KHAZAR UNIVERSITY

School: Graduate School of Science, Arts and Technology

Department: Political Science and Philosophy

Speciality: Conflict Studies

MASTER'S THESIS

The relations between Armenia and the CSTO/Russia during and after the Second Karabakh War

Student: _____ Cavahir Amrahova Mahammad

Supervisor: _____ Dr. Vasif Huseynov Maharram

Baku – 2025

XƏZƏR UNİVERSİTETİ

Fakültə: Təbiət Elmləri, Sənət və Texnologiya yüksək təhsil

Departament: Siyasi Elmlər və Fəlsəfə

İxtisas: Konfliktologiya

MAGİSTR DİSSERTASİYA İŞİ

İkinci Qarabağ Müharibəsi dövrü və sonrasında Ermənistan və KTMT/Rusiya münasibətləri

İddiaçı: _____ Cavahir Əmrahova Məhəmməd qızı

Elmi rəhbər: _____ s.e.ü.f.d. Vasif Hüseynov Məhərrəm oğlu

Bakı – 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Regional security governance (RSG) refers to the *"development and operation of security arrangements within a specific region, institutionalized through regional or sub-regional organizations that rely on shared understandings, rules, and practices in the realm of security"* (Kacowicz & Press-Barnathan, 2016, p. 299). However, the effectiveness of such governance mechanism also directly depends on the structure of the region in which it operates. In this regard, this thesis argues that understanding the CSTO's inaction in Armenia's request requires an analysis of key regional dynamics, including significant power imbalance in the region and the lack of genuine integration among the member states.

The objective of the study. While the core issue highlighted in this thesis is that the CSTO was legally unable to respond to Armenia's appeals due to the absence of border delimitation between Armenia and Azerbaijan, it also undertakes an overall assessment of the CSTO and geopolitical dynamics of the South Caucasus to uncover the full range of factors contributing to the organization's inaction.

Therefore, the thesis first analyzes CSTO institutionally by exploring its structure, mandate, legal ambiguities, and internal asymmetries among member states; second, it examines the geopolitical variables behind CSTO' inaction during the Second Karabakh War and subsequent border clashes through process-tracing of major events since beginning of the war. The study begins by evaluating whether Armenia's appeals were aligned with CSTO's stated obligations and whether the organization has institutionalized mechanisms capable of effectively responding to such requests. For this purpose, it applies the framework of institutionalization and its core dimensions of specificity, functional differentiation and cohesion. While the dimensions of specificity and functionality are addressed in Chapter 3, the cohesion dimension is examined in the theoretical framework through the lens of Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT). In addition, the theory of security dilemma in alliance politics was employed as the main framework of the thesis to interpret the bilateral dynamics between Armenia and Russia, showing how Armenia's dependence reduced Russia's fear of abandonment and allowed Moscow/CSTO to avoid entrapment into the conflict whose outcome was less valuable, particularly at a time where shifting dynamics of the South Caucasus were not allowing Russia to act uncontestedly in the region.

Research question. To understand the underlying reasons for CSTO's inaction, the thesis aims to address the following question: *What factors explain CSTO's inaction during and after the Second Karabakh War in response to alleged security threats the member state Armenia claimed to be facing?*

The thesis hypothesizes that the *CSTO's inaction during the Second Karabakh War and afterwards resulted from both its lack of a legal mandate and its under-institutionalized structure, which, coupled with the evolving regional security environment in the South Caucasus, where Russia's hegemony is no longer uncontested.*

The relevance of the study. The relevance of this study lies in its approach to explaining the CSTO's inaction during Armenia's appeals by combining institutional analysis of the CSTO and an assessment of challenges of regional security governance in the post-Soviet space, with the application of the theory of alliance security dilemma to Armenia's asymmetrical relations with Russia. It also sheds light on the changing dynamics of the Armenia–CSTO relationship, including Armenia's growing dissatisfaction with CSTO after the Second Karabakh war.

The outline of the study. The structure of the study is organized into 5 chapters. Following the Introduction, Chapter 1 reviews the existing literature on the CSTO and presents the theoretical framework guiding this research. Chapter 2 discusses the research methodology. Chapter 3 examines the institutional design of the CSTO, focusing on its legal foundations, institutional bodies and mandates, and structural weaknesses, particularly the asymmetries within the contribution of member states to organization's budget and military programs. Chapter 4 analyzes why Armenia's requests for assistance failed, with particular attention to the changing regional security environment in the South Caucasus. Chapter 5 evaluates the CSTO's engagement across other cases, namely Kyrgyzstan 2010, Tajikistan 2021 and Kazakhstan 2022. The final chapter summarizes the interpretation of the key findings and outlines the study's limitations.

CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Overview of the Existing Literature on the CSTO

The existing scholarship on the CSTO remains limited, with most studies framing it as either an instrument of Russian hegemony or a case of "authoritarian regionalism." A dominant perspective in the literature portrays Russia-led multilateral initiatives in Eurasia as mechanisms to consolidate Moscow's influence in its "near abroad" (Allison, 2004; Kaszuba, 2019; Torjesen, 2009; Troitskiy, 2019; Weitz, 2018). However, critics argue that reducing the CSTO to a mere extension of Russian power overlooks the agency of member states and the complexities of sovereignty in the region (Buranelli, 2022).

While examining Russia-led integration initiatives, a common belief is that regime type affects a state's willingness to cooperate, and institutions led by authoritarian states struggle to operate as fully functioning organizations. Instead, such alliances are often seen as primarily focused on protecting their members from external threats while preventing interference in internal affairs. This type of regionalism is known as "sovereignty boosting" (Söderbaum, 2004) or authoritarian regionalism (Libman & Obydenkova, 2018), or, as Roy Allison describes it, protective integration (Allison, 2008). In this discourse, the contributions of Allison (2008) and Collins (2009) are worth mentioning, since both scholars focused on the regime type prevalent in the post-Soviet space and how patrimonialism in this region focuses on security-oriented regionalism, which is driven by authoritarian states. While primarily aimed at ensuring the survival of the regime, this type of integration does not necessarily entail trade liberalization or political integration. To support their argument, one could site Karimov's regime rejoining the CSTO after the condemnation of the events in Andijan by the West as an example of "legitimacy enhancer" nature of the CSTO which clearly illustrates how Central Asian states are balancing between the West and Russia (Aris, 2014, p. 560). In addition to this perspective, in their article *"Regional international organizations as a strategy of autocracy: the Eurasian Economic Union and Russian foreign policy"* Libman & Obydenkova (2018, p. 1058) argue that Russia is interested in solidifying authoritarianism in post-Soviet countries since it decreases these states' chances of aligning with the West. If one questions why Russia allowed the Armenian revolution, the authors conclude that Russia did not interfere in the 2018 Velvet Revolution because, in general, it is less motivated to support autocracy in countries that have little option to escape Russia's orbit (Libman & Obydenkova, 2018, p. 1050).

Although there is a consensus about CSTO's being an insufficient provider of security, some scholars analyze it from different angles. For example, Guliyev & Gawrich (2020, p. 2)

state that, given its geopolitical proximity, one would expect the CSTO to be an active participant in conflicts in the Post-Soviet space, however, because of its low level of institutionalization, weak security governance, and members' perception of the conflicts as a non-threat to their security have resulted in its passivity (Guliyev & Gawrich, 2020, p. 16). In a similar vein, echoing the argument that the CSTO's repeated failure to respond to the member states' request rendering it a lifeless alliance, Scott & Askerov (2024, p. 94) argue that the ineffectiveness of the CSTO is not only attributed to its focus on maintaining authoritarian stability, but also to external constraints. The landlocked nature of its member states and the minimal level of institutional links among member states are additional reasons for the further decrease in the organization's capacity for cooperative action.

A minority of scholars challenge the "Russian hegemony" narrative. In this regard, Yulia Nikitina (2013, p. 5) presents a different perspective, indicating that the main drawbacks that make CSTO fall behind are its member states' unwillingness to allow the organization's involvement in their internal affairs, since this would mean giving up part of their sovereignty, and organization's lack of common enemy and shared ideology. She supports this argument by pointing out that if Russia were truly a hegemon within the CSTO, it wouldn't have allowed Uzbekistan to challenge the organization's most collective initiatives, given its consensus-based decision-making structure. Nikitina further contends that the CSTO was not involved in the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan in the 1990s, because its charter does not allow it to interfere in internal conflicts. Similarly, it did not assist Uzbekistan in its fight against extremist insurgents, because at time it was designed only to counter threats from other states and non-state actors (Nikitina, 2012). However, this situation changed after the 2010 Kyrgyz incidents, as member states agreed to expand the scope of the newly formed Collective Rapid Reaction Forces (CRRF) to include involvement in domestic crises and civil emergencies (Rozanov & Douhan, 2013, p. 17).

Similarly, Kropatcheva (2016) offers a nuanced viewpoint and explains the CSTO and Russia's hegemony within it from the rational state-centered institutional multilateralism perspective and posits that CSTO is not only an instrument for Russia's geopolitical aspirations, but also a platform where Russia seeks burden-sharing in regional security matters. She examines CSTO's reactions in different scenarios: European Security Treaty Initiative, the 2008 war with Georgia, 2010 Krygyz revolution, Crimea annexation and the situation around Afghanistan and came to this conclusion that the CSTO member states are only interested in giving a support to Russia in matters which do not confront their relations with West or when the issue represents a shared security concern. Ultimately, this kind of free riding by the member

states makes the CSTO's future dependent on Russia's ability to maintain its influence within the organization and to keep the members' loyalty to their commitments to it.

After the CSTO's failure to comply with Armenia's requests and its first-ever mission which took place in Kazakhstan in 2022, the organization gained renewed scholarly attention. In this context, R. Weitz's (2022) article *"The Collective Security Treaty Organization Before and After the Ukraine War: Some Implications for the South Caucasus"* is relevant, in which he posited that if Russia had been interested in intervening in conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, it would have orchestrated an operation regardless of the CSTO's charter, just as it did in Kazakhstan, where Russia claimed that foreign terrorists or state sponsors were behind the incidents. In this sense, Weitz repeats the argument made by other scholars that Moscow's political will is the decisive factor in CSTO interventions, while the organization itself lacks the necessary capabilities to perform any action (Ibid, p. 69).

In light of the CSTO's deployment to Kazakhstan, scholars have debated whether this intervention was a paradigm shift or political consolidation (Gleason & Dunay, 2022). Libman & Davidzon (2023, p. 1298), in their analysis, argue that the level of dependency and credibility of allies' commitments are crucial in authoritarian organizations for their collective action. While higher levels of risk and dependency make intervention less feasible, the lower the constraints on a partner, the riskier the cooperation becomes. Based on this generalization, they contend that the CSTO's intervention in Kazakhstan stands out from other cases (such as Armenia in 2021 and 2022, Kyrgyzstan in 2010, and Tajikistan in 2021) since it did not necessitate a prolonged military commitment and the operation was largely symbolic which the authors posited it a "military spectacle". According to them, given the ongoing war in Ukraine, Russia intended to demonstrate that CSTO could deploy its forces, while displaying its support to the legitimacy of Tokayev's regime and Kazakhstan's strong ties with China further ensured that CSTO's troops would withdraw quickly, thus guaranteeing the intervention's limited scope (Ibid, p. 1311).

Overall, we can summarize that the academic literature on the CSTO has three main themes: some see it as a tool of Russian foreign policy, some focus on its institutional weaknesses, and others view any integration attempts by Russia in the post-Soviet space as authoritarian regionalism. In line with these existing themes, this thesis contributes to the existing academic debate rather than filling any gaps. While the core issue highlighted in this thesis is that the CSTO was legally unable to respond to Armenia's appeals due to geographical ambiguity , it also undertakes an overall assessment of the CSTO. This is because the crisis raised deeper questions about the organization's overall capacity to provide collective defense in the post-Soviet region and it's necessary to explore all factors that resulted in CSTO's

inaction as a whole. To that end, the thesis examines the CSTO's institutional design, internal asymmetries, and the cohesion among its member states. Moreover, Armenia's experience is analyzed through the lens of Snyder's alliance theory, in order to capture the role of dependence in asymmetric alliances.

1.2. Theoretical Framework

To properly assess the role of the CSTO in the Second Karabakh War, we must first understand how institutional capacity affects the organization's ability to be effective. Therefore, before discussing the CSTO's response to Armenia's requests, it is important to understand whether the organization has the level of mechanisms and institutional coherence necessary to act. To this end, this thesis addresses the concept of institutionalization, which will be the basis for our discussion of analyzing the functionality of the CSTO. Following Haftendorn et al. (1999, as cited in Kirchner & Sperling, 2006, p. 11), this thesis analyzes institutionalization through three critical dimensions: specificity - the degree to which institutional rules are clear and effectively enforced; functional differentiation - the extent to which an institution divides responsibilities among its participants and allocates specific functions to different actors; cohesion - the degree to which members agree on what constitutes a collective threat and what could be appropriate responses (while they call this dimension as commonality, and commonality is how member states share the same values and positions, we identify it with cohesion since we focus on what is perceived as threat perception among member states).

Next, the thesis applies Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT). RSCT emphasizes the regional nature of security dynamics and highlights how the post-Soviet space consists of different security complexes rather than a single coherent one. This helps explain why CSTO member states, particularly those outside the South Caucasus, did not perceive Armenia's security concerns as shared threats. RSCT also offers a regional lens for evaluating the impact of other actors such as Turkey on the CSTO's behavior.

Finally, the thesis employs the security dilemma in alliance settings as its main framework to explore CSTO's failure to respond to Armenia's request. This theory helps explain how Armenia's deep dependence on Russia created strong expectations of support, whereas Russia, facing no fear of losing influence over Armenia, could easily ignore Yerevan's appeals without risking its strategic position. In other words, because Armenia had no viable alternatives and remained firmly within Russia's sphere of influence, Moscow had little incentive to intervene.

Taken together, the insights from all three theoretical perspectives will allow us to

identify the overall factors behind CSTO's inaction in Armenia's case as a whole. However, it must be underlined that the primary reason was the absence of a formal mandate of the CSTO, as the hostilities occurred outside Armenia's internationally recognized borders.

1.2.1. Rational Institutionalism and the Role of International Organizations

Rationalist theories begin from the realists' assumption that states are rational, self-interested actors that engage with international organizations to maximize their strategic gains. Compliance in international organizations, therefore, depends on the perceived utility of cooperation and the credibility of enforcement mechanisms (Keohane, 1988; Bell, 2002). However, rational institutionalists challenge the realist claim that institutions are mere extensions of hegemonic will. Instead, they argue that policymakers can design institutions to address collective action problems and institutions can facilitate stable cooperation by lowering transaction costs, increasing transparency, and coordinating expectations among states (Koremenos et al., 2001).

However, despite this more optimistic outlook, rational institutionalists acknowledge that significant obstacles to cooperation remain, and institutions do not eliminate strategic dilemmas. To explain how these challenges manifest, Martin (1993, p. 94) categorizes cooperation problems into four distinct forms: collaboration (defection), coordination (miscoordination), assurance (distrust), and suasion (free riding), each demanding tailored institutional solutions. The collaboration problem arises when an ally defects from long-term cooperation to pursue its own goals and prioritize immediate payoffs, allowing more independent states to free ride; the coordination problem occurs when states have incentives to cooperate but struggle to reach a consensus on how to do so; in the suasion model, smaller states, confident that the hegemon will continue providing a security umbrella, take advantage of this protection and continue to free ride; the assurance problem stems from uncertainty about allies' behavior, leading to defection driven by a lack of trust in mutual commitments.

Given these challenges, we now turn to the question of whether institutions can function effectively despite the divergent preferences of their member states. This leads us to the concept of institutional autonomy, which is the ability to make binding decisions and resolve disputes without interference from individual member states. According to Lenz and Marks (2016, pp. 528-529), this autonomy is shaped by two key dimensions: pooling, which refers to majority-based decision-making procedures, and delegation, the transfer of authority from member states to independent bodies such as secretariats, courts, or commissions. The authors measured pooling by evaluating six decision areas, such as membership changes, budgetary matters, and constitutional reform, based on three criteria: whether decisions depart from unanimity toward

majoritarianism, whether they are binding, and whether they come into force without requiring ratification by member states. Delegation is measured by the extent to which authority is transferred to five types of non-state bodies (e.g., secretariats, courts, assemblies) across the same decision areas, and in dispute settlement, by how independent, binding, and accessible judicial bodies are.

With all being said, it has to be mentioned that functionalist approaches' optimism about institutional design risks overlooking the influence of power and shifting state interests. As Voeten (2019, p. 152) notes from a distributive rationalist perspective, states pursue their own goals and often shape institutions to serve those objectives, which suggests that institutional design is not enough to weaken the member states' incentives to free ride. Therefore, this thesis integrates both functionalist and distributive rationalist perspectives to better capture the complexities of cooperation. In the light of this, we refer to Posner and Goldsmith's (2005) approach to applying rationalism to international law. They argue that states only comply with agreements when it serves their interests, not because they are required by some moral norms or the law. They claim that international law does not by itself affect the actions of states or contradict a state's primary goals. According to authors, states only follow treaties due to one of these four strategic situations: (i) coincidence of interest – states act in their self-interest, and their behavior happens to align with what the treaty requires, making it seem like they are complying with the treaty when, but in reality, they are just pursuing their interests independently and they would behave the same way even if the treaty didn't exist; (ii) coercion – a powerful state (or coalition of states) forces weaker states to comply by threatening or imposing costs. The weaker state follows the treaty not because it wants to, but because the alternative (punishment or sanctions) is worse; (iii) cooperation – violating the agreement could lead to retaliation or the loss of long-term advantages, so compliance ensures stable and beneficial relationships over time; (iiii) coordination – states comply because they benefit from establishing a common standard or rule that makes interactions smoother. Even if the rule was not initially created through coercion or repeated interaction, once established, it becomes the easiest and most efficient way for states to cooperate (Ibid, pp. 10-13).

Considering the arguments presented above, it becomes clear that institutions and agreements are helpful tools to explain some behavior, but they shouldn't be the only thing we look at. Instead, we should bridge functionalism with power-based realities and use international organizations as a supplement to other ways of explaining states' actions, following Keohane's argument that *"Any clear separation between functional and power arguments is misleading"* (Keohane, 1990, p. 746).

1.2.2. Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) and Limits of Collective Security in Post-Soviet Space

Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) offers researchers a structured way to analyze complex security interactions across the whole spectrum of levels - domestic conditions, interstate relations within the region, interactions with neighboring regions, and influence of great powers, which collectively form the security constellations (Buzan & Waever, p. 51). And it should be noted by its very nature, RSCT serves as an analytical rather than predictive framework and allows us to understand each region's unique security dynamics through case-specific analysis without supposing outcomes beforehand.

The raison-d'etre of RSCT is security interdependence, meaning that security concerns are more intense within a region than between regions. As Buzan and Wæver state, *"Within the terms of RSCT, RSCs define themselves as substructures of the international system by the relative intensity of security interdependence among a group of units, and security indifference between that set and surrounding units."* (Buzan & Waever, 2003, p. 48). What makes RSCT unique is its ability to blend materialist and constructivist approaches to security analysis. On the materialist side, it draws on concepts similar to neorealism, such as anarchy and the distribution of power. At the same time, the constructivist dimension of RSCT acknowledges that security threats are shaped by political processes, historical narratives, and the actions of securitizing actors. Long-standing patterns of amity and enmity, influenced by historical and cultural factors, influence how security dynamics evolve within a RSC (Ibid, p. 49).

Based on the power distribution of regional states and the role of major powers within the region, RSCT identifies different types of RSCs: standard RSCs, where multiple regional states interact without a dominant power; centered RSCs, where a single regional power shapes security dynamics; great power RSCs, where the core of the region is shaped by the interaction of great powers. Great powers in this type of region influence the security dynamics of the entire region, often in a way that directly impacts global security, because these powers are not regionally, but also globally significant; super complexes where multiple regions with great powers and their security dynamics interact and influence each other across regional boundaries (Ibid, pp. 53-59).

