CHAPTER VI

RUSSIA'S PEACEKEEPING OPERATION UNDER VLADIMIR PUTIN
Chapter 6

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1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout Boris Yeltsin’s era, it was witnessed that Russian peacekeeping operations (RPKO) in the CIS had separated the conflicting parties and thereby reduced the violence in the region. But the paradox remains that RPKOs have not been able to promote trust between the parties involved in the conflicts. Despite this, Russia has continued to be a main force of peacekeeping in the region. The coming of new a president, Vladimir Putin in 2000 brought about dramatic changes in its foreign policy, defence policy and security concept. His approach to the former Soviet republics was also different from those of his predecessor, President Boris Yeltsin. During Yeltsin’s administration, the Former Soviet Republics were projected as areas of priority in Russia’s foreign policy, while in practice they were assigned a second class status.

Putin, on the other hand, adopted a less declamatory approach but one which was in reality far more serious about exercising the Russian influence in the periphery, treating the latter as a de facto sphere of influence (Lo 2003: 16). The gloomy circumstances in the late 1990’s like the NATO enlargement, Iraq war, Kosovo crisis and deteriorating relationship with the US compelled Russia to make dramatic changes from the earlier stance or approach to international relations adopted by the Yeltsin regime. The NATO military action against Yugoslavia in March 1999 marked a significant event in that it tempted Russia to re-assess its military policy including peacekeeping mission (Arbatov 2003: 29). It was following this reassessment that Russia reinforced a retrenchment of its peacekeeping operation after so much of crisis in Duma during Yeltsin’s era and August 1998 economic crisis.

Moreover, in the aftermath of the 11 September terrorist attacks in the USA, there came about an unconventional proximity of the United States to the Russian Federation with the advancement of the former into the Soviet space i.e. in Central Asia in the name of war against terrorism. This development led the
Russian President V. Putin and his government on a course of further strengthening its foreign policy and re-assessing its priorities into the region. The changes in policy as well as the emerging new geo-politic in former Soviet republics brought a new pattern and method to RPKO.

In this context, the main purpose of this chapter is to examine Putin’s approaches to peacekeeping operation. In fact, the comprehensive change in Russian foreign policy before and after 9/11 attacks in USA along with the launching of a security policy under the President V. Putin has its impacts on the peacekeeping operation. Hence, the chapter further analyses the transformation of Russian foreign policy towards the CIS. It further analyses the increasing role of RPKO and its contribution to the UN peacekeeping missions.

2. BACKGROUND: Rise of New Geo-Political Situation in 1990s

In 1990s, it was witnessed that Russia’s serious economic problems and political weaknesses hampered its efforts to restore its hegemony in former Soviet space. Meanwhile, the increasing rivalry over the Caspian Basin’s energy resources as well as the growth of regional conflicts elevated the region to a unique geopolitical interest that harboured various threats to regional and wider international peace and stability (Aydn, 2000). Since mid 1990’s, several Western countries including the USA have increased their influence in the CIS. The United States has become more active in Central Asia and in the Caucasus.

By virtue of their proximity to Caspian Sea, Georgia and Azerbaijan in the Transcaucasus came to occupy a position of American geo-political interests. Under such circumstance, Georgia’s permission to NATO to use their airfields, training areas and ports naturally solidified American position in the region. Moreover, Georgian efforts of bringing NATO involvement in peacekeeping operations in Abkhazia and South Ossetia further proved to be a turning point in the existing geo-politics of the former Soviet space in the late 1990s. Besides this, in July 1999, Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze sought for UN participation in peacekeeping in Abkhazia while requesting for the withdrawal of Russian peacekeepers (Rotar 1999). Georgia further made efforts for accession to
the NATO. This stand was acknowledged by Shevardnadze during the US Defence Secretary William Cohen’s visit to Georgia in August 1999. These developments were perceived as a threat by Moscow to its influencing role in the region (Georgiev 1999).

In Central Asia too, by April 1995, the United States signed their first bilateral agreement on military cooperation with Uzbekistan. This agreement provided an opportunity for US to use Uzbek’s military base facilities. In fact, it has paved the way for a long-term U.S. military presence, including the stationing of the U.S. troops on a standing basis. This shows the USA’s active interests of intervention in Central Asia, to counter-balance Russia’s sphere of hegemonic influence in former Soviet republics (Starr 1996: 80-92). On other hand, the development of a strategic partnership with the USA has provided an opportunity to Uzbekistan in harboring its regional ambitions which is contrasted with Russia’s “near abroad” policies. Furthermore, the withdrawal of the Russian border guards from Kyrgyzstan in 1994 and Tashkent’s refusal to renew its participation to the CIS Collective Security Treaty in the same year brought changes in the geopolitics of the region.

