

Peace Policy on the Threshold of Post-Soviet Transformation

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ABSTRACT: Peace policy is an essential component of a state's foreign political strategy. After the end of WWII, and with the establishment of the United Nations system, peaceful coexistence among states became of paramount importance. This issue gained even more significance after the dissolution of the Soviet Union's empire. The evolving geopolitical scenario has caused changes in the political approaches of states toward one another. The approaches used to develop peace policy have evolved over time, leading to the modeling of methods for policy implementation. As a result, protecting international peace and security remains the primary concern of both international organizations and governments. Numerous procedures have been created to address these issues, but their success remains questionable, as evidenced by the ongoing active military conflicts and the political decisions of states. Subjects of international law openly affirm the importance of peaceful cooperation, but this is not reflected in their political behavior. There are various perspectives on how to resolve these existing issues. The presented article will analyze the military-political situation in the South Caucasus, the Balkan states, and Central Asia after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Based on this analysis, it will highlight the role of diplomacy today in the implementation of peace policy, both as a tool for realizing the foreign policies of states and as a means of addressing these issues through peace policy. The article will also examine the flaws in the mechanisms of managing peace policy.

KEYWORDS: international security, peace policy, diplomacy, geopolitical situation, international law

Introduction

What is peace? It is an antonym of war. The absolute need for peace originates from ancient times when the conflict between the two states ended with a partition document—a truce. The world has been talking about its necessity for centuries, agreements are made to establish peace, to maintain peace, and different types of platforms are created. Peace is the determining factor for the continuous development of mankind.

Peace policy became especially necessary and difficult to achieve in the context of the political changes taking place in the world at the beginning of the 20th century. After the end of the World War I, in order to achieve peace, the states decided to create a type of organization that would ensure its protection. Accordingly, the League of Nations was created to prevent future conflicts. Unfortunately, due to the World War II, the League of Nations failed to provide a platform from which to ensure permanent peace and there was a need to create its successor—a better modeled world universal organization that would also appeal to peace and at the same time ensure international order. As a result, the work of the League of Nations was dissolved and the debt imposed on it was transferred to the United Nations Organization (UN). Due to the fact that the UN was supposed to be the organization that should take care of peace, certain international legal privileges were granted to it. In the United Nations organization, different types of bodies were created to take care of security and peace. Unfortunately, the work of the United Nations was not very effective in maintaining peace, and the shortcomings of its organs were highlighted even in the last period of the 20th century, when the largest empire of the Soviet Union collapsed.

The collapse of the Soviet Union was a turning point for world politics. In fact, the bipolar era, when the world was divided into capitalist and socialist parts, is over. The Russian Federation, the legal heir of the Soviet Union, immediately after recognizing its own state as *de*

jure, begins to model the policy of the republics included in the Soviet Union in such a way as to subject it to its own influence. All this led to a rather large political collapse in the republics of the former Soviet Union, and therefore there were frequent internal disturbances, conflicts and so on in these republics. The South Caucasus is a particularly acute region where the three states—Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan—tried to establish themselves in such a way as to avoid hostilities. Despite these efforts, the protection of Georgia's statehood and political strength in the post-Soviet period was relatively difficult. An internal armed military confrontation has undermined the strength of the state.

This is where the main era of the necessary production of peace policy begins. The collapse of the Soviet system presented the world with a new vision that was supposed to end the conflicts and disagreements between the states, although in reality it did not happen. The world has been talking about various ways of peace policy/peacemaking for a long time, but their effective operation still needs to be refined.

This article will analyze the current military-political situation of the world after the collapse of the post-Soviet system using historical, dogmatic and comparative legal research methods. Based on this analysis, it will be emphasized what role diplomacy has in the implementation of peace policy today; how the gaps created can be eliminated with the help of peace policy; what types of peace mechanisms are more effective and what are the gaps in the mechanisms of peace policy management.

The Influence of Soviet Collapse on Peace Policy

The Cold War is considered a turning point for the international community. It was a period that established a new world order and had a great impact on the security issues of states. Even at the end of the Second World War, when the United Nations system was being reformed, there was active talk about what kind of mechanisms should be used to bring peace to the world. It is especially from this period that the peace policy originates, which has become the quintessence of the existence of many states.

