

Geopolitical constraints and institutional innovation: the dynamics of multilateralism in Eurasia¹

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This chapter assesses the relationship between traditional state-based security concerns and the development of multilateral institutions in Eurasia from 1992 to 2002. Multilateral institutions matter in Eurasia, but multilateral cooperation is highly contingent upon power relationships. Large states have used multilateral institutions to exert power and small states have used them to constrain larger ones. States have also used these institutions to signal their intentions and to reinforce their domestic identity. None the less, international institutions in Eurasia have neither mitigated the security dilemma nor facilitated cooperative approaches to the new security challenges of transnational terrorism, ethnic strife, environmental degradation, food and energy scarcity, drug trafficking, unchecked population growth, rampant migration and organised crime.² Eurasia hosts several variations in institutional forms, including the CIS, GUUAM, and the SCO. Yet these three principal regional institutions have largely failed to cultivate cooperative multilateralism. Can they do so singularly or in combination in the future?

Multilateral form and the security dilemma

The basic conditions underlying western models of multilateral institutional cooperation do not exist in Eurasia.³ In the transatlantic context, the major institutions reflected a benign American hegemony and acquiescent western European states. NATO, for example, survives because its combination of American power and institutional attributes enhanced cooperation between its members over time. NATO has promoted transparency and information sharing, facilitated issue linkages, fostered the norm of multilateralism, and helped lower the transaction costs of collective action among its member-states. This transatlantic institutional configuration of power and cooperation has not taken hold in Eurasia, where Russia retains a degree of postcolonial hegemonic influence through the CIS. Nevertheless, smaller

former Soviet republics have sought to exert their independence through multilateral balancing of Russian influence and by signalling their national identity preferences through the GUUAM group. Meanwhile, the growth of American military engagement in Eurasia has the potential to transform another multilateral institution – the SCO – into a mechanism for a renewed Sino-Russian alliance.

Despite potential fissures arising from great power competition in the region, the states of Eurasia share some important interests in multilateral cooperation. Russia and China, as well as key medium-sized states such as Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, are status-quo oriented and seek to ensure that no single power can dominate. Moreover, the states of Eurasia and interested external powers such as the United States all view radical political Islam and international terrorism as common threats and share interest in the quest for international order. Eurasia is not a region where interstate war is likely.⁴ And yet, traditional security concerns dominate the dynamics of multilateralism. The inability of the Eurasian states to develop western-style institutions or to embrace cooperative multilateralism effectively is not the result of intrinsically opposed political cultures or a new political divide reflecting a ‘clash of civilisations’.⁵ The key variable affecting the dynamic and form of multilateralism in Eurasia is divergent state interests.

The security dilemma

Security dilemmas stem from the assumption that the international system is based on self-help and comprised of states with an egoist definition of interest. In the absence of a global leviathan, international relations are inevitably anarchic. States will eventually position themselves in an offensive or defensive posture depending on their perceived security needs. States operating under such threat perceptions confront a situation where a country’s efforts to increase its own security (even if for defensive purposes) can be perceived by other states as an offensive threat.⁶ Consequently, states will make adjustments in their defensive or offensive position – through self-help or via alliances – to ensure survival. Such a security dilemma can produce arms races or preventive war if a balance of power is not attained or breaks down. States therefore must worry about both the absolute and relative gains of their competitors.⁷ That is, states must worry about their overall international position relative to the power of other states.⁸

States have a variety of multilateral options to pursue in response to a threat.⁹ States might balance the existing threat by increasing their capabilities or forming alliances with like-minded countries sharing the same threat perception.¹⁰ Alternatively, states might align with a dominant power by bandwagoning towards it to reap distributive gains.¹¹ Balancing or bandwagoning through multilateral alliances represent one variation in institutional form of multilateralism. Each approach can result in peace if a

functional balance of power is achieved. Among a coalition of states, the dominant power can exert the greatest degree of influence and, in the process of exercising institutional hegemony, may also contribute to peaceful relations among alliance members. From hegemony, effective multilateral cooperation can emerge and be applied to issue areas separate from that for which the institution was originally intended.¹²

Confronted with a relative decline in power, large states often seek to maintain influence by making concessions to prevent defection and balancing by previous allies. Smaller powers may seek to sustain multilateral institutions, but also to adapt them to gain more influence. Moreover, great powers are positioned to lead coalitions with smaller states – which make residual institutions useful in lowering transaction costs. Institutional forms reflecting hegemonic influence can alleviate the security dilemma, because smaller states receive security reassurance against each other as the dominant power provides a public good of general security.¹³ Nevertheless, as hegemonic influence declines, states will not necessarily bandwagon towards the declining power and rather might pursue balancing strategies. At this stage new forms of multilateralism can emerge with new institutions replacing old ones, or old ones being transformed. Alternatively, conflict and instability can emerge as institutions become unable to moderate the security dilemma given changed geopolitical realities.

