

Security Dynamics in the Former Soviet Bloc (Graeme P. Herd and Jennifer D.P. Moroney)

JASKIRAT SINGH GUJRAL¹

**Graeme P. Heard and Jennifer D.P. Moroney. *Security Dynamics in the Former Soviet Bloc*.
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This book investigates the extent to which democratic security has been established in four former Soviet sub-regions: the Baltic, the Slavic countries, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. It investigates the concept of democratic security, which includes military depoliticization and civilian oversight of the military, conflict resolution through international collaboration, and involvement in international organisations. It investigates how far these regions' states have progressed in developing cooperative foreign and security policies towards their immediate neighbours as well as key Western states and organisations, examines the interplay between internal and external aspects of a democratic security building, and employs case-study examples to demonstrate how interstate bilateral and multilateral relations are developing.

The author, a civil-military relations professor, analyses these sub-regions in sections throughout the book, beginning with the USSR's foreign and security policies before its collapse. Part 2 discusses the Baltic states, the extent to which NATO integration shapes the Baltic security agenda, with a focus on intra-Baltic foreign policy cooperation in the military-security sector, and the pressures that shaped Russia's Baltic policy throughout the 1990s and into the new century, particularly geo-economic considerations. Part 3 discusses the CIS and the Slavic Republics of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus, as well as the impact of geoeconomics on Russian foreign policy towards the CIS, allowing for a comparison of geoeconomic considerations with Russia's Baltic policy. It also analyses and contrasts the influence of NATO and EU enlargement on Russia and Ukraine, as well as Russia's relationship with Ukraine through realism and imperialism, as well as an appraisal of the Belarus-Russia union. Part 4 discusses the CIS's periphery states, such as Moldova, Georgia, and Central Asia, as well as the US's bilateral and multilateral ties with states previously subject to Russian rule. Finally, Part 5 brings the book to a close by providing insights into the features of security dynamics in the former Soviet bloc.

¹ The author is an Undergraduate student at Jindal School of International Affairs (JSIA) and is a Research Assistant at the Centre for Security Studies (CSS).

Democratic Security and Democratic State-Building

The argument asserted at the beginning of the book is about democratisation and democratic state-building. Part 1 covers various interpretations of democratisation and democratic state-building done by academics such as, but not limited to, Samuel P. Huntington, Ralf Dahrendorf, Taras Kuzio, Dankwart Rustow, Jack Snyder, and Edward D. Mansfield. The authors of the book covered the aspects of nationalism and liberalism in democratic state-building and the steps to take for democratising: breakdown, transition, consolidation, and, if successful, perpetuation. Along with that, they covered the hindrances that newly independent states face when undergoing democratisation, such as an increase in or high level of nationalist sentiments, which leads to authoritarian or even fascist sentiments being fostered in a newly independent state. Another aspect covered is the fact that members of the former elite become part of or reserve positions in political structures. Therefore, political development is strongly influenced by often undemocratic political cultures, strategies, and attitudes. Despite the introduction of democratic reforms, civil society in the post-Soviet states remains very weak and underdeveloped, a legacy of totalitarian rule.

A main point of complication is found in the necessity of conducting wide-reaching economic reforms while simultaneously attempting to institute the norms of democratic government and society. Dahrendorf states that transitional periods are highly politicised; therefore, economics is usually neglected. Post-Soviet states had the additional complication of being obliged to develop foreign and security policies with little experience to draw on, leading them to follow antagonism or isolationism.

Due to the former USSR being made up of multiple different ethnicities and nationalities, the fall of the USSR led to many states having multiple ethnicities within their borders. The post-communist states broadly share three common factors:

- A similar starting point and legacy
- A comprehensiveness of their attempts at transition
- The global context in which such attempts have been made

Democratisation can only mitigate ethnic tensions if they are addressed early in the transition period, and many scholars have spoken about the role of ethnicity in democratisation. Many scholars agree on the aspect of ethnicity works against young democracies. John Stuart Mill believes that democracy is next to impossible in a country made of different nationalities, and Zakaria believes that without a background in constitutional liberalism, the introduction of democracy in divided societies has fomented nationalism, ethnic conflict, or war. Samuel Huntington also believes that democracy itself can act against democratisation, as he believes that the introduction of democracy creates a democracy paradox, allowing undemocratic groups to come to power. He also writes that democratisation can increase the probability of war.

