation of security missions arising from the EU's general political and economic role as a global actor. The EU does not limit its activity to the territory of its member states but believes in handling conflicts on its periphery in the broad sense of the word, including Africa, the Middle East and the newly independent states of the Balkans and the post-Soviet space.*
- *Although formally the EU is only a sub-regional international organization (it encompasses only a part of countries on one continent), in practice, the EU does not consider it necessary to legitimize its conflict interventions through UN mechanisms. Operations and missions are conducted pursuant to the EU's own political decisions at the level of European heads of state. Granted, the EU does not undertake openly coercive political missions on its own, leaving the UN Security Council to decide on them. Even so, many EU operations have a well-developed military component.*
- *Unlike other regional organizations, the EU has a system of prompt and effective financing in place for its own operations. Its operations are often of a hybrid nature, conducted jointly with the UN, the African Union, ASEAN and other partners.*
- *Unlike the UN and the OSCE, the EU sets rather modest political goals for its operations, leaving the aforementioned organizations only those matters related to achieving a political settlement, holding elections and restoring the political infrastructure of peaceful life. EU police operations and numerous training or consultative missions, designed to create modern professional defense, security and law enforcement agencies in conflict regions have proved most effective.*

Still, even the EU's results are rather modest due to the difficulty of aligning the political interests of almost 30 EU member countries. For decades, common foreign and security policy has not been sufficiently

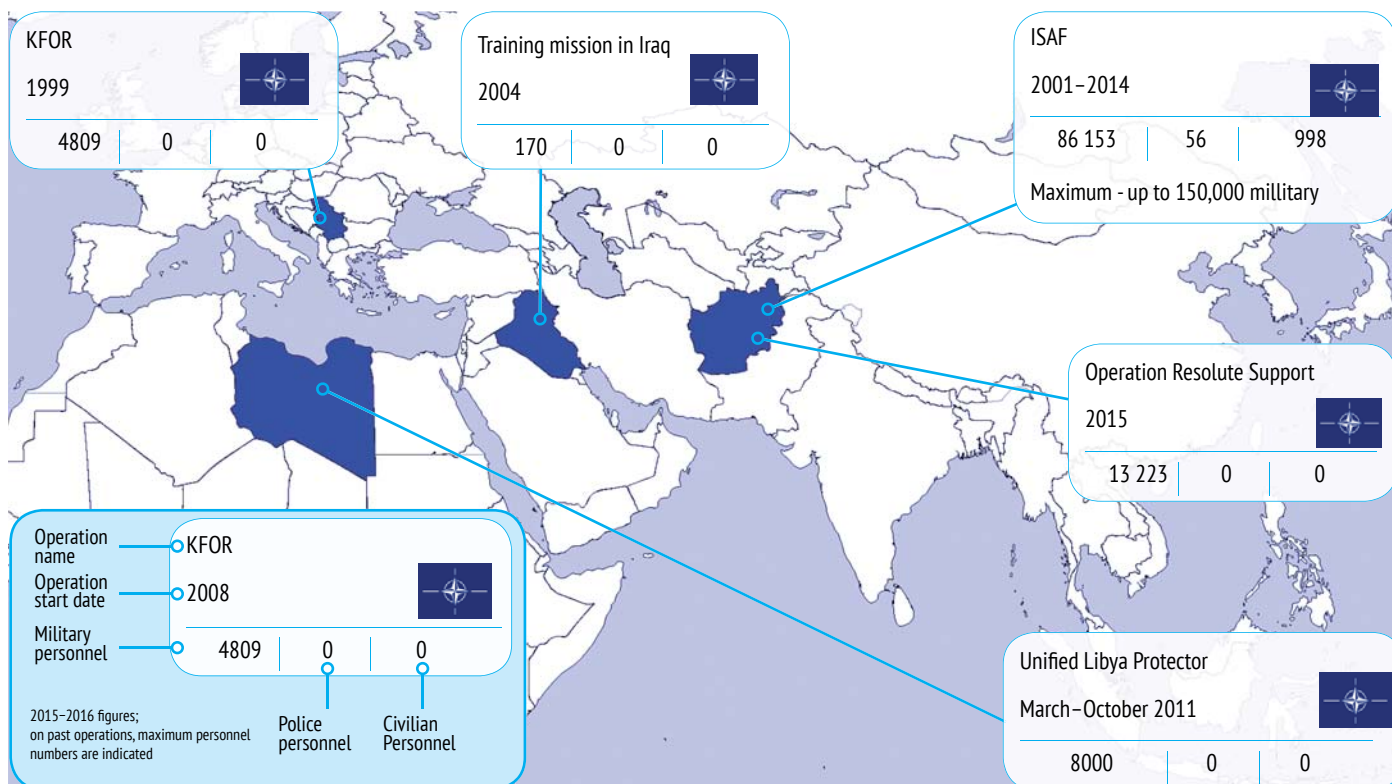
harmonized while the differences in priorities and views on what the political results of conflict interventions should be make the EU pursue a restrained and cautious policy in many conflicts.