International institutions and security

International institutions are persistent and connected sets of rules that prescribe behaviour roles, constrain activity, and shape expectations through informal regimes and formal organisations.¹⁴ As a possible means of modifying the security dilemma, international institutions have become a dominant part of international politics. Though institutions remain dependent upon the will and interests of member states, they are increasingly seen as enhancing security and facilitating crisis management. Institutions are used by states to maximise their individual or mutual security interests because they are presumed to make cooperation easier to attain than in their absence. By encouraging reciprocity, international institutions help states manage the uncertainties of international anarchy better. Multilateral cooperation, conducted over time, might become an international norm if states were socialised into new patterns of cooperative behavior. Consequently, security could be enhanced because states would perceive gains from learning about each other. By enhancing transparency among states, the security dilemma might be reduced, as states can better signal their intentions and reduce the risk that misperception or miscalculation will lead to tension or conflict.¹⁵

Institutions are thought to impact on interstate relations positively because the shadow of the future and the uncertainty of anarchy in the

international system allow for an environment in which international institutions embody and affect state expectations.¹⁶ Institutions play a variety of roles including aiding the exercise of influence, constraining bargaining strategies, balancing or replacing other institutions, signalling governments' intentions, specifying obligations, and shaping or defining the interests and preferences of states.¹⁷ Institutions are seen as relevant to security because they increase the level of information available to states by enhancing transparency, raising the costs of defection and defining what constitutes defection, increasing the likelihood of issue linkage, and advancing interstate socialisation towards the concept of an international community.¹⁸

Unlike multilateral forms of hegemonic stability and alliance formation, some institutional approaches to security offer positive inducements to multilateral cooperation. For example, concert diplomacy is an institutional form emphasising state interest in maintaining great power equilibrium. A concert is a self-regulating means of systems management. If the principal regional powers have a common interest in maintaining a systemic status quo, they may avoid steps to revise it. Conversely, if concert powers see a state making efforts to overturn the status quo, then those states will form a common alliance to challenge the defector and ensure that it does not succeed. Concerts are generally organised around informal structures with powerful states cooperating to resolve crises. If each major regional power shares in the benefits of an existing international order, a concert system will function. However, if any one actor successfully dominates and balancing fails, then the system will be transformed. Historically, war is the most common byproduct of a failed consensus on international order by the great powers.¹⁹ The historical track record of concert diplomacy is strong when the conditions are favourable. The Concert of Europe lasted, at various levels of strength, well into the nineteenth century.²⁰ This institutional form was replicated in the arrangements providing for the permanent members of the UN Security Council and is evident in the Contact Group/Group of Eight diplomacy used to settle the 1990s Balkan conflicts.

A contemporary institutional form, cooperative security, has emerged in the post-Cold War era, building on a more inclusive approach to systems management than concert diplomacy, while also being more realistic than the legalistic, hierarchical arrangements of the failed League of Nations. Cooperative security provides for less automatic but prospectively more successful approaches to organising states to act on mutual security concerns. Cooperative security implies that no state acting alone can solve all regional security problems and thus respectful multilateral solutions are necessary. Cooperative security is intended to be inclusive and to promote consultation over confrontation, reassurance over balancing, and information sharing, transparency and burden sharing among security partners.²¹ Cooperative security promotes both dialogue and socialisation into shared norms as a crisis-prevention mechanism via confidence- and security-

building measures. Cooperative security is also a model for forming ad hoc military coalitions for crisis management by lowering the transaction costs of multilateral cooperation. Thus intervention in a crisis is thought to be easier to attain under coalitions of the willing facilitated through the institutional mechanisms of cooperative security.²²

In Eurasia, the security dilemma drives the nature of state choices for international cooperation. Eurasia is also, however, a region where the status quo has not been changed by deep military alignments or security cooperation. The variations in institutional form illustrate that states are primarily signalling their security concerns via institutional membership choices. While such security cooperation is not deeply ingrained, it could become so in the future. Thus the dynamics of multilateralism in Eurasia do provide a framework for understanding the general geopolitical trends in the region. Consequently, as the following discussion shows, the institutional forms that reflect hegemonic stability, regional balancing and global balancing are key to understanding the geopolitical trend-lines of Eurasia. As this chapter illustrates, many of the core components are in place for a general regional concert system in Eurasia. Whether that concert system can successfully be translated into a new cooperative security arrangement is a critical policy and theoretical question confronting Eurasian security.

Geopolitics and the institutions of Eurasia

Much strategic analysis of Eurasian geopolitics focuses on access to oil and related transportation routes. Many strategists thus predict increased competition over natural resources in a new 'great game', as historically practised between Great Britain and Russia in the nineteenth century.²³ This historical analogy gained currency with the 2001 war in Afghanistan and the resulting extension of American access to military bases in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Nevertheless, the 'great game' assessment of Eurasian power competition is oversimplified. In the words of one regional expert: 'The misplaced belief among US, Russian and other analysts in the central importance of geopolitical rivalry represents a cumulative failure of imagination'.²⁴ In reality the priority concern of the Eurasian states is status-quo maintenance. This quest has led to a combination of divergent threat perception and shared interests on specific issues such as counter-terrorism.

The Eurasian geopolitical spectrum reflects three major trends: Russian efforts to sustain hegemonic influence, met by the actions taken by some former states to balance Russian influence and assert their sovereignty; American efforts to project power and promote regional stability, generating nascent cooperation between Russia and China to balance American engagement; and a shared interest among all regional actors in diffusing the encroachment of radical political Islam and associated terrorism. The

confluence of these geopolitical trends reflects the persistence of the security dilemma, which forms an intractable barrier to the duration and effectiveness of multilateralism. These geopolitical trends make Eurasia not especially receptive to multilateral institutions addressing the 'new security agenda', which raises the prospects that instability will grow and in turn impact on the existing strategic concerns of states. These trends are illustrated by the three most prominent multilateral security institutions of early twenty-first-century Eurasia: the CIS, GUUAM, and the SCO.