One of the core premises of RSC is that regional rivalries and global power struggles align, reinforcing each other in one RSC. Since major powers are no longer just above regions but also inside them, it's harder to map security dynamics globally. Thus, rather than assuming a clear separation between them, both regional and global levels of security need to be studied not just on their own but also in terms of how they interact with each other (Ibid, p. 59).

Considering the mentioned aspects of RSCT, it's reasonable to suggest that CSTO tries

to encompass three dissimilar regional security complexes together (Baev, 2014, p. 42), the members of which do not share a unified set of security concerns. Central Asian members never treated the Karabakh conflict as a collective security issue, just as Armenia remains largely unaffected by security challenges in Central Asia, such as instability emanating from Afghanistan (Mozaffari, 1997, p. 9). Similarly, Jackson (2014, p. 183) also challenges Buzan's framing of the post-Soviet space as a single regional security complex, arguing instead that security dynamics in this area are often shaped by trans-regional dynamics involving major powers, therefore, it must be viewed through an outward-looking lens. Hence, it can be argued that the South Caucasus, in fact, operates as a distinct security arena characterized by multi-layered security dynamics – local rivalries, regional competition (Turkey-Iran-Russia), and intersecting great power interests shaped by these powers' involvement in conflicts elsewhere. The region's conflict and cooperation dynamics are heavily influenced by external powers, particularly Russia, Turkey, and Iran (Coppetiers, 2003, p. 160). CSTO reaction to the Second Karabakh War demonstrates that the South Caucasus no longer functions as a Russian-centered RSC, but a contested great power RSC, where Moscow must carefully navigate the ambitions of other powerful actors such as Turkey.

1.2.3. Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics to Analyze Dynamics Between the CSTO and Armenia

One of the dominant explanations for alliance formation is the capability aggregation model, which gets its roots from the balance of power theory. This approach argues that states form alliances primarily to aggregate their military strength against a common enemy. According to this model, once the common enemy and shared threat disappear or a particular ally's military contribution is no longer needed, the alliance is more likely to terminate. Taking into account that CSTO is not falling within this framework, since its member states do not face a common external threat, its persistence can be better understood through the autonomy-security trade-off model introduced by Morrow (1991, p. 907). This model suggests that alliances are about bargaining between security and autonomy: weaker states receive protection, while the stronger power gains political leverage and strategic influence over its allies' actions. In the case of CSTO, it could be argued that Russia provides security guarantees to member states, but these guarantees are not purely defensive, they serve to maintain Moscow's influence in the post-Soviet region. A clear example of this dynamic can be seen in the Collective Security Council session on December 20, 2011, where CSTO member states agreed that to locate the military base of a third country on the territory of the CSTO member states, it will be necessary to obtain the formal consent of all its members. At that time, this decision was strategically meant to serve Russia's ambitions of countering Tajikistan's attempts

to seek closer relations with non-CSTO members and to allow the deployment of foreign military bases, namely by the US and India, on its territory (Sodiqov, 2012). Similarly, in December 2012, Kyrgyzstan ratified a 15-year base lease deal with Russia after Moscow agreed to write off some $500 million of Kyrgyzstan's debt, which led to the closure of the U.S airbase in Manas (Dzyubenko, 2014).

Snyder's (1984) theory of the alliance dilemma is also built upon the concept of dependence among allies. While his work differentiates primary and secondary alliance dilemmas, this thesis will focus on the secondary dilemma which came to play after alliances formed and concerns the degree of commitment between allies. This theory argues that the core risks in the alliance dilemma are abandonment and entrapment. According to Snyder, abandonment is essentially a form of defection, though it can take various forms:

"Abandonment, in general, is "defection," but it may take a variety of specific forms: the ally may realign with the opponent; he may merely de-align, abrogating the alliance contract; he may fail to make good on his explicit commitments; or he may fail to provide support in contingencies where support is expected" (Snyder, 1984, p. 466).

On the other hand, entrapment refers to a state being dragged into conflict over an ally's interest, even if one does not share the same concerns. The more dependent a country is on an ally, the more afraid it is of being abandoned and the more likely it is to accept risks to keep the alliance strong. Conversely, if a state feels less dependent, it will avoid being trapped in conflicts and be less concerned about whether its ally feels abandoned. Meanwhile, failing to provide aid to an ally also leads to abandonment and decreases the value of the alliance, putting alliance's future under question (Ibid, p. 467).

Dependence is the key independent variable in this theory, as it influences whether a member state will decide to enter a conflict in support of its ally. Snyder (1997) distinguishes between two main types of dependence within alliances. Direct dependence refers to situations where a state relies on its ally's military support for its own survival. Indirect dependence, on the other hand, involves a strategic interest in preventing an ally from falling under the influence of a rival alliance. Several factors can increase a state's dependence on its ally, including military weakness, the ally's relative strength, its involvement in a conflict, and the lack of viable alternatives for realignment (Ibid., pp. 471–472). While stronger states may have indirect dependence on weaker allies, this can be outweighed by the weaker state's direct dependence. In such cases, the stronger power can avoid entrapment, as the weaker ally's high level of dependence gives the hegemon greater control over alliance dynamics.

As Armenia is highly dependent on Russia in terms of its security and economy, this

theory is best suited to explain how Russia avoided entrapment during the Second Karabakh War and the subsequent border clashes. It also helps to comprehend how Russia's abandonment of Armenia ultimately led to its disillusionment with the CSTO. Although the CSTO's inaction was legally justifiable, since the conflict occurred outside Armenia's internationally recognized borders, Armenia's high level of dependence on Russia created strong assumptions that Russia, and by extension the CSTO, would come to its defense. When these expectations were unmet, disillusionment with the alliance began to set in, ultimately leading Armenia to freeze its participation in the CSTO and seek alternative partnerships. Russia's restrained response was also consistent with Morrow's (2000, p. 79) theory of asymmetric alliances. Morrow argues that in alliances with asymmetric interests, the stronger power is less worried about abandonment because the cost of breaking the alliance falls more heavily on the weaker state. This logic applies to Armenia, which has limited alternative security providers beyond Russia.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Design

The thesis adopts a single case study design to explore the challenges of collective security in the post-Soviet space by examining why the CSTO didn't respond to Armenia's requests during the Second Karabakh War. A case study approach enables an in-depth examination of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2017, p. 15). According to Yin, case studies are well-suited when research focuses on "how" and "why" questions. According to George & Bennett (2005, pp. 19-22), the case study method offers four key advantages. First, it ensures high conceptual validity by allowing the researcher to measure the indicators that most accurately reflect the conceptual framework the researcher intends to assess. Second, it makes it easier to come up with new hypotheses, as in-depth engagement with a case may reveal patterns or deviations that result in new theoretical insights. Third, case studies are well-suited for tracing causal mechanisms, enabling the researcher to explore how specific outcomes occur. Finally, they are valuable for addressing causal complexity, particularly in contexts where multiple theoretical perspectives are at play.

While remaining within the bounds of single-case study design, to make internal validity of the case stronger, it must be verified whether empirical and predicted patterns are consistent or an outlier (Yin, 2017, p. 175). To that end, this thesis will refer to other requests of the member states to the CSTO, the 2010 Kyrgyzstan unrest, Tajikistan's appeal in 2021, and the 2022 Kazakhstan crisis. Additionally, a process-tracing model will be used in this study to understand how relations between Russia and Armenia changed since the Velvet Revolution. It will be useful to explore how Armenia's rapprochement with Western mediation in the subsequent processes, along with Russia's involvement in the Ukrainian war, resulted in Russia's limited leverage in the conflict since 2022, which led to Armenia freezing its membership in the CSTO.

2.2. Data Collection

The data collection, which is based on the qualitative research design combining primary and secondary resources, will allow for a deep dive to examine a detailed analysis of the CSTO's decision-making during the Second Karabakh War. Primary sources include official documents such as the CSTO Charter, Agreements on military-technical cooperation and the use of force, as well as statements and declarations issued by the organization regarding the conflict, and speeches by key actors, including Russian, Armenian, and Azerbaijani officials.

These materials were collected from the CSTO's official website and reputable news outlets to ensure their reliability. Additionally, secondary sources comprise scholarly articles, policy reports, and expert reviews will be interpreted to gain a deeper understanding of primary data. To that end, the method of content analysis will be applied, allowing for the identification of recurring patterns, themes, and framing strategies in official discourse.

To paint a more complete picture of the case and enhance the validity of the findings, this study will apply data triangulation. Allowing the researcher to combine multiple sources of evidence to examine the case from different angles, this approach strengthens the reliability of the findings (Patton, 1999, p. 1193). Therefore, in addition to qualitative data, quantitative indicators such as member states' financial contributions to the CSTO budget, participation rates in joint military programs, the level of economic and military interdependence, and relative military capabilities will be examined throughout the thesis.

2.3. Limitations

A significant limitation of qualitative research, including this study, is the potential for researcher bias, the influence of the investigator's personal perspectives or expectations on the way of data collection and interpretation of it (Johnson, 1997, p. 283). Another constraint of this study, and qualitative research on political decision-making more broadly, is the inability to determine the underlying intentions. While the analysis evaluates the CSTO's response during the Second Karabakh War through available data, the actual reasons behind Russia's or other member states' choices remain partially inaccessible. There is also a language barrier that affects the researcher's ability to fully engage with broader sources, as much of the relevant material on the CSTO is in Russian, and two of the countries involved have Armenian and Russian as official languages.

Lastly, the study acknowledges constraints inherent to qualitative case study research. Single case studies help us understand if and how something matters, but not how much it matters across many cases. Thus, they're less suited for producing generalized estimates like statistical methods can (George & Bennett, 2005, pp. 30-31). This shortcoming of the study limits its generalizability, as the case of Armenia was quite specific, given that the territories in question, May 2021 and September 2022, were disputed territories, and since there was no border delimitation, the CSTO's response was also limited. As such, findings can not be extended to other potential CSTO cases.

CHAPTER 3: ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY OF THE CSTO

3.1. From the CST to the CSTO: Founding and Early Challenges

"The Commonwealth of Independent States" (CIS) was established in December 1991 to facilitate a 'civilized divorce' among the former Soviet republics. Among its key purposes in the security dimension were the necessity to effectively handle the collapse of the Soviet security structure, the need to mediate conflicts arising within and between these states, and Russia's aspiration to maintain its dominant position as the primary security actor both regionally and globally (Hoffman, 2013 as cited in Aris, 2015, p. 555). To that end, article 6 of the Agreement on the Establishment of the CIS (1991) proclaimed the creation of "a joint command, a common military-strategic space, including a single control over nuclear weapons". To reach the aforementioned objectives, the Council of Defense Ministers (CDM) of the CIS was established to assist member states in forming their national armies, along with the High Command of the Joint Armed Forces (JAF), which was subordinate to the CDM. However, the member states rejected the idea of forming a unified CIS army, since it was perceived as a threat to their newly gained sovereignty. Therefore, when they completed the formation of their national armies, the bodies lost their relevance. Consequently, in December 1993, the JAF was dissolved and succeeded by the Headquarters for the Coordination of Military Cooperation. The CDM also evolved and shifted its focus towards fostering multilateral military collaboration among CIS countries (Davidzon, 2021, p. 75).

In light of these developments, the Tashkent summit of the CIS witnessed the adoption of the Collective Security Treaty (CST), which later became the foundation of the CSTO. With the scaling down of the proposed role of CIS, the treaty only touched upon the use of national armed forces in the event of an attack on member states (Webber, 1997, p. 38). The treaty was drafted by Uzbekistan, Russia, and Kazakhstan, and signed on May 15, 1992, by Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Armenia, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Belarus joined the treaty later in 1993, and it officially entered into force on April 20, 1994. According to Article 11 of the treaty, the CST was initially valid for five years with the possibility of extension. The parties agreed to prolong the Treaty by five more years in April 1999, however, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Georgia did not sign the protocol on the extension. Azerbaijan's withdrawal was influenced by the unresolved Karabakh conflict, while Georgia distanced itself as it began to pursue a pro-Western foreign policy course (Davidzon, 2021, pp. 76-78). Uzbekistan withdrew in part due to the CST's inability to prevent the entry of Islamist militants, particularly members of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), through Tajikistan. Uzbekistan even accused the Tajikistan's government, linked to the United Tajik

Opposition, which held significant positions after the Tajik Civil War, of supporting the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) (Rasid, 2000).

The Collective Security Concept, signed in 1995, laid out more ambitious plans for the CST framework. It envisioned the phased development of a collective security system, beginning with the establishment of national armed forces in the initial stage. The second stage aimed at the creation of coalition groupings of joint troops and the establishment of a joint air defense system for repelling potential aggression. The final stage envisioned the full establishment of the collective security system, a goal that has yet to be realized (Douhan & Rusakovich, 2016, p. 121). The concept gave the basis for collective defense on a regional basis, which was among the main principles of collective security outlined in the concept. The other principles included indivisibility of security, equal responsibility of member states, non-interference in sovereignty, and consensus-based decision-making on key collective security issues (Rozanov & Douhan, 2013, pp. 8-9).

The car bombings in Tashkent and the 1999 Batken incursion exposed the ineffectiveness of the CST, although at that time, the CST was primarily designed to address threats from state actors and external military attacks. After these events, along with the conflict in Chechnya and the growing influence of the U.S. activities against terrorism in Central Asia, the need for a more formalized structure became clear. On May 15, 2002, in Moscow, the CSTO was officially established following the signing of its Charter by Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan. In December 2003, the Charter was officially registered with the UN Secretariat, and by 2004, the CSTO secured observer status at the UN General Assembly.

Russia's declining influence in the region was evident at that time, and it should not come as a surprise that the creation of the CSTO followed soon after Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan were negotiating with the United States to deploy military forces and establish bases on their territory. In response, in December 2002, Russia deployed military aircraft to Kyrgyzstan with the intention of establishing an air base just 30 kilometers away from the U.S.-operated Manas air base (Eurasianet, 2002). The establishment of the CSTO can thus be seen as an effort to counter U.S. involvement in the region.

3.2. Decision-Making Bodies and Mandates

While the foundations of the CSTO's organizational bodies are grounded in the Collective Security Concept (1995), its charter outlines the key organizational bodies of the organization. According to Article 11 of the Charter (2002), CSTO bodies are the Collective Security Council (CSC), Council of Foreign Ministries (CFM), Council of Defense Ministries

(CDM), Committee of Security Council Secretaries (CSSC), and Permanent Council. The main working bodies of the organization are the Organization Secretariat and the Joint Staff. Additionally, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization serves as the body for inter-parliamentary cooperation.

According to Article 13 of the Charter (2002), the CSC is the supreme decision-making body of the CSTO. Composed of the heads of member states, it defines the organization's strategy, addresses fundamental issues concerning the organization, makes decisions to achieve the organization's goals and objectives, and facilitates coordination and cooperation among member States for their implementation. The CSC decides on providing assistance, including military aid, to member states under attack. It also oversees political-military integration of member states and develops policies on defense, security cooperation, and peacekeeping (Rozanov & Douhan, 2013, p. 93). In addition, the Council appoints the Secretary General, approves the CSTO budget, manages membership matters, and may establish working and subsidiary bodies to support its functions. The chairman of the Council is usually the head of the member state where the regular session of the Council is held, unless the Council decides otherwise (Douhan & Rusakovich, 2016, p. 126).

CFM, CDM, and the CSSC serve as the CSTO's executive and advisory bodies. Each is responsible for coordinating member states' actions within its respective domain: the CFM in foreign policy, the CDM in military and defense matters, and the CSSC in national security. According to the *Provisions on the Council of Foreign Ministers of the CSTO*, endorsed by the Council on 28 April 2003 (as cited in Rozanov & Douhan, 2013),[1] the main functions of the CFM include the implementation of CSC decisions on foreign policy and collective security; proposing strategies to counter terrorism, extremism, trafficking, and transnational crime; coordinating member states' foreign policy actions; aligning positions on international and regional security; and proposing initiatives for engagement with non-member states and international organizations. Additionally, it submits proposals on appointment of Secretary General and membership of new countries to the CSC, together with the CDM and CSSC (Ibid, pp. 94-95).

Regarding the main functions of the CDM, it submits to the CSC proposals on the deployment of collective security forces with financial and economic justification; the provision

---

[1] The mandates of CSTO bodies such as the CFM, CDM and Secretary General are drawn from their respective provisions, endorsed by CSTO decisions. However, these documents are not publicly available on the CSTO's official website or other open sources. The content referenced in this thesis is based on the official texts reproduced in: Rozanov, Anatoliy A., and Alena F. Douhan. 2013. Collective Security Treaty Organisation 2002–2012. DCAF Regional Programmes Series no. 18. Geneva and Minsk: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces and Foreign Policy and Security Research Centre, see pp. 93-102

of military and military-technical assistance to counter armed aggression; the enhancement of collective security systems and regional structures; and the development of military-scientific cooperation and joint personnel training. It also approves or presents plans to the attention of the Council for joint operational and combat training of coalition forces *(see footnote 1)*.

As set out in Article 16 of the Charter (2002), the Permanent Council serves as the key coordinating structure of the organization between the sessions of the Council. Composed of permanent representatives designated by the heads of Member States, it ensures the execution of decisions adopted by the Council, CMFA, CMD, and CSSC in conjunction with the permanent working body.

The CSTO Joint Staff is a permanent, working body tasked with coordinating and implementing the military component of the CSTO, supporting the work of the CDM. Although the Joint Staff began its operational work in January 2004, the decision to establish an intergovernmental body responsible for the military control of the CSTO's collective security framework was made in 2001 at the Yerevan session of the CST. It is tasked with preparing and conducting joint operational and combat training activities in collaboration with the CDM, overseeing military technical cooperation, coordinating joint training for personnel and specialists across CSTO armed forces, and managing the Crisis Response Center. Its headquarters are located in Moscow, at the former site of the Warsaw Pact's headquarters (CSTO, n.d.).

The Parliamentary Assembly of the CSTO (PA) serves as the statutory inter-parliamentary cooperation body within the CSTO framework. Its establishment was initiated following the 2006 session of the CSTO Collective Security Council in Minsk. PA is composed of parliamentary delegations from member states, with the size of each delegation determined by the respective national parliament according to the temporary regulations. The Assembly's primary functions include adopting model legislative acts to regulate legal relations within CSTO's sphere of competence, offering recommendations for harmonizing national legislation with CSTO agreements, and developing programs for legislative approximation over specific periods. PA is managed by its Chairman and Council consisting of the heads of the parliaments. It is currently composed of 77 lawmakers from the parliaments of member states and has three standing commissions: on defense and security; on political affairs and international cooperation; on social, economic, and legal Issues. Nominations for the Chairman of PA come from the Head of Parliament of the state chairing the CSTO and it is elected based voting among the parliamentary delegations of member states. As of 2025, the Chairman of the PA CSTO is Vyacheslav Volodin, the Chairman of the State Duma of the Russian Federation (CSTO, n.d.).

The supreme administrative official of the organization is the Secretary General. With the consent of the CDM and the CSSC, the Secretary General is appointed by the CSC based on the proposal of the CFM. Acting under the direction of the Council, the Secretary General: a) manages and supervises the activities of the CSTO Secretariat; b) organizes consultations among member states to support the implementation of the CST; c) coordinates the preparation and alignment of documents and decisions for Council sessions and other CSTO meetings, following the Council's instructions; d) facilitates the signing of Council decisions by heads of states when needed, according to established procedures; e) submits an annual report to the Council, analyzing security trends and proposing recommendations; f) represents the CSTO in relations with non-member states, international organizations, and the media, as authorized by the Council; g) communicates with the UN Security Council regarding CSTO's peacekeeping activities when instructed; h) provides regular updates to the Council and other CSTO bodies on the implementation of their decisions; i) defines the roles of Secretariat departments and staff, and oversees personnel management, including employment contracts; j) prepares the Organization's budget proposals, monitors budget execution, and submits financial reports for Council approval and other related duties (Rozanov & Douhan, 2013, pp. 99-101, see footnote 1).

