

## Presentation for the 2011 Annual Security Review Conference

## Working Session II:

Early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management, conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation: lessons learned and way ahead

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### **INTERNATIONAL PEACE OPERATIONS**

International peace operations in the narrow sense of the word is a system of operations by the United Nations in conflict regions conducted on behalf of the international community on the basis of the principles of Chapter VI (mediation and safeguarding of already established peace) and Chapter VII (peace enforcement) of the Charter of the United Nations. The system of collective operations by states in conflict regions began to take shape in late 1940s soon after the establishment of the United Nations, has been developing for about 60 years, and encompasses over 60 operations of varying natures. In 2009, 20 UN operations employing 110,000 people were in progress on four continents. As the United Nations has no armed forces of its own, the operations have always been performed by military contingents temporarily dispatched for the purpose by (all-in-all) 118 countries.

Along with operations conducted by the United Nations proper, a practice of conflict intervention (including use of force) by regional organizations has emerged over time. Such operations have been conducted by the African Union and other African sub-regional organizations, the Organization of American States (OAS), and in Eurasia by the European Union, NATO and the CIS. One of the trends of the 1990s has been the emergence of coalitions of countries, which on behalf of international organizations (or by their own collective decision) realized an international mandate to intervene (for example, the US-led coalitions in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Australia-led coalition in the UN operation in East Timor, etc.).

Some states, in particular the United States, have created their own general guidance documents on peacekeeping operations. The United States as well as a number of other countries have started to use the term “peacekeeping” to describe certain action in conflict regions conducted on a multilateral basis (and sometimes also unilaterally) even without backing from the United Nations or an international regional organization. Moreover, the term “peacekeeping operation” has by extension started to be used occasionally to describe de facto police operations to stabilize the situation inside a country’s borders.

As, in contrast to “classic” international wars and conflicts, an ever-growing number of modern conflicts are of a non-interstate nature and happen inside states or involve non-state actors, the issue of peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations gets ever more tightly entwined with the problem of intervention by the international community (or its members) in

the internal affairs of states. The issue of the legitimate/illegitimate nature of various types and forms of intervention has become very acute.

### **Intervention involving armed force**

The principles and the practice of the use of armed force by international organizations in conflicts have seriously evolved over the last two decades. Serious differences of approach have become apparent between Russia and other countries, first and foremost the United States, regarding the goals, the nature and the legitimacy of intervention in conflicts on foreign territory, including conflicts in newly independent states.

Replacing the standard practice of UN-sponsored peace operations under a UN Security Council mandate and with equal and joint participation by the countries of the East and the West, two basic and ever-diverging models of international conflict intervention have established themselves.

The first is the continuation of “classic” UN peacemaking under the mandates (political resolutions) of the Security Council or the General Assembly. It has seen failures (Rwanda, Somali) as well as universally recognized successes (East Timor, for example).

The second professes conflict intervention by regional organizations and coalitions of countries without UN authorization. The 2003 Iraq invasion by the international coalition is not the only and not the first instance of such intervention. The same has happened at least ten times throughout the decade. NATO, the United States, Russia and the CIS have all acted in certain cases in the absence of a UN mandate.

The grounds for the conflict intervention may be categorized as follows.

- During the Kosovo crisis the formula of “humanitarian intervention” prevailed (military intervention aimed at averting or stopping a humanitarian disaster, genocide), which was widely quoted by Western countries in their doctrinal and political messages and conceptually finalized in the “Responsibility to Protect” Report to the United Nations.
- After September 11, 2001 and during the military campaign in Afghanistan a new formula was born - conflict intervention on the grounds of conducting a “counter-terrorist operation”.
- During the preparation stage for the Iraq invasion and after North Korea’s withdrawal from the NPT, a new type of intervention legitimization emerged - to prevent proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). It was proclaimed that that goal could be achieved by means of a preventive strike against a country arousing suspicion.
- On the same grounds and with the additional motivation of the “export of democracy” has appeared the formula of coercive “regime change”. The specter of “regime change” in Iran, North Korea, Sudan and even Pakistan some time further down the line was raised.

### **A Russia-West “battlefield” or field for mutual cooperation?**

Military intervention in a series of conflicts by the United States, NATO and Western countries on one side and Russian involvement in certain conflicts (sometimes with CIS

authorization) on the other look like two divergent lines and are mutually rejected as having nothing to do with “true” peacekeeping.

The West refused to recognize as legitimate peacekeeping Russian efforts under a CIS mandate in Tajikistan and Abkhazia (up to 2008) as well as under bilateral agreements with Moldova (Transnistria) and Georgia (South Ossetia up to 2008). After the events of August 2008 the issue of Russian peacekeeping with regard to South Ossetia and Abkhazia is seen by the West as not making any sense.

Russia does not recognize the legitimacy of Western and especially NATO-led action against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999 and the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 (in both cases up until the issue of a UN mandate).