The CIS and hegemonic stability

The CIS is a manifestation of some structural aspects of the Soviet Union. Established through the Minsk Treaty of 1991, the CIS emerged as a loose confederation of 12 countries seeking to harmonise various economic and, to a much lesser extent, security policies after the collapse of the Soviet state. In 1993, Russia completed a military doctrine that defined the frontiers of the former Soviet Union as the strategic frontiers of Russia. In 1995, a presidential statement identified Moscow's goals in the CIS as making the region an exclusive area of Russian influence, minimising the expansion of external presence and influence in CIS territory, facilitating regional crisis management, and protecting Russians living outside Russia within the CIS.²⁵ For non-Russian members, support for the CIS has varied from the enthusiastic responses of Belarus to the antagonistic compliance of Ukraine. In the absence of significant western assistance, states like Ukraine, with their continued economic dependence on Russia, have little choice but to bandwagon reluctantly towards Moscow.

Russia's residual hegemony in the CIS is primarily economic and is exercised through pre-existing, Soviet-era personnel networks and bilateral linkage strategies. Power is increasingly exerted through fuel and energy, which Moscow can turn on and shut off to those states still depending on the Soviet-era pipeline system. For example, to pressure Georgia into allowing a continued presence of Russian military bases on its territory, Moscow has shut off the flow of natural gas. When Georgia refused to allow Russia to enter the Pankisi Gorge area on the border with Chechnya, Moscow retaliated by introducing visas for Georgian citizens and by halting gas supplies until past debts were repaid. Russia has also used the flow of energy supplies as a means of pressuring Ukraine and Moldova to make payments on debts owed to Moscow.²⁶

Russia has sought to develop within the CIS a customs union, economic integration, converging standards of international economic legislation, a payments union, integration of production in science and technology (and the defence industry), common legal conditions and a common capital market.²⁷ Moscow has also sought to destabilise CIS countries not cooperating with Russia through intelligence activities, blackmail, coercion,

subversion of problematic political leadership, and support to violent groups amenable to Russian influence.²⁸ Russia's overall military influence is receding. Russia maintains 8,000 forces in Tajikistan (in high combat readiness status), 2,900 troops in Armenia, 4,000 in Georgia and 1,500 in Moldova.²⁹ With a base in Tajikistan, Moscow has organised joint exercises with Central Asian armies and seeks to supply arms and equipment to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which Russia sees as important allies.³⁰ However, Russia has declining capacity to project military power within the CIS. Russia hopes to develop a 50,000-member rapid deployment corps at the Russia–Kazakhstan border, but whether it can fund and sustain full readiness is doubtful. Airlift capabilities are severely limited and what remains of Russia's air capacity is largely medium-range bombers and operational-tactical missiles – most of which are of little value in a fight against terrorism, the major security threat.³¹ In a worst case, Russia might, given its conventional military weakness, have to rely on tactical nuclear weapons to deter attacks on forward-deployed forces.

Other aspects of Russian influence within the CIS area are in steady decline. Between 2025 and 2035 the last generation socialised during the Soviet era will retire and leave leadership positions. Russian is no longer a priority language in non-Russian Eurasian countries, though it remains a primary language of business and government.³² Moreover, the Russian public had little appetite for shedding blood and treasure to keep Russia intact in Chechnya – let alone to sustain the CIS. Russia has thus used economic leverage to exercise its residual hegemonic influence. While Russia's economic pressure has some effect, CIS states increasingly define their relationship with Moscow on their own in the absence of the credible threat of military force. This trend is especially true as trade and other forms of international contact have diversified among the non-Russian CIS states, to include alternative transport corridors for oil and natural gas. Russia's ability to exert its regional influence is complicated by the hegemonic design of the CIS, which does not foster trust among its member-states, in combination with a variety of competing national agendas among the smaller members. The more Russia leverages its residual hegemony in the region, the lower the prospects for cooperative multilateral relationships through the CIS. Indeed, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Uzbekistan opted in 1999 to withdraw from formal CIS security cooperation, while Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan have refused to participate in CIS political and economic structures.

While Russian influence is declining, a number of post-Soviet states have bandwagoned towards Russia, and thus the CIS persists. The trade-off for Russian influence is the provision of some degree of stability – especially for states like Tajikistan, which have post-Communist leaders drawing from their Soviet background to facilitate distributive gains and enhance their domestic authority (in the absence of democratic legitimacy). Even non-CIS

state (and NATO member) Turkey has made some important moves towards Russia to enhance its own relative economic-security needs. In June 2001, Turkey completed a deal to build the Blue Stream natural gas pipeline with Russia, which would increase its dependence on Russian natural gas from 66 to 80 per cent (Turkey imports some 98 per cent of its energy needs). This deal was completed over strong American opposition.³³ For Russia, the result has been sustained regional involvement which satisfies Moscow's basic interests in maintaining influence on its periphery. However, Russians may increasingly question these gains as they see core CIS partners as resource burdens diminishing Moscow's international prestige. Of particular concern has been the degree to which Russia has discounted energy prices to CIS members in order to promote the objectives of integration.³⁴ Since becoming president, Vladimir Putin has increasingly prioritised Russia's bilateral relations with CIS members over multilateral action.