However, even the appointment of the Secretary General by consensus remains problematic. The position was held by Nikolai Bordyuzha from 2003 until 2016, who previously served as Secretary of the Security Council of Russia. However, in 2015, the heads of member states decided to introduce a rotational system, assigning the post to each member state for a term of three years. According to this rotation, Armenia was the first country in line to nominate the Secretary General. However, the process was delayed due to repeated summit postponements and political maneuvering, particularly by Kazakhstan and Belarus. Belarus's rejection was widely interpreted as an attempt to gain concessions in its ongoing dispute with Russia over the pricing of energy. Amid these tensions, the Armenian representative, Yuri Khachaturov, was finally appointed Secretary General on May 2, 2017. However, his tenure was cut short when he was arrested by Armenian authorities on charges related to the alleged overthrow of Armenia's constitutional order during the March 2008 post-election crackdown. Armenia demanded that it should be allowed to nominate a replacement under the rotational principle. Nevertheless, this request was blocked by Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia, and the CSTO started 2019 with an Acting Secretary-General from Russia (Troitskiy, 2019, pp. 215-216).

3.2.1. Legal Ambiguities and Enforcement Gaps

The CSTO's decision-making process is fundamentally constrained by its charter provisions, which create significant legal ambiguities. Article 12 of the Charter (2002) states that: *"Resolutions of the Council, CMFA, CMD and CSSC on the issues, except for the procedural ones, shall be adopted by consensus... Resolutions of the Council and the resolutions of CMFA, CMD and CSSC adopted for execution thereof shall be binding for the Member States and shall be executed in accordance with the procedure established by the national laws."* which means, except for the procedural decisions, substantive decisions require unanimous consensus but lack automatic enforceability. Even if decisions are labeled "binding," they still depend on national laws for implementation, which can allow states to delay or ignore obligations.

Likewise, while CSTO decisions formally oblige member states to comply with them according to the charter, contradictions exist within CSTO procedures. For example, Article 4.8 of the Provisions on the CFM requires that CFM decisions be approved by the CSC before taking effect, which at the end also makes it dependent on member states. In this direction, further legal ambiguity also emerged when Uzbekistan rejoined the CSTO in 2006. It was required of Uzbekistan to "accede" to past decisions of the organization. Considering that organizational decisions are meant to be automatically binding, unlike treaties, this practice raises questions about the binding nature of CSTO decisions (Rozanov & Douhan, 2013, p. 53).

As mentioned before, while Article 3 of the CST created the CSC, the CST participating states signed the agreement on the Statute of the CSC on 6 July 1992, in Moscow. However, the Statute of the CSC does not clearly define decision-making procedures. According to the Statute, *"decisions of the Council are made, at its sessions, in correspondence with the time-frame set separately for each particular session and come into force for each participating state in compliance with the provisions of its Constitution,"* which also implies the organization is dependence on national legislation, constitutional constraints, and the political will of its member states (Yegorov, 1996).

With that being said, for non-compliance with the decisions of organizational bodies, there are no enforcement mechanisms, although articles 20 and 25 address this issue to some extent. Article 20 states that if member states fail to comply with fulfilling their obligation, CSC may make decisions on excluding that member state, which requires a consensus decision without the participation of the respective state. Article 25 sets some penalties for non-compliance with budget responsibility. According to the article, if a CSTO Member State does not pay its financial debts to the budget for two years, the CSTO Council will pass a decision

regarding the non-nomination of that country's citizen for positions within the organization's body and its right to vote in CSTO decision-making bodies until it fully pays its debt. Dispute mechanism is also lacking, according to article 27, any dispute among member states shall be settled by consultations. There is no designated body for handling disputes; unresolved issues may be submitted to the Council for consideration.

CSTO's security guarantees are also contradictory and require case analysis. Unlike NATO's Article 5, Article 4 of the CST (1992) and Article 7 of the Charter (2002) do not result in an automatic response, instead, the practical military assistance of the organization depends on the activation of a consultation mechanism that decides whether the use of collective forces will be approved. In practice, when a member state appeals for assistance under the CSTO framework, the response is not automatic. Each case is assessed individually, and following a request, the CSC may mandate a fact-finding mission usually involving the Secretary General and the chief and representatives from the Joint Staff, who then report their findings back to the CSC. Only after this process can a decision be taken. According to Article 4

"If one of the Member States undergoes aggression (armed attack menacing to safety, stability, territorial integrity and sovereignty), it will be considered by the Member States as aggression (armed attack menacing to safety, stability, territorial integrity and sovereignty) to all the Member States of this Treaty. In case of aggression commission (armed attack menacing to safety, stability, territorial integrity and sovereignty) to any of the Member States, all the other Member States at request of this Member State shall immediately provide the latter with the necessary help, including military one…"

However, this article also contradicts Article 5 of the Charter (2002), which emphasizes that the organization functions based on principles such as respect for the sovereignty of its members, voluntary participation, and non-interference in internal matters.

3.3. Military Components of the CSTO

The legal framework for deploying collective security forces within the CSTO was first established by the *Agreement on the Status of the Forces of the Collective Security System*, signed on 11 October 2000. This agreement set the conditions under which military contingents of the organization could be deployed to the territory of the member states, requiring the prior consent of the host state. Based on this framework, the Collective Rapid Deployment Forces (CRDF) were created in 2001 among Russia and the Central Asian member states (Rozanov & Douhan, 2013, p. 34). However, at that time, the deployment of collective forces was permitted only under two circumstances: to repel an external military aggression or to conduct joint anti-terrorism operations. Additionally, as mentioned, CRDF was only designated for Central Asian

states. The basis of subdividing forces into regional groupings was laid out in the *Collective Security Concept* (1995) and further developed during the Minsk session of the CSC on 24 May 2000, where member states adopted a document titled *Model of a Regional System for Collective Security*. As a result, it led to the development of bilateral security relationships of member states with Russia rather than the establishment of integrated collective forces. Specifically, the model divided the security space into European, Caucasian, and Central Asian subdivisions, which resulted in bilateral arrangements such as Armenia–Russia, Belarus–Russia, and Central Asian states–Russia security relations (Ibid, p. 10). While forces designated for Central Asia were organized through the establishment of the CRDF, the arrangements with Armenia and Belarus remained bilateral. Belarus and Russia formalized their joint force agreement in 1999, and Armenia and Russia signed theirs in 2016 (Davidzon, 2021, p. 81).

Additionally, the Collective Rapid Reaction Forces (CRRF) were officially created in 2009. Unlike the CRDF, the CRRF is not restricted to a specific geographical area. It is a multinational military formation composed of approximately 20,000 personnel. The primary tasks of the CRRF are as follows: deployment within any CSTO member state's territory to demonstrate readiness for the use of military force; prevention and repulsion of armed attacks and localization of armed conflicts; participation in combating international terrorism; and illicit trafficking of drugs or organized crime.; strengthening the defense of state borders and the protection of key state and military facilities; support for the operational deployment of joint (regional) troop groupings; protection of civilian populations from the dangers arising during or after military hostilities and elimination of emergencies, including the provision of humanitarian assistance (CSTO, n.d.). Initially, the CRRF was not assigned to intervene in internal political crises, and this limitation became evident during the 2010 crisis in Kyrgyzstan, where it failed to respond. Therefore, on December 10, 2010, CSTO agreed on *amendments to the Agreement on the Status of Forces and Assets for the CSTO Collective Security System*. As set out in new changes deployment could be authorized for following purposes: realization of the right to collective defense in the case of a threat or an armed attack (aggression) against one or more CSTO parties; countering other challenges and threats to collective security; emergency response actions; conducting joint command-staff and troop exercises (CSTO, 2010).

In 2007, the CSTO established a framework for collective peacekeeping. Under this framework, each member state committed to maintaining permanent contingents of peacekeeping forces that are uniformly trained, equipped with compatible arms and communications, and regularly participate in joint exercises. When a peacekeeping operation is needed, the decision is made by the CSC, based either on a host state's official request or a

decision by the UN Security Council for non-CSTO territories. While the structure, size, and composition of the forces are specifically tailored by the CSC for each mission, the overall peacekeeping capability consists of about 3,000 armed forces personnel and approximately 600 representatives from the internal affairs agencies of the Member States. Command of the collective peacekeeping forces (CPF) is entrusted to a commander who reports directly to the CSC, while overall coordination and operational management are under the responsibility of the CSTO Joint Staff (CSTO, n.d.; Rozanov & Douhan, 2013, pp. 34-35).

There is also partial progress made in the framework of the CSTO joint collective air force. With this aim, Russia has actively pursued bilateral agreements with Belarus (2009), Kazakhstan (2013), and Armenia (2015). Discussions with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are also ongoing. Although neither has a modern air force or advanced SAM capabilities, Russia and Kyrgyzstan reached an agreement to create a joint air defense system near the Russian airbase (Engvall, 2023). As part of its efforts to bolster member states' capabilities, in 2015-2016, Russia transferred second-hand five battalions of the S-300PS systems to Kazakhstan and four battalions to Belarus free of charge. However, since the creation of joint air forces is not feasible in the near future, given the capabilities of allies, it has been argued that these initiatives are less likely to genuinely enhance the defensive capabilities of CSTO members. Instead, they aimed at expanding Russia's radar coverage and military footprint across the region (Plopsky, 2017).

3.4. Structural Asymmetry within the CSTO

As outlined in the theoretical framework, functional differentiation is one of the three core factors influencing the level of institutionalization. In the case of the CSTO, functional differentiation reveals a notable concentration of responsibilities and capacities in the hands of Russia, highlighting structural asymmetries among member states. This section examines how budget contributions, troop deployments, arms transfers, and broader economic interdependencies are unevenly distributed across the organization, which reinforces differentiated roles between Russia and the rest of the member states.

Institutional asymmetry within CSTO is reflected in budget and troop contributions. The official data of the Ministry of Finance of Belarus for 2020 shows that the CSTO Collective Security Council approved a budget of 419.8 million Russian rubles ($5.7 million), and the share of Belarus remained unchanged – 10% of the total pool (Karimov, 2021). The overall budget of the CSTO is divided equally between Russia and all the other members combined. In other words, Russia provides 50 percent, and the remaining part of the budget is covered by shares distributed among the other member states equally. It should be noted that the CSTO

budget primarily funds administrative functions, such as the Secretariat and Joint Staff HQ, which manage organizational and military operations. Therefore, this budget does not cover the financing of major military-security programs, such as the Collective Operational Reaction Force (CORF). Established in 2009, the CORF consists of 20,000 troops, with Russia contributing the largest portion – 9,500 troops. Other CSTO member states also contribute, with Kazakhstan providing 5,000 troops, Belarus contributing 2,000, and smaller contributions from Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Armenia, each providing 1,000 troops. Therefore, while the CSTO's budget doesn't cover the contribution to security programs, Russia's contribution in these areas is significantly higher (Aris & Boguslavska, 2019, p. 277).

This pattern could also be seen in CSTO military asymmetry. According to the Global Firepower index (2024), the total size of the armed forces across CSTO member states amounted to approximately 1.52 million personnel and Russia accounts for nearly 85% of this figure. For comparison, based on the 2020 Global Firepower report, NATO maintains a significantly larger force of approximately 3.462 million personnel, yet only around 40% of this figure comes from the United States (Global Firepower, 2020, as cited in Karimov, 2021).

The CSTO's heavy dependence on Russia is further reflected in arms supplies. Based on data from SIPRI (as cited in Klein, 2019, p. 24), between 2000 and 2016, Russia was responsible for a significant portion of arms imports into CSTO member states: 95% for Tajikistan, 93% for Belarus, 81% for Armenia, 79% for Kazakhstan, and 78% for Kyrgyzstan.

In many cases, arms transfers were linked to broader strategic concessions. For countries like Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Armenia, subsidized arms imports are often the only feasible option to moderate their military. In return, these countries agree to extend Russia's rights to maintain military bases on their territories. Additionally, to encourage membership in the CSTO and ensure its allies remain reliant on its military support, Russia offers CSTO personnel discounted education and training at its military academies (Weitz, 2018, p. 12). It also allows member states to acquire Russian weaponry at the same cost as their armed forces. *The Agreement on the Basic Principles of Military-Technical Cooperation* (2000) forms the basis for this arrangement. As set out in Article 1 of the agreement, member states supply military goods to each other at favorable prices, often those used for national armed forces. According to Article 9 of the Agreement, if a party withdraws from the CST, it must pay compensation, and if it violates the agreement, the others can suspend it partially or entirely and demand compensation. That being said, Russia has continued to use military assistance as a strategic tool in its relations with CSTO members. Beginning in 2012, Moscow and Bishkek signed multiple agreements under which Kyrgyzstan was to receive military aid valued at approximately $200 million. Till 2020, $126 million worth of equipment has been transferred

to Kyrgyzstan under these agreements. The assistance included two An-26 military transport planes, four Mi-24V attack helicopters, six Mi-8MTV and Mi-8MT helicopters, two divisions of upgraded air defense systems, around fifty modernized armored personnel carriers, and other military supplies (Ria Novosti, 2020). Similarly, in 2019, following the CSTO's "Indestructible Brotherhood-2019" joint exercises, Russia donated military equipment worth approximately 320 million rubles to Tajikistan, including radar systems and BRDM-2M armored vehicles (Davidzon, 2021, p. 173). After Tajikistan's ratification of the 201st Russian military base on its territory, in exchange as how it put by the head of the Ministry of Defense of Tajikistan, Sherali Khairulloev, it accepted assistance in the form of aviation, communications, artillery, anti-aircraft missile systems, as well as small arms. Russia also pledged additional support, including easing conditions for Tajik labor migrants and removing export duties on fuel supplies (Safronov et al., 2013).

Table 3.4.1. Comparative Military Strength of CSTO Member States

Country	Defence budget (US$) (2024)	Active Personel	Tanks	Artillery pieces (towed + self propelled+	Attack helicopters	Armored Vechicles	Fighter aircraft	Fighter-ground aircraft
Russia	126B	1320000	5750	16678	557	131527	833	689
Kazakhstan	2.048B	110000	350	607	12	7736	63	25
Belarus	1.077B	63000	507	778	29	6916	36	50
Armenia	1.7B	57500	109	393	20	1306	4	15
Kyrgyzstan	221M	23000	215	220	2	2686	0	0
Tajikistan	446M	9500	38	36	6	1240	0	0

Source: Prepared by the author based on data stipulated on the Global Firepower site Retrieved from https://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-listing.php

While the Interstate Commission for Military-Economic Cooperation within the CSTO focuses on the standardization and unification of military-economic systems among member states, significant asymmetries persist among member states. One of the commission's key tasks is to harmonize the development, production, and supply of military goods to ensure compatibility across national armed forces. However, the graph below illustrating the military capacities of CSTO members reveals an imbalance among member states, where the dominant power's military expenditure is more than 60 times higher than the organization's second largest contributor. Russia overwhelmingly dominates in terms of military strength and

technological advancement of its products, while other member states possess comparatively limited military resources. Indeed, Russia is responsible for nearly 80% of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan's imported weaponry (from 1991 to 2018). In 2012, Russia pledged $1.1 billion in military aid to this country to help modernize its armed forces. Since that time, the two countries have signed multiple agreements providing up to $200 million worth of used Russian military equipment free of cost (Jardine & Lemon, 2020).

Economic ties between Russia and member states are also imbalanced in Russia's favor. Labor migration plays a crucial role here, for example, in 2023, remittances, mostly from workers in Russia, accounted for 23,7 percent of Kyrgyzstan's GDP. Tajikistan's economy remains even more remittance reliant, it is the world leader dependent on remittances, which contributed 45,4 percent of its GDP (Ratha et al., 2024). This reliance leaves these countries economically vulnerable to fluctuations in Russia's economy and migration policies. In parallel, Russia remains a dominant trade partner. Following the Ukraine war, economic cooperation accelerated among member states, with total trade between Russia and Central Asia reaching approximately $44 billion in 2023 (Gusseinov & Allayarov, 2025). Nevertheless, trade data reveal how member states have substantial deficits due to heavy reliance on Russian imports. Beyond trade and remittances, Russia also channels foreign direct investment (FDI) into the region, maintaining a portfolio of nearly $24 billion by 2023, primarily targeting strategic sectors such as energy, infrastructure, and finance (Migranyan, 2025). Altogether, these economic dependencies reinforce the structural asymmetries that bind CSTO member states to Russia's sphere of influence.

Table 3.4.2.Trade Deficits of CSTO Member States with Russia

Country	Exports to Russia (US$ million)	Imports from Russia (US$ million)	Trade Deficit
Armenia	711.6	1,892.7	-1,181.1
Belarus	15,635.5	23,130.4	-7,494.9
Kazakhstan	7,132.2	18,493.8	-11,361.6
Kyrgyzstan	348.1	2,156.0	-1,807.9
Tajikistan	99.1	1,114.2	-1,015.1

To sum up, the distribution of functional responsibilities within the CSTO demonstrates a hierarchy, with Russia taking on the roles of principal security provider, financier, and economic patron. Since weaker states' security, economic, and military needs are primarily met by Russia, the cost of breaking the alliance is higher for them.

CHAPTER 4: CASE STUDY OF ALLIANCE DILEMMA – ARMENIA AND THE CSTO'S DYNAMICS DURING AND AFTER THE SECOND KARABAKH WAR

4.1. Triggering Events and the Outbreak of the Second Karabakh War

A series of events on the outbreak of the Second Karabakh War led to increased tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan, ultimately undermining the already fragile status quo. The most important of these was Armenia's request to include representatives of the separatist regime as negotiating parties (Huseynov, 2020).

At the same time, on March 29, 2019, while Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev were holding official talks in Vienna under the auspices of the Minsk Group, Armenian Defense Minister David Tonoyan made a provocative statement, stating that the *"the formula 'territories for peace' will no longer exist"* and *"We will reformulate it as 'new war – new territories"* (Coyle, 2021, p. 162).

The Armenian side's irredentist rhetoric continued. During the virtual meeting of the OSCE Minsk Group, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov announced that the talks were moving towards a phased solution. According to this solution, the territories surrounding Karabakh would be returned, and transport and economic links would be unblocked. In response, Armenian Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan strongly rejected this idea and called such proposals "unacceptable to the Armenian side." He emphasized that Armenia would not accept any concessions that would violate Karabakh's right to self-determination, and not a single decision can be made without the involvement of people living in Karabakh (Armenian Weekly, 2020).

Armenia's proposed third road to Karabakh further deteriorated relations. Unlike the other two existing roads, which passed through Lachin and Kalbajar, this road was intended to pass through the territories of Gubadli and Jabrayil region, which were non-negotiable by Azerbaijan. In 2019, the Secretary of the Armenian Security Council, Armen Grigoryan, announced that the road aimed to shorten the distance between Karabakh and Armenia and was scheduled to be completed by the end of 2019 (Kucera, 2019).

Furthermore, the Madrid Principles, which had served as the basis for peace negotiations within the OSCE Minsk Group since 2007, were ultimately violated by Armenia's new government. The key elements of the Madrid Principles were the gradual return of territories surrounding Karabakh to Azerbaijani control; an interim status for Karabakh that would provide security and self-governance; a corridor connecting Armenia with Karabakh; the determination of the final legal status of Karabakh through a referendum; the deployment of international peacekeepers; special monitoring measures in some regions, such as Kalbajar; and

mutual commitments not to use force (Coyle, 2021, p. 145). However, Pashinyan's statement that *"Karabakh is Armenia"* directly contradicted the basic compromise logic of the principles (Shafiyev, 2023, p. 7). Therefore, it was clear to the Azerbaijani side that Armenia was no longer committed to the negotiating framework.