Hence, the drift-away of Georgia and Azerbaijan from Moscow since 1999 besides threatening to leave the CIS Collective Security Treaty gave a considerable blow to Russia as it further diminished her ability to influence the foreign policies of the former Soviet states in the southern regions. In Central Asia, Uzbekistan withdrew from the treaty in March 1999, and the emulation of her decision by Baku and Tbilisi added difficulties to Moscow. All these actions had raised doubts about the future of the CIS. Moreover, the efforts of Georgia and Azerbaijan to move away from Moscow’s orbit had geo-political repercussions beyond the Caucasus while Uzbekistan’s move weakened Moscow’s influencing power in Central Asia. Furthermore, similar tendencies were again displayed by Ukraine and Moldova. It is in this background that the Russian President Vladimir Putin launched its new foreign policy, and Military Doctrines in 2000 as well as the peacekeeping operations in the CIS.
3. PUTIN'S FOREIGN POLICY AND NEW SECURITY CONCEPTS

Putin started his regime with a thorough re-evaluation of the state’s assets and interests. He consolidated his power and strengthened Russia’s regional power position. On 28 June 2000, Putin approved the new foreign policy concept of the Russian Federation (http://www.mid.ru/vpcons.htm). One of the main objectives of President Putin's foreign policy was to ensure the reliable security of the country, to preserve and strengthen its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The foreign policy concept further highlighted Russia's foreign economic interests and concerns about the treatment of the 20 million Russians residing in the "near abroad" former Soviet republics.

3.1. Policy towards the CIS

Putin made significant efforts to regain Russia’s influential role in the Caucasus and Central Asia both for security reasons and for the regions’ vast energy resources. The US and other Western countries also continued to maintain strong interests in these regions. Here Russia's geo-strategic interest was “to remain strong in the area and wield power within and control over the ... CIS, thereby ensuring the security of its southern flank” (Bajarunas 2002: 5). In fact, Putin and his supporters had considered all the CIS member states as strategic partners. His policy priority had been to ensure conformity of multilateral and bilateral cooperation with the member states of the CIS to strengthen the national security tasks of the country. His first significant statement on Russia's relations with the CIS came on 22 December 1999, when he was Prime Minister. Speaking in the Federation Council, he argued in favour of the CIS integration (Godin 2000). The relationship with each of them has to be structured with due regard for reciprocal openness to cooperation and readiness to take into account in a due manner the interests of the Russian Federation, including the guarantees of rights of Russian compatriots. The main priority of his foreign policy towards the CIS was economic cooperation and security cooperation. The security cooperation manifested in two main directions:

1. The development of a CIS anti-terrorist programmed and
2. The development of the CIS Collective Security Agreement.
A dramatic change in his foreign policy took place in September 28, 2001, when he declared comprehensive cooperation with the US in Washington’s anti-terrorism campaign. He declared Russian support to the US anti-terrorism campaign by providing information to the US about the terrorist bases, allowing the use of Russian airspace for humanitarian flights in areas of anti-terrorism operations, accepting US use of Central Asia airfields for anti-terrorism operations, and by supporting and arming the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan (Volkova 2001). This move was not a complete surrender of the region to the U.S. It was rather initiated as a part of the Russian strategic move to fight against transnational terrorism which Moscow already had difficulties combating in Chechnya as a result of increasing pressure from Islamic fundamentalism coming from Afghanistan through Central Asia. Russia hence signed several agreements with the southern states - Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan - to defend itself from Islamic fundamentalism. Meanwhile, Putin’s support to the American anti-terrorism campaign by allowing its entry into the region provided an opportunity to Central Asian states to reduce their dependence on Moscow.

3.1.1 Post 9/11 Policy towards Central Asia

Trans-national terrorism and drug trafficking as well as uncontrollable migration in Central Asia have been issues of major concern to Russia. These problems call for cooperation among the international community and raising the effectiveness of the available forms and methods of combating as well as taking emergency measures to neutralize (Bakshi 2000: 1279). In this context, the presence of the U.S. in Central Asia in its post 11 September anti-terrorism campaign provided an opportunity to the Russian government in the pursuit of its own anti-terrorism policy. Another reason behind Russia’s consent to US presence in Central Asia also stemmed from the fact that the US had been stating all along that it did not intend to station its military forces permanently on the Central Asian soil, once its anti-terrorism operations in Afghanistan were accomplished successfully.

However, after the announcement of the Bush doctrine, Russia came to realise of the American intention of a long term presence in the region which would naturally pose a threat to Russian national interests. In fact, US Air Force
Col. Billy Montgomery, commander of a team of engineers working on the Manas base said: ‘I think it is fair to say there will be a long-term presence here well beyond the end of hostilities’ (‘US Gains foothold in Central Asia’, 2005). Further, the US Secretary of State, Colin Powell said, “America will have a continuing interest and presence in Central Asia of a kind that we could not have dreamed of before” (Ibid). This development in Central Asia has become a major concern in Moscow as well as in Beijing, both of whom have strategic interests in the region.

By 2002, Russia restructured its presence in the CIS in general and Central Asia in particular by grouping together its allies and supporters (Buszynski 2004: 161). Putin’s foreign policy in this region was more security oriented (Allison 2004:283-289) and had strengthened to play a more decisive role. Suspicious of the US intentions with respect to its future strategy vis-à-vis the Central Asian States (CAS), Russia desired to solve all the regional problems by involving the regional states, and minimising the role of outside powers in any future economic, political and security problems of the region.