Snyder and Mansfield came up with four conditions that increase the propensity of a democratising state to engage in war, which they outlined as:

- Elite disunity and conflict
- Mobilised mass politics
- A constricted marketplace of ideas
- An unfavourable international environment

War can also be triggered by the same motives to make communal appeals that also stimulate ethnic conflict within democratising states. The transition period from an authoritarian to a democratic state can witness a dramatic rise in nationalism, particularly among ethnic minorities within a multinational state, which exacerbates the volatile nature of a partially democratised state, culminating in war. The reason why is due to domestic political competition following the break of the authoritarian regime. As mentioned earlier, the elite from the old regime also hampers the democratic transition as they compete with newer and weaker democratic forces for power and survival. They gain allies using nationalism, and once these allies are mobilised, the groups prove difficult to control.

The book also outlines the difference between democratisation and liberalisation. The difference between democratisation and liberalisation is also thoroughly covered, as liberalisation doesn't lead to democratisation and can restore authority to a weakened regime without launching democratisation. The difference between liberalisation and democratisation is that liberalisation allows for free speech and civil rights, whereas democratisation takes the process further towards the establishment of a popular political regime with regular and free elections.

In conclusion, the Collapse of the former USSR emphasises the immense complexity of democratic transition and the fundamental weakness of existing democratisation theories when applied. The book addresses debates surrounding the external and internal aspects of a democratic security building and addresses three core themes.

- The extent to which states within these regions have developed cooperative foreign and security policies towards their immediate neighbours and key Western states and organisations.
- The nature of the relationship and interplay between internal and external aspects of democratic security building
- The main dynamics shaping inter-state bilateral and multilateral relations in the post-Soviet space using case studies

It is generally accepted that the democratic security building process in the former USSR is an uphill road, and while challenges are somewhat unique to each post-soviet subregion, some challenges are prevalent in all. Key among those is the need for states to focus on the state or institution, and nation-building. The West continues to encourage these partners to continue along the road to true democracy and interaction in the market economy.

The Baltics

Part 2 examines case studies of the foreign policy approaches in the Baltic States. The authors assess the extent to which the Baltic security agenda is being shaped by NATO integration, focusing on Intra-Baltic foreign policy cooperation within the military-security sector and the pressures that shaped Russia's Baltic policy through the 1990s and into the new century, particularly the geo-economic considerations.

The authors cover the history of the Baltics in four phases:

- Independence
- Internationalisation
- European Sponsorship
- Expanding Emphasis on Washington and Brussels.

Due to their turbulent past, the Baltic states have an interplay between the democratic security building and the external security orientation of the Baltic states. Under Phase 1, the authors outline that the Baltic states worked closely in their post-independence era and adopted a similar strategic orientation due to the USSR treating the three republics more or less the same. In the initial months of their independence, the Baltics were focused on compelling the USSR to decentralise power while they set about establishing their institutions. Citizenship quickly became a fundamental political issue, as after the collapse of the USSR, more than 30% of Estonian and Latvian residents were part of the Russian-speaking minority. This led to many ethnic Estonians and Latvians wanting to confer citizenship on pre-1940 residents. As evidenced by recent events in the modern era, the Russian minority would be a long-standing point of contention with Russia.

Under Phase 2, the authors describe how the collapse of the USSR threw the strategic orientation of the Baltic states into profound uncertainty. Any hopes for cordial relations were soured amidst controversies regarding the aforementioned Russian-speaking minority, the status of borders, the disposition of Russian forces in the Baltic territory, and the economic relations across new boundaries. Thus, as relationships deteriorated, the primary goal of the Baltics was the withdrawal of Russian forces from their Cold War garrisons. Russia dodged this goal to put pressure on the Baltic governments to settle citizenship and financial disagreements on terms amenable to the Russian government, and therefore Russo-Baltic relations settled into a long term pattern of antagonism. At this stage, the involvement of outside powers and institutions became a vital element in the resolution of disputes in the region and the development of the Baltic state's orientation. The Baltics internationalised their relations with Russia to great avail as they began their involvement and membership in international forums such as the European Union (EU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), and the United Nations (UN). This led to the withdrawal of Russian forces in 1994.

Under Phase 3, the authors note that the Russo-Baltic relations did not improve after the withdrawal of Russian troops and that the strategic orientation of the Baltic states was fundamentally shaped by disagreements and provocations with Russia. Russian threats, coupled

with prior Baltic experiences regarding the withdrawal of Russian troops, furthered interest in EU and NATO membership. However, even with the enthusiasm shown by the Baltic states to be involved in the EU and NATO, they failed to find any European sponsors who would be willing to back their entry into NATO or other European frameworks.