There are many opinions about the collapse of the Soviet Union, the political decisions that should have been directed against the abolition of the system, actually followed the path leading to it. The policies of the leaders of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, Leonid Brezhnev, and Nikita Khrushchev, indicated that the dismantling of the Soviet system was going wrong. Despite many ineffective political moves, the collapse of the Soviet Union was a kind of shock to the world community, and this is due to various reasons. The first is that there was a danger of a reactivation of the conflicts that seemed to have ended during the Second World War and were still not clearly ongoing during the Cold War. Also, the main member of the security body in the world's only universal organization was the Soviet Union (the Security Council, which is responsible for world peace and security). Despite this sudden event that the Soviet Union seemed to collapse suddenly, on December 26, 1991, after the collapse of the USSR, the great powers of the world immediately recognized the creation of the Russian Federation, the legal successor state of the USSR, and it became the replacement of the places once occupied by the Soviet Union. In fact, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the order that existed during the Cold War was broken (Baberowski 2011, 148). It was time to establish a new order and modify the peace policy. The mechanisms that existed before, the hidden conflicts that the Soviet Union hid within its own borders, were suddenly activated. In addition, the Russian Federation could not adapt to the fact that it lost significant influence in the republics that were once part of the Soviet Union. Because of this, he soon began to think and act to create a type of organization that would ensure a certain influence on the member republics of the former Soviet Union. As a result, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation created the Commonwealth of Independent States. The organization's charter clearly stated that peace is a priority. It was also emphasized that the CIS would contribute to the

peaceful resolution of current conflicts between member states (Charter of the Commonwealth of Independent States, with declaration and decisions, 1993). Nevertheless, the difficulties that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union did not disappear in peaceful ways, which further intensified the need to perfect the peace policy.

Soon after the collapse of the Soviet Union, political turmoil begins in the post-Soviet republics. Even before the collapse of the system in 1988, the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia for the control of Nagorno-Karabakh ("Artsakh", as the Armenians call it) began (Hamilton 2017). However, the peace policy, which was implemented to prevent all this, ended in vain. In 1992, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) established the Minsk Group, which was tasked with de-escalating the ongoing conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia (Hopmann 2015, 167). Due to the current political situation, the Karabakh war, which started in 1988, was "frozen" for a long time. Accordingly, the Minsk Group met several times to de-escalate the conflict, but to no avail. Finally, after the armed conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2020, the President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, made a statement that the existence of the Minsk Group was no longer necessary, as he considered this conflict to have been resolved (Trend New Agency 2022). On February 16, 2024, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev officially canceled the OSCE Minsk Group and all other OSCE mechanisms (Russian News Agency 2024). The Karabakh conflict that started in 1988 continued in 1991 with the ongoing military-armed conflict in the Tskhinvali region, where the Tskhinvali region became the so-called South Ossetia (in historical context, the Shida Kartli Mountain Range) and tried to secede. The same action took place in 1992, when Abkhazia region actually had the same desire. However, it is important that the main role in this confrontation was played by the Russian Federation as a "facilitator" between the two opposing sides. Finally, on June 24, 1992, Eduard Shevardnadze and Russian President Boris Yeltsin met in the city of Sochi, where they discussed issues related to the termination of Tsetslikh. On July 14, 1992, the CIS peace operation began, the goal of which was to maintain a calm situation in the region (Sammut and Cvetkovski 1996, 14). Despite the fact that there was an agreement on the cessation of fire, small confrontations were still ongoing. In fact, the CIS peacekeeping mission could not fulfill any of its obligations regarding the provision of peace and security in the region. The so-called Tskhinvali region South Ossetia separated from Georgia, and even today, this conflict is frozen.

The next important conflict that took place on the territory of the post-Soviet Republic of Georgia was the war in Abkhazia. The internal armed conflict started between Abkhazia and the Georgian side, in which the so-called *The war in South Ossetia*, in which Russia played the main role, did not end peacefully. Moreover, the main political instigator was the Russian Federation. The confrontation also ended according to Russia's political desire: Abkhazia was separated from Georgia and is still under Russia's protection as an "independent state." Georgia's conflicts did not end there; the situation began to escalate in 2008, which finally led to the ongoing armed conflict between Russia and Georgia, and ended with the loss of the entire Tskhinvali region and the Kodori Valley.