Military intervention in conflicts, both legally sound and infringing on traditional international law has become a tacit “norm” of international life. Many operations conducted over the last 15 years in conflict regions are questionable and controversial as far as international law is concerned - both for the West and for Russia.

Russia may have vehemently contested the formula of “humanitarian intervention”, which it still rejects, but it is exactly that formula that presents the most compelling argument for legitimization of Russian intervention in the 2008 South Ossetia crisis. Despite berating the “regime change” formula, Moscow made a tacit exception for the “removal by force of the Taliban regime” in Afghanistan, operation Russia backed both politically (in the United Nations) and practically (by providing aid to the Northern Alliance).

The instances of military intervention in conflicts multiply, providing new material for a thorough examination of the ensuing political results. The multilateral structures that aspire to a tangible international presence, including NATO, the EU, the CSTO, are testing the instruments of intervention at their disposal or are creating new instruments for the future. NATO has set up the NATO Response Force (NRF), the European Union its own Rapid Reaction Forces, the CIS/CSTO has Collective Rapid Deployment Forces (CRDF) for Central Asia and a decision has been made to create Collective Forces for Operative Reaction (CFOR). Both Russia and NATO, the EU, the United States and the West as a whole are in search of new forms and acceptable norms for conflict intervention.

On this background it is important to make the interaction between Russia and the West on international peacekeeping proceed along the road of cooperation rather than competition and, worse still, confrontation. Engaging on that path involves resolving one after the other a number of tasks.

- Russia and the West must take steps towards each other to get over their mutual refusal to recognize the other’s peacemaking efforts. It is necessary to get to see the controversial situations through the eyes of the “other side”, and look for joint or mutually acceptable formulae for forceful conflict settlement.

- Both Russia and the West could turn their attention to the same conflicts and world regions. In such cases cooperation could come in really handy - up to coordinating peace operations and parallel use of some of their elements.

- Eventual creation of a common peace operations mechanism as an instrument of ensuring European security (with potential for use outside Europe in the more distant future) could serve as a beacon.

That course of action appears possible. Despite a serious impasse in Russia-NATO relations, their peacekeeping interaction in conflict regions seems to be a likely perspective in the medium term. It is worth recalling that the crises in former Yugoslavia have allowed Russia and NATO to gain some joint experience of field peacekeeping.

The Russia-NATO Council worked out a concept of joint Russian-NATO peacekeeping operations. It was the result of three years of consultations in a special working group set up for the purpose. Unfortunately, that document has never been presented to the public and remains secret. To all appearances, it may come in handy in the new environment as far as the tasks of upgrading the architecture of European security are concerned. It is important, however, to make sure that work on the conceptual development of the issue involves stakeholders outside the Russia-NATO linkup.

### **Reforming the mechanism of peacemaking to promote the new security architecture: possible models**

We consider the formation of a mechanism of joint conflict settlement as the goal of such reform. Virtually any new system (architecture) of international security will be faced with tackling not just one but a complex of tasks.

- Form a system of early conflict warning monitoring and preventive (aimed at averting armed conflict) action.
- Put in place a system of effective international mediation.
- Set in motion a mechanism of political decision-making on conflict intervention (necessary to legitimize the intervention).
- Make possible the selection of the right level and format of international intervention.
- Provide for the creation and maintenance of an arsenal of tools of intervention (from humanitarian aid to military force).
- Make advance provisions for the measures of post-conflict settlement, stabilization, humanitarian aid, and restoration of peaceful life in the conflict region.
- Make sure that the problem of eradicating the roots of the conflict (social, economic, political, etc.) is addressed so as to avoid any recurrence.

It is doubtful that all these tasks can be solved with the help and within the framework of a single organizational format. It seems more likely that the international crisis response and conflict settlement forces could be multi-component - comprising the existing international organizations and elements with tasks distributed and coordinated among them.

One other basic point concerns the operating field of the peacekeeping mechanism. Applicability for such a mechanism could be envisaged on different levels:

- to be applied first and foremost in Europe;
- to be available for deployment across the whole OSCE area;
- to be ready for use on a larger scale.

Obviously, in a situation when several regional structures each with a different list of participating countries and a history of competition against the others co-exist in the same geo-political space, it would be logical for the United Nations to play the role of key reference structure, to which any mechanism of peacemaking would be tied. It is also true that the OSCE in its current political and organizational state would have problems performing the important coordinating peacekeeping functions in the new security architecture. To do so, it must get its second wind by giving a new quality to the mechanisms of its first “basket” (politico-military and disarmament issues). To define it, the OSCE-2 or OSCE-Plus formula could be used.

Three models of possible reform of the mechanisms of conflict settlement and crisis response in the architecture of European security may be put forward.