In Phase 4, The Baltic states' efforts in aligning their security policy towards Washington and Brussels paid off, and the authors note that the states' internal capacity for participating in Euro-Atlantic institutions is steadily increasing with outside assistance. The Baltic countries have achieved remarkable success in their process of democratic security building; however, the authors have suggested that the Baltics should be pursuing Nordic-Baltic regional security cooperation. The authors also suggest collaboration with Russia to build the mechanism for managing "hard security" challengers in the Nordic-Baltic region. Some potential measures that the authors suggested were collaborative airspace and agreed-upon limits on military deployment. The authors also believe that democratic security building in the Baltics will accomplish its full objective only when Baltic states are fully capable of participating in such regional security cooperation. Baltic strategic security objectives rest on two pillars: internal development and external integration. The author argues for NATO membership as well.

The book also analyses Russia's Baltic policy, with the Author's analysis arguing that Russian economic policy since 1991 has been contradictory. Russian policy is short-term and reactive, and private companies and businessmen appear to give priority to their own economic needs, which makes them cooperative with Baltic authorities. Russian President Boris Yeltsin was ambivalent, advocating economic cooperation in the Baltics and authorising pressure for political aims against them. In contrast, the authors noted that Vladimir Putin has given priority to economic interests and cooperation with the EU. Russia became more interested in mutually beneficial economic ties with the Baltic states when Russia was weakened in 1991. Russian economic blackmail pushed the Baltic states to reduce their dependence on Russia and seek integration with the West. The Russian economic crisis induced Russia to increase exports, particularly of energy, to EU states. The authors believe that Baltic accession could help foster Russia-EU ties, pressure Belarus, and remove their imperialist tendencies. In their conclusion, the authors believe that the Baltic states' accession to the EU will broadly have beneficial effects both on the states involved and on their neighbours.

The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus

Part 3 covers the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. The authors cover the impact of geo-economics on Russian foreign policy towards the CIS, allowing a contrast between geo-economic considerations and Russia's Baltic policy; compare and contrast the impact of NATO and EU enlargement on Russia and Ukraine; Russia's relations with Ukraine through realism and imperialism; and assess the Belarus-Russia union. Despite the high expectations that proponents of pragmatic nationalism have for Russian corporations as

agents of foreign policy, the reality of Russian business abroad reveals a significant gap between individual corporations' policy preferences and the official definition of national interest.

Russian businesses wanted to increase their profits as much as possible, so they expanded into global markets and consolidated control over strategic assets in the former Soviet Union. Some Russian businesses refused to serve as tools in Russian foreign policy, and others had the clout to support their foreign policy course, creating allies or ignoring pre-existing rivalries. Russian foreign policy saw a substantial change with the advent of pragmatic nationalism, moving it closer to normalisation. Relationships with the CIS nations were to be reorganised to restore Russia's great power status based on economic might rather than military might. After the unification of the newly independent republics, strategies towards the CIS were to be guided by the principles of profit and economic benefit and aimed at gaining more economic clout by acquiring key assets and opening up internal markets. In the 1990s, Russian foreign policy was comparable to that of many Western nations in that it included efforts to encourage business expansionism.

Additionally, the issues presented by NATO and the EU on expansion for border security are very different. NATO is no longer involved in the advanced defence of Western Europe, and civilian police, not armed forces, typically guard European borders. In addition to creating a zone of security and peace, NATO's eastward expansion helps to reintegrate Central and Eastern European nations into Europe. By offering stable and democratic neighbours protective military postures, it can support the security of the former Soviet republics and their borders. The real test for NATO will be striking a balance between eastward expansion and the security of those European nations that choose to remain outside the alliance. According to the author, Belarus and Moldova are not major players in NATO due to Russia and Ukraine's strong and continuous relations.

The basic tension between the Russian vision of the organisation and the leaders of the newly independent republics' desire for sovereignty was one of the reasons the CIS failed. The former USSR nations having the most cordial and conventional relations with Russia are those that have successfully forged alliances with the West, according to the author. The Russian attitude towards several of these nations has shifted away from imperialism and towards realism, thanks in part to US and NATO policy.

Peaceful and normal relations are conducted through more or less standard diplomatic channels and based on generally accepted international rules, not necessarily ones that are devoid of problems. Even if they gain genuine autonomy, CIS nations are still minor entities that are adjacent to a dominant regional power. Their freedom of conduct is limited by this fact alone.

In light of a trend that seemed to be pressuring governments to either join existing blocs or form new ones, Belarusian policymakers considered economic and military integration with Russia as the most practical external direction concerning the Russo-Belarusian Union. By instilling a feeling of urgency in the minds of Russian policymakers and making Russian sceptics more

aware of the strategic benefits of unification with Belarus, the decision to expand NATO to the East helped Belarus fulfil its leadership choice. The partnership with Belarus is viewed at least as a safety net against NATO expansion. The merger of Russia and Belarus has hardly been directly influenced by outside forces like NATO and the EU. Any influence these institutions may have had on the process is not the product of diplomatic or policy initiatives to sway Russia and Belarus away from or towards a specific type of bilateral integration. If you can't join them, try to live like them by following their example.