NATO in Conflict Regions

NATO has carried out four major operations. The first was the mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (IFOR, 1995–1996, 60,000 military personnel), which developed into SFOR (1996–2004, 32,000 military personnel). The second operation was

the mission in Kosovo, which began with an air operation (bombings in March–June 1999) that were NOT authorized by the UN Security Council and continued as Operation KFOR following the later approval of the UN Security Council mandate in June 1999.

NATO'S CURRENT OPERATIONS IN CONFLICT REGIONS



Source: Никитин А.И. Международные конфликты: вмешательство, миротворчество, урегулирование. М.: Аспект-Пресс, 2017.

The third was the operation by the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan (NATO led it between 2003 and 2014). Here, the total number of military personnel at the peak of the operation was 150,000, with contingents coming from more than 35 countries. The ISAF mission proceeded in parallel with an independent US military operation in Afghanistan.

Finally, the fourth was the French-led military operation in Libya (March-October 2011). It was designated in a UN Security Council resolution as an operation to enforce a no-fly zone in Libya's airspace to protect civilians. In reality, however, the operation was developed to provide military support to opposition forces and ended in the overthrow of the Muammar Qaddafi regime.

In addition to the aforementioned major military operations, the alliance carried out a number of smaller missions with a military component. These included three operations in Macedonia, in particular the so-called preventive deployment designed to prevent the spillover of the Kosovo conflict to Macedonia. Since 2014, NATO has been involved in overflying and patrolling the airspace of the three Baltic member states. In Iraq, NATO is conducting a training (consultative) mission to retrain Iraqi defense, security and law enforcement personnel. NATO also participated in the African Union's operation in Sudan/Darfur, airlifting tens of thousands of African soldiers. In 2014, following the withdrawal from Afghanistan, the ISAF mission was replaced by Operation

Resolute Support, which is formally conducted not by a coalition under a UN mandate but by the US under agreement with the Afghan government with the participation of small NATO contingents. In its Resolution 2189 (2014), the UN Security Council unanimously supported new missions for the US and NATO forces in Afghanistan.

Since the end of the cold war, Russia and NATO have accumulated a certain albeit not very extensive experience in joint operations in conflict regions. In the 1990s, Russia participated in two NATO-led operations under a UN mandate, first in Bosnia and Herzegovina and then in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia/Kosovo. In the 2000s, the Working Group at the Russia-NATO Council developed a doctrine of joint peacekeeping operations, coordinated

the operations in Afghanistan (Russia limited itself to assistance from its own territory, as well as from Central Asia) and ensured the northern transit corridor (across Russia and Central Asian countries to Afghanistan). Finally, in 2015–2016, the Russian Aerospace Forces cooperated with NATO forces in Syria and Iraq in operations against ISIS. This cooperation was far from smooth due to differences in their interests: Russia was focused on supporting Syria's legitimate government while NATO mainly supported the opposition. Nevertheless, cooperation in Syria marked a new stage in combined efforts to respond to shared threats and challenges.

