



The Future of Peacekeeping in the Collective Security Treaty Organization

OE Watch Commentary: The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) has stated that its collective force, made up of units from member states, is capable of taking part in a UN peacekeeping mission. The units in the collective force from member states Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan have carried out a number of joint peacekeeping exercises. The CSTO has been criticized in the past for not intervening with peacekeepers during a conflict involving a member state, notably during the June 2010 violence in southern Kyrgyzstan, though not much criticism came up during Armenia's recent clashes with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh. The accompanying excerpted articles report on the CSTO's ongoing efforts with peacekeeping and provide one example of criticism of the organization for not acting during the recent clashes in Nagorno-Karabakh. They also provide insight into what the organization could do with peacekeeping moving forward.



Flag of the Collective Security Treaty Organization.

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flag_of_the_Collective_Security_Treaty_Organization.svg
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The article from *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, a newspaper in Kazakhstan, reports on a recent CSTO meeting “held in the format of a video conference.”

The article mentions how “leaders of the states exchanged views on international and regional security” at the meeting and that “special attention was paid to practical measures to counter current challenges and threats, to combat terrorist manifestations, drug trafficking, and joint measures in the field of cyber security.” The article also includes statements from the President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, who “praised the role of the mediation of Russian President Vladimir Putin in ending hostilities in Nagorno-Karabakh.” He also stated that he believed it was “the only correct decision in the current critical situation and this agreement will contribute to the establishment of long-term peace in the region.” The article did not bring up the possibility of deploying CSTO peacekeepers to Nagorno-Karabakh, but it did note how member states signed off on new documents, including “on the basic educational and methodological organization for the training of personnel of the CSTO Peacekeeping Forces” and “on the protocol on the composition and deployment of peacekeeping contingents of the CSTO member states.”

The article from Russian newspaper *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* discusses the response of the CSTO to the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, specifically that “a Russian peacekeeping mission is being deployed, but the CSTO troops were not involved in it.” The author of the article notes how “CSTO leaders even planned to participate in UN missions, preparing special battalions of blue helmets for this” and that “just a month ago, Belarus hosted the command post exercise with the CSTO peacekeepers ‘Indestructible Brotherhood – 2020’.” The author brings up how during the clashes in Nagorno-Karabakh, “CSTO Secretary General Stanislav Zas stated that ‘the organization will provide military assistance to Armenia in the event of a real threat to its territorial integrity or a direct military attack.’ But, in his words, Yerevan did not apply to the CSTO for such help.” The author also notes how Secretary Zas stated that he “welcomed the entry of Russian peacekeepers,” but that “he did not say anything about the readiness to do this of other CSTO countries.” The CSTO has a collective defense article, but the organization's officials have stated in the past that the article has not been enacted in the case of any of Armenia's clashes over Nagorno-Karabakh because it is not Armenian territory. Additionally, CSTO members have stated in the past that they would only participate in a peacekeeping mission with the organization if it is through a UN mission. This notably came up a few years ago when Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan rejected a call by the Russian government to participate in peacekeeping in Syria because of a lack of UN involvement in it. In any case, the recent CSTO summit shows that the organization continues to prepare for a peacekeeping mission, even if it has yet to happen. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**

“Kassym-Jomart Tokayev made a number of proposals for the further development of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, including the establishment of a new institution - a special representative of the CSTO Secretary General on peacekeeping issues.”



Continued: The Future of Peacekeeping in the Collective Security Treaty Organization

Source: “Liliya Syzdykova, “Безопасность – задача общая (Security is a common issue),” *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, 3 December 2020. <https://www.kazpravda.kz/articles/view/bezopasnost--zadacha-obshchaya>

The session of the Collective Security Council of the Collective Security Treaty Organization was held in the format of a video conference. It was attended by the President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko, President of Russia Vladimir Putin, President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon, Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan, Acting President of Kyrgyzstan Talant Mamytov, and CSTO Secretary General Stanislav Zas.

The leaders of the states exchanged views on international and regional security, summed up the results of the implementation of the priority areas of the CSTO activities in the outgoing year, and outlined plans for the coming period.

Special attention was paid to practical measures to counter current challenges and threats, to combat terrorist manifestations, drug trafficking, and joint measures in the field of cyber security...

...Speaking about the current situation in the field of regional and global security, characterized by the growing potential for conflict in interstate relations, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev praised the role of the mediation of Russian President Vladimir Putin in ending hostilities in Nagorno-Karabakh. The agreement reached with the most active participation of Russia, in my opinion, is the only correct decision in the current critical situation and this agreement will contribute to the establishment of long-term peace in the region...

Kassym-Jomart Tokayev made a number of proposals for the further development of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, including the establishment of a new institution - a special representative of the CSTO Secretary General on peacekeeping issues...

...The practice of military exercises of the CSTO member countries has been continued. Much attention is paid to joint work on combating terrorism and organized crime... “In light of the current tense situation in the world and the region, the relevance of building up the CSTO’s potential to effectively counter threats and security challenges is increasing many times over,” said President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon...

Following the summit, 15 documents were approved and adopted... According to President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, the adoption of these documents convincingly demonstrates the common commitment of the member countries of the organization to further strengthen and develop international dialogue and cooperation to address global and regional problems.

Including:

...“On the basic educational and methodological organization for the training of personnel of the CSTO Peacekeeping Forces”

“On the Protocol on the composition and deployment of peacekeeping contingents of the CSTO member states”...

Source: “Vladimir Mukhin, “Почему в Карабахе нет миротворцев ОДКБ (Why there are no CSTO peacekeepers in Nagorno Karabakh),” *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 17 November 2020. https://www.ng.ru/armies/2020-11-17/1_8016_karabakh.html

...In Nagorno-Karabakh, for example, a Russian peacekeeping mission is being deployed, but the CSTO troops were not involved in it... There is no definite answer to this question.

There is also no explanation why, given the low efficiency of the CSTO, the countries that belong to this organization (Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan) will not dissolve it... While Moscow is taking large-scale and very costly peacekeeping steps related to the organization in the Karabakh conflict zone of measures to separate the warring units, return refugees, deploy observation posts, demining, etc., the secretaries of the security councils of the CSTO countries have, as it were, worked through all these questions on Tuesday in virtual mode...

Recall that creating peacekeeping forces within the framework of collective defense, the CSTO leaders even planned to participate in UN missions, preparing special battalions of blue helmets for this. But where are these battalions now?

Just a month ago, Belarus hosted a command post exercise with the CSTO peacekeepers “Indestructible Brotherhood - 2020”, in which the peacekeeping units of the organization participated, including the servicemen of the brigade of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, which is now actually operating in Nagorno-Karabakh...

In October 2020, when the Karabakh war was in full swing, CSTO Secretary General Stanislav Zas stated that “the organization will provide military assistance to Armenia in the event of a real threat to its territorial integrity or a direct military attack.” But, in his words, Yerevan did not apply to the CSTO for such help. On November 11, the CSTO Secretary General welcomed the entry of Russian peacekeepers into the Karabakh conflict zone. But for some reason he did not say anything about the readiness to do this of other CSTO countries...