The Periphery of the CIS

Part 4 covers the Periphery of CIS states and their security dynamics. The book covers the states of Moldova, Georgia, and the Central Asian countries, as well as US bilateral and multilateral ties with states hitherto under Russian hegemony.

Moldova

At the turn of the century, there were no ongoing foreign threats to the security of Moldova. The re-establishment of Moldova's territorial integrity, the removal of Russian military forces from Transnistria, and the bolstering of the nation's independence are the main security goals. These goals depend on the continued development of democratic institutions and, most importantly, the still-unseen emergence of a strong economy. Moscow has adopted a policy of ambiguity and prevarication that has distinguished its military involvement in Transnistria since the creation of an independent Moldovan state in 1991.

The Caucasus

Following the events of September 11, 2001, the US, NATO, and the EU have shown a particular interest in the South Caucasus, according to recent trends in that region. All South Caucasian republics joined the anti-terrorist coalition led by the US and welcomed the West's efforts to bring about peace and stability in the area, which primarily aim to strengthen control over uncontrolled territories. This indicates that the idea of regional cooperation will be successful both in theory and practice. The South Caucasian republics must overcome numerous challenges if they are to take advantage of the rare opportunity to create a democratic cooperative security system in the area rather than an "imperial" one.

Given its eastern borders with Georgia and Armenia and its positive relations with Azerbaijan, Turkey's role in the South Caucasus is fairly significant. Since Turkey and Armenia have been unable to forge diplomatic connections, there are severe tensions between the two countries. This is a result of the Armenian state's ongoing attempts to convince the international community to recognise the Armenian Genocide. As a result of Turkey's opposition to this and vociferous denial of any wrongdoing, diplomatic ties have come to a complete halt. The leadership of Armenia is likewise seeking a self-determination-based settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh

issue, despite Azerbaijan, a significant Turkish ally, accusing Armenia of committing aggression against its territorial integrity. In the Caspian Sea, Azerbaijan and Iran have also conflicted over disputed land. Given that the US views Iran as a renegade state, this has sparked US interest in the area.

Russia and Georgia's northern neighbour have gotten into arguments over the two breakaway states of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The authors do, however, speculate that the Georgian government may resurrect a strategic alliance with Russia. But Russia continues to support Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The potential for anti-democratic and orthodox fundamentalism in Georgian society still exists, and this could help to enforce the pro-Russian political vector.

Central Asia

In particular, for areas like Central Asia, the authors think that the US and NATO's "foot in the door" policy is insufficient. According to the authors, the West requires a comprehensive plan with quantifiable goals and objectives to accomplish particular aims and fully use the resources at its disposal. Stressing the value of a continued presence in this area is an essential element. Beyond the short-term objectives of exploiting the region as a launching pad for Afghanistan and curbing the expansion of terrorist organisations in the area, the West does not appear to have a longer-term plan for central Asia. The US needs to understand that the states in Central Asia are continuously keeping an eye on other players operating in their nation and region. They occasionally view their people as foes. Due to Russia's economic and political sway over the region, the Russians will continue to see these nations and their future as an essential part of Russian security.

The current focus on Central Asia's strategic importance is likely to significantly strengthen the region's political-military and economic ties with the West while simultaneously deflecting attention from the Western part of the former USSR and the potential contribution of sub-regional organisations like GUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova) to the advancement of security in the area. Due to geopolitical realities and their domestic political and economic problems, it is unlikely that these Central Asian governments will fully join the European security order. By creating a framework, the US hopes to strengthen ties between Central Asia and the West. According to the authors, if the West had decided against forging tighter connections with these nations, this silence might have been interpreted as a de facto recognition of the region's firm membership in Russia's sphere of influence. These nations will be dependent on Russia, and the US is working to strengthen its connections with Central Asia to fight terrorism and the trafficking of weapons and narcotics.

Conclusion

The writers' conclusions regarding the book and the security dynamics they covered in the Baltics, CIS countries, Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus, as well as the CIS's outlying states, are presented in Part 5.

The security dynamics that affect both the quantity and quality of stability within the former Soviet bloc as well as international relations are intricate, intertwined, and highly challenging to separate. Their incidental causes and effects are difficult to determine. This book makes an effort to summarise the important arguments and the changing environment in which the former Soviet governments' foreign and security policies are developed. The region's stability will be largely dependent on how well the former Soviet countries can be incorporated into the global political economy.