NATO's approach toward conflicts and conflict resolution can be described as follows:

- *In dealing with regional conflicts, NATO gradually adapted its military infrastructure and tools that were previously created for a possible large-scale war with other states.*
- *NATO gradually, although not immediately, recognized the possibility of conducting its own military operations based on political decisions by other organizations: the OSCE and the UN. NATO's largest operations (in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Afghanistan) were carried out under UN mandates and with NATO coordination of broader international coalitions (in Afghanistan, 51 countries).*
- *The alliance allows the conduct of military operations involving the use of force with elements of coercive action in the absence of a UN Security Council mandate even though it refers to cases such as FRY bombings as an exception, not a rule.*
- *NATO is less willing than the EU to conduct hybrid operations with other regional organizations (for example, the African Union and ECOWAS) although over time NATO established the practice of transferring the responsibility in the zone of past operations to the EU.*
- *Unlike the UN, the OSCE and the EU, NATO does not engage in political activity in conflict regions to offer mediation, organize talks or foster the post-conflict political process, leaving these functions to other international organizations.*
- *NATO's zone of responsibility has expanded significantly, with its military tools (including mobile facilities) reoriented toward global operations.*
- *NATO's conflict resolution activity (as well as its fight against terrorism and [sea] piracy) has provided new justification to its functional designation, but even so, this activity remains secondary in relation to its fundamental function of developing the military machine for traditional military offensive and defensive missions.*

The CSTO's Conflict Resolution Prospects

Established in 2002, the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) is a relatively new participant in world politics. Amid the events in the Arab world and the past “color revolutions,” the CSTO is reviewing its crisis response strategy with regard to internal destabilization processes. Recent CSTO summits show that the maintenance of sociopolitical stability is increasingly becoming the main goal and value for its member states. Meanwhile, the CSTO's future strategy could lie in modernization by integrating the organization into the global security system.

The CSTO's conflict resolution policy is based on a package of doctrinal documents adopted in 2007 (amended in 2012 and 2015) and includes both fundamental decisions on the need for collective participation in peacekeeping efforts in the event of a conflict in its member countries and the creation of a crisis intervention mechanism: the CSTO Collective Peacekeeping Forces (CPF). These documents provide for the use of the CPF both by the decision of CSTO member countries in CSTO territory and at the request (mandate) of the UN in any conflict region in the world. Importantly, following the signing of a memorandum with the CSTO, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations is seriously considering the possibility of employing CPF contingents and CSTO military assets in UN operations.

However, politically, the question remains: is the CSTO ready for expanding its zone of responsibility in doctrinal and practical terms and contributing personnel (even if initially in small numbers) to UN operations in the Middle East or Africa? On the one hand, the presidents of CSTO countries will find it far easier to agree to use the CSTO's military force and demonstrate its power on other continents than on their own territory in conflicts similar to the Kyrgyz coup or Tajik-Kyrgyz-Uzbek interethnic clashes. But on the other hand, public opinion and the balance of political forces in some CSTO countries may not be prepared to support the idea of globalizing the organization's activity.

It is noteworthy that under a UN mandate, NATO has assumed coordination of several peacekeeping missions in Europe and Asia (including Afghanistan and Iraq), while the EU with its newly created tactical combat groups (CJTFs) has engaged in operations in Congo, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. The CSTO may coordinate with the UN a mandate for the post-conflict setting of the Tajik-Afghan border under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. An operation under at least one UN mandate in one conflict region (which is part of the CSTO zone of responsibility anyway) would greatly enhance this organization's international legitimacy, visibility and recognition.

Russia, CSTO Regional Conflict Resolution Policy

In the past decade, Russia has had quite a few bones to pick with the UN and the OSCE over politically motivated conflict

intervention. The mandate for the UN operation in Libya, which was formulated to include the enforcement of a no-fly zone to protect

civilians, in practice led to UN contingents supporting the Libyan opposition that eventually overthrew the president and changed the country's political regime. As a matter of fact, the change of the political regime, which has never been part of an operation's mandates, also became the result of UN-sanctioned operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. The same scenario could be played out in Syria. Russia's successful political initiative on the destruction of Syria's chemical arsenal postponed the issue of a UN operation to end the civil war in Syria by a year. However, the pause is over now and the question is back on the agenda: will the UN and other international organizations be able to maintain neutrality between the ruling regime and the opposition in Syria or will the proposed "peacekeeping" procedures prove to be a form of support for the opposition, as in Libya?