The situation reached a boiling point when a serious military escalation occurred in the Tovuz region in July 2020, which was far away from the traditional line of contact between the parties. The confrontations involved the use of heavy artillery, tanks, and drones, thus bringing a new dimension to past incidents. Armenia was reported to have established a new military position, which was perceived by Azerbaijan as a violation of the status quo outside the Minsk format. The skirmishes led to at least 16 deaths, including one major general from Azerbaijan and several soldiers from both sides. Meanwhile, due to the strategic position of the Tovuz region near crucial infrastructures in energy, including pipelines carrying oil and gas to Europe, the incident assumed a broader degree of geopolitical sensitivity (Coyle, 2021, p. 58).

Following the growing volatility in the region, the war erupted fully on September 27, 2020. According to official sources from Azerbaijan, the Armenian side sharply escalated the situation by attacking Azerbaijani positions and civilian areas with hundreds of artilleries, as well as mortars and other heavy weaponry (AZE MFA, 2020). Thus, after Armenia's widespread attacks on Azerbaijani military positions and civilian settlements, Azerbaijan launched counter-offensive operations, which marked the beginning of the 44-day war. The fighting lasted until November 10, 2020, when Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Russia's leaders signed a ceasefire agreement with Russia as a facilitator. The agreement outlined a phased territorial handover, including the return of the Aghdam, Kalbajar, and Lachin districts to Azerbaijani control. Other terms of the agreement included the positioning of Russian peacekeepers to the contact line and the Lachin corridor, and commitments to reopen regional transport links (Shafiyev, 2023, pp. 7-8).

On September 19, 2023, Azerbaijan launched anti-terrorist operations against the illegal Armenian armed groups in the region, which resulted in the total surrender of dissolution of the separatist regime and the full restoration of Azerbaijani control over the region. Following these developments, in 2024, one year ahead of the expiration of their initial mandate, Russian peacekeepers began withdrawing from the region and concluded their deployment in June 2024 (Anadolu Agency, 2024).

4.2. Armenia's Appeals to the CSTO and Its Response

During the 2020 war, both CSTO Secretary General Stanislav Zas and Russian President Vladimir Putin emphasized that the organization's mutual defense obligations would only apply

if hostilities occurred within the internationally recognized borders of Armenia. On the 7th of October, Putin called for a ceasefire and emphasized that Russia would fulfill its obligations under the CSTO only if hostilities extended into the internationally recognized territory of Armenia. His statement implicitly drew a red line, signaling that any escalation beyond Karabakh could trigger collective defense mechanisms under the CSTO framework (Kommerstant, 2020).

Since the end of the Second Karabakh War, one of the most serious post-war escalations occurred in May 2021, when Armenia accused Azerbaijani forces of advancing approximately 3.5 kilometers into its territory. According to the Armenian side, Azerbaijani troops took full control of the area surrounding a small border lake, referred to as "Black Lake", in what Yerevan described as a violation of Armenian sovereignty. Azerbaijan rejected the accusations, stating that the country "is engaged in strengthening security on the border, and this is happening based on the maps available to Baku and Yerevan" (BBC, 2021).

The following day, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan convened an emergency meeting of Armenia's Security Council. During this meeting, he announced that Armenia would formally appeal to the CSTO for assistance (Primeminister, 2021). On May 14, Pashinyan officially addressed the incumbent Chairperson of the CSTO Collective Security Council, President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon, requesting the immediate activation of emergency consultations under Article 2 of the Collective Security Treaty. Contrary to Armenian expectations, the CSTO did not take immediate concrete measures following Armenia's appeal. Instead, the organization issued a statement, noting that it was "closely monitoring the development of the situation in the border areas of the Syunik region of Armenia" and that, *"as the situation develops, if necessary, actions will be taken in accordance with the provisions of the Collective Security Treaty and the CSTO Charter."* (CSTO, 2021) CSTO Secretary General Stanislav Zas later clarified that the organization could only intervene in the event of direct aggression. In the case of Armenia, he emphasized that the incident was considered a border dispute without casualties or armed clashes, thus it did not result in the activation of collective defense measures (Armenpress, 2021). Later, on May 19, 2021, in the CSTO ministerial summit in Tajikistan, Lavrov stated that Russia had proposed an alternative solution in the form of a border commission, with Russia acting as a mediator. However, the Armenian side did not accept this proposal (RFE/RL, 2021). Additionally, although no concrete action was taken, talks on delimitation of borders were held in Moscow on June 2 between Armenia's deputy chief of the General Staff, Arshak Karapetian, the head of the Armenian border service, Arman Gasparian, Azerbaijan's head of external intelligence Orhan Sultanov, and the commander of Russia's peacekeeping mission in Karabakh, Rustam Muradov (Huseynov, 2021).

The second appeal to the CSTO from the Armenian side came in September 2022, following large-scale skirmishes that happened on the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan. As a response to Armenia's aggressive actions, including the planting of landmines and direct attacks on Azerbaijani military positions, definitive retaliatory measures were taken by the units of the Azerbaijani Army (MFA AZE, 2022). However, the Armenian side reported that several towns near the border, such as Goris, Kapan, and Jermuk, were targeted with artillery (The Guardian, 2022). On the evening of September 13, the day the fighting began, Armenia convened an emergency video summit with the heads of state of the CSTO. The following day, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan formally invoked the CSTO's collective defense provision, claiming that Azerbaijani forces had seized positions within Armenia's internationally recognized territory. In response, the CSTO decided to send a fact-finding mission, headed by the organization's chief of general staff, Colonel-General Anatoly Sidorov, with the first members expected to arrive in Armenia on September 15, followed by CSTO Secretary General Stanislav Zas the following week. The main task of the mission was monitoring the situation on the ground in certain border areas of the Republic of Armenia and developing proposals for further measures. In addition, the CSTO members agreed to establish a Working Group composed of staff from the CSTO Secretariat and military personnel from the Joint Staff to continuously monitor the situation within the area of the organizational responsibility (CSTO, 2022).

However, even before the mission's arrival, the CSTO signaled it did not anticipate deploying peacekeepers. At a briefing on September 15, Sidorov emphasized that the heads of member states had agreed to resolve the crisis through political and diplomatic means, and therefore, military involvement was not under discussion. He later cited the ceasefire reached on September 14 between Armenia and Azerbaijan as justification for the organization's inaction (Mejlumyan, 2022).

Considering the CSTO's precedent of inaction, it was obvious from the outset that member states would not intervene meaningfully in Armenia's defense, as the conflict was occurring within Azerbaijan's internationally recognized territory. This pattern had been established as early as the 2016 Four-Day War, when CSTO members came together in Yerevan after the war yet pointedly refrained from issuing any collective statement regarding the situation in Karabakh. Notably, Kazakhstan declined to participate in this meeting, and the appointment of Armenian representative Yuri Khachaturov as CSTO Secretary General was removed from the agenda of the meeting (Mghdesyan, 2016).

However, differentiating from the previous ones, Yerevan this time deliberately claimed the clashes occurred within its territory, thereby attempting to invoke CSTO security

mechanisms. Yet, in the aftermath of the 2022 events, Russian officials, including Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Galuzin, justified the organization's inaction by claiming that Armenia itself had rejected CSTO proposals that aimed at stabilizing the situation. He emphasized that the CSTO had offered serious initiatives, including military-technical assistance, sending a monitoring mission, and helping to train Armenia's border troops. Galuzin argued that Armenia preferred to invite the European Union monitoring mission, which, according to him, was not focused on border security but rather on intelligence gathering against Russia, Iran, and Azerbaijan (TASS, 2024). During his annual news conference, Russian FM Sergey Lavrov also echoed this point that Russia was ready to send its mission (possibly troops) to Armenia-Azerbaijan border, even that the mission parameters and documentation had already been agreed upon, but that the final declaration was rejected by Yerevan which insisted on including a strong condemnation of Azerbaijan in the mission's agreement (Reuters, 2023).

4.3. The Implications of Armenia's Asymmetric Alliance with Russia on CSTO's Behaviour

Considering that CSTO is dependent on the strategic interests of its members, particularly those of Russia, we must consider *whom the requested assistance would have been directed against*. In this case, it was Azerbaijan, a country with which Russia maintains strong political and economic ties, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan share ethnic bonds and membership in the Organization of Turkic States, and Belarus accounted for 7.1% of its arms imports between 2011 and 2020 (SIPRI, 2021). Hence, aiding Armenia risked undermining relations with a key regional actor.

From a theoretical standpoint, Armenia's experience mirrors the systemic constraints faced by small states in an anarchic international order. In international relations, it has long been argued that since the system is anarchic and particularly dominated by great powers, small states possess limited options to pursue their foreign policy goals. According to Stephen M. Walt, small states have 2 options: they either tend to balance against perceived threats by joining alliances or bandwagon with stronger powers in hopes of ensuring their survival. In the context of weak and fragile states, he argues that bandwagoning is the most likely strategy. As he further asserts, weak states typically have little to offer in terms of military or strategic value and given their limited capacity to influence the outcome of conflicts, they are often forced to bandwagon and align with stronger powers (Miller, 2017, pp. 27-28).[2]

---

[2] This citation is based on the ePub version of the book. Thus, page numbers may not align to those in the print edition.

However, after the end of the Cold War, scholars have noted that small states do not always strictly follow these two paths; instead, some adopt a third strategy known as hedging. Kuik (2021) who explored the concept "hedging" in the context of Southeast Asian states defines it as "... *insurance-seeking behavior under situations of high uncertainty and high stakes, where a rational state avoids taking sides and pursues opposite measures vis-à-vis competing powers to have a fallback position*" (Kuik, 2021, p. 300) Through avoiding commitment to a single alignment, this strategy allows a state to preserve a range of diplomatic and strategic options. According to the model he proposed, hedging is not a single strategy; rather it manifests in 5 distinct, yet complementary forms: Limited bandwagoning involves a small state selectively collaborating in specific foreign policy areas with a dominant state to maximize political benefits; Binding engagement refers to efforts by small states to institutionalize relationships with larger powers, through bilateral or multilateral agreements, to construct communication channels; Economic pragmatism reflects a strategic effort to maximize economic gains by engaging in trade and investment with larger states and to minimize economic risks of dependence by diversifying economic links; Dominance denial seeks to prevent any one great power from establishing overwhelming influence in the region by inviting other powers to play an active role in regional affairs; Indirect balancing involves strengthening military capabilities and engaging in military alignment with balancing powers to mitigate threats without explicitly targeting any single power (Kuik, 2016, p. 3).

In Armenia's case, true hedging proved difficult due to its deep entanglement with Russia, especially in the energy and security sectors. Economically, this dependency harmed Armenia's bilateral relations with other countries. For example, in 2005, when Armenia wanted to diversify its energy imports, the diameter of the pipeline to be built for gas imports from Iran was reduced from 56 inches to 28 inches at the request of Russia, as Gazprom de facto taking control of the majority share of the pipeline under 2006 arrangements between Russia and Armenia. The pretext for this was that any gas imported to Ukraine and Georgia through Armenia as a transit route was seen as reducing Russia's sphere of influence (Kaleji, 2024). Making a substantial shift away from Russia's dependency is challenging for Armenia's economy. Even after the deterioration in political relations between 2019 and 2021, approximately 70% of Armenia's petroleum oil and around 85% of its natural gas were imported from Russia, and the remaining 15% of natural gas comes from Iran (Nazaretyan, 2023). As indicated, this 15% coming from Iran is itself completely under the control of Gazprom Armenia, because in 2015 the government sold the remaining 41 km section (from Meghri to Karajan) of the pipeline to Gazprom, as it was unable to repay the loan it received from Russia in 2009 (Coyle, 2021, p. 94; Azatutyun 2015).

To repair and manage Armenia's gas supply system, in 1997, Gazprom and Armenia established a company called HayRusGazArd (also known as ArmRosGazProm). However, over the years, Gazprom's share in the company continued to increase, and in 2014, the Armenian government sold all of its shares to Gazprom to pay off its $300 million debt to it. The company was then renamed Gazprom Armenia, and as a result of this, Gazprom Armenia oversees the country's entire gas distribution network (Nazaretyan, 2023). Additionally, over 80% of Armenia's energy infrastructure is either directly or indirectly controlled by Russian entities. Although 30% of Armenia's annual energy production comes from the nuclear power plant industry, the Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant imports all its nuclear fuel from Russia. At the same time, Rosatom has full authority over the upgrading of this power plant and the extension of its lifespan until 2036 (Shahverdyan, 2023). In the railway sector, a similar pattern of Russian involvement is evident. In February 2008, Armenia signed a franchise agreement with Russian Railways. The agreement period is 30 years and can be extended by mutual agreement. As part of this deal, South Caucasus Railways, a subsidiary of Russian Railways, was established, which, with this concession agreement, fully operates and manages Armenia's railway system. (Soboliev, 2019).

Being the key destination for its exports and a major source of imports, Armenia's economy depends on Russia since its dependence. This dependency deepened in recent years as trade with Russia has increased significantly since 2022, largely due to Armenia serving as a sanctions circumvention hub. The trade turnover with Russia grew from $2.6 billion in 2021 to $7.3 billion in 2023. Armenia's exports to Russia tripled in 2022 and grew another 43% in 2023. Armenia imports goods such as telecommunications, cars, household electronics, and medical devices from the EU, Gulf, and Asia, then re-exports them to Russia, thus, Russia is the recipient of 91% of Armenia's total exports of electromechanical equipment. Notably, Armenia's gold exports surged to $2.5bn in early 2024, despite not producing gold in such quantities (Mammadov, 2024). Russia is the major market for Armenia's agricultural exports, often in volumes exceeding 95%. Armenia's aluminum industry, worth $160 million, is based on raw aluminum purchased from Russia, and the sector itself is managed by a single player, Armenal, which is also owned by the Russian giant Rusal (Nazaretyan, 2023). Additionally, Russia is Armenia's largest investor in FDI, accounting for almost 67% in the first 3 quarters of 2022, compared to the Russian share of just 8.3% in Azerbaijan's FDI in the same quarters (Nelson, 2023).

Security relations between the two countries were institutionalized through key treaties signed in the 1990s, which provided the basis for the presence of the Russian military in Armenia. The foundational August 21, 1992 agreement provided the legal basis for Russian

forces to operate in Armenia to secure the USSR's external borders. This was followed by the September 30 1992 agreement, which formalized the deployment of Russian FSB border guards along Armenia's borders with Turkey (330 km) and Iran (45 km). Its detachments were stationed in Gyumri, Armavir, Artashat, and Meghri, as well as a unit at Yerevan's Zvartnots Airport, totaling around 4,500 troops. In addition, the March 16, 1995 treaty among parties transformed Russia's remaining Soviet-era forces into the 102nd Military Base in Gyumri. This base initially hosted 3,000–5,000 troops and later expanded to include the 3624th Air Base at Erebuni Airport. Indeed, on August 20, 2010, Presidents Serzh Sargsyan and Dmitry Medvedev signed an agreement extending the treaty for 49 years. Thus, the base's jurisdiction was extended until 2044 (Nazaretyan, 2021). Considering these deep-rooted relations, it could be wrongly interpreted that the 1995 bilateral defense treaty between Russia and Armenia, which included a defense clause, is a guarantee for Armenia in Karabakh. However, according to Armenian National Security Advisor Gerard Libaridian, the treaty did not guarantee automatic support, and if one side was attacked, the other could choose whether to intervene and how to act. Moreover, during the negotiations leading up to the 2010 extension, reports indicated that Russian President Dmitry Medvedev had received a government "protocol" specifying that Russian forces would *"protect Armenia's security together with Armenian Army units"* which indicated that this treaty hadn't extend its security guarantees to Karabakh (Coyle, 2021, p. 49). Nonetheless, since the 2016 Four-Day War, it was clear that neither the CSTO commitments nor Russia's bilateral treaties with Armenia extended any real security guarantees to Karabakh.

In contrast to Armenia, Azerbaijan has actively pursued a multifaceted hedging strategy that leverages its geopolitical location, energy resources, and transport corridors to maximize its autonomy. Rather than fully aligning with any single power center, Azerbaijan has maintained more balanced relations with key players in the region. One key component of this strategy was its deepening partnership with Türkiye, aimed at counterbalancing Russian influence in the South Caucasus. In 2010, Türkiye and Azerbaijan signed the Agreement on Strategic Partnership and Mutual Support, which included a defense clause that obligates mutual military assistance in the event of a third-party attack. According to Article 2 of the agreement, if one party were subjected to armed aggression or military attack by a third state or group of states, the other party committed to providing mutual support, including the use of military capabilities and force, within the limits of its available means and resources. The form and scale of this assistance would be determined through immediate consultations between the parties (UN Library, 2020). This alignment between two countries gained further strategic weight after Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, which marked a shift in Moscow's regional

posture from being a regional hegemon and patron of frozen conflicts to becoming increasingly reliant on rising regional powers for economic and strategic access. Rather than focusing solely on conflict management, Moscow sought to embed itself in a multipolar regional order (Broers, 2023).

In this regard, Türkiye emerged as a critical gateway for Russia to the outside world. Russia-Türkiye trade turnover nearly doubled in 2022, reaching over $60 billion, making Türkiye Russia's second-largest trading partner after China. Crucially, Russian energy exports to Türkiye increased: natural gas from Russia covered almost 40% of Türkiye's needs, and oil and coal imports from Russia more than doubled. The TurkStream gas pipeline became the only direct gas route to Southeastern Europe after the sabotage of Nord Stream and Western sanctions. Moscow and Ankara also began working on a new Türkiye-centered gas hub project, which was proposed by Vladimir Putin at the Astana Summit in October 2022, to maintain Russia's influence over European energy markets (Coşkun et al., 2024). Türkiye has also served as a safe haven for Russian capital, companies, and sanctioned elites seeking to avoid Western restrictions. Energy Intelligence reports that Türkiye has been importing unusually large volumes of discounted Russian diesel for domestic consumption, while exporting its own domestically refined diesel to the EU since the latter banned Russia-produced refined products (Konarzewska, 2023).

In parallel, Azerbaijan's strategic importance also grew significantly for Russia. As a close regional ally, Azerbaijan became vital for Moscow's pivot toward alternative trade corridors. In particular, the International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC), initially agreed upon in 2000 by Russia, Iran, and India, gained renewed strategic importance following Russia's growing isolation from Western markets after the Ukraine war. The 7,200-kilometer corridor, which spans Central Asia, the Caspian Sea, Iran, and ultimately the Arabian Sea, offers an advantage by reducing freight transit times from 40–60 days to 25–30 days and cutting transportation costs by approximately 30% (Kasturi, 2022). Among its 3 main routes, the western branch passing through Azerbaijan emerged as the most promising and operationally viable. Azerbaijan and Iran had first formalized cooperation on the corridor in 2016. However, the imposition of U.S. sanctions on Iran in 2018 complicated financing efforts and resulted in Azerbaijan reconsidering its earlier commitment to provide a €500 million loan to Iran. Recognizing the urgency of developing the route after 2022, the Russian government itself later issued a €1.3 billion loan to Iran in 2023 (Smagin, 2023). Last year, during a meeting with President Vladimir Putin, President Ilham Aliyev stated that Azerbaijan allocated approximately $120 million toward the modernization of its railway infrastructure to meet the

increased demand for cargo transit (Aliyev, 2024). Because Russia is highly dependent on financing this route due to sanctions on Iran, Azerbaijan became an essential partner.