To make Russia's regional hegemonic goals more palatable within the CIS, Moscow presents its efforts to foster hegemonic stability as a cooperative effort. In 1992, Russia negotiated a 'Collective Security Treaty' with most of the CIS members. As security developments under this framework largely reflected all institution and no cooperation, little effective action was taken to develop the CIS at the multilateral level of security cooperation. By 1999 some multilateral programmes did emerge, with the development of a CIS Joint Air Defence System headquartered in Moscow and headed by the Russian Air Defence Forces command. Participants in the air defence system include Russia, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (which has kept its participation limited to what it describes as 'coordinated' rather than 'joint' operations). CIS security functions received additional competencies in October 2000 when an agreement was signed in Biskek to create a joint rapid reaction force, consisting of troops from Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, to respond to regional crises and to fortify porous border areas against terrorist attacks and incursions.

In March 2001, the CIS Collective Security Council secretary, Valery Nikolaenki, visited Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to discuss military integration of rapid reaction forces, to include headquarters planning as 'the first step in setting up collective rapid deployment forces' under the Collective Security Treaty.³⁵ For Russia the purpose of such an organisation would be to facilitate the transfer of military equipment and technology within the CIS to limit the influence of other purveyors of military equipment, particularly the United States, and to organise responses to radical political Islam and associated terrorism. On 25 May 2001, the participating countries – now including Armenia and Belarus – completed plans for a CIS rapid deployment force. Each participant contributes at least one battalion to this force. The force includes a 3,000-strong contingent for Central Asia including battalions from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and

includes elements of the remaining Russian 201st division deployed for peacekeeping purposes in Tajikistan. A separate arrangement includes Russian and Armenian forces totalling 1,500 for crisis management in the Caucasus.

The mandate of the CIS rapid deployment force was put in geostrategic terms, declaring that: 'We, the leaders of the states participating in the Collective Security Treaty, state our strong resolution to promote the formation of a multipolar, fair, and democratic world order based on respect for the United Nations Charter and the norms of international law'.³⁶ For Russia, the CIS was also a means of signalling its security interests to the United States and its worries over the projection of American power. The culminating effect of CIS security developments has been to allow Moscow to extend a defence perimeter away from its borders via air defence, border guards, and the possible development of small-scale rapid deployment forces. This outcome runs contrary to many assumptions of the mid-1990s that the CIS would be strengthened, perhaps as a counter-weight to balance NATO enlargement. Rather, the CIS has become a progressively weaker security institution.

GUAM: regional balancing

Efforts by some Eurasian states to minimise the effects of lingering Russian hegemony have produced mixed results. Most former Soviet states are torn between their desire to enhance their sovereignty *vis-à-vis* Russian influence and the reality that Moscow dominates their economies. The most significant attempt at regional balancing against Russia's residual hegemony is the GUUAM grouping of Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Moldova.³⁷ The GUUAM states officially describe this institution as a 'strategic alliance designed to strengthen the independence and sovereignty of these former Soviet republics'.³⁸ At the same time, the members of GUUAM assert that their institution is organised against no particular state. Rather, GUUAM members stress it is a cooperative means to address a range of issues via: political cooperation; joint efforts on energy production (including a Transcaucasian energy supply route); mutual support for sovereignty and territorial integrity; opposition to ethnic and religious intolerance; combating illegal drugs; and working closely with NATO, the OSCE and the UN. Conceptually, the GUUAM members identify economic security, energy security, environmental security and territorial security as their main concerns. None the less, it is highly significant that GUUAM is the only security institution in the former Soviet space not including Russia.

Western officials generally view GUUAM as an anti-Russian balancing effort. This perspective was shared in Moscow, which watched cooperation in GUUAM accelerate during the Kosovo war in side-meetings held during NATO's fiftieth anniversary summit in Washington, DC. Russian foreign

minister Igor Ivanov noted:

How should we understand the fact that the new regional organisation GUUAM has been created in Washington during a NATO summit? What aims are pursued by demonstratively creating this organisation at the time of the latest events in the Balkans? This is a reflection of the policy of the leaders of the states who make such steps rather than a mere coincidence.³⁹

GUUAM began informal consultations and produced joint declarations beginning at the Conventional Forces in Europe review conference held in 1996, and formalised their status as a cooperative structure at the 1997 Summit of the Council of Europe meeting in Strasbourg.⁴⁰ The principal organising elements of GUUAM include promotion of: political interaction, combating separatism, peaceful resolution of conflicts, peacekeeping activities, and development of a Eurasian-Transcaucasian transport corridor. Strategically, GUUAM members signalled their intent to hedge against Russian power through their integration into Euro-Atlantic and European structures of security and cooperation, including 'the development of a special relationship and dialogue with NATO'.⁴¹ By combining elements of cooperative security and balancing simultaneously, these countries have signalled a general desire to pursue a political and economic path divergent from Russia's vision while seeking to constrain Russia's influence. As the Georgian ambassador to the United States, Tedo Japaridze, declared in November 2000, 'GUUAM's birth mother is the CFE [Conventional Forces in Europe] negotiations, and our foster mother is NATO'.⁴²

The level of members' interest in GUUAM varies. Both Moldova and Uzbekistan engage inconsistently. Uzbekistan, Ukraine and Moldova moved closer (to varying degrees) in their alignments towards Russia in 2001–02, although those alignments face the countervailing pulls of a heightened economic reliance on Moscow and the general desire to signal a non-Russian security policy orientation. By June 2002, Uzbekistan effectively suspended its membership in GUUAM and Ukraine announced its desire to be considered a formal candidate for NATO membership, even while at the same time its economic fortunes grew more deeply embedded with those of Russia. Moreover, the GUUAM architecture remains informal, with high-level ministerial meetings occurring, but with little effort to create institutional mechanisms to coordinate multilateral action on declared objectives. Nevertheless, GUUAM made modest steps towards institutionalisation by creating a secretariat in 2001 and exploring the establishment of a parliamentary assembly. At a June 2001 summit, the GUUAM members signed the Charter of GUUAM, which codified it as an international organisation. Yet GUUAM's significance is symbolic in that these states pursue, to the extent feasible, a policy separate from that of Russia, or seek a balance between a western and a Russian orientation.