This development in Putin’s policy in the region was highlighted during the summit meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), held at St. Petersburg (Russia) in June 2002, and the first Summit meeting of the Conference on Interaction and SCO held at Almaty (Kazakhstan) in June 2002 (Sulaiman 2000). In October 2002, the founding documents of a SCO were signed between Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which were ratified later on 28 April 2003. This provided Russia with a vehicle of influence in Central Asia (Buszynski 2004: 161).

The strategic concept of this organization was entailed to the creation of three regional groups of forces: the Western group that includes Russia and Belarus, the Caucasian group composed of Russia and Armenia; and the Central Asian group consisted of Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan (Vladimir 2003). Besides the traditional military threats, the Charter of the CSTO had stressed the fight against international terrorism and extremism, illegal trade of
narcotics from Afghanistan, psychotropic substances or arms, organized transnational crime and illegal migration as their missions.

Putin further strengthened its economic ties with Central Asian states by concluding several economic treaties. For instance, in September 2003, the Presidents of Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan signed a treaty on a Single Economic Space (SES). The agreement on the creation of a Single Economic Space envisaged the gradual formation of a highly integrated structure that promotes a common macroeconomic policy; and harmonizes the legislation on trade, competition, and natural monopolies; and promotes the free movement of labour force, goods, services and capital (Soglashedenie o Formirovanii Edinogo Economiceskogo Prostranstva [Agreement on Creation of Single Economic Space] 2003). Russia further opened a military base at Kant airport in Kyrgyzstan on 23 October 2003. It was just 20 kilometers east of the capital Bishkek, and 30 kilometers from Manas airport where American aircrafts were stationed.

3.1.2. Policy towards Caucasus

Despite the current problems in the Northern Caucasus, Russia has also paid enormous attention to the region. In the post Cold War scenario, particularly after September 11, the presence of the US troops in Caucasus region, which was of greater strategic significance to Russia, became the most sensitive concern to Moscow. In fact, the strategic significance of South Caucasus already occupied an important place in US foreign policy. Beginning from 27 May 2000, in Georgia the US had already promulgated a ‘train and equip’ programme for the Georgian army. Hence, the US military deployment in Georgia further threatened the Russian policy of security cooperation as well as political cooperation. Despite this, Putin managed to establish Russia as the key player in the region.

Meanwhile, Georgia and Azerbaijan also attempted to bring the involvement of Western countries into negotiation process of ethnic conflicts in the region. The presence of America and its interests on the energy resources on the one hand, and the willingness of the Georgian government to cooperate with America on other hand, gave a blow to Russia’s efforts of securing the Caspian oil
transit routes. After the "Rose Revolution" in Georgia in 2003, the gap between Russia and Georgia got further widened (Cornell 2007). The US's increasing influence simultaneously weakened Moscow's attempts to suppress the separatist revolt in the breakaway republic of Chechnya.

3.2. Military Doctrine and National Security Concepts

In January 2000, Russia adopted the new National Security Concepts and a new military doctrine, (Krasnaia Zvada 1999: 3-4) which were approved by the Duma and the President himself in May 2000. This national security concept had a provision on the use of nuclear weapons to deter conventional attacks. This new defence policy under the military doctrine has two main tasks:

a. preservation of nuclear weapons

b. anticipation and preparation for local conflict (peacekeeping).

In fact, regarding the preservation of nuclear weapons, Putin had cleared the Russian stance on it in his first statement as Russian president in 2000. In his first major foreign policy statement as president, Putin told to nuclear power states that he wanted "to make our nuclear weapons complex more safe and effective," as well as "preserve and strengthen" it (Encyclopedia of the Nations: 2003). Besides this, the new Military doctrine further stated that the Russian Federation maintained a readiness to wage war and take part in armed conflicts exclusively with a view to preventing and repulsing aggression, protecting the integrity and inviolability of its territory, and safeguarding the Russian Federation's military security as well as that of its allies in accordance with international treaties. Moreover, it announced that both in peacekeeping and peace restoration operations, the Russian troop had the following main tasks –

1. to disengage the warring factions,

2. to stabilize the situation, and

3. to ensure the conditions for a just and peace settlement ("Russia's Military Doctrine" : 2000).
The doctrine also mentioned several other tasks and functions for Russian troops that the troops had to perform while disengaging armed groups of the warring factions. These functions or tasks were as follows:

1. to pave the way for humanitarian aid
2. to provide helping hand to the evacuation of civilians from the zone of conflicts,
3. to establish political settlement and
4. to provide special training to its troops for the tasks of peacekeeping operations.