4.4. Armenia's Disillusionment with the CSTO after the Second Karabakh War

Since the outbreak of the conflict in 1992, Russia's policy in the conflict functioned as a form of pivotal deterrence, maintaining strategic ambiguity by giving both sides uncertainty about how it would respond to any escalation or changes in the status quo. Moscow kept its position deliberately vague, deterring full-scale war but encouraging limited actions, like how it let Azerbaijan manage to seize some territorial gains in the 2016 Four-day war (Broers, 2019, p. 232). Indeed, Russia's simultaneous arming of both Armenia and Azerbaijan at that time further complicated the situation and resulted in anti-Russian demonstrations in Armenia. While Azerbaijan deployed advanced Russian weaponry during the war, including TOS-1A thermobaric systems and Smerch rockets, to gain a tactical advantage, Armenia lacked equivalent capabilities at the outset of the fighting. As a result, after the war, Russia extended a $200 million loan to Armenia to purchase similar systems in order to restore military parity. (Daly, 2016). In addition to that, Russia approved an agreement to establish a joint Russo-Armenian military. The Armenia-Russian air-defense agreement, which was signed by the two countries in December 2015 also ratified by Armenia's parliament at that time.

Nevertheless, the situation started to change following the Velvet Revolution, as the previous governments of Serzh Sargsyan and Robert Kocharyan had maintained close ties with Moscow. During the 2018 events, Russia appeared to back Karen Karapetyan, the First Deputy Prime Minister and former Gazprom executive, who sought to become interim Prime Minister after Sargsyan's resignation. Reflecting this preference, Russian media criticized the protest movement led by Pashinyan (Sukiasyan, 2021).

After Pashinyan came to power, a wave of anti-corruption initiatives targeted several prominent pro-Russian businessmen and enterprises operating in Armenia. One of the early steps taken by the new administration was to cancel the planned transfer of the High Voltage Electric Networks of Armenia to the Russian-linked Tashir Group, headed by a diaspora Armenian entrepreneur. Shortly afterward, Armenian authorities showed little willingness to intervene when protesters disrupted the activities of GeoProMining, a major Russian mining corporation. Investigations were also launched into South Caucasus Railways, 100 % owned subsidiary of Russian Railways (Sukiasyan, 2021). The anti-corruption effort included investigations into Gazprom Armenia, a division of Russia's state-owned Gazprom. The business was accused of legal action after audits by the Armenian State Revenue Committee revealed financial irregularities and tax evasion. Russia responded to the situation by increasing

the cost of natural gas delivered to Armenia from $150 per thousand cubic meters to $165 per tcm (Coyle, 2021, p. 101). CSTO Secretary General Yuri Kacharatov and former prime minister Robert Kacaharyan were also arrested on charges of attempting to overthrow the government during the events of March 2008.

A significant illustration of these deteriorated relations also occurred in July 2018, when Russian troops based in Armenia held snap military drills near the Armenian village of Panik without notifying local authorities or civilians. A new tone in bilateral ties became apparent when Pashinyan publicly criticized Russia for the lack of communication (Ibid, p. 55). Tensions between two states were further inflamed when a Russian soldier stationed at the 102nd military base in Gyumri was accused of murdering an Armenian woman. This incident resulted in anti-Russian protests, especially since it wasn't the first time that crimes committed by Russian soldiers had led to local outrage (a particularly brutal 2015 case involved the murder of an entire Armenian family) (Mejlumyan, 2018).

The Armenian government also indicated a potential shift in its foreign policy when the U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton paid a visit to Armenia and announced that the United States would consider the sale of arms to Armenia. Bolton highlighted that such a sale would provide Armenia with greater flexibility in its security choices, reducing its dependence on a single major power. This statement triggered a swift reaction from Russia, which condemned the idea. In response, Pashinyan expressed openness to discussing the possibility of an arms deal with the U.S. (Coyle, 2021, p. 55).

In 2019 Armenia abstained from the so-called Lavrov plan, which was put forward by the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergey Lavrov. The plan envisaged the return of the regions around Karabakh to Azerbaijan, and the issues of the Kalbajar and Lachin corridor and the status of Karabakh to be resolved later. Also, the placement of Russia's peacekeeping contingency in Karabakh was included in the plan, which sidelined other international missions or those involving Turkey. However, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia declared the plan unacceptable for Armenia. The rejection was a clear indication of Armenia's desire to distance itself from Russia's control (Poghosyan, 2020).

Regardless of all this, it should be noted that Russia did not leave Armenia alone during and following the Second Karabakh war. And in fact, it increased its military presence in Armenia after the war, deploying additional border guards to Syunik Province (Tegh, Vorotan, Shurnukh, Agarak) and Nakhichevan border zones (Yeraskh), while maintaining its core bases in Gyumri and Yerevan (Nazaretyan, 2021). Additionally, as a result of the war, through signing a trilateral statement with the parties, Russia became a major power broker and reduced the OSCE Minsk group and Turkey's presence in peace processes. Following the Trilateral

Statement, Russia deployed 19,600 peacekeepers to Karabakh. These peacekeepers were repeatedly criticized by Azerbaijan for not fulfilling their duties properly, tolerating the presence of Armenian Armed Forces in Karabakh (Huseynov, 2021). That said, this stance of Russia began to shift with Armenia's attempts to align with the West. In July 2021, during Charles Michel's visit to Armenia, the EU provided Armenia with a 2.6 billion euro assistance package and emphasized the EU's desire to actively participate in peace negotiations, as well as the revival of the OSCE. There were also claims in the Russian political environment at this time that France and Armenia were holding secret talks about the possibility of deploying French forces in the border region, which was not welcomed by Russia (Huseynov, 2021).

With the start of the Russia-Ukraine war, escalations between Armenia and Azerbaijan further increased, and Azerbaijan intensified its criticism of Russia's peacekeeping mission for failing to fulfill its duties, particularly for allowing the Lachin corridor to be used for military purposes (Huseynov, 2022). As Russia became preoccupied with its war in Ukraine, Baku was able to increase its activities to test possible reactions from Russia, and on March 24, Azerbaijani forces entered the village of Farrukh. However, Russia's response was limited to calling for a retreat and claiming that Azerbaijan had entered a zone under Russian peacekeeping control (Huseynov, 2022).

While Russia was distracted, the mediation process between parties was hijacked by the European Union and for the first time in 2022, the leaders of the countries met in Brussels. The April 2022 Brussels meeting resulted in two important decisions. First, the establishment of a bilateral commission on border delimitation and demarcation, a topic that had also been discussed during the Sochi meeting in November 2021. At that time, Russia had emphasized the possibility of creating an international commission with its participation, but no tangible outcome was achieved. The second decision concerned the preparation of a peace treaty by the foreign ministers. These moves were considered by Russia as sidelining its role in the process (Huseynov, 2022). It should be noted that through Armenia, Russia attempted to create obstacles to Brussels' involvement in the peace process. After Pashinyan visited Russia in April, the Armenian side insisted on adding an article regarding the status of Karabakh to the proposals sent by Azerbaijan as the basis for peace negotiations (Huseynov, 2022).

Nevertheless, Armenia's stance changed following Russia and the CSTO's lack of response to Armenia's appeals regarding the events of September 12. During the CSTO Collective Security Council's annual meeting in Yerevan in November 2022, the organization reviewed the issue of joint assistance measures for the Republic of Armenia (CSTO, 2022). However, Armenia rejected the CSTO's proposals, arguing that they lacked a political

assessment of the situation, failed to address how Armenia's sovereignty would be restored, and didn't include Armenia's proposals (Jam News, 2022).

Therefore, in late 2022 in Prague, during the first European Political Community summit, both sides – Armenia and Azerbaijan – recognized each other's internationally recognized territory by reaffirming their commitment to the Alma-Ata Declaration and the UN Charter (Huseynov, 2022). The meeting was also followed by deployment of the European Union Monitoring Capacity to the Armenia border with Azerbaijan, the proposal came from the Armenian side, and Azerbaijan agreed to cooperate with it to the extent of its interests. The mission itself was civilian and was initially deployed in October 2022 with a 2-year mandate. The mission's main objective was to ensure stabilization at the border, facilitate the signing of a peace agreement by the end of 2022, and support the work of the established border commission to prevent future escalations. It consisted of 40 staff members, drawn from the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia. The mission came to an end on 19 December 2022; however, upon its end, the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Armenia invited the EU to deploy a civilian CSDP mission in Armenia (Krikorian, 2021). As a result, the EUMA (European Union Monitoring Mission in Armenia) was launched in January 2023 with a two-year mandate, and this time without the consent of Azerbaijan. The mission faced criticism from Russia. Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova stated that *"Everything is being done to squeeze Russia out of the region and weaken its historical role as the main guarantor of security."* (Teslova, 2023).

A day after the deployment of the EU mission, CSTO spokesperson Vladimir Zaynetdinov said that the organization was preparing to send its mission to Armenia. With the EU's deployment to the region, the Armenian side's criticism of Russia increased, and even Pashinyan said that Russia's presence in Armenia is a threat to our security. Moreover, due to the ongoing crisis around the Lachin road, the Armenian side stated that if Russian peacekeeping cannot resolve the issue, they should consider deploying a multinational mission to the region (Huseynov, 2023). As Armenia's recognition of Azerbaijan's internationally recognized territories led it to conclude that the issue of the status of Karabakh is no longer important for Armenia, but only the security of Karabakh Armenians is on the agenda. Russia, which was afraid of losing leverage against both sides by using the status issue, organized a trilateral meeting between the parties in Sochi on October 31, 2022. Putin also criticized Western mediation and stated that if Armenia gives up Karabakh, we will support the choice of the Armenian people (Huseynov, 2022).

The Pashinyan government began to look more favorably on Western mediation since blaming the failure in Karabakh on Russia's inability to fulfill its responsibilities helped the

government stay in power longer. At the same time, since coming to power, Pahinyan got the opportunity to genuinely pursue his multi-vector foreign policy. Taking advantage of Russia's engagement in Ukraine, Western actors advocated for a peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan. In response, the Pashinyan government began to shift its rhetoric on Karabakh. For the first time, in May 2023, at a trilateral meeting held under the auspices of the EU, both sides recognized each other's respective territorial integrity – 29,800 km² and 86,600 km² (European Council, 2023).

With all being said, Russia's passivity during Azerbaijan's military operations in 2023 can be interpreted as a reflection of its diminishing political will to protect a partner that has sought to reduce its dependence on Moscow. Although Moscow attempted to retain a foothold by introducing figures such as Ruben Vardanyan into the Karabakh leadership, Armenia's new government increasingly viewed the Karabakh issue and close ties with Russia as impediments to its sovereign and Western-oriented trajectory. This perception could also be seen in statements of Russian officials. For instance, after Armenia agreed to return four villages to Azerbaijan and initiated border demarcation, Russia began framing the situation as a betrayal by the Armenian government. Moscow portrayed Yerevan's willingness to move closer to the West and distance itself from Russia as the real reason for the loss of Karabakh. Russian officials, including President Putin and Foreign Minister Lavrov, publicly argued that Armenia had rejected Russian proposals to maintain the status quo, implying that the loss of Karabakh was ultimately the result of Armenia's own choices. While aiming to deflect blame from Moscow, framing the events like this was also a clear warning to other post-Soviet states about the dangers of abandoning Russia's patronage (Muradov, 2024). With Azerbaijan restoring its full sovereignty over Karabakh and the Armenian population leaving the region, Russia's peacekeeping mission lost its relevance and withdrew nearly a year before its mandate was due to expire.

The Armenian government saw the situation as a consequence of its one-sided reliance on Russia. As a result, Armenia started to take a balanced foreign policy course and diversify its security partnerships. One of the symbolic moves of this shift in its foreign policy was signing a defense cooperation agreement with France in October 2023, under which France committed to providing military equipment to help Armenia secure its borders (Jamnews, 2024). In addition, Armenia hosted joint military exercises with the United States, "Eagle Partner" in both September 2023 and July 2024. In July 2024, the European Union, for the first time under the European Peace Facility, granted Armenia €10 million in assistance. The primary objectives of this support package were to improve the logistical capacities of the

Armenian Armed Forces and to increase the interoperability of Armenian forces in preparation for potential participation in international missions (Council of European Union, 2024).

In line with these developments, the Armenian government refused to host the CSTO military exercises "Indestructible Brotherhood" in January 2023 (Al Jazeera, 2023), which have been held since 2012 to enhance the capabilities of peacekeeping forces. In March Armenian Foreign Ministry announced that it had rejected its quota for the post of CSTO Deputy Secretary-General (Mgdesyan, 2023). This was followed in September by the recall of Armenia's permanent representative to the CSTO without the appointment of a successor (Tass, 2023). Eventually, Armenia froze its participation in the CSTO in February 2024 and started to cease contributions to the organization's budget since May, 2024.

These actions did not go unnoticed by Moscow. In response to Armenia's participation in the joint U.S.-Armenia "Eagle Partner" military exercises, Russia summoned the Armenian ambassador (Anadolu Agency, 2023). Additionally, in November 2023, dozens of Armenian trucks were denied entry into Russia at the Upper Lars checkpoint under the pretext of phytosanitary inspections (News.am, 2023). Following the border clashes of September 2022, Armenian officials complained that Russia had failed to deliver the promised weapons worth $400 million signed between Armenia and Russia in 2021. Some reports suggest that Moscow withheld the arms deliveries because the payments made by Yerevan were used to cover Armenia's debt to Russia (Nersisyan & Melkonian, 2024). There are also claims that in 2023, Russia temporarily shut down the gas pipeline running from Georgia to Armenia as a show of leverage (de Wall, 2024).

Therefore, Armenia's deep economic and military dependence on Russia continues to limit its ability to fully exit Russia's sphere of influence. As of writing these sentences, for example, while Azerbaijan chose not to participate in the May 9 Victory Day celebrations in Russia, Pashinyan attended. Moreover, on May 21, for the first time since June 2022, Sergey Lavrov visited Armenia (Jam News, 2025), which indicates ongoing, albeit strained, diplomatic relations between two states.

CHAPTER 5: EMPIRICAL PATTERNS OF THE CSTO'S ENGAGEMENT

5.1. Kyrgyzstan 2010

Protests against the Bakiyev government in Kyrgyzstan started in April 2010, triggered by rising utility prices and widespread government corruption. Some Western analysts who expressed Russia''s displeasure because Kyrgyzstan did not close the US Manas air base claimed that these protests were supported by Russia. In fact, only a month before the coup, Russia imposed 100 percent export duty on the oil exports of Kyrgyzstan and announced that 1.7 billion dollars of the 2 billion dollars intended by Russia for the construction of the Kambarata-1 hydropower will not be allocated anymore (Górecki, 2010). In addition, on the eve of the April events, the Russian state media also increased their criticism of the Bakiyev administration (Bond & Koch, 2010, p. 541).

Following Bakiyev's ousting, ethnic riots erupted in Osh in June 2010 between Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities. Many Uzbeks, who felt discriminated against and politically marginalized under Bakiyev's rule, supported the new provisional government. Conversely, many ethnic Kyrgyz in the south remained loyal to the previous regime (Ibid). With the escalation of violence, the interim government appealed to Russia and requested the deployment of a peacekeeping contingent. However, Russia hesitated to react quickly and waited for the emergency CSTO meeting scheduled for June 14. At the meeting, CSTO agreed to send logistical, military and technical assistance rather than peacekeeping troops to support Kyrgyz forces. However, President Dmitry Medvedev later indicated that, if the violence continued, a summit of CSTO leaders might be held to reconsider the possibility of sending a stability contingent (Nichol, 2010, p. 1). Additionally, on June 18, 2010, Russian President Dmitri Medvedev announced that the interim government had withdrawn its request for the deployment of Russian peacekeepers, and the situation was "an internal matter" (Lenta.ru, 2010). Although the CSTO was the first organization to consider logistics and humanitarian aid, it refrained from any military deployment, because at that time, there was no legal basis for such an intervention in the CSTO. (Kropatcheva, 2016). Speaking at a briefing in Almaty on 23 April, CSTO Secretary General Nikolai Bordyuzha stressed that the situation in Kyrgyzstan was an internal matter and rejected CSTO military intervention unless it was politically justified and approved by the Security Council (CSTO, 2010).

However, the issue was not solely legal, there was also a lack of political consensus among the member states. Both Belarus and Uzbekistan, for instance, did not attend the relevant CSTO meeting. Belarus' absence was linked to its prior refusal to recognize the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which led Russia to withhold a previously agreed $500 million

stabilization loan and impose a ban on Belarusian imports. (Socor, 2009). Additionally, following Ukraine's agreement to extend Russia's Black Sea Fleet lease in Crimea in exchange for discounted gas, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko criticized Russia for maintaining military bases on Belarusian territory without offering any financial compensation (Makhovsky, 2010). Uzbekistan, for its part, opposed the use of CORF in domestic conflicts within member states. Its resistance was also related to ongoing tensions over regional hydropower projects, the Rogun Dam in Tajikistan and the Kambarata-1 Dam in Kyrgyzstan, both backed by Russian support (Kim, 2013).

Other analysts argued that the fundamental reason for the CSTO's inaction lay in Kyrgyzstan's limited geopolitical value given that it doesn't have any strategic assets, it lacks a direct border with Russia, and there was any major terrorist threat which could spill to Russia. As a result, both Moscow and Washington had "little at stake" in intervening (Matveeva, 2013, p. 486). However, it was also noted that if Russia had been politically inclined to intervene, it could have done so legally under the bilateral Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance signed with Kyrgyzstan on July 27, 2000, which provides a framework for military support to Kyrgyzstan outside CSTO mechanisms (Ibid).

Moreover, another key factor behind the CSTO's inaction was that the interim government in Kyrgyzstan appealed directly to Russia rather than to the CSTO, and legally this did not meet the threshold for a CSTO response (Nikitina, 2012, p. 50). Since the government was not legal and other member states were afraid of the domino effect of such revolutions in their own countries, they hesitated to act, concerned that this could set a precedent for CSTO intervention in similar cases. This position was further reinforced by the fact that, even before the appeal, the CSTO had already issued a statement about Kyrgyzstan at its informal summit and condemned the change of power as unconstitutional (Kucera, 2010).

Besides these, the 2010 Kyrgyz crisis exposed critical institutional and political limitations within the CSTO framework. Following the crisis, Russian policymakers initiated discussions on formalizing the conditions under which the CSTO could intervene in cases of internal unrest within member states. The issue was raised at the CSTO's informal summit in Astana in August 2010, where the organization discussed broadening its security agenda beyond external threats to include internal security challenges (Socor, 2011). Uzbekistan refused to participate, even declined to sign the agreement on CORF, arguing that it could legitimize foreign intervention in the internal affairs of member states, which exposed the lack of trust among member states toward Russia and deep-rooted weaknesses of Eurasian regional security structures, which is the prevailing norm of non-interference in the internal affairs.

5.2. Tajikistan 2021

In mid-2021, the security situation along the Tajik-Afghan border deteriorated significantly due to the rapid advance of Taliban forces in northern Afghanistan. This escalation led to approximately 1,500 Afghan government soldiers crossing into Tajikistan over a two-week period. The influx of Afghan troops and the Taliban's control over more than 70% of the Afghan-Tajik border increased Tajikistan's concerns about potential security challenges (Ibragimova, 2021).

In response to these developments, on July 7, 2021, the Tajik representative to the CSTO, Hasan Sultanov, appealed to the organization for "an adequate response within the framework of the CSTO," including measures to strengthen the capacity to protect the southern borders. He asked for the full implementation of a 2013 resolution that called for assistance in reinforcing the Tajik-Afghan border (RFE/RL, 2021). This aforementioned plan envisioned two stages: the first involved rearming Tajikistan's border forces, while the second, referred to as the "Target Interstate Program to Strengthen the Tajik-Afghan Border", aimed to establish the necessary border infrastructure. Nonetheless, eight years later, the CSTO had made no tangible progress beyond discussing a draft of the program (Baratov, 2021).