Concerns over residual Russian hegemony are a driving force behind

GUAM. However, the organisation is a reflection of only nascent multilateral balancing efforts. GUAM members have avoided deep security cooperation within this framework, as they generally prioritise their individual relationships with NATO's PfP.⁴³ The leaders of GUAM stress that the success or failure of their institution lies in the degree to which it gains assistance from the United States. The United States has trodden carefully so as not to over promote GUAM as the sole western alternative for Southeast and Central Eurasian states, while simultaneously encouraging the development of cooperative security programmes. US assistance included (for the fiscal year 2001): \$5 million in foreign military financing grants, \$2 million in non-proliferation and export control assistance, \$500,000 in international military equipment and training funding, and \$1 million in anti-terrorism assistance.⁴⁴ Some members of GUAM are ambivalent about giving the institution true balancing power. Ukraine, for example, still exists under significant Russian economic influence.⁴⁵ President Leonid Kuchma insisted that GUAM members not turn the organisation into a military-political structure.⁴⁶ Ukraine and Uzbekistan are increasingly deviating politically from some of the declared normative goals of the institution, while at the same time moving closer to Moscow out of economic necessity and a shared fear of the spread of international terrorism.

GUAM does force Russia to account for balancing forces affecting its foreign policy. This trend could moderate Russian hegemonic ambitions if Moscow worries that its exercise of power might contribute to a deepening of balancing institutions. Consequently, the prospect of significant countervailing pressures within Eurasia might force Russia to consider more cooperative or issue-linked bargaining strategies that eventually are reflected in new institutional forms. However, in the short term, Russia would be more likely to favour working bilaterally with each GUAM member (as it has with Ukraine and Moldova) to undermine institutional cohesion. It is possible that with the growing US–Russian accommodation, reflecting a common interest in combating terrorism, the historical fears of Russian hegemony in the region will be allayed – particularly for states such as Uzbekistan, which hosted US troop deployments in the 2001–2 campaign against the Taliban in Afghanistan.

The SCO: great power balancing

In June 2001, the leaders of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan transformed an informal grouping established in 1996 and known as the 'Shanghai Five' into a formal international institution, the SCO, which was expanded to include Uzbekistan. The official objectives of the institution are to promote trust, stability and mutual understanding between members, including confidence building in the military sphere and mutual reductions of armed forces in border areas.⁴⁷

The SCO is viewed in western circles as a potential balancing mechanism designed by China and Russia to frustrate American global dominance. Indeed, the founding SCO document specifies that promoting multipolarity is a core institutional objective. Both China and Russia use the advancement of multipolar international relations to balance American power. At the political level, this objective is reinforced by the specific requirement that states accept the primacy of the UN, respect for sovereignty, and non-interference in the domestic affairs of states. While specifying that the organisation is not an alliance directed against any other states, there are important elements of balancing behaviour in the SCO. For example, to bolster Russian and Chinese efforts to frustrate US plans for national missile defence, SCO members agreed to preserve the global strategic balance. The members stated that they all saw the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty as crucial to that objective. According to Chinese vice-foreign minister Zhang Deguang, the SCO is in agreement that missile defence 'would have a negative impact on the safeguarding of world strategic balance and security'.⁴⁸ None the less, the application of the SCO to this global balancing dynamic demonstrated the relative weakness of even a combined Russian–Chinese position as the United States announced its intent to withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in late 2001.

The balancing prospects of the SCO can be overstated. Russia had serious misgivings about including Uzbekistan in the institution, largely because Tashkent has pursued a strident independence. Meanwhile, the smaller SCO members – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan – have have been reluctant to place too much emphasis on purely Russian-led institutions. As Uzbek president Islam Karimov asserts: 'This organization must never turn into a military political bloc . . . It should not be against any country, should not join certain trends, should not organise subversive activities against third countries'.⁴⁹ Russia's interest in the SCO may be as much guided by a desire to constrain the growth of China's influence in the region as to hedge against American power. Russia might also bandwagon towards the United States if Chinese power continues to grow. Russian–Chinese accommodation must also be viewed in the light of their history of deep tensions and rivalry for influence in northeast Asia.

The issue generating the highest convergence of interests among the SCO members is the spread of radical political Islam and associated international terrorism. The SCO has agreed to create an anti-terrorist centre in Biskek, Kyrgyzstan, and a 2,000-soldier unit of Russian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Tajik troops was organised. Although there are American concerns that this institution was designed to counterbalance the United States, the SCO could alternatively move more closely towards American interests in combating international terrorism. This trend-line is true even for China, which has a significant ethnic separatist movement in its northwest Xinjiang province. China asserts that Islamic groups in Xinjiang were supplied with money,

arms and leadership by the al-Qaeda terrorist organisation.⁵⁰

Given the proximity of these states to Afghanistan and other areas of terrorist basing, the SCO could even complement American strategic interests as the SCO pursues its open-ended campaign against terrorism. Conversely, the SCO could be used by Russia and China to ensure that the United States does not gain a strategic foothold in Eurasia justified by counter-terrorism. By further institutionalising the SCO in the area of counter-terrorism, Russia and China would advance their goals of limiting American influence in Eurasia and justify efforts to secure their own state authority in Chechnya and Xinjiang. In early 2002, the SCO issued a joint statement declaring that regional and sub-regional structures were best suited to fighting terrorism, and implied that the post-September 11 environment had provided a rationale to institutionalise further the SCO's anti-terrorism capabilities. Yet, for medium and smaller regional powers, the increased American presence in Central Eurasia might make the SCO less attractive – particularly for Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