**1. The model of joint conflict monitoring** with independent follow-up action by various international structures.

As the security structures in the Euro-Atlantic space are rather heterogeneous, Russia could suggest within the framework of this model to create a mechanism of joint monitoring in the zones of regional conflicts on the basis of a common UN mandate.

In particular, observers dispatched by common agreement and on the basis of a common coordinated UN mandate could be present in regional conflict zones on behalf of the main Euro-Atlantic security-related organizations (the United Nations, the OSCE, the EU, NATO, the CSTO, possibly, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Council of Europe). It would help better organize and coordinate conflict settlement efforts. Further action with regard to the conflict in question would be undertaken by each international organization independently on the basis of its own special procedures, mandates and mechanisms.

That is a watered-down version of the joint approach to crisis response providing for better mutual communication and transparency but leaving it to individual parties to make their decisions and choose the course of action. The advantage of this approach is the possibility of setting it in motion relatively quickly and with no additional bureaucratic, political and financial efforts.

### **The Russia-USA-EU model**

This model takes account of the existing objective limitations to the powers of international organizations and focuses on the traditional role of states as the main protagonists in the international political space.

We would suggest proposing to the United States and the EU a joint action program based on a clear understanding and delimitation (geographically and functionally) of each other's spheres of interest and areas of responsibility - individual as well as common. At the same time we are proposing joint rather than competitive action by Russia, the EU and the United States to settle conflict situations. That will require overcoming serious political and psychological barriers and stereotypes by both the West and Russia.

The chances of this option in the security architecture are seriously hindered by a lack of interest and possible passive resistance to it from other players on the territory of the former Soviet Union (including some participating states of the CIS and the CSTO). Some post-Soviet states benefit from certain tension between the three centers of power, which provides them with a wider playing field (multi-vector policy) and allows them to exploit the contradictions between Russia, the United States and the EU.

### **The OSCE-2 model**

This model presumes overhauling the role and functions of the existing organizations and security mechanisms. Unlike the first of the above-mentioned models, which provides for joint monitoring but separate action, this model implies setting up a mechanism of deeper coordination in regional conflict situations that would go beyond mere observation and involve joint decision-making and practical steps by the powers of the region. We are talking about upgrading, increasing the role of the first OSCE "basket" or even using it as a foundation for an independent regional mechanism of crisis response and conflict settlement - with universal representation of all the countries of the region.

The OSCE-2 format could comprise a number of principles and "formulae", such as:

- regular (possibly, even annual) OSCE-scale summits and emergency summits of the countries of the region in the event of a sharp deterioration of a conflict in the region;
- creation of a mechanism of pan-European political consultations on the issues of security;
- development of the monitoring role of the Conflict Prevention Centre;
- creation of an autonomous or integrated within the OSCE coordinating structure on the issues of conflict settlement and crisis response in the region;
- agreement on the selection of a tool from the existing set of instruments of emergency response (at the disposal of the EU, NATO and the CSTO) depending on the location, type of conflict, etc.

In the event of the formation of a new security and conflict settlement structure (organization) on the basis of the transformation of the first OSCE "basket", it appears relevant to:

- ensure the continuity of the practices and the legal basis of the system of the United Nations and the OSCE;
- employ all the existing OSCE elements dealing with the issues of security (conflict prevention, counterterrorist and anti-drugs activities, etc.), having provided for their

enlargement and a more tangible mandate, which could be formally issued by an OSCE summit;

- look into the possibility of creating additional mechanisms: the Centre for the Monitoring of the Politico-Military Situation (in conjunction with the consultations and conciliation mechanism involving stakeholders - as a mechanism for a new adaptation or radical upgrade of the CFE); the Coordination Service for Regional Peacekeeping Operations, including those authorized by OSCE-2 (this service would seek agreement of the participating states on the joint or separate use of the instruments of crisis response by the regional organizations - first of all the EU, NATO and the CSTO); the International Regional Organizations Coordinating Committee (involving the EU, the Council of Europe, NATO, the CIS, the CSTO, the SCO, the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), etc.) - to exchange information and agree a common position on the issues of peacemaking and conflict settlement.

Campaigners for the promotion of OSCE-2 could dwell on the following advantages of the structure, based on the upgraded first “basket” of the Helsinki Final Act.

- Its functional objectives will directly tackle the most acute aspects of the issue of European security.

- It will not be designed to counterbalance NATO or the EU, but interact with them as actively as possible with the option of them taking center stage if that is necessary and acceptable.

- It will “add value” to the system of European security provision by taking on board all the main multilateral structures operating the region;

- Its continuity and organizational link with the OSCE will lift some objections regarding the new “institutional construction” in Europe.

The scheme leaves no room to suspect Russia of self-seeking maneuvering (claims over its “sphere of influence”, demands that NATO expansion be halted, etc.) while paving the way for a fresh start in combining efforts to uphold European security, something that is quite in line with Russian interests.