CSTO's response to Tajikistan's request remained limited and Secretary General Stanislav Zav clarified that deploying CSTO troops was out of the question, and only technical assistance and support could be considered (TASS, 2021). Indeed, the only concrete decisions CSTO made were to accelerate the adoption of the proposed program and the holding of a series of joint military exercises, "Search-2021," "Echelon-2021," "Interaction-2021," and "Cobalt-2021", near the Tajik-Afghan border in the following months (CSTO, 2021).

While no clear expert explanation or official statement could be found regarding why the CSTO did not promptly assist Tajikistan and delay the adoption of the targeted program, several factors may be the reason. Financial and logistical constraints could likely play a significant role, given the CSTO's nature as an asymmetrical alliance composed of relatively weak member states with limited resources. Another possible reason could be Russia's reluctance to support the full strengthening of Tajikistan's armed forces, as a more self-sufficient Tajik military could reduce Dushanbe's dependence on Moscow. Russia may have preferred to maintain its influence through the presence of its own forces. For instance, in 2015, when Tajik officials expressed their dissatisfaction with the implementation of the assistance program, Russian and CSTO officials stated that, in the event of further aggravation, Tajik authorities could request support of the Russian 201st Military Base deployed in Tajikistan or the deployment of the CORF. However, Tajikistan clarified that what they expected from their

allies was the assistance in strengthening Tajikistan's own military capabilities to independently secure its border (Kommerstant, 2015). Thus, this divergence clarifies that it was not in Russia's strategic interest to provide direct military capacity-building support, but rather to maintain influence through the option of increasing its own military presence.

Additionally, Russia chose to assist Tajikistan bilaterally, which further demonstrates that the main reason behind the delay in drafting the aforementioned program could be financial difficulties and the general lack of interest among CSTO member states to contribute from their already strained budgets. In May 2022, the Tajik parliament approved a grant agreement with Russia for the allocation of $1.1 million toward the construction of a border checkpoint on the Tajik-Afghan border (Daly, 2022). In fact, being a small country in Central Asia, Tajikistan has an established record of receiving Russian military aid. For instance, in 2015, Russia pledged to supply Tajikistan with approximately $1.2 billion worth of military hardware (The Moscow Times, 2015). Indeed, Tajikistan hosts the largest Russian military base abroad with around 7,000 troops.

The CSTO formally adopted the Targeted Interstate Program 11 years later on November 28, 2024. The implementation of the program is planned for 5 years and the program is structured in three stages. In the initial phase, set for 2025, the Tajik government, designated as the project's coordinating authority, is tasked with assessing the ability of CSTO member states to supply arms, military equipment, and border surveillance technologies. This phase also includes identifying potential funding sources and concluding procurement agreements. In the second stage, planned for 2026–2027, the delivery and deployment of the necessary weaponry and equipment to key border posts are scheduled to take place. Finally, the third stage, planned from 2027 to 2029, envisions the full operationalization of the program along the entirety of the Tajik-Afghan border (Fergana News, 2025).

5.3. Kazakhstan 2022

The crisis in Kazakhstan began on January 2, 2022, when protests broke out in the western town of Zhanaozen. The immediate trigger was the sudden doubling of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) prices, from 60 to 120 tenge per liter, following the implementation of the government's policy to fully liberalize the LPG market on January 1, 2022. Western Kazakhstan, unlike other regions, is particularly dependent on LPG, as it is widely used for both home heating and personal transportation. Within days, the protests spread to other cities, including Almaty and Nur-Sultan, and what started as an economic grievance quickly turned into broader political demands. (Libman & Davidzon 2023, p. 1302, Ryembetov 2022).

In response to the growing unrest, the government decided to reduce LPG prices and reintroduce a price cap specifically for the western province. However, the measure had little effect on calming the protests in Zhanaozen and Aktau (Al Jazeera, 2022). Amidst the ongoing riots, on January 5, President Tokayev announced a two-week state of emergency in Almaty and the Mangystau region (RIA Novosti, 2022). And shortly after declaring a state of emergency, Tokayev accepted the resignation of the Kazakh government and appointed Alikhan Smailov as acting prime minister (Walker, 2022). In addition, Karim Masimov, the head of the country's main security service and a close ally of Nazarbayev, has been fired and arrested on charges of treason. Masimov was largely seen as Nazarbayev's main overseer in the team of his appointed successor, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. The removal of Masimov and other Nazarbayev allies sought to eliminate Tokayev from the guardianship of the former president, his family, and associates (Lillis, 2022).

On January 5, 2022, Tokayev officially requested assistance from the CSTO. Justifying the appeal, he described the protests as an act of external aggression, labeling the situation a "terrorist threat." (Putz, 2022). The CSTO decision this time was notably swift. The CSTO Secretariat and Joint Staff promptly initiated the process of preparing legal decisions to authorize a peacekeeping operation. This process also involved coordinating the logistical and legal aspects of deploying the CSTO Collective Peacekeeping Forces to Kazakhstan. A draft decision titled *"On Measures to Normalize the Situation in the Republic of Kazakhstan"* was submitted to the CSC and subsequently adopted on 6th of January (CSTO, 2022). According to Stanislav Zas, the CSTO Secretary General at the time, the decision to deploy the Collective Peacekeeping Forces to Kazakhstan was based on Articles 2 and 4 of the Collective Security Treaty, the Agreement on Peacekeeping Activities, as well as the formal appeal from the Kazakhstan side (CSTO, 2022).

The peacekeeping contingent of CSTO was not tasked with participating in operational and combat activities (TASS, 2022), instead, they were assigned to secure critical infrastructure, including Almaty airport, key energy facilities, and the Baikonur Cosmodrome, which is operated by the Russian state corporation Roscosmos (Cooley, 2022). The peacekeeping contingent consisted of approximately 2,500 personnel. The majority of the forces, nearly 2,000 troops, came from Russia, backed up by around 150–200 servicemen from Belarus, 200 from Tajikistan, 150 from Kyrgyzstan, and approximately 100 from Armenia. The operation was placed under the command of Colonel-General Anatoly Sidorov, the Chief of the CSTO Joint Staff (Rybin, 2022).

The significance of political framing was central to the CSTO's decision to intervene in Kazakhstan. Unlike previous domestic crises in member states, during an extraordinary session

of the Collective Security Council, President Tokayev described the unrest as a deliberate attempt to undermine the constitutional order and framed it as an attempted coup d'état. His narrative also included claims of foreign involvement, which served as justification for the state's forceful suppression of the unrest (CSTO, 2022). Putin also reinforced this framing and declared that Kazakhstan had *"faced a terrorist aggression with the participation of destructive internal and external forces"* (TASS, 2022)

On January 13, 2022, Tokayev requested the withdrawal of the peacekeeping forces from the Chairman of the CSC. In response, the CSTO Secretariat prepared a draft decision outlining the procedure for the withdrawal of the CSTO Collective Peacekeeping Forces for the Collective Security Council (CSTO, 2022). The withdrawal of the troops was completed on January 19, 2022.

Following the public disorder Kazakhstan's Parliament approved the "On Amendments and Additions to Certain Constitutional Laws of the Republic of Kazakhstan" which removed the requirement to coordinate major state initiatives with the First President, thereby it allowed President Tokayev to further consolidate his power and reduce Nazarbayev's formal influence (Kazpravda, 2023). That being said, the request for CSTO intervention cannot be viewed in isolation from the internal power struggle happening in Kazakhstan. According to Baunov (2022), the arrests of key figures from the former Nazarbayev administration, including the head of Kazakhstan's National Security Committee, Karim Masimov signaled a shift in the country's internal power balance. Therefore, given Nazarbayev's traditionally close ties with Russia, Tokayev's decision to request CSTO intervention was likely intended to demonstrate continuity and loyalty in Kazakhstan's foreign policy to Moscow. Thus, it could be interpreted like CSTO' action was not more than symbolic in Kazakhstan.

Indeed, the Kazakhstan case was the first time the CSTO took action, and this shift in organization approach was likely influenced by a mix of strategic, political, and geopolitical factors. For example, Kazakhstan shares the world's longest land border with Russia, approximately 7,500 kilometers, and is home to a significant ethnic Russian population, particularly in the northern regions. While protecting this minority might appear a plausible justification for CSTO's intervention, CSTO forces were not deployed in those areas, which demonstrates that safeguarding ethnic Russians was not the primary motive (Libman & Davidzon, 2023, p. 1303).

Additionally, Russia has a significant stake in Kazakhstan's energy sector and relies on Kazakhstan as a key transit corridor. For example, Russia depends on routes such as the Tuymazy-Omsk-Novosibirsk-2 (TON-2) pipeline and the Atasu-Alashankou for its oil exports to China. Beyond transit routes, Russia is deeply integrated into Kazakhstan's energy and raw

materials sectors, it is a dominant player in Kazakhstan's uranium industry. In 2013, the Russian state corporation Rosatom acquired 100% of the Canadian company Uranium One, which held controlling stakes in several uranium mining enterprises in Kazakhstan. Uranium One now accounts for more than 20% of Kazakhstan's total uranium production. The development of the Karachaganak field, one of the country's key oil and gas infrastructure sites, is managed by the Karachaganak Petroleum Operating consortium, in which the Russian company Lukoil holds a 13.5% stake (Zhanbulatova et al., 2020, pp. 124-127). These economic and strategic entanglements could be the reason for Russia's interest in maintaining political stability in the country.

5.4. Analysis of Patterns of CSTO (In)action

In Kyrgyzstan (2010), the crisis began in the aftermath of regime change and ethnic clashes in the southern regions of the country. The nature of the threat was internal. There was no attempt by Russia or the CSTO to frame the situation as a common or regional security threat. Russia also opted for a cautious bilateral approach and was reluctant to legitimize the interim government at an early stage. As a result, the CSTO abstained from any military involvement, limiting its response to rhetorical statements and minimal technical support. However, this can't be interpreted as CSTO's failure, given that at that time CSTO and CORF did not have a mandate to respond to internal crises. Furthermore, there was no internal consensus among CSTO member states regarding intervention. As mentioned in the subchapter regarding the Kyrgyz case, Uzbekistan opposed Russian and CSTO involvement in what it saw as an internal matter, and Belarus even hosted the ousted president Bakiyev.

In the case of Tajikistan (2021), the request of Tajik government was the adoption of the interstate program and the modernization of its border forces, which was adopted in 2013, but had not yet progressed beyond the negotiations aimed at preparing a draft version. Given the financial difficulties of the CSTO member states, it was not expected that they would provide any financial assistance to strengthen the border forces of other member states, and for that reason, the program was adopted only in 2025. Therefore, Russia opted for bilateral ways outside the CSTO, and allocated $1.1 million bilaterally in 2022 towards the construction of a border checkpoint on the Tajik-Afghan border (Daly, 2022).

In Armenian cases (2021-2022), given that the hostilities largely occurred either within Azerbaijani territory or in areas with disputed status, this geographic ambiguity provided a legal pretext for the CSTO's inaction. Russia and other CSTO member states framed the clashes as border incidents, as Kazakhstan's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mukhtar Tileuberdi, stated, it is not possible to speak of any kind of border violation because

there has been no official border delimitation ([Report.az](#), 2022). Given this context, the CSTO's restrained reaction can be considered reasonable. Although the organization itself did not take action, Russia independently proposed the establishment of a border delimitation commission following the May 2021 clashes, in an attempt to de-escalate tensions. This demonstrates that, on one hand, the disputed status of the territories complicated collective defense obligations, on the other hand, because an assertive CSTO intervention would have risked damaging Russia's relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey, Russia preferred to address the issue through bilateral channels rather than through the CSTO framework which ultimately disappointed Armenia.

In contrast, Kazakhstan (2022) marked the only case of direct CSTO intervention. The crisis was internal unrest, but was framed quickly and decisively by both the Kazakh government and Russia as a foreign-sponsored threat to regime stability since Russia's and member states' interests aligned with the regime's survival. Additionally, intervention was largely symbolic as the CSTO deployed only 2500 troops with 80% of them coming from Russia and were tasked with protecting critical infrastructure which made CSTO response possible within hours.

In summary, not a single request for assistance submitted to the CSTO has met the threshold defined in Article 4 of the Collective Security Treaty, which applies to a traditional type of external military attack. Therefore, it would not be accurate to claim that the CSTO failed to respond to the support requests of its member states. If there is an external attack on the sovereignty of a member state, the CSTO will respond, however, it should be considered that such a CSTO intervention must be supported by Russia, because, as we discussed in the structural asymmetry chapter, the organization is significantly financially and militarily dependent on Russia. Therefore, given the lack of genuine contributions from member states to the CSTO, Russia tends to prefer bilateral engagement in response to member states' requests.

CONCLUSION

Following its independence, Armenia found itself in a state of geopolitical isolation, which resulted in Yerevan relying heavily on Russia for security and economy. As a result of its bandwagoning with Russia, Russia today controls Armenia's entire gas distribution network through Gazprom Armenia, which also owns the Iran-Armenia gas pipeline, and over 80% of Armenia's energy infrastructure is linked to Russian entities. Even Armenia's Metsamor nuclear power plant relies exclusively on Russian nuclear fuel and technical support. In addition, the country's railway system has been operated by a Russian Railways subsidiary since the 2008 franchise agreement. In security terms, Armenia hosts Russian troops under longstanding bilateral agreements: the 102nd Military Base in Gyumri, the 3624th airbase at Erebuni, and FSB border guards deployed along its frontiers with Turkey and Iran (since January 2025, with Armenian forces).

Therefore, this strategic dependence shaped Armenia's expectations of support from Russia, especially within the framework of the CSTO. To explain why those expectations were unmet, this thesis applied alliances' security dilemma framework, which focuses on the risks of abandonment and entrapment in alliances. Through this theory, the thesis argued that given Armenia's high dependence on Russia, Russia faced no real risk of abandonment and was able to avoid entrapment in the conflict against its interests.

While Armenia did not request assistance from the CSTO during the Second Karabakh War in 2020, its first formal appeal came in May 2021 with Yerevan invoking Article 2 of the CSTO charter, which focuses on the launch of collective consultation mechanisms. Nonetheless, despite growing disillusionment with the CSTO's non-compliance with its request, Armenia continued to actively participate in the organization. For instance, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan chaired the Collective Security Council in 2022, and Armenian troops took part in the CSTO mission deployed to Kazakhstan. However, the dynamics began to shift in 2022, as the European Union increasingly became involved in regional mediation, while Russia was distracted by its war in Ukraine. As a result of its second appeal to the CSTO regarding the September 2022 border clashes with Azerbaijan, the CSTO offered to send a monitoring mission and military assistance in November; however, Yerevan rejected this offer claiming that the CSTO's proposed support did not offer any clear path for restoring Armenia's territorial integrity and failed to condemn Azerbaijan's actions. Instead, Pashinyan's government opted to welcome the EU civilian mission. This response indicates that Yerevan, disappointed by the level of support received from Russia, saw an opportunity to reduce its dependence on Moscow and started security reorientation.

Although the primary reason for the CSTO's inaction during the Second Karabakh War

and subsequent events was its lack of a clear legal mandate, additional insights emerged in this study by assessing the CSTO through the concept of institutionalization and its 3 core dimensions (Haftendorn et al., 1999). From this perspective, it became evident that the CSTO remains an under-institutionalized entity. One of the clearest indicators of this is the existence of three distinct force structures within the organization, namely the Russia–Central Asia, Russia–Belarus, and Russia–Armenia axes. Additionally, addressing the research question through the core premises of RSCT, the thesis demonstrated that the CSTO includes member states representing 3 distinct regional security complexes that lack cohesion and a shared perception of threats. RSCT also helps us understand that, due to the regional complexity surrounding the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, Moscow was obliged to balance its geopolitical interests among multiple actors rather than unconditionally prioritizing the alleged security claims of member states, especially in cases, which do not clearly fall within the legal scope of the CSTO's mandate. Therefore, beyond the absence of a legal mandate, the thesis revealed that the CSTO's institutional weaknesses (lack of institutional cohesion among member states, ineffective enforcement mechanisms, as well as an imbalance in member states' capabilities) and the complex interplay of regional power dynamics also limited its response to Armenia's requests.

One of the main arguments of this thesis is that the CSTO's ineffectiveness should not be attributed solely to its function as a tool of Russian foreign policy. More broadly, it is because of the weakness of member states' economies and militaries and the lack of mutual trust among them, which leaves their participation largely symbolic and rooted in demonstrating loyalty to Russia. To address this, Stephen David's (1991, as cited in Miller, pp. 28-29, see footnote 2) alignment theory, specifically the concept of omnibalancing, is useful, which provides insight into why member states continue to align with the CSTO. Omnibalancing theory posits that states located in the Global South prioritize threats over power, with domestic threats often outweighing external ones. While external threats remain relevant, it is the interplay between systemic and domestic threats that shapes alignment behavior. The most powerful determinant of alignment in the developing world is the rational calculation by leaders of which external power is most likely to help them maintain domestic control. Leaders may choose foreign alignments based on which actor is most likely to keep them in power, even if that actor is itself a potential external threat. As David notes, leaders may *"protect themselves at the expense of promoting the long-term security of the state and the general welfare of its inhabitants"* (Ibid, p.29, see footnote 2). Membership in the CSTO provides these states with two key benefits: protection against internal threats and economic and military support from Russia. In exchange,

what these states do within the CSTO is to offer political loyalty and geopolitical alignment to Moscow.

To sum up, CSTO is what its member states make of it. What holds these countries together is not a genuine commitment to collective security, but rather the support they receive from Russia. Most of them, given their geographic position and lack of strong alternatives, are left with little choice but to align with Moscow. While Russia expected some form of burden-sharing within the CSTO, this has not happened in practice.

While this thesis provides a focused investigation into the CSTO's inaction during the Second Karabakh War, several limitations constrain its scope. First, the study centers on a single case, which limits its ability to make generalizability to future CSTO cases, as the case of Armenia was quite specific, given that the territories in question, May 2021 and September 2022, were disputed territories, and since there was no border delimitation. Second, the research heavily relies on publicly available sources and official narratives, and despite being the official platform, the CSTO's website itself lacks comprehensive documentation of its decisions. This reflects the closed decision-making structure, which restricts researchers from gaining a full picture of how decisions are negotiated within the alliance. Third, the study is focused on Russia as the dominant actor within CSTO, but other member states' preferences weren't explored. A more balanced analysis would require considering how the remaining members of the organization interpreted the situation.