Conclusion: geopolitics, multilateralism and twenty-first-century Eurasia

The prospects for building cooperative multilateral institutions for addressing the complex new security agenda of Eurasia are not promising. The security dilemma remains strong in the region as Russia continues to seek hegemony via the CIS; former Soviet republics seek to balance against or bandwagon towards Russian power; America has significantly increased its Eurasian regional interests during the war against terrorism; and Russia and China remain poised to balance continuing assertions of American power. All the regional actors remain united in a shared fear of radical political Islam and international terrorism. While these geopolitical constraints are a major inhibitor of the development of western-style cooperative security institutions, it does not mean that multilateralism is irrelevant. Rather, as an institutional form, multilateralism remains at best an intervening, and more likely dependent, variable determining regional security outcomes. Nevertheless, Eurasia is poised to function as a regional concert system that might eventually foster cooperative multilateral efforts towards addressing the new security agenda.⁵¹

Prior to the September 11 2001 attacks on the United States, conditions favouring a regional concert system were largely in place in the Eurasian area. The United States, Russia and China appeared prepared to sustain an informal triangular framework for relations among major regional actors. Of these countries, currently none can exercise complete hegemony over the Eurasian area. While American influence ascended in 2001–2, Washington's interests in the region are transitory and limited to counter-terrorism and transit routes for oil rather than issue-based multilateralism. The key pivot point is Russia, which has the opportunity to shift between the

United States and China. Meanwhile, the medium-sized states of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan serve as keystone powers between Russia and China. Both large and medium powers want to sustain domestic regime stability, especially in the light of the challenge of a rising tide of radical Islam. Ultimately, Eurasian states hope to sustain international stability so they can address pressing domestic challenges.

Formal institutions that can constrain state behaviour through the extension of hegemony or specific rules and norms, such as the CIS, GUUAM and the SCO, are not likely to provide cooperative means of addressing Eurasia's new security agenda. These institutions remain highly conditioned by the regional balance of power. Indeed, they are best understood as important reflections of an informal concert framework. Should China or the United States become too powerful, Russia can use the CIS as a peripheral defensive measure. However, the weaknesses of the CIS may force Russia to bandwagon and make a truly historic decision as to whether its interests lie with the West or with Asia. Should the United States become too powerful in a way that undermines the Eurasian balance of power, Russia and China can use the SCO to balance American power. Conversely, while Russia may bandwagon towards the West, Moscow might undermine American primacy by elevating its relationship with Europe over Washington. Alternatively, should Russian power increase or a functional Russian–Chinese accommodation emerge, then GUUAM might serve to project American security interests.

The defeat of the Taliban in Afghanistan in late 2001, however, raises important questions as to the longevity of the concert model. While political Islam remains a serious challenge to regional stability, the absence of the Taliban regime makes it more difficult for radical Islamic groups to organise and wield international influence. Consequently, this shared threat perception could recede if stability reigns in Afghanistan. The utility of the concert model lies in its flexible capacity to ebb and flow depending on the interests of the major powers. Should, for example, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan ever succeed in taking over Uzbekistan and further threaten its neighbours, the existing concert framework would be strengthened among the major powers in a manner similar to that exercised by the 2001–02 anti-Taliban coalition. Even without the collapse of a key state, smaller areas such as Chechnya, the Ferghana Valley and the Xinjiang province provide sufficient reason for the major powers to share ongoing fears of radical political Islam.

American military engagement could also upset the Eurasian status quo. The nascent concert framework places heavy emphasis on states' preference for the existing status quo and particularistic quest for domestic regime stability. Conservative Eurasian regimes fear radical Islam and increasingly use that threat to avoid addressing human rights concerns or opening to democratic reforms. The global pressures towards democracy, free markets and respect for human rights that accompany the expansion of American

power may run directly counter to the status-quo state interests in Eurasia. Even more problematic, as conservative and repressive regimes work to sustain the status quo they are able in the short term to combat international terrorism. However, in the long term, it is this very state repression of freedoms that often fuels the radicalisation of Islam. Thus the United States faces an uncomfortable policy choice between promoting stability and values.

The prospects for a lasting regional concert system for Eurasia will depend on whether the United States asserts its regional role with restraint and whether it pursues multilateral or unilateral security engagement. During the war in Afghanistan, Russia acquiesced to the United States and allowed American military deployments in former Soviet bases in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Indications that American troops would not be likely to leave this area in a timely manner might eventually heighten the security dilemmas of Russia and China. Russia, in particular, will be put under increasing pressure to overturn the status quo or seek balancing arrangements if the United States does not act with restraint. Russia's historic sensitivities to traditional encirclement are well known – and now Russia faces an expanding NATO to the west, American military forces on its southern borders, and the rising power of China to the east. The core question of the future of Eurasian security may be which side Russia will choose: West or East. This long-standing question for Russia's identity will in large part be determined by how the United States adapts its policies in the region, and by whether Washington builds cooperative security institutions that include Russia and account for Moscow's interests.