4. RUSSIAN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS: UNDER PUTIN

During Yeltsin’s period, Russian peacekeeping operations in CIS were more of a military solution, which were characterised by the use of already stationed troops in the areas where hostilities broke out besides deploying the troops from the Russian territory. Most of the Russian peacekeeping operations were conducted under the CIS mandate, which were more or less used by the Russian government in its efforts to maintain Russia's security and national interests both by ensuring military presence and by suppressing the violence. After all, the Russian peacekeeping operations in CIS were part of its policy to regain the great power status in World politics. Putin followed the same policy but with different means and methods. He strengthened the Russian diplomatic campaign to legitimise its peacekeeping operations in the CIS and to expand its operations in various International peacekeeping operations. Meanwhile, the expenditure on the Russian peacekeeping operations had grown higher. In fact, during 1992-1998, Russia had spent about 1.2 billion roubles on peacekeeping operations (Polikanov 2003:195 in Mackinlay and Peter Cross (ed) 2003). These financial burdens forced Russian leaders to reduce its troop presence overseas (Ibid). But Putin re-deployed the troops in 2001.

Putin’s peacekeeping operations in the CIS evolved with the various reforms and changes in the structure of the troops or units as well as with a revival of the Collective Security treaty. The status of the military had also changed. Special trainings on peacekeeping were given to the troops who were selected for
this job. During the Kosovo crisis in 1999, the Russian government made a decision to prepare amendments to the law, while participating in the UN peacekeeping mission, “On Military Service and Conscription” in order to allow conscripted soldiers to sign up to become professional contract soldiers after six months of service instead of 12 months (as was provided by Federal law). The amendments also had a provision on signing up of contract soldiers for a duration of six to 12 months to participate in peacekeeping operations (Ibid: 193). However, these changes were made in early 2001 only.

Beside these developments, structural changes in its peacekeeping forces were also visible. For instance, in Transdniestria, the peacekeepers from Privolzhsky and Leningradsky districts were replaced by units of the disbanded 14th Army and then by units from the Moscow military district and in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the missions were accomplished by troops of the North Caucasus military district (Ibid, :194). Meanwhile, in Tajikistan, the 201st Motor Rifle Division was relieved of their former peacekeeping functions and inducted into regular Russian army.

4.1. Russian Peacekeeping in Georgia

Since taking over as president of Russia, Vladimir Putin has successfully streamlined and centralized the decision-making processes, particularly in foreign and security policies. The pressures on Georgia, which earlier had often been imputed to various Russian agencies acting purportedly on their own, became more systematic and more dangerous under Putin's presidency than they had been during Boris Yeltsin's final years. President Putin intensified the pressures on Georgia well before the Pankisi problem came up. Moscow's fixation in recent past on Pankisi had more or less served as an instrument to distract international attention from its other actions.

Dissatisfaction over the Russian peacekeeping role in the country was intensified soon after the U.S. came into the region. Moreover, Russia's decision to stop withdrawal of its troops from the region, which Moscow once agreed to during the OSCE meeting in 1999 in Istanbul, had become a common debate
between Moscow and Georgia. The Georgian President, Mikhail Saakashvili further warned Russia not to support separatists in South Ossetia. Meanwhile, top-level talks were held between Moscow and Washington to prevent the violence in the breakaway Georgian region from erupting into armed conflict. There was a string of clashes in 2002 that had increased tensions between Tbilisi, South Ossetia's self-proclaimed government and Russian peacekeepers, who many Georgians suspected of siding with the separatists.

Table 10. Russian Peacekeeping Forces in the CIS in 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units number</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Russian Acronym</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Helicopter squadron, autonomous</td>
<td>Combat unit</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Bombora (Gudauta)</td>
<td>OVZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Motorised rifle battalion, autonomous</td>
<td>Combat unit</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Gudauta</td>
<td>OMCB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Motorised rifle battalion, autonomous</td>
<td>Combat unit</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Tskhnivali</td>
<td>OMCB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Motorised rifle battalion, autonomous</td>
<td>Combat unit</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Urta</td>
<td>OMCB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Signal battalion, autonomous</td>
<td>Combat unit</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Abkhazia</td>
<td>OBS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.62</td>
<td>Air defence regiment</td>
<td>Combat unit</td>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>Tiraspol</td>
<td>ZRP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Motorised rifle battalion, autonomous</td>
<td>Combat unit</td>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>Tiraspol</td>
<td>OMSBR (GV)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Signal regiment, autonomous</td>
<td>Combat unit</td>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>Tiraspol</td>
<td>OPS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2003, besides the dissatisfaction over Russia’s decision to ignore withdrawal of its troops, it was the mandate of the CISPKF (Commonwealth of Independent States Peacekeeping Forces) which gave a blow to the Russian peacekeeping operations and gave bad name in front of the international community. The CISPKF got expired in 2003 but the Russian peacekeeping troops continued its presence in Georgia without a clear approval from Tbilisi (Oku 2005). However, the Abkhazian separatists were in favour of it and accused Tbilisi for Georgia’s attempt to annex them. As we see in Table 10, Russian peacekeeping forces had maintained a presence of its maximum forces in Georgia. Most of these units (CISPKF) came from the GRVZ (Gruppa Rossivskikh Voisk V zakavkazie).