REFERENCES

English:

1.   Agreement on the Establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent. (1991, December). Internet-portal of CIS. Retrieved from https://e-cis.info/page/3373/79405/

2.   Al Jazeera. (2022, January 5). *Emergency declared in Kazakhstan's Almaty, Mangistau amid unrest*. Al Jazeera. Retrieved from https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/5/emergency-declared-in-kazakhstans-almaty-mangistau-amid-unrest

3.   Al Jazeera. (2023, January 10). *Armenia cancels Russian-led military drills amid conflict*. Retrieved from https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/1/10/armenia-cancels-russian-led-military-drills-amid-conflict

4.   Aliyev, N. (2024, September 11). *The International North–South Transport Corridor: Russia's geoeconomic and geopolitical interests*. Baku Research Institute. Retrieved from https://bakuresearchinstitute.org/en/the-international-northsouth-transport-corridor-russias-geoeconomic-and-geopolitical-interests/

5.   Allison, R. (2004). Regionalism, regional structures and security management in Central Asia. *International affairs, 80*(3), 463-483. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2346.2004.00393.x

6.   Allison, R. (2008). Virtual regionalism, regional structures and regime security in Central Asia. *Central Asian Survey, 27*(2), 185-202. https://doi.org/10.1080/02634930802355121

7.   Anadolu Agency. (2023, September 8). Russia summons Armenia's ambassador to protest Yerevan's 'unfriendly' steps. Retrieved from https://www.aa.com.tr/en/world/russia-summons-armenias-ambassador-to-protest-yerevans-unfriendly-steps/2986973

8.   Anadolu Agency. (2024, April 17). Russian peacekeepers withdraw completely from Karabakh: Azerbaijan. Retrieved from https://www.aa.com.tr/en/world/russian-peacekeepers-withdraw-completely-from-karabakh-azerbaijan/3247852

9.   Aris, S. (2014). Collective security treaty organization. In *Handbook of governance and security* (pp. 554-570). Edward Elgar Publishing. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781781953174.00042

10.   Aris, S., & Boguslavska, K. (2019). The finances of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO). In *The Finances of Regional Organisations in the Global South*

(pp. 221-236). Routledge.
https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780429055874-15/finances-collective-security-treaty-organisation-csto-stephen-aris-kateryna-boguslavska

11.   Armenian Weekly. (2020, April 23). Lavrov calls for 'liberating' lands, Yerevan says 'no concessions'. The Armenian Weekly. Retrieved from https://armenianweekly.com/2020/04/23/lavrov-calls-for-liberating-lands-yerevan-says-no-concessions/

12.   Armenpress. (2021, July 3). *CSTO will always follow the situation in Armenia's south, Secretary General says*. Retrieved from https://armenpress.am/en/article/1057315

13.   Azatutyun. (2015, June 3). *Armenia to sell remaining section of Iran gas pipeline to Gazprom*. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. Retrieved from https://www.azatutyun.am/a/27052147.html

14.   Baratov, S. (2021, July 19). *A fateful moment for the CSTO on the Afghan border*. The Diplomat. Retrieved from https://thediplomat.com/2021/07/a-fateful-moment-for-the-csto-on-the-afghan-border/

15.   Baunov, A. (2022, January 11). *Will the crisis in Kazakhstan signal change in its foreign policy?* Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Retrieved from https://carnegieendowment.org/posts/2022/01/will-the-crisis-in-kazakhstan-signal-change-in-its-foreign-policy?lang=en

16.   BBC News Russian. (2021, May 18). *Что и почему происходит на границе Азербайджана и Армении?* Retrieved from   https://www.bbc.com/russian/news-57150521

17.   Bell, S. (2002). Institutionalism. (pp. 363-380).

18.   Bond, A. R., & Koch, N. R. (2010). Interethnic tensions in Kyrgyzstan: a political geographic perspective. Eurasian Geography and Economics, 51(4), 531-562. https://doi.org/10.2747/1539-7216.51.4.531

19.   Broers, L. (2019). Armenia and Azerbaijan: anatomy of a rivalry. Edinburgh University Press.

20.   Broers, L. (2023, September 29). *Russia concedes Karabakh for stake in new regional order*. Chatham House. Retrieved from https://www.chathamhouse.org/2023/09/russia-concedes-karabakh-stake-new-regional-order

21.   Buranelli, F. C. (2022). The CSTO intervention in Kazakhstan: implication for regional and world order. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/76976872/The_CSTO_Intervention_in_Kazakhstan_Implications_for_Regional_and_World_Order

22.   Buzan, B., & Waever, O. (2003). *Regions and powers: The structure of international security* (Vol. 91). Cambridge University Press.

23.   CSTO. (n.d.). *Historical background*. Collective Security Treaty Organization. Retrieved from https://jscsto.odkb-csto.org/en/istoricheskaya-spravka/

24.   Collective Security Treaty Organization. (n.d.). *Authorized organs*. Retrieved from https://en.odkb-csto.org/authorized_organs/parliamentary_assembly/

25.   Collective Security Treaty Organization. (n.d.). *Collective Rapid Reaction Forces of the CSTO*. Retrieved from https://jscsto.odkb-csto.org/en/voennaya-sostavlyauschaya-odkb/ksorodkb.php

26.   Collective Security Treaty Organization. (n.d.). *Peacekeeping Forces of the CSTO*. Retrieved from https://jscsto.odkb-csto.org/en/voennaya-sostavlyauschaya-odkb/msodkb.php

27.   CSTO (2002). *Charter of the CSTO*. Retrieved from https://en.odkb-csto.org/documents/documents/ustav_organizatsii_dogovora_o_kollektivnoy_bezopasnosti_/#loaded

28.   CSTO. (2000). *Agreement on the basic principles of military-technical cooperation*. Retrieved from https://mkves.odkb-csto.org/en/news/regulations/soglashenie_ob_osnovnyh_principah_voenno-tehnicheskogo_sotrudnichestva_11/#loaded

29.   Collins, K. (2009). Economic and security regionalism among patrimonial authoritarian regimes: The case of Central Asia. *Europe-Asia Studies, 61*(2), 249-281. https://doi.org/10.1080/09668130802630854

30.   Cooley, A. A. (2022, January 9). *What is the CSTO? Kazakhstan called for assistance. Why did Russia dispatch troops so quickly?* The Washington Post. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/01/09/kazakhstan-called-assistance-why-did-russia-dispatch-troops-so-quickly/

31.   Coppieters, B. (2003). An EU Special Representative to a new periphery. The South Caucasus: A Challenge for the EU,"(Institute for Security Studies.

32.   Coşkun, A., Gabuev, A., Pierini, M., Siccardi, F., & Umarov, T. (2024, October 15). *Understanding Türkiye's entanglement with Russia*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Retrieved from https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/10/understanding-turkiyes-entanglement-with-russia?lang=en

33.   Council of the European Union. (2024, July 22). *European Peace Facility: Council adopts the first ever assistance measure in support of the Armenian Armed Forces*.

Retrieved from https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/07/22/european-peace-facility-council-adopts-the-first-ever-assistance-measure-in-support-of-the-armenian-armed-forces/https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/10/understanding-turkiyes-entanglement-with-russia?lang=en

34. Coyle, J. J. (2021). Russia's Interventions in Ethnic Conflicts. Springer International Publishing.

35. Daly, J. C. K. (2016, April 12). Russia proclaims 'parity' in arms sales to Armenia and Azerbaijan. *The Jamestown Foundation*. Retrieved from https://jamestown.org/program/russia-proclaims-parity-in-arms-sales-to-armenia-and-azerbaijan/

36. Daly, J. C. K. (2022, June 22). *Russia, China and the US assist Tajikistan in strengthening its troubled border with Afghanistan*. The Jamestown Foundation. Retrieved from https://jamestown.org/program/russia-china-and-the-us-assist-tajikistan-in-strengthening-its-troubled-border-with-afghanistan/

37. Davidzon, I. (2021). Regional security governance in post-Soviet Eurasia: the history and effectiveness of the collective security treaty organization. Springer Nature.

38. de Waal, T. (2024, July 11). *Armenia navigates a path away from Russia*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Retrieved from https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/07/armenia-navigates-a-path-away-from-russia

39. Douhan, A. F., & Rusakovich, A. V. (2016). Collective Security Treaty Organization and Contingency Planning after 2014. Geneva/Minsk: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces.

40. Dzyubenko, O. (2014, June 3). U.S. vacates base in Central Asia as Russia's clout rises. *Reuters*. Retrieved from https://www.reuters.com/article/2014/06/03/us-kyrgyzstan-usa-manas-idUSKBN0EE1LH20140603/

41. Engvall, J. (2023, November 27). *Russia's menu of manipulation in Kyrgyzstan*. Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst. Retrieved from https://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/feature-articles/item/13776-russia%E2%80%99s-menu-of-manipulation-in-kyrgyzstan.html

42. European Council. (2023, May 14). *Press remarks by President Charles Michel following the trilateral meeting with President Aliyev of Azerbaijan and Prime Minister Pashinyan of Armenia*. Retrieved from https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/05/14/press-remarks-by-

president-charles-michel-following-the-trilateral-meeting-with-president-aliyev-of-azerbaijan-and-prime-minister-pashinyan-of-armenia/

43. Eurasianet. (2002, December 6). *Russia to establish an air base in Kyrgyzstan, deals blow to US strategic interests in Central Asia*. Retrieved from https://eurasianet.org/russia-to-establish-air-base-in-kyrgyzstan-deals-blow-to-us-strategic-interests-in-central-asia

44. Fergana News. (2025, April 14). *CSTO Secretary General discusses reinforcing Tajik-Afghan border with Tajik Defense Ministry*. Retrieved from https://en.fergana.news/news/137466/

45. George, A. L., & Bennett, A. (2005). *Case studies and theory development in the social sciences*. mit Press.

46. Gleason, G., & Dunay, P. (2022, February 8). CSTO deployment in Kazakhstan: Strategic shift or political consolidation? *The Diplomat*. Retrieved from https://thediplomat.com/2022/02/csto-deployment-in-kazakhstan-strategic-shift-or-political-consolidation/

47. Global Firepower. (2025, January 9). *2025 Tajikistan military strength*. Retrieved from https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.php?country_id=tajikistan

48. Goldsmith, J. L., & Posner, E. A. (2005). *The limits of international law*. Oxford University Press.

49. Górecki, W. (2010, July 27). Russia's position on the events in Kyrgyzstan (April–June 2010). OSW Commentary. OSW Centre for Eastern Studies. Retrieved from https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-commentary/2010-07-27/russias-position-events-kyrgyzstan-april-june-2010

50. Guliyev, F., & Gawrich, A. (2023). NATO vs. the CSTO: security threat perceptions and responses to secessionist conflicts in Eurasia. In *Global Governance and Interaction between International Institutions* (pp. 137-158). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.1080/14631377.2020.1800316

51. Gusseinov, E., & Allayarov, S. (2025, January 15). *Beyond Western narratives: Unpacking Russia's strategic role in Central Asia*. Retrieved from https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/beyond-western-narratives-unpacking-russias-strategic-role-in-central-asia/

52. Huseynov, V. (2020, April 6). *New hope for a breakthrough in the Nagorno-Karabakh deadlock?* The Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst. Retrieved from

https://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/13611-new-hope-for-a-breakthrough-in-the-nagorno-karabakh-deadlock?.html.=

53.   Huseynov, V. (2021) *Armenian-Azerbaijani post-war peace process on hold ahead of Armenia's snap parliamentary elections*, The Jamestown Foundation. Retrieved from https://jamestown.org/program/armenia-azerbaijan-post-war-peace-process-is-on-hold-before-the-formers-snap-parliamentary-elections/

54.   Huseynov, V. (2021). *Azerbaijan increasingly critical of Russia's peacekeeping mission in Karabakh*. Eurasia Daily Monitor, 18(144). The Jamestown Foundation. Retrieved from https://jamestown.org/program/azerbaijan-increasingly-critical-of-russias-peacekeeping-mission-in-karabakh/

55.   Huseynov, V. (2021). *Azerbaijan's president visits Moscow amidst uncertainties in post-war peace process with Armenia*. Eurasia Daily Monitor, 18(119). The Jamestown Foundation. Retrieved from https://jamestown.org/program/azerbaijans-president-visits-moscow-amidst-uncertainties-in-post-war-peace-process-with-armenia/

56.   Huseynov, V. (2022). In Brussels, Armenia and Azerbaijan make progress in peace talks. Eurasia Daily Monitor, 19(51). The Jamestown Foundation. Retrieved from https://jamestown.org/program/in-brussels-armenia-and-azerbaijan-make-progress-in-peace-talks/

57.   Huseynov, V. (2022). In Prague, Armenia and Azerbaijan make a critical move toward peace. The Jamestown Foundation. Retrieved from https://jamestown.org/program/in-prague-armenia-and-azerbaijan-make-a-critical-move-toward-peace/

58.   Huseynov, V. (2022). Post-war status quo in South Caucasus trembles while Russia fights on in Ukraine. Eurasia Daily Monitor, 19(36). The Jamestown Foundation. Retrieved from https://jamestown.org/program/post-war-status-quo-in-south-caucasus-trembles-while-russia-fights-on-in-ukraine/

59.   Huseynov, V. (2022). Russia accuses West of trying to hijack Armenian-Azerbaijani peace process. Eurasia Daily Monitor, 19(73). The Jamestown Foundation. Retrieved from https://jamestown.org/program/russia-accuses-west-of-trying-to-hijack-armenian-azerbaijani-peace-process/

60.   Huseynov, V. (2022). Tensions escalate in Karabakh as Azerbaijan demands withdrawal of Armenian armed groups. Eurasia Daily Monitor, 19(43). The Jamestown Foundation. Retrieved from https://jamestown.org/program/tensions-escalate-in-karabakh-as-azerbaijan-demands-withdrawal-of-armenian-armed-groups/

61.   Huseynov, V. (2022). *The Sochi summit raised more questions than answers*. The Jamestown Foundation. Retrieved from https://jamestown.org/program/the-sochi-summit-raised-more-questions-than-answers/

62.   Huseynov, V. (2023). *Yerevan and Karabakh separatists divided over Russia's regional security role*. The Jamestown Foundation. Retrieved from https://jamestown.org/program/yerevan-and-karabakh-separatists-divided-over-russias-regional-security-role/

63.   Jam News. (2022, November 24). *CSTO fiasco – military bloc decided not to assist Armenia*. Retrieved from https://jam-news.net/csto-fiasco-military-bloc-decided-not-to-assist-armenia/

64.   Jam News. (2024, Dec 12). *Armenia and France set to deepen military cooperation in 2025*. Retrieved from https://jam-news.net/armenia-and-france-set-to-deepen-military-cooperation-in-2025/

65.   Jam News. (2025, May 21). *Lavrov's visit to Yerevan and the unconventional welcome – details*. Retrieved from https://jam-news.net/lavrovs-visit-to-yerevan-and-the-unconventional-welcome-details/

66.   Jardine, B., & Lemon, E. (2020, May 27). *In Russia's shadow: China's rising security presence in Central Asia*. Kennan Institute, Wilson Center. Retrieved from https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/kennan-cable-no-52-russias-shadow-chinas-rising-security-presence-central-asia

67.   Johnson, R. B. (1997). Examining the validity structure of qualitative research. *Education*, *118*(2).

68.   Kacowicz, A. M., & Press-Barnathan, G. (2016). Regional security governance. The Oxford handbook of comparative regionalism, 297-322.

69.   Kaleji, V. (2024, November 20). Iran's gas export to Armenia: From energy imbalance in Iran to Russia's monopoly in the Armenian gas market. The Jamestown Foundation. Retrieved from https://jamestown.org/program/expanding-iran-armenia-energy-ties-combat-yerevans-reliance-on-russian-oil/

70.   Karimov, N. (2021, January 11). Effectiveness of the CSTO in the context of the changing regional security system. *CABAR.asia*. Retrieved from https://cabar.asia/en/effectiveness-of-the-csto-in-the-context-of-the-changing-regional-security-system

71.   Kasturi, C. S. (2022, July 27). Is the INSTC Russia's new economic escape route? *Al Jazeera*. Retrieved from https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2022/7/27/russias-new-economic-escape-route

72.   Kaszuba, M. (2019). The collective security treaty organization (CSTO) in the foreign policy of the Russian Federation. *The Copernicus Journal of Political Studies, (1)*. http://dx.doi.org/10.12775/CJPS.2019.008

73.   Keohane, R. O. (1988). International institutions: Two approaches. In *International organization* (pp. 171-188). Routledge.

74.   Keohane, R. O. (1990). Multilateralism: An agenda for research. *International journal, 45*(4), 731-764.

75.   Kim, A. (2013, July 19). *Water in Central Asia: Divides or Unites?* The Jamestown Foundation. Retrieved from https://jamestown.org/program/water-in-central-asia-divides-or-unites/

76.   Kirchner, E. J., & Sperling, J. (2006). Global security governance. Routledge.

77.   Klein, M. (2019). Russia's military policy in the post-Soviet space: Aims, instruments and perspectives (No. 1/2019). SWP Research Paper. DOI:10.18449/2019RP01

78.   Konarzewska, N. (2023, June 26). *Turkey will not give up on its lucrative trade with Russia*. Turkey Analyst. Retrieved from https://www.turkeyanalyst.org/publications/turkey-analyst-articles/item/709-turkey-will-not-give-up-on-its-lucrative-trade-with-russia.html

79.   Koremenos, B., Lipson, C., & Snidal, D. (2001). The rational design of international institutions. *International organization, 55*(4), 761-799. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3078615

80.   Krikorian, O. J. (2024, March 11). *European Mission in Armenia completes its first year amid regional tensions*. The Jamestown Foundation. Retrieved from https://jamestown.org/program/european-mission-in-armenia-completes-its-first-year-amid-regional-tensions/

81.   Krivosheev, K. (2021, July 8). *Does the Collective Security Treaty Organization have a future?* Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Retrieved from https://carnegieendowment.org/posts/2021/06/does-the-collective-security-treaty-organization-have-a-future?lang=en

82.   Kropatcheva, E. (2016). Russia and the Collective Security Treaty Organisation: Multilateral policy or unilateral ambitions? *Europe-Asia Studies, 68*(9), 1526–1552. https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2016.1238878

83.   Kucera, J. (2010, May 11). *CSTO: Kyrgyzstan events 'unconstitutional'*. Eurasianet. Retrieved from: https://eurasianet.org/csto-kyrgyzstan-events-unconstitutional

84. Kucera, J. (2019, July 25). Armenia and Karabakh announce construction of third connecting highway. Retrieved from https://eurasianet.org/armenia-and-karabakh-announce-construction-of-third-connecting-highway

85. Kuik, C. C. (2016). How do weaker states hedge? Unpacking ASEAN states' alignment behavior towards China. Journal of Contemporary China, 25(100), 500-514. https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2015.1132714

86. Kuik, C. C. (2021). Getting hedging right: A small-state perspective. China International Strategy Review, 3(2), 300-315 https://doi.org/10.1007/s42533-021-00089-5

87. Lenz, T., & Marks, G. (2016). Regional Institutional Design. In T. Börzel & T. Risse (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of comparative regionalism* (pp. 513–537). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199682300.013.23

88. Libman, A., & Davidzon, I. (2023). Military intervention as a spectacle? Authoritarian regionalism and protests in Kazakhstan. *International Affairs, 99*(3), 1293-1312. https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiad093

89. Libman, A., & Obydenkova, A. V. (2018). Understanding Authoritarian Regionalism. *Journal of Democracy, 29*(4), 151-165. DOI: 10.1353/jod.2018.0070

90. Lillis, J. (2022, January 8). *Kazakhstan: Ex-security services chief and Nazarbayev ally arrested*. Eurasianet. Retrieved from https://eurasianet.org/kazakhstan-ex-security-services-chief-and-nazarbayev-ally-arrested

91. Makhovsky, A. (2010, April 25). *Belarus leader raps Russia, may snub security summit*. Reuters. Retrieved from https://www.reuters.com/article/world/belarus-leader-raps-russia-may-snub-security-summit-idUSTRE63O0PT/

92. Mammadov, S. (2024, September 19). *COMMENT: How Armenia helps Russia bypass Western sanctions*. bne IntelliNews. Retrieved from https://www.intellinews.com/comment-how-armenia-helps-russia-bypass-western-sanctions-343999/

93. Martin, L. (1993). The rational state choice of multilateralism. In J. G. Ruggie (Ed.), *Multilateralism matters. The theory and praxis of an institutional form* (91–121). Columbia University Press.