To sustain its regional presence, the United States might pursue trade-offs with Russia on economic assistance or on future NATO enlargement. Or America might withdraw and thus instigate a return to regional bandwagoning and balancing behaviour. Such a move would seriously damage expectations raised among the smaller states of Eurasia and contribute to a persistence of unresolved traditional and new security challenges. Alternatively, the United States presence could be the precursor of the development of a cooperative security dynamic for the region. This outcome would require Washington to pursue a multilateral and inclusive framework for its engagement, involving Russia and China as co-equal regional partners, and to create institutional mechanisms to engage the smaller regional powers in multilateral dialogue. Western models of cooperative security might subsequently evolve in Eurasia, but only as an evolutionary process that fosters trust. Such an effort might use conference-style diplomacy to create a network of multilateral issue-based regimes. For example, by making the existing Cooperative Threat Reduction programme (for reducing the risks of nuclear proliferation out of Russia) into a multilateral regional framework, new patterns of security cooperation might emerge and be transferred into other issue areas.

The United States has important gains to make by achieving a regional

foothold in Eurasia. A US military presence in Central Asia could facilitate containment of either Russia or China should the need arise in the future. An American presence could also facilitate access to proven and unproven oil reserves that could supply the world with significant energy resources well into the twenty-first century. Moreover, a military presence could assist American power projection should it lose access to bases in the Persian Gulf. If the extension of American power into Eurasia were accompanied by a gradual extension of cooperative multilateral forms, rather than a quest for extending unilateral gains, Russia might overcome its historical security dilemma and join the West while constructive engagement with China was fostered. However, if poorly handled by Washington, there is significant risk that its policies in Eurasia will drive Russia and China towards a balancing architecture. As with the cooperative multilateral institutions that have evolved in Europe, the prospects for international institutions in Eurasia will depend on the nature and exercise of American leadership – and restraint.

Notes

- 1 For this chapter, I conducted research as a Visiting Fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London during summer 2001. I am grateful to many individuals for their support and observations, including: Klaus Becher, Mats Berdal, Douglas Blum, Archie Brown, Richard Caplan, Jonathan Chipman, Chris Coker, Chris Donnelly, Richard Fusch, Robert Grant, Stuart Horsman, Stuart Kaufman, Margot Light, Neil MacFarlane, Dov Lynch, Andrew Michta, William Park, M.J. Peterson, Jean-Mark Ricci, Karl Ryavec, James Sperling, Joshua Spero, Kristina Spor and Paul Taylor.
- 2 International Institute for Strategic Studies, *Strategic Survey: 2000–2001* (London, International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2001), pp. 269–70.
- 3 See Patrick M. Morgan, 'Multilateralism and Security: Prospects in Europe', in John Gerard Ruggie (ed.), *Multilateralism Matters: The Theory and Praxis of an Institutional Form* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 327–64.
- 4 Richard Sokolsky and Tanya Charlick-Paley, *NATO and Caspian Security: A Mission Too Far?* (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 1999), pp. 13–21.
- 5 Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).
- 6 See Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976); and Alexander Wendt, 'Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics', *International Organization*, 46:2 (1992), pp. 391–425.
- 7 See Joseph Grieco, 'Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation: A Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutionalism', *International Organization*, 42:3 (1988), pp. 485–507.
- 8 See John J. Mearsheimer, 'The False Promise of International Institutions', *International Security*, 19:3 (1994–95), pp. 10–12.
- 9 See Robert Jervis, 'Cooperation under the Security Dilemma', *World Politics*, 30:2 (1978), pp. 167–214.

- 10 See Glenn H. Snyder, 'The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics', *World Politics*, 36:4 (1985), pp. 461–96; and Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987).
- 11 See Randall L. Schweller, 'Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In', *International Security*, 19:1 (1994), pp. 72–107. Neil MacFarlane demonstrates that the distribution of power in Eurasia favours a Russian strategy of assertion and consolidation in its periphery but, at the global level, Russia has bandwagoned towards the United States. Neil MacFarlane, 'Realism and Russian Strategy after the Collapse of the USSR', in Ethan B. Kapstein and Michael Mastanduno (eds), *Unipolar Politics: Realism and State Strategies after the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp. 218–60.
- 12 See Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984).
- 13 See Lisa Martin, 'The Rational State Choice', in Ruggie, *Multilateralism Matters*, pp. 91–117.
- 14 See Robert O. Keohane, *International Institutions and State Power* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989).
- 15 See Oran R. Young, 'The Effectiveness of International Institutions: Hard Cases and Critical Variables', in James N. Rosenau and Ernst-Otto Czempiel (eds), *Governance without Government: Order and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 160–94.
- 16 Robert Axelrod and Robert O. Keohane, 'Achieving Cooperation under Anarchy: Strategies and Institutions', in Baldwin, *Neorealism and Neoliberalism*, pp. 85–115.
- 17 Robert O. Keohane, Joseph S. Nye and Stanley Hoffmann (eds), *After the Cold War: International Institutions and State Strategies in Europe, 1989–1991* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), pp. 2–3.
- 18 Charles Kupchan, 'The Case for Collective Security', in George Downs (ed.), *Collective Security After the Cold War* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), pp. 50–1.
- 19 Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).
- 20 See Paul W. Schroeder, 'The Transformation of Political Thinking: 1787–1848', and William H. Daugherty, 'System Management and the Endurance of the Concert of Europe', in Jack Snyder and Robert Jervis (eds), *Coping with Complexity in the International System* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993), pp. 47–70, 71–106.
- 21 Craig A. Snyder, 'Regional Security Structures', in Craig A. Snyder (ed.), *Contemporary Security and Strategy* (London: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 114–15.
- 22 See Janne E. Nolan (ed.), *Global Engagement: Cooperation and Security in the 21st Century* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1994).
- 23 See Ariel Cohen, 'The New "Great Game": Pipeline Politics in Eurasia', *Eurasian Studies*, 3:1 (1996), pp. 2–15; and Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives* (New York: Basic Books, 1997).
- 24 Kenneth Weisbrode, *Central Eurasia: Prize or Quicksand? Contending Views of Instability in Karabakh, Ferghana and Afghanistan* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2001), p. 9.
- 25 'Strategic Policy Toward CIS Published', *Foreign Broadcast Information Service*