The Georgia-Russian relationship was further worsened after the Georgian parliament passed a resolution on July 18 by 144 votes (of a total of 235, and in the absence of opposition deputies) calling on the government to take immediate measures to expedite the withdrawal from South Ossetia and Abkhazia of the Russian peacekeeping contingents that have been deployed there since 1992 and 1994 respectively (Fuller 2006). The Georgian government accused the Russian peacekeeping operations in South Ossetia and Abkhazia as “permanent attempt to annex Georgia’s territory”. (“Parliament instructs the Government to cease Russian peacekeeping,” 2006). Besides, the Georgian Parliament had instructed the government to undertake the necessary measures “for deployment of the international police forces” in the conflict zones (Ibid.). This clearly indicated the Georgian government’s efforts to replace the Russian peacekeeping operation with the International peacekeeping forces.

Another factor in the equation was Georgia’s threat to leave the CIS. For instance, MP Levan Berdzenishvili of the opposition Republican Party, said “It is a waste of time. Let the government announce that Georgia quits the CIS and of course this will automatically lead to stopping of the peacekeepers’ mandate in Abkhazia,” (Ibid). In response, Putin made it clear that Russia was not interested in withdrawal. In fact, after the armed clashes in Kodori during the summer of 2006, Russian soldiers increased their military activities. Moreover, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov dismissed the resolution as politically rather than militarily motivated. Lavrov argued that it would be more appropriate to try to build trust
between Georgia and the leaders of its breakaway republics, and he stressed that
Russia was trying, together with the OSCE and the UN, to promote a political
settlement of the two conflicts. He further stated that "Our soldiers will implement
their mandate to the end, until all political agreements are in existence," (RIA
Novosti 2006a). In fact, the July 18 resolution fueled fears among the Abkhazian
and South Ossetian leaders. They assumed that the resolution was a part of
Georgia’s new offensive for bringing back the breakaway region under the control
of the central Georgian government.

4.1.1. South Ossetia

By June 2006, Russian peacekeeping operation in South Ossetia came to be
accused by Georgia over issues of troop rotation. Col. Rem Akimov, chief-of staff
of the Joint Peacekeeping Force in the Georgian-Ossetian conflict zone said that
"the rotation is over now, and the Russian peacekeeping contingent has been
brought back in line with the set quota - 500 men per battalion" (RIA Novosti
2006b). These 500 Russian peacekeepers were operating in South Ossetia as part
of a CIS peacekeeping force that also included equal number of Georgian and
Ossetian servicemen. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Russia’s peacekeeping
forces were deployed in 1992 following the signing of an agreement between the
then leaders of Georgia and Russia, Eduard Shevardnadze and Boris Yeltsin, that
ended two years of sporadic low-level hostilities between informal Georgian and
South Ossetian militias. The different national peacekeeping contingents patrolled
the conflict zone separately. However, the Georgians accused the Russian
peacekeepers for selectively extending protection to Ossetian civilians and to
Ossetian criminal clans engaged in smuggling, while ignoring Ossetian reprisals
against the unrecognized republic's minority Georgian population.

4.1.2. Abkhazia

The Russian peacekeeping force in Abkhazia was far larger (1,600 men) than the
one in South Ossetia, and not complemented by contingents from any other
country. In fact, Ukraine had offered to send peacekeepers to Abkhazia under the
aegis of the UN, but not of the CIS. On 29 March 2000, despite the Georgian
pressure for withdrawal of its troops, Putin requested for the extension of mandate of the Russian peacekeeping operation in Abkhazia. His request was supported by the UN special representative for Abkhazia, Dieter Boden, and also by Abkhazian president Vladislav Ardzinba (http://wwwanca.org/resource-centre/transcaucasus.php?transyer=2001). The UN special envoy Dieter Boden, also criticized the Georgian side for the lack of progress in the repatriation of ethnic Georgian displaced from their homes in Abkhazia. On the other hand, Tbilisi repeatedly accused the Russian peacekeepers of conniving with Abkhaz criminal gangs and of failing to protect Georgians who had returned to their homes in Abkhazia's southernmost Gali Raion from where they fled during the fighting of 1992-93.

In 2006, however, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's outgoing special representative for Abkhazia, Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini, lauded the Russian presence, together with that of the unarmed UN Observer Mission in Georgia, as "the sole deterrent to prevent the situation spiraling out of control," (Fuller 2006). On the other hand, in June 2006 Abkhaz president Sergei Bagapsh warned that it would deploy its armed forces and plant mines along the border separating Abkhazia from the rest of Georgia if the Russian forces left Abkhazia (RFE/RL July 19, 2006). Moreover, after the July 2006 Georgian parliament resolution, Abkhazian repeatedly warned that they would not agree to the Russian peacekeepers’ withdrawal, which they claimed was Georgia’s demand to facilitate a new war (Ibid). This not only legitimised the presence of Russian peacekeeping operation in the region but also strengthened its position. The Russian peacekeeping operation in Abkhazia has been recently reinforced and raised to the total figure of 2542. Meanwhile, to maintain peace and avoid bloodshed has remained the only goal of the operation. Table 11 given below shows the number of the Russian ground forces present in Georgia in 2005.