Not only in the South Caucasus but also in the territory of Transnistria, there was an important armed confrontation, which finally ended with its de facto secession. Despite the existing peace operations there, which started in 1992 and continues to this day, the situation cannot be de-escalated. The monitoring missions there today, whose primary duty is to maintain peace and security, have been compared to being in a state of "quasi-hibernation", meaning that they are completely incapable of being there (CSCE Conflict Prevention Centre 1994, 2).

Another important conflict in the post-Soviet republics was the armed conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation, which occurred in 2014 and ended with the annexation of Crimea. In the case of Ukraine, this conflict did not end only in 2016. In 2022, after the Russian Federation decided to conquer the entire territory of Ukraine, the issue of security of the states, including the countries near Ukraine, became even more active. Unfortunately, the war is still

going on in an active mode today, in which many peace missions are involved, negotiations are actively going on between the two sides, but the fact is that we do not have the result in sight.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the situation in Central Asia also became tense, especially after the border conflict between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. This disagreement still comes from the period of the existence of the Soviet Union, when the borders between the republics had a formal meaning. Since 2000, disputes have been actively started in the 971-kilometer border area, at this time, 471 kilometers remain in dispute. During this time, negotiations on border demarcation and delimitation were actively held, but unfortunately, no consensus was reached. On these issues, the Tajik side repeatedly offered the other side the option of semi-delimitation of the disputed territories, while the Kyrgyz side preferred to determine the border line, taking into account the independence, inviolability and territorial integrity of the CIS, Almaty Declaration, and the Moscow Convention. Unfortunately, no agreement was reached and these negotiations are still actively ongoing today (Pannier 2017).

Above, we briefly reviewed the important conflict situations that took place in the post-Soviet republics. As a result, we can draw a conclusion that despite the international organizations and peace operations in the world, their effective work is being questioned, because the basic principles that states must follow in order to maintain peace and security in the world are neglected. It is necessary to introduce such mechanisms or improve the existing ones, which will make peace operations more effective.

The Influence of Diplomacy on Contemporary Peace Policy

Diplomacy is the art of relations between states and the implementation of their foreign policy. Diplomacy as a term was interpreted in different ways in different periods. For example, the famous American diplomat Henry Kissinger, in his book "Diplomacy," defines it as the adaptation of differences during negotiations. According to Hadley Bull, diplomacy is the management of relations between states and other entities involved in world politics through official policies and peaceful means.

Although diplomacy has different types of definitions, its main essence remains the same: it is a means by which states cooperate with each other. Decisions made as a result of diplomacy largely influence the foreign and domestic policies of states (Abdurahmanli 2021, 1). Diplomacy in resolving armed conflicts or internal disagreements plays an important role. Diplomatic negotiations and established platforms ensure peaceful resolution of conflicts. After the collapse of the Soviet system, diplomacy also changed its face and adapted to the existing political situation. Even in the 1990s, the role of diplomacy in the conflicts in the post-conflict space became even more evident. The changed international situation, which was still in the process of modeling, required more effective mechanisms that should condition the stabilization of the situation. For example, through diplomatic negotiations by the Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe, the Minsk Group was established in 1992 to regulate the situation concerning the Nagorno-Karabakh territory (OSCE Minsk Group). The group, which included the great powers of that time: the Russian Federation, France and the United States of America, tried to settle the Karabakh conflict for almost 30 years. Despite these efforts, the round table negotiations, the conflict was frozen for a long time.

Also, a similar mission was created during the intra-ethnic conflict of Abkhazia on the territory of Georgia. The United Nations, whose main priority is the protection of world peace and security, created an observer mission in the conflict region, which was supposed to ensure the non-interference of the third party (United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia n.d.). Despite the created observation mission, the situation could not be stabilized.