- Daily Report: Central Asia SOV-95* (28 September 1995), pp. 19–20.
- 26 International Institute for Strategic Studies, *Strategic Survey*, p. 122.
- 27 'Strategic Policy Toward CIS Published', pp. 19–20.
- 28 See Stephen J. Blank, *Energy, Economics, and Security in Central Asia: Russia and its Rivals* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, 1995).
- 29 International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance: 2001–2002* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2001), pp. 117–18.
- 30 In April 2000, Russia organised, and Tajikistan hosted, CIS Southern Shield 2000 exercises, which involved the additional participation of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan and were designed to prevent rebel forces from infiltrating Uzbekistan via Tajikistan. *ITAR-TASS* (2 April 2000) (FBIS-NES-2000-0402).
- 31 Dmitri Trenin, 'Central Asia's Stability and Russia's Security', *PONARS*, 168 (November 2000).
- 32 Sokolsky and Charlick-Paley, *NATO and Caspian Security*, p. 28.
- 33 Douglas Frantz, 'Russia's New Reach: Gas Pipeline to Turkey', *New York Times* (6 June 2001).
- 34 International Institute for Strategic Studies, *Strategic Survey*, p. 121.
- 35 *Interfax* (31 March 2001).
- 36 Haroutian Khachatryan, 'Creation of Rapid Deployment Force Marks Potential Watershed in Collective Security Development', *Eurasia Insight* (2 July 2001).
- 37 The June 2002 Uzbek announcement that it would suspend membership in GUUAM means that the institution's acronym will revert to GUAM.
- 38 'The GUUAM Group: History and Principles: Briefing Paper', at www.guam.org/.
- 39 Quoted in Charles Fairbanks, C. Richard Nelson, S. Frederick Starr and Kenneth Weisbrode, *Strategic Assessment of Central Eurasia* (Washington, DC: Atlantic Council of the United States, 2001), p. 59.
- 40 Uzbekistan joined GUAAM in 1999.
- 41 Anatol Lieven, 'GUUAM: What Is It, and What Is It For?' *Eurasia Insight* (18 December 2000).
- 42 *Ibid.*
- 43 See Taras Kuzio, 'Promoting Geopolitical Pluralism in the CIS: GUUAM and Western Foreign Policy', *Problems of Post-Communism*, 47:3 (2000), pp. 25–35. Some military cooperation goals include creating a joint peacekeeping unit, and information exchange on regional security issues. GUUAM has also adopted a calendar of forthcoming events to facilitate cooperation among ministries of defence. Some external cooperative military programmes have developed, including the signing of a defence protocol between Azerbaijan, Georgia and Ukraine in March 1999, which was followed by joint military exercises designed to protect oil pipelines. Meanwhile, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey established a nascent multinational approach to regional security, focusing on combating terrorism and organised crime as well as protecting oil pipelines.
- 44 For further discussion, see Chapter 10 by Willerton and Cockerham in this volume.
- 45 Ukraine's interdependence with other GUUAM states is limited. In 2002, Ukrainian exports to GUUAM countries were 2.5 per cent of its exports. The corresponding share for imports was 1.8 per cent. Total turnover in trade with Ukraine's four GUUAM partners was 70 per cent of that with Belarus and slightly

- over 50 per cent of that with Turkmenistan. Igor Torbakov, 'G.U.U.A.M.'s Potential to Play Role in Anti-Terrorism Alliance Appears Limited', *Eurasia Insight* (11 January 2002).
- 46 Iryna Solonenko, 'Quo Vadis, G.U.U.A.M.?', *Central Europe Review* at www.ce-review.org. Limited public awareness of G.U.U.A.M. is another constraint on its potential: 62.6 per cent of Ukrainians have not heard of G.U.U.A.M. and only 3.6 per cent were well informed about the activities of the institution.
- 47 'Joint Statement by the Heads of State of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the People's Republic of China, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan'.
- 48 'Central Asia Bloc United Against Missile Shield', *CNN World* at cnn.com.
- 49 'Russia Has Misgivings about Shanghai Cooperation Organization', *Eurasia Insight* (20 June 2001).
- 50 In early 2002, China blamed separatist forces in Xinjiang for 200 explosions, assassinations and other attacks over an 11-year period, resulting in 111 deaths and 440 injuries. As many as 1,000 Chinese Muslims may have trained in al-Qaeda terrorist camps in Afghanistan. Philip P. Pan, 'China Links Bin Laden to Separatists', *Washington Post* (22 January 2002).
- 51 The emergence of a contemporary regional concert for Eurasia was first identified by Kenneth Weisbrode. See Weisbrode, *Central Eurasia*.