4.2. Russian Peacekeeping in Moldova

Dov Lynch views the Russian peacekeeping operations in CIS as being similar to the traditional interposition operations deployed with the consent and continuing cooperation of the parties subsequent to the ceasefire while maintaining formal
neutrality in the zone of conflict (Lynch 2000). However, in the Transdniestrian case, the issue of the parties’ consent to the operation was somewhat unclear. Since late 1990’s, Moldova had been repeatedly seeking for the replacement of the Russia led peacekeeping with an international peace-building mission operating under the aegis of the OSCE. The Moldovan delegation to the Joint Control Commission furthermore ceased its participation in the operation.

Table 11. Russian Ground Forces in Georgia in 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit no.</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Part of</th>
<th>RF Acr:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>Anti-armour division</td>
<td>Combat</td>
<td>Akhalkalaki</td>
<td>GRVZ</td>
<td>OPTADN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>142</td>
<td>Armed vehicles</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Tbilisi</td>
<td>GRVZ</td>
<td>BTRZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115</td>
<td>Armoured battalion</td>
<td>Combat</td>
<td>Batumi</td>
<td>GRVZ</td>
<td>OTB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Artillery ammunition depot</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Sagaredzho</td>
<td>GRVZ</td>
<td>ABB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1089</td>
<td>Artillery regiment</td>
<td>Combat</td>
<td>Batumi</td>
<td>GRVZ</td>
<td>SAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>817</td>
<td>Artillery regiment</td>
<td>Combat</td>
<td>Akhalkalaki</td>
<td>GRVZ</td>
<td>SAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>Cc central</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Kodzhori</td>
<td>GRVZ</td>
<td>US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>cc-post, reserve</td>
<td>Cc</td>
<td>Mtskheta</td>
<td>GRVZ</td>
<td>ZKP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Grvz battle group cc post</td>
<td>Cc</td>
<td>Tbilisi</td>
<td>GRVZ</td>
<td>Sjtab GRZV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>364</td>
<td>Guard battalion</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Akhalkalaki</td>
<td>GRVZ</td>
<td>OBOO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>176</td>
<td>Maintenance and renovation</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Batumi</td>
<td>GRVZ</td>
<td>ORBV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Military base</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Akhalakali</td>
<td>GRVZ</td>
<td>VB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 1999, at the Istanbul summit, the Russian Federation reaffirmed its commitment to the withdrawal of its troops from Moldova by the end of 2002. However, Russia continued to ignore the agreements reached with the government in Chisinau and with the international community regarding the removal of its troops from Moldova. Yet, being mindful of the effects and implementation of the Adaptation of the CFE treaty, Russia could no longer evade its commitments made within the framework of the Final Act of Participating-States in the CFE treaty, namely to remove from Moldova the heavy armaments limited by this treaty by the
end of 2001. As a result, during the two years following the 1999 Istanbul Summit, Moscow withdrew 125 pieces of Treaty Limited Equipment (TLE) and 60 railway wagons containing ammunition from Moldova. In 2002 Russia withdrew just 3 military equipment trains (118 railway wagons) and 2 of ammunition (43 wagons) from Moldova.

In the course of 2003, 11 rail convoys transporting military equipment and 31 transporting ammunitions left Moldova. These “efforts” did not, however, led to the end of Russian military presence on the Republic of Moldova’s territory, as the 2002 Decision of the OSCE Ministerial Council in Porto had stipulated. At present, the districts on the east bank of the Nistru River in the Republic of Moldova are still occupied by Russian troops, and over 20,000 tons of ammunitions remain stored in the depots of Colbasna. According to the OSCE Mission to Moldova, of a total of 42,000 tons of ammunitions stored in Transdniestria, 1,153 tons (3%) was transported back to Russia in 2001, 2,405 tons (6%) in 2002 and 16,573 tons (39%) in 2003 (Dr. Gribincea: http://politicom.moldova.org/stiri/eng/20998/). However, the growing dissatisfaction on the Moldovan side over the presence of the Russian forces surfaced again in 2005.

In June and July 2005, the Moldovan parliament passed resolutions calling for the complete withdrawal of Russian troops, in line with Russia’s agreement under the CFE Treaty, 1999 and the Istanbul Commitments within that treaty. Those Moldovan parliamentary acts equally called for replacing Russia's "peacekeeping" troops with an international mission of military and civilian observers. However, Moscow, on the other hand, insisted that the states supporting the adoption of the CFE Treaty should ratify this document before Russia withdrew its troops from Moldova and Georgia. These developments showed the reaction of the Moldovan people against the Russian peacekeeping operations and served as a source of accusation against Moscow of pursuing a hidden imperialist agenda.
Table 12. Russian Ground Forces in Tajikistan in 2005.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit no.</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>RF Acr:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Military base</td>
<td>Dushanbe</td>
<td>Military base</td>
<td>VB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201</td>
<td>Motorised rifle division</td>
<td>Dushanbe</td>
<td>Combat</td>
<td>MSD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>148</td>
<td>Motorised rifle regiment</td>
<td>Kulyab</td>
<td>Combat</td>
<td>MSP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>191</td>
<td>Motorised rifle regiment</td>
<td>Kurgan-Chube</td>
<td>Combat</td>
<td>MSP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>Motorised rifle regiment</td>
<td>Dushanbe</td>
<td>Combat</td>
<td>MSP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