In both of the above examples, diplomatic negotiations did not have much effect since, in both cases, the conflict either froze or ended in armed conflict. Nevertheless, using only these two post-Soviet period conflicts as an example, it is not allowed to say that diplomatic

negotiations are constantly flawed or ineffective. The end of the 2008 Russia-Georgia military conflict was precisely due to diplomatic efforts. When Nicolas Sarkozy, the president of the EU chairman country at that time, stopped the intervention of the Russian Federation in the controlled territories of Georgia through diplomatic negotiations. As a result, a treaty was signed, under which Russia signed an agreement that it would stop the process of illegal annexation of the territory of Georgia. It should also be noted here that, despite the agreement, the Russian Federation continues to illegally seize the territory of Georgia, although it has nothing to do with the diplomatic negotiations conducted by Nicolas Sarkozy.

In the 1990s, the turmoil that started in the countries of the former Yugoslavia threatened the peaceful existence of Europe. Since 1991, international organizations have been actively talking about the issue of harassment of Serbs in Kosovo, to which there has been little response. All this made the situation quite tense and as a result we got a protracted ethnic conflict in the member states of the former Yugoslavia. Without international involvement, this conflict would likely have escalated into an active military confrontation (Ellis 2000, 29). However, the international organizations protecting the peace and security of the world, using their powers, began to actively discuss the status of Kosovo according to international law. In 2005, the UN Security Council started working with Kosovo to decide on its final status, although at that time the negotiations did not reach the end (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development 2022). In the following years, in 2008, the Assembly of Kosovo in Pristina passed a resolution in the face of Serbian opposition regarding the independence of its state. This issue has upset several states, including Serbia and Russia. Despite the divided opinion of the international community, today Kosovo is an independent state. Active diplomatic negotiations, created platforms ultimately prevented us from another armed conflict.

One of the most important conflicts in the post-Soviet space is the dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh. We talked about the conflict that started between them in 1988. Ultimately, this conflict ended in 2023, when the Azerbaijani side regained Nagorno-Karabakh, although to this day, neither side has signed the peace agreement, due to disagreements on the terms of the agreement (Caprile and Przetacznik 2023, 2). Nevertheless, the conflict that started in the 20th century and continued actively in the 21st century has finally ended. Later in 2023, the Azerbaijani side opened fire on the Armenian side, the hostilities ended in November 2023 as a result of active negotiations, one of the facilitators of which was the Russian Federation, and Nagorno-Karabakh came under the jurisdiction of Azerbaijan (Landgraf and Nareg 2024).

The way of peaceful settlement or final solution to the conflicts discussed above was through diplomatic negotiations and roads. Diplomacy, on its part, plays an insignificant role in conflict resolution, and our attention was paid to post-Soviet conflicts. In the world, apart from the conflicts in Europe, or even in the Caucasus region, unfortunately, conflicts are actively taking place on other continents as well. The cause of these disagreements is often internal conflict or international disagreement. In the end, we can conclude that diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict peacefully are often insufficient, because the scenario of the conflict is unpredictable. Therefore, it is necessary to create a new type of mechanism, to modify the existing one, in order to eliminate the existing conflict. Given that geopolitics is constantly changing and diplomacy will actively follow its changes, it is necessary to modify diplomacy in such a way that it adapts to the conflicts in today's reality and helps us to solve them.

University Diplomacy

For centuries, education has played a major role in the management of the state. A broad worldview, which is formed in a person from birth, is in his education. Properly received education plays a huge

role in solving any issue or even problem. Consequently, with the passage of time, education has been given even more importance.

With the passage of time, different types of educational institutions were formed, whose main mission was to provide information to young people and to develop the ability to analyze it. The young generation is the part of the society that constantly plays a decisive role in the development of the state. The policy pursued by this or that state is always aimed at future prosperity, of which the new generation is a constituent part. As a result, we are facing a very important situation regarding how the young generation can participate in the development of the state, especially in the period when the issue concerns the peace of the state. We mentioned above that many international organizations were created to take care of world peace and security. As a result, their mechanisms to ensure all this contained legal or political issues. The developed events, including armed conflicts between states and internal conflicts, have demonstrated that it is necessary to change not the goal that leads to world peace and security, but the path leading to the goal.