The occupation of a part of Syrian and Iraqi territories by ISIS (an organization banned in Russia) has created a new geopolitical situation where combined efforts to stop the spread of ISIS should have become a formula for temporary collaboration between different powers in stabilizing the situation in Syria. Russia can contribute to these efforts by providing assistance, including military, to the Syrian regime while Western countries can choose to support other regional forces (for example, Kurds, as well as the Iraqi authorities) exerting their own military pressure on ISIS. The UN can and should assume the function of coordinating these multidirectional efforts. Here, it is important to ensure (by pursuing a corresponding course at the UN Security Council) that the UN's coordination activity does not come into conflict with Russia's strategy in that region.

In the present situation, the CSTO could, on UN approval, send a mission of military observers to Syria who would provide the UN (as well as Russia and CSTO states) with objective information about the situation in different parts of Syria. Russia does not support the idea of a broad internationalization of the Syria conflict by packaging and deploying UN disengagement forces there, but as the principal outside actor in the Syria operation, it could support sending a CSTO observer mission under UN auspices.

The issue regarding the role of international organizations in the conflict around Ukraine has yet to be resolved. Just as the missions of the IMF, the Council of Europe and a number of other international organizations, the OSCE, which currently has an observer mission in Ukraine with under 1,000 observers, has problems with maintaining neutrality in relation to the parties to the Ukraine conflict. During the first several months of an acute stage in the Ukraine conflict, Russia took a tough position against internationalizing the conflict resolution process, blocked plans to send UN observer missions and objected to the OSCE mission. However, it now seems to be the right time for a certain evolution of the Russian position toward recognizing the expediency of the mediating role of international organizations in the Ukraine peace process, provided that they maintain neutrality toward the parties to the conflict. It is essential to rely more actively on the authority and mechanisms of the Conflict Prevention Center and the OSCE observer mission, the International Red Cross and international human rights organizations

in ensuring the implementation of the Minsk Agreements in Eastern Ukraine.

The CSTO needs an active dialogue with the EU. There is considerable similarity between the EU and CSTO security concepts (their focus on dealing with “new threats”). A number of international forums have taken place with the participation of EU foreign and defense policy officials and representatives of the CSTO Secretariat. The EU does not distance its policy from the military-political organization of newly independent states, unlike NATO in relation to the CSTO. In its time, Russia adopted the concept of “four common spaces” with the EU, one of them being a security space. The concept of an EU-CSTO common security space could become an area of “selective cooperation with the EU.”

In recent years, the UN has received proposals regarding the use of three parallel conflict intervention mechanisms: the NATO Response Force, EU tactical forces and the CSTO Collective Peacekeeping Forces. Components of these forces could be used under UN mandates, either in parallel or jointly. NATO and the EU are already conducting so-called hybrid operations with the UN. The issue of the CSTO’s involvement in such operations requires consideration.

There is an emerging trend in international conflict resolution practice toward both a greater role and larger scale of participation by regional international organizations together with the UN (and quite often now also instead of the UN or on UN

assignment) in conflict regions. The trend toward the expansion and re-division of the zones of responsibility of regional organizations is also spreading to the post-Soviet space.

The post-Soviet space is ceasing to be the field of predominantly Russian influence. It is necessary to enhance the role of new regional actors (CSTO, SCO) where Russia plays a very important role. However, this should not be a new “zero sum game” according to the “them vs us” principle. There is a need for new forms of active cooperation with the UN, the CSTO, NATO, the EU and other international organizations on joint participation in conflict resolution processes in regions where Russia has its own legitimate interests.

Despite a certain crisis in Russia-West relations over the events in Ukraine and Crimea, peacekeeping cooperation between Russia and Western countries in conflict regions remains a possible middle-term prospect. Neither Russia nor the West intends to abandon attempts to resolve particular conflict situations based on their own interests: in the South Caucasus, Moldova, Central Asia, Ukraine or the Middle East.

In this context, the role of the UN as the only interstate organization with a universal global outreach in ensuring international peace and security remains unique. Russia fully recognizes this and remains committed to promoting conflict resolution mechanisms that do not involve the use of force and pursues an active policy to ensure international stability and peace.



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valdaiclub.com

valdai@valdaiclub.com

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