4.3. Tajikistan

As analysed in Chapter 4, Russia had a large border troop along with the 201st Motorised Rifle Division (MRD) as part of the peacekeeping forces in Tajikistan. During the period, 1992 to 1997, these troops were alleged to be biased which eventually led to accusations of imperialism against Moscow by other CIS member states as well as by Western countries. Under Putin’s policy, the 201st MRD had been made no longer a part of the peacekeeping forces. In 2001, the 201st MRD was transformed into a regular army (‘Russian Military base to be established in Tajikistan.’ 2006). Since then, under the provision of the interstate agreement, the 201st MRD has been in Tajikistan and involved in law enforcement and anti-terrorism activities (Polikanov 2003: 194). Besides, one of its units is also attached to the counter-terrorist rapid deployment force established in late May 2001 within the framework of the Collective Security Treaty (Ibid). The base was formed as
base number 4 and hosted some 5,000 personnel. In 2004, Russia and Tajikistan concluded an agreement, under which the Russia agreed to hand over responsibility for border protection to Tajik forces by 2006. However, the Tajik border still witnesses the presence of the Russian army.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO UN PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS

Since 1973, the Russian Federation had been participating in international peacekeeping efforts. In fact, after the Cold War in 1991, Russia has accelerated its participation in UN peacekeeping mission by contributing both military and police personnel. The principal tasks of these military observers are monitoring adherence to armistice agreements and ceasefires between combatants while the important tasks of the police personnel involve extending a helping hand to create and train the police forces of that particular host country.

In the post Cold War scenario, Russia consistently stands for improved cooperation between the UN and regional organizations under Articles 52 and 53, Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. In fact, the interaction between the UN and regional organizations is of special importance to Russia in the light of the growing cooperation between the United Nations and the CIS in settling conflicts on the territory of the Commonwealth. Russia has been working or campaigning to set up clear cut restrictions of cooperation and reasonable division of labour between the United Nations and its regional partners in the field of peacekeeping. But such division or cooperation should not clash with the Security Council’s primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.

Since 1999, many Russian military and police including civilian personnel have been taking part in UN peacekeeping missions in various corner of the world. Russia became one of the countries having the greatest number of military observers engaged in peacekeeping operation i.e. 122 troops in Liberia, Burundi, Sudan and Sierra Leone as of October 31, 2006. In fact, Russian police officers serving in the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) were awarded UN peacekeeping medals in March 2006 (UN 2006). During this award distribution ceremony, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General for
Operations and Rule of Law, MR, Luiz Carlos da Costa praised the Russian contingents saying “your invaluable support to UN peacekeeping has demonstrated Russia’s strong commitment to international peace and security,” (Ibid.).

Generally speaking, close to 10,000 Russian servicemen and civil policemen are involved in peacekeeping operations in different formats: about 300 men in the UN PKOs (Russia takes part in 10 out of 17 UN operations launched), more than 6,600 troops as members of the CIS Collective Forces in Tajikistan, about 1,700 troops in the CIS Collective Peacekeeping Forces in Abkhazia, Georgia, more than 1,300 troops as members of multinational Stabilization Forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Fiftieth Anniversary of United Nations Peacekeeping, 1998. In April 2005, two Russian policemen joined the UN peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo with the tasks of monitoring and training of local policemen (RIA Novosti 2005). According to the Interior Ministry, 132 Russian policemen are currently involved in peacekeeping operations abroad. Moreover, Russian military contingent of 200 soldiers and four Mi-8 military transport helicopters were also engaged in Sudan under the UN peacekeeping mission with tasks of patrolling southern Sudan (Agence France-Presse 2006). It is true that the Russian Federation is fully aware of its responsibility as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, and continues to contribute its troops for successful operations of UN peacekeeping activities.

6. FUTURE OF RUSSIAN PEACEKEEPING

Russia’s expansion of its peacekeeping operation in international peacekeeping operations particularly in post Soviet era has strengthened its role as a great power in world politics. In the above mentioned context, with its large experience in peacekeeping operations, Russia has shown to the world the capability for conducting such operations in intra-state conflicts characteristic of the post cold war world. With the modernization of the Russian Armed Forces that has been pursued under Putin, this development dramatically enhances their peacekeeping capability. As noted earlier, Russia has already participated in a large number of UN, as well as in a relatively small number of, NATO-led peacekeeping operations besides its dominant role of peacekeeping under CIS collective peacekeeping in
former Soviet republics. Indeed, the NATO and Russia are engaged in developing inter-operable structures for such future joint operations.