Along with the expansion of the educational space, the establishment of universities as centers of higher education begins. This fact makes it even more obvious that giving the youth the right education and giving them the right view of their own role has a positive effect on any state. The idea of a university includes freedom, humanism, secularism, democracy, tolerance, and so on (Khonelidze 2021, 71). The university constantly contributes to the overcoming of public problems, contradictions between generations and actors with different interests (Khonelidze 2021, 72). University as an educational space is a process of progress and continuity. It "presents a real opportunity to fulfill the historical, extraordinary mission of maintaining and strengthening the ability to self-reform" (Khonelidze 2021, 72). The immeasurable role of the university, which, in fact, shapes the outlook of a person, is necessary to solve the pressing issues facing the world today. Military armed conflicts, which have become one of the concerns of the international community, especially in the last few decades, constantly require regulation and finding appropriate mechanisms. However, unfortunately, the political and legal mechanisms that currently exist are ineffective. Therefore, it is important to discuss how to change the political or legal mechanism so that the result is inevitably positive. It was at this moment that the most important idea of university diplomacy emerged, the main characters of which are the youth in the bosom of the university. If we connect diplomacy, which is aimed at fulfilling the foreign political goals of the state, with the university and the students in its environment, we will get a new type of diplomacy—university diplomacy.

In general, space is undefined, although the existence of something in space is defined. Diplomacy is the same, if we do not introduce new elements related to its effective action, then its existence will be meaningless. Accordingly, the space of diplomacy should be filled with the important opportunities that time offers. Time offers us changes, the main thing is how the environment and space adapt to time. It is precisely the unity of diplomacy and the university that will allow us to fill the space aimed at the de-escalation of conflict situations.

University diplomacy, as a new, innovative form of diplomacy, should be considered in a way that does not separate from the essence and definition of classical diplomacy, but rather, it will be a new way "which will connect science - diplomacy and the scientific center - university" (Khonelidze 2021, 87).

The internal ethnic armed conflict in the territory of Abkhazia in the post-Soviet period further confirmed the role of the young generation in maintaining peace. The South Caucasus (a region that has always been politically active) was most painfully affected by the settlement of inter-state or even intra-state conflicts. Therefore, care for the peace of this region should be primarily based on the young generation, which is the most pragmatically-minded part of society. Therefore, the only way to solve the ethnic conflict is to expand education and use the university for all of this. Due to the fact that the opposing party, the Russian Federation, carries

out its occupation policy in the region of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali, not only with military equipment, but also engages in active propaganda, thereby facilitating the process of Russification, there is a fundamental need to find a new form of diplomacy that will be directly aimed at to regulate the internal ethnic, ethnopolitical, political and interstate conflicts hindering unity (Khonelidze 2021, 112).

Through university diplomacy, a space, a bridge, should be created where the balance of interests will be directed not to slow down the conflict situation, but to its direct resolution. "University diplomacy" as a paradigm of peace is a new model for resolving conflict situations with the help of younger generations.

Conclusion

The era, which is in constant geopolitical shifts, requires a politics of transformation. The unsystematic dismantling of the Soviet Union had a great impact on the development of world politics. Issues of peaceful coexistence have been raised, many international organizations have been created, many treaties have been adopted, which are directly aimed at maintaining world peace and security, but everything is still in vain. The mainstay is still diplomacy, as the existence of a sound, peaceful solution through negotiation. However, diplomacy is constantly changing, not in its essence, but in the means by which it is implemented.

Today, the existing mechanisms in the world, which are necessary for the production of peaceful politics, are ineffective. Many decisions, conventions, principles of international law adopted by international organizations are not respected. The interests of states always prevail over the desire for peace. Therefore, it is necessary to constantly search for new things and refine and modify the existing ones. Therefore, the ongoing conflicts in the post-Soviet period gave us the opportunity to see correctly what flaws existed in the implementation of the peace policy, to analyze it and to find a new way that would lead us to the desired goal - peace. Such a new means is "university diplomacy" mentioned and explained above. The correct use of existing educational platforms and adapting them to the necessary situation will allow us to make sure that "university diplomacy" is not only an optimistic thought, but also a reality through which the educational space becomes a new viable arena, through which we will promote the global dream - peace. Finally, "There is no way to peace, peace is the way" (Ward 2015).

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