94. Matveeva, A. (2013). Russia's changing security role in Central Asia. European security, 22(4), 478-499. https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2013.775121

95. Mejlumyan, A. (2018, December 14). *Russian soldier accused of murdering Armenian woman*. Eurasianet. Retrieved from: https://eurasianet.org/russian-soldier-accused-of-murdering-armenian-woman

96.   Mejlumyan, A. (2022, September 15). *For Armenians, CSTO missing in action*. Eurasianet. Retrieved from https://eurasianet.org/for-armenians-csto-missing-in-action

97.   Mghdesyan, A. (2016, October 19). *CSTO summit in Yerevan: Disparate interests and Armenia's mistakes*. EADaily. Retrieved from https://eadaily.com/en/news/2016/10/19/csto-summit-in-yerevan-disparate-interests-and-armenias-mistakes

98.   Mgdesyan, A. (2023, March 14). *Armenia further downgrades participation in CSTO*. Eurasianet. Retrieved from https://eurasianet.org/armenia-further-downgrades-participation-in-csto

99.   Migranyan, A. (2025, March 6). *Neighbourhood Belt: New architecture of foreign trade and financial ties between Russia and Central Asia*. Valdai Club. Retrieved from https://valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/neighbourhood-belt-new-architecture/

100.   Miller, E. A. (2017). To balance or not to balance: alignment theory and the Commonwealth of Independent States. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315236049

101.   Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan. (2020, September 27). *Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan*. Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the UN. Retrieved from https://un.mfa.gov.az/en/news/azerbaycan-respublikasinin-xarici-isler-nazirliyinin-beyanati

102.   Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan. (2022, September 12). Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan (No. 392/22). Retrieved from https://www.mfa.gov.az/en/news/no39222

103.   Morrow, J. D. (1991). Alliances and asymmetry: An alternative to the capability aggregation model of alliances. *American journal of political science*, 904-933. https://doi.org/10.2307/2111499

104.   Morrow, J. D. (2000). Alliances: Why write them down?. *Annual review of political science, 3*(1), 63-83. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.3.1.63

105.   Mozaffari, M. (1997). The CIS'Southern Belt: A New Security System. In *Security Politics in the Commonwealth of Independent States: The Southern Belt* (pp. 3-34). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

106.   Muradov, M. (2024, April 25). *Why did Russian peacekeepers leave?* Topchubashov Center. Retrieved from https://top-center.org/en/analytics/3643/why-did-russian-peacekeepers-leave

107.   Nazaretyan, H. (2021, March 4). *Russia's Increasing Military Presence in Armenia*. EVN Report. Retrieved from https://evnreport.com/politics/russia-s-increasing-military-presence-in-armenia/

108. Nazaretyan, H. (2023, July 7). *Armenia's economic dependence on Russia: How deep does it go?* EVN Report. Retrieved from https://evnreport.com/economy/armenias-economic-dependence-on-russia-how-deep-does-it-go/

109. Nelson, H. (2023, April 18). *2022 FDI in the Caspian region*. Caspian Policy Center. Retrieved from https://caspianpolicy.org/research/economy/2022-fdi-in-the-caspian-region

110. Nersisyan, L., & Melkonian, S. (2024, November 12). *Escaping Russia's backyard: Armenia's strategic defense shift*. Applied Policy Research Institute of Armenia. Retrieved from https://apri.institute/escaping-russias-backyard-armenias-strategic-defense-shift/

111. NEWS.am. (2024, July 11). *Over 2,000 trucks stranded at Upper Lars, high alert regime established*. Retrieved from https://news.am/eng/news/833637.html

112. Nichol, J. (2010, June). The April 2010 coup in Kyrgyzstan and its aftermath: context and implications for US interests.

113. Nikitina, Y. (2012). The Collective Security Treaty Organization Through the Looking Glass. *Problems of Post-Communism, 59*(3), 41-52. https://doi.org/10.2753/PPC1075-8216590304

114. Nikitina, Y. (2013). Security cooperation in the post-Soviet area within the Collective Security Treaty Organization. *ISPI Analysis, 152,* 1-5.

115. Obydenkova, A. (2011). Comparative regionalism: Eurasian cooperation and European integration. The case for neofunctionalism?. Journal of Eurasian studies, 2(2), 87-102. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euras.2011.03.001

116. Patton, M. Q. (1999). Enhancing the quality and credibility of qualitative analysis. *Health services research, 34*(5 Pt 2), 1189.

117. Plopsky, G. (2017, April 7). *Russia's big plans for air defense in Eurasia*. The Diplomat. Retrieved from https://thediplomat.com/2017/04/russias-big-plans-for-air-defense-in-eurasia/

118. Poghosyan, B. (2020, April 30). *Why is Lavrov pushing for a Karabakh agreement?* Commonspace.eu. Retrieved from https://www.commonspace.eu/opinion/opinion-why-lavrov-pushing-karabakh-agreement

119. Putz, C. (2022, January 6). *CSTO deploys to Kazakhstan at Tokayev's request*. The Diplomat.Retrieved from https://thediplomat.com/2022/01/csto-deploys-to-kazakhstan-at-tokayevs-request/

120. Rashid, A. (2000, September 27). IMU insurgency threatens Tajikistani political reconciliation. The Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst.Retrieved from

https://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/7160-analytical-articles-caci-analyst-2000-9-27-art-7160.html

121.   Ratha, D., Plaza, S., & Kim, E. J. (2024, December 18). *In 2024, remittance flows to low- and middle-income countries are expected to reach $685 billion, larger than FDI and ODA combined*. World Bank Blogs. Retrieved from https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/peoplemove/in-2024--remittance-flows-to-low--and-middle-income-countries-ar

122.   Report.az. (2022, September 14). *Kazakh FM: Hard to speak about violations on border since there is no delimitation between Azerbaijan and Armenia*. Retrieved from https://report.az/en/region/kazakh-fm-difficult-to-discuss-border-violation-since-no-delimitation-between-azerbaijan-and-armenia/

123.   Reuters. (2023, January 18). *Russia's Lavrov says Moscow ready to send mission to Armenia-Azerbaijan border*. Reuters. Retrieved from https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russias-lavrov-says-moscow-ready-send-mission-armenia-azerbaijan-border-2023-01-18/

124.   RFE/RL. (2021, July 7). Tajikistan reportedly calls on allies for help with security challenges from Afghanistan. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. Retrieved from https://www.rferl.org/a/tajikistan-csto-help-afghanistan/31346198.html

125.   RFE/RL's Armenian Service (2021, May 19). Russia proposes Armenia-Azerbaijan commission to demarcate border amid incursion dispute. Retrieved from https://www.rferl.org/a/armenia-azerbaijan-border-demarcation-russia-proposal-karabakh/31263485.html

126.   Rozanov, A. A., & Douhan, A. F. (2013). *Collective Security Treaty Organisation, 2002-2012*. Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces.

127.   Rybin A. (2022, January 7). *Kazakhstan: Ex-security services chief and Nazarbayev ally arrested*. Fergana. Retrieved from https://fergana.media/articles/124563/

128.   Rymbetov, S. (2022, January 20). Social unrest in Kazakhstan turns violent, ends Nazarbayev era. The Jamestown Foundation. Retrieved from https://jamestown.org/program/social-unrest-in-kazakhstan-turns-violent-ends-nazarbayev-era/

129.   Safronov, I., Chernenko, E., & Karabekov, K. (2013, October 2). Russia will arm Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Kommersant. Retrieved from https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2309780.

130.   Scott, T. C., & Askerov, A. A Post-Mortem of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

131.   Shafiyev, F. (2023). Peace negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies. Retrieved from https://aircenter.az/uploads/_rO1GCLHAPFg.pdf

132.   Shahverdyan, L. (2023, Dec 31). *Russia to revamp Armenia's nuclear power plant*. Eurasianet. Retrieved from https://eurasianet.org/russia-to-revamp-armenias-nuclear-power-plant

133.   Smagin, N. (2023, June 15). A North–South Corridor on Putin's Dime: Why Russia Is Bankrolling Iran's Infrastructure. *Carnegie Politika*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Retrieved from https://carnegieendowment.org/russia-eurasia/politika/2023/06/a-north-south-corridor-on-putins-dime-why-russia-is-bankrolling-irans-infrastructure?lang=en

134.   Snyder, G. H. (1984). The security dilemma in alliance politics. *World politics, 36*(4), 461-495. https://doi.org/10.2307/2010183

135.   Soboliev, V. (2019, September 30). *Russian Railways threatens to pull out of Armenia*. OC Media. Retrieved from https://oc-media.org/russian-railways-threatens-to-pull-out-of-armenia/

136.   Socor, V. (2009, June 15). *Belarusian president boycotts Moscow's CSTO summit*. The Jamestown Foundation. Retrieved from https://jamestown.org/program/belarusian-president-boycotts-moscows-csto-summit/

137.   Socor, V. (2011, September 9). *Medvedev's think-tank proposes reinforcing Russia-led CSTO (Part Two)*. The Jamestown Foundation. Retrieved from https://jamestown.org/program/medvedevs-think-tank-proposes-reinforcing-russia-led-csto-part-two/

138.   Söderbaum, F. (2004). Modes of regional governance in Africa: neoliberalism, sovereignty boosting, and shadow networks. *Global Governance, 10*(4), 419-436. DOI: 10.1163/19426720-01004004

139.   Sodiqov, A. (2012, January 16). CSTO agreement on foreign bases frustrates Tajikistan's ambitions. *Eurasia Daily Monitor, 9*(10). Retrieved from https://jamestown.org/program/csto-agreement-on-foreign-bases-frustrates-tajikistans-ambitions/

140.   Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. (2021, March 15). Arms transfers to conflict zones: The case of Nagorno-Karabakh. Retrieved from https://www.sipri.org/commentary/topical-backgrounder/2021/arms-transfers-conflict-zones-case-nagorno-karabakh

141. Sukiasyan, N. (2021, February 1). *Appeasement and autonomy: Armenian-Russian relations from revolution to war*. European Union Institute for Security Studies. Retrieved from https://www.iss.europa.eu/publications/briefs/appeasement-and-autonomy

142. TASS. (2021). CSTO sees no need for involvement of collective forces in Tajikistan. Retrieved from https://tass.com/defense/1312073

143. TASS. (2022, February 10). *Putin says Kazakhstan faced terrorist aggression in January*. Retrieved from https://tass.com/world/1401211

144. TASS. (2023, September 5). *Armenia recalls its envoy to CSTO, appoints him ambassador to the Netherlands*. Retrieved from https://tass.com/world/1670235

145. Teslova, E. (2023, February 21). *Exclusively geopolitical motives behind new EU mission in Armenia: Russia*. Anadolu Agency. Retrieved from https://www.aa.com.tr/en/politics/exclusively-geopolitical-motives-behind-new-eu-mission-in-armenia-russia/2826576

146. The Guardian. (2022, September 13). *About 100 troops killed in clashes between Armenia and Azerbaijan*. The Guardian. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/13/deadly-clashes-erupt-in-disputed-territory-between-azerbaijan-and-armenia

147. The Moscow Times. (2015, April 3). *Russia ready to give Tajikistan $1.2 billion military aid to fight ISIS*. Retrieved from https://www.themoscowtimes.com/archive/russia-ready-to-give-tajikistan-12-billion-military-aid-to-fight-isis

148. Torjesen, S. (2008). Russia as a military great power: The uses of the CSTO and the SCO in Central Asia. In *The multilateral dimension in Russian foreign policy* (pp. 195-206). Routledge. DOI: 10.4324/9780203890554

149. Troitskiy, E. (2020). Dead-letter regimes in the post-Soviet space: Strategies and communication. *Global Society, 34*(2), 206-225. https://doi.org/10.1080/13600826.2019.1700934

150. United Nations Office of Legal Affairs. (2020, October). *No. 51060. Turkey and Azerbaijan: Agreement on strategic partnership and mutual assistance between the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Azerbaijan, Baku, 16 August 2010*. In *Treaty Series 2936* (pp. 55–80). United Nations. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.18356/0d3d3416-en-fr

151. Voeten, E. (2019). Making sense of the design of international institutions. *Annual Review of Political Science, 22*(1), 147-163. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-041916-021108

152.   Walker, S. (2022, January 5). Kazakhstan president declares state of emergency in protest-hit areas. The Guardian. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jan/04/kazakhstan-president-declares-state-of-emergency-in-protest-hit-areas

153.   Webber, M. (1997). CIS Integration Trends: Russia and the Former Soviet South, The Royal Institute of International Affairs: Russia and Eurasia Programme

154.   Weitz, R. (2018). *Assessing the collective security treaty organization: Capabilities and vulnerabilities.* https://press.armywarcollege.edu/monographs/390/

155.   Weitz, R. (2022). The Collective Security Treaty Organization Before and After the Ukraine War: Some Implications for the South Caucasus. *CSP Journal.* Retrieved from https://cspjournal.az/post/the-collective-security-treaty-organization-before-and-after-the-ukraine-war-some-implications-for-the-south-caucasus-477

156.   World Bank. (n.d.). *World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS).* Retrieved from https://wits.worldbank.org

157.   Yegorov, V. (1996). *Collective Security Treaty: The Way It Is and the Way It Will Be.* NATO Academic Fellowships Programme. Retrieved from https://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/94-96/yegorov/04.htm

158.   Yin, R. K. (2017). Case study research and applications: Design and methods. Sage publications.

159.   Zhanbulatova, R., Zhiyenbayev, M., Dyusembekova, M., & Nurtazina, R. (2020). The energy vector of Kazakhstan-Russia relations in the context of global changes on the international energy market. Central Asia and the Caucasus, 21(2), 121-130.

Russian

160.   Collective Security Treaty Organization (1992). *Договор о коллективной безопасности (ДКБ).* Retrieved from https://en.odkb-csto.org/documents/documents/dogovor_o_kollektivnoy_bezopasnosti/#loaded

161.   Collective Security Treaty Organization. (2010, April 23). *Бордюжа: ОДКБ не будет задействовать силовой потенциал в Киргизии.* Retrieved from https://odkb-csto.org/news/smi/bordyuzha_odkb_ne_budet_zadeystvovat_silovoy_potentsial_v_kirgizii_/#loaded

162.   Collective Security Treaty Organization. (2010, December 10).*Соглашение о порядке формирования и функционирования сил и средств системы коллективной безопасности Организации Договора о коллективной безопасности.* Retrieved from

https://odkb-csto.org/documents/documents/soglashenie_o_poryadke_formirovaniya_i_funktsionirovaniya_sil_i_sredstv_sistemy_kollektivnoy_bezopas/#loaded

163. Collective Security Treaty Organization. (2021, August 23). *Об итогах внеочередной сессии Совета коллективной безопасности ОДКБ, посвященной ситуации в Афганистане и ее влиянию на безопасность государств – членов ОДКБ.* Retrieved from https://odkb-csto.org/news/news_odkb/ob-itogakh-vneocherednoy-sessii-soveta-kollektivnoy-bezopasnosti-odkb-posvyashchennoy-situatsii-v-af/#loaded

164. Collective Security Treaty Organization. (2021, May 13). *Комментарий ОДКБ в связи с ситуацией в зоне армяно-азербайджанской границы в Сюникской области* Retrieved from https://odkb-csto.org/news/news_odkb/kommentariy-odkb-v-svyazi-s-situatsiey-v-zone-armyano-azerbaydzhanskoy-granitsy-v-syunikskoy-oblasti/#loaded

165. Collective Security Treaty Organization. (2022, January 10). *10 января в формате видеоконференции состоится заседание Совета коллективной безопасности ОДКБ.* Retrieved from https://odkb-csto.org/news/news_odkb/10-yanvarya-v-formate-videokonferentsii-sostoitsya-zasedanie-soveta-kollektivnoy-bezopasnosti-odkb-p/#loaded

166. Collective Security Treaty Organization. (2022, January 13). Секретариат ОДКБ направил членам Совета коллективной безопасности Организации проект Решения СКБ. Retrieved from https://odkb-csto.org/news/news_odkb/sekretariat-odkb-napravil-chlenam-soveta-kollektivnoy-bezopasnosti-organizatsii-proekt-resheniya-skb/#loaded

167. Collective Security Treaty Organization. (2022, January 15). *Генеральный секретарь ОДКБ Станислав Зась в интервью агентству МИА «Россия сегодня» рассказал о численности и задачах миротворческого контингента в Казахстане.* Retrieved from https://odkb-csto.org/news/news_odkb/generalnyy-sekretar-odkb-stanislav-zas-v-intervyu-agentstvu-mia-rossiya-segodnya-rasskazal-o-chislen/#loaded

168. Collective Security Treaty Organization. (2022, September 14). *На внеочередной сессии Совета коллективной безопасности ОДКБ 13 сентября обсудили ситуацию в связи с резким обострением в отдельных районах на границе Армении и Азербайджана.* Retrieved from https://en.odkb-csto.org/news/news_odkb/na-vneocherednoy-sessii-soveta-kollektivnoy-bezopasnosti-odkb-obsudili-situatsiyu-v-svyazi-s-rezkim-/

169. Collective Security Treaty Organization. (2022, November 23). *Совет коллективной безопасности 23 ноября в Ереване обсудил актуальные проблемы международной и региональной безопасности и их влияние на безопасность*

государств–членов ОДКБ. Retrieved from https://en.odkb-csto.org/session/2022/sovet-kollektivnoy-bezopasnosti-23-noyabrya-v-erevane-obsudil-aktualnye-problemy-mezhdunarodnoy-i-re/#loaded

170.   CSTO. (2022, January 10). *10 января 2022 года в формате видеоконференции состоялось внеочередная сессия Совета коллективной безопасности ОДКБ. Обсуждалась ситуация в Республике Казахстан и меры по нормализации обстановки в стране.* Retrieved from https://odkb-csto.org/session/2022/10-yanvarya-2022-goda-v-formate-videokonferentsii-sostoyalos-vneocherednaya-sessiya-soveta-kollektiv/#loaded

171.   Ibragimova, K. (2021, July 9). *Что Таджикистану сулит господство «Талибана»?* Eurasianet. Retrieved from https://russian.eurasianet.org/%D1%87%D1%82%D0%BE-%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%B4%D0%B6%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%B8%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%BD%D1%83-%D1%81%D1%83%D0%BB%D0%B8%D1%82-%D0%B3%D0%BE%D1%81%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%B4%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%BE-%C2%AB%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%B1%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B0%C2%BB

172.   Kazpravda. (2023, May 26). *Парламент Казахстана отменил необходимость согласования с Елбасы государственных инициатив*. Retrieved from https://kazpravda.kz/n/parlament-kazahstana-otmenil-neobhodimost-soglasovaniya-s-elbasy-gosudarstvennyh-initsiativ/

173.   Kommersant. (2015, April 3). *Россия перебросит 70 миллиардов к Афганистану.* Retrieved from https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2699992

174.   Kommersant. (2020, October 7). *Путин призвал прекратить огонь в Нагорном Карабахе.* Retrieved from https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4521118

175.   Lenta.ru. (2010, June 18). *Медведев: Ввод миротворцев в Киргизию не планируется*. Retrieved from: https://lenta.ru/news/2010/06/18/medvedev/

176.   Primeminister. (2021, May 13). *Скорейшее выполнение процедур ОДКБ необходимо для предотвращения дальнейшей эскалации событий и защиты территориальной целостности Республики Армения: Никол Пашинян*. Retrieved from https://www.primeminister.am/ru/press-release/item/2021/05/13/Nikol-Pashinyan-Security-Council-meeting/#photos[pp_gal_1

177. RIA Novosti. (2020, May 18). *Эксперты: РФ и Киргизия обсуждают поставки ЗРК 'Бук-М1' и вертолетов Ми-8*. RIA Novosti. Récupéré de. Retrieved from https://ria.ru/20200518/1571589839.html

178. RIA Novosti. (2022, January 4). *Президент Казахстана ввел режим ЧП в Мангистау и Алматы*. Retrieved from https://ria.ru/20220104/chp-1766590484.html

179. TASS. (2022, January 9). Миротворцы ОДКБ в Казахстане взяли под охрану важнейшие объекты. Retrieved from https://tass.ru/armiya-i-opk/13370749

180. TASS. (2024, June 4). *Галузин заявил, что миссия ЕС в Армении "шпионит" против Москвы, Тегерана и Баку*. Retrieved from https://tass.ru/politika/20991339