Table 13. Russian Troop and Other Personnel Contribution to the UN Peacekeeping (1996-2007)

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>1,222</td>
<td>1,125</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>372</td>
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<td>208</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>1,195</td>
<td>1,114</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>382</td>
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<td>320</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>300</td>
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<td>April</td>
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<td>83</td>
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<td>337</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>343</td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
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<td>1,122</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>293</td>
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<td>June</td>
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<td>1,099</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>302</td>
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<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>1,267</td>
<td>1,057</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>298</td>
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<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>1,177</td>
<td>1,082</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>1,117</td>
<td>1,065</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>219</td>
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<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>1,279</td>
<td>945</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>290</td>
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<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>1,215</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>295</td>
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<td>322</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>218</td>
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<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>1,173</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>293</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Peace and Security Section of the Department of Public information in cooperation with the Department of Peacekeeping Operation, (URL: http://www.globalpolicy.org/Security/Peacekp/data/pka)
However, cooperation has almost frozen because of the sudden worsening in relations between Russia and the West during 2002-04. For instance, a new section of political elite emerged in Russia in early 2002 that raised voices against Putin's anti-terrorist coalition and good relations with the NATO and the USA. This development produced a public opinion which reflected their fears on the increasing presence of the Western troops in Central Asia (Buckley 2003: 35). On the other hand, Russia's demand for equal partnership in NATO with full veto power remained unacceptable to the US led NATO members (Ibid.). Moreover, the eastward expansion of the EU (European Union) in 2004 that brought maximum proximity to Russian borders was a major concern to Moscow. The joining of the EU by the three Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) as well as by Rumania, Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia, Cyprus, Malta and Bulgaria has created a problem of access for Russia to Kaliningra (separated from Russia by Lithuania and Belarus) (Bakwa 2004: 212). However, NATO remains Russia's most likely partner in international peacekeeping operations in near future. Paradoxically, participating in such operations might be necessary for Russia to project itself as a leading power on the world stage.

In the near future, particularly in the near abroad, Russia will prefer to work under the aegis of the CIS while striving to receive UN mandate and funding for its operations. A look at the priority areas of the Russian foreign policies from Yeltsin to Putin clearly shows that Russia will most likely be unwilling to sacrifice control of the operation for a full UN mandate and funding, but would continue to request for funds and troops from other CIS states. Despite the high costs of involvement, Russia would continue to get involved in conflicts in the near abroad to protect its interests and maintain influence in the region.

6.1. Resources for Future Russian Peacekeeping Forces

The 15th Motor Rifle Brigade (MRB) of Samara, whose mission consists solely of peacekeeping tasks, has a potential for future Russian peacekeeping operation. It was made up of some 2,000 troops and was established on the basis of a NATO-Russia initiative in 2005. Troops and officers in this unit were given special peacekeeping training, such as language courses (Bruusgaard 2007). The 15th
MRB has been a part of the NATO-Russia Interoperability Framework Program, under which a number of activities are planned for the period ending in 2009, culminating in a live exercise with the 15th MRB and the NATO Response Force scheduled for 2009.

In the CIS, the use of motor rifle units in peacekeeping operations has been extensive, with the 201st motor rifle division in Tajikistan being the prime example. Some of these light infantry units are also part of the permanently combat-ready units of the Russian Armed Forces (Ibid.). Such deployment would not only free the 15th brigade at Samara, but also provide the highly trained units of the Russian army with necessary combat and operations training. Such experience seems essential if these units are to be as efficient as is intended. Thus the resources necessary to deploy to international peacekeeping operations are currently being enhanced.

7. CONCLUSION

The increasing presence of the United States in Central Asia and Caucasus following 9/11 has compelled the Russian government to strengthen cooperation with its allies in the region despite accusations from Georgia and Moldova. These developments as well as the demands of the international political situation led the President Putin to make several changes within the force structure and selection of the peacekeepers. The ground forces of the Russian army were given the leading role in the peacekeeping operation in the CIS. His new National Security Concepts, foreign policy and Military Doctrine of the 2000 provide the necessary support to post II September developments.

Meanwhile, the Russian refusal to withdraw its troops from the CIS as was agreed by Moscow in Istanbul in 1999 further heated up the controversies of Russian presence in the region. In fact, the Georgian and the Moldovan governments had shown their dissatisfaction with the Russian peacekeeping operation in the region. However, the separatist groups of Abkhazia and Transdniestria were neutral to the Russian presence. The Russian decision to stop withdrawal of its troops from the CIS was one of its responses to the increasing
U.S. presence in the region with the ambition of a long term presence. Washington’s anti-terrorist campaign and its presence in Central Asia and Caucasus had a mixed response from Putin’s government.

The CIS collective peacekeeping mandate expired in 2003 but Russian troops are still present in Central Asia and Caucasus. Russian diplomatic and political moves were accelerated despite lack of success in winning the support of the international community for its peacekeeping operations in CIS. However, Russian had shown to the world that it has a capacity to carry out the peacekeeping operation under the UN mission by serving several peacekeeping missions under the UN flag. At present, many of the Russian military and police personnel are serving peacekeeping operations under the UN blue helmet. In 2006, the Russian police contingent serving in Liberia was awarded the UN peacekeeping medal for its outstanding performance. The time has come for the Russian government to cooperate with the UN as well as with other regional organisations in peacekeeping operations both in CIS and in other part of the world to reduce financial burden on it. However, in the near future, the Russia Federation is not likely to withdraw its troops from the CIS since it continues to be an instrument for Moscow in its struggle to regain its great power status.