

Soft Security Perceptions in the Former Soviet Republics: Following, Engaging or Ignoring NATO?

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The recognition of “soft” or non-traditional threats in the national security concepts of the former Soviet republics has become increasingly common during the past decade. Yet, this has also occurred in parallel with the gradual evolution of NATO strategic doctrine from its classical purpose of maintaining an effective counter-balance to Russia in continental Europe, to the vision of a transnational security community that protects member states from both military and non-military challenges that affect societies as a whole. This article examines the linkage between soft security perceptions in the post-Soviet states and their relationship with NATO since independence. The analysis compares bilateral relations with NATO and the recognition of soft threats as indicated by their inclusion in the official national security documents of the Baltic States, East Europe/the Slavic Republics, the South Caucasus, and Central Asia since independence. The chronology of NATO policies and the identification of soft threat types are examined to determine to what extent they represent direct alignment with NATO soft security initiatives, indirect influence of security assistance policies, or the pursuit of more independent definitions of national or Eurasian security as an alternative to renewed opposition between Europe and Russia alleged by advocates of further NATO enlargement.



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During the past decade, the governments of all fourteen republics of the former Soviet Union have promulgated updated versions of their official national security concepts, or, in the case of the South Caucasus states, long embroiled in unresolved civil and interstate conflicts, have introduced them for the first time. The ongoing process of revision or redefinition of national defense priorities undoubtedly reflects both changes in the international climate and the evolution of global security conventions as well as domestic political debates. Yet, a particularly noteworthy feature of these documents is their increasing identification of non-traditional or “soft” threats linking both internal and external domains alongside conventional military contingencies across post-Soviet countries. On one hand, this development may simply signify the growing recognition of the potential dangers posed by hostile non-state actors and forces since the 1990s, an established international norm in the post-9/11 era. Earlier studies have attributed this broadening awareness to a range of factors, including: the possible impact of issues such as environmental degradation and organized crime on internal and regional stability in Central Asia and the Caucasus; the urgent risks posed by the increasing flow of illegal drugs from the Southern Tier states into Russia and Europe; the formation of new “security complexes”; and the spillover of pathologies such as narcotics, illicit arms trade and terrorism across East-Central Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia due to the disintegration of the former Soviet borders.¹ These may have been compounded by the prevalence of interethnic tensions, dire socio-economic conditions and lack of preparation for natural disasters in some countries of the Caspian Sea region.² The interconnected nature of domestic and foreign threats and their negative impact upon national well-being is further demonstrated by the increase of HIV/AIDS infections, criminal cartels and drug and human trafficking in the Baltic and Slavic republics. In the Caucasus and Central Asian states, this threat matrix has been linked to the limited capacity to control territory and porous international boundaries, as well

1 See Nancy Lubin, “New Threats in Central Asia and the Caucasus: An Old Story with a New Twist”, and Irina Zviagelskaya and Vitali Naumkin, “Non-Traditional Threats, Risks and Challenges in the Former Soviet South”, in Rajan Menon, Yuri Fedorov and Gia Nodia eds. *Russia, the Caucasus, and Central Asia: The 21st Century Security Environment*, EastWest Institute, 1999, pp. 209, 244-1245; and Roy Allison, “Subregional Cooperation and Security in the CIS”, in Renata Dwan and Oleksandr Pavliuk eds. *Building Security in the New States of Eurasia: Subregional Cooperation in the Former Soviet Space*, M.E. Sharpe, 2000, p. 171.

2 Hrach Tchirlingirian, “Key Security Issues in the Caspian Region”, in M. Sharpe and Agboluaje eds. *Science and Society in the Face of the New Security Threats*, IOS Press, 2006, pp. 51-53.

as the activity of transnational criminal groups.³

Yet, in the contemporary context, such innovations in defense policy are frequently associated with the expanding presence of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), as it ostensibly advances from its classical role as a U.S.-dominated counterbalance to once-and-future Russian imposition on the Continent to a *bona fide* transnational security community—in effect, a direct auxiliary of the European Union (EU)—which promotes and protects the values of the Western liberal democracies.⁴ The logic of this premise links the implementation of NATO partnerships and structural reform programs in non-member and aspirant states to doctrinal objectives of comprehensive defense against the social, political, economic, environmental and technological hazards that affect societies as a whole.⁵ Thus, within this view, military preparedness is equally directed toward the domestic concerns of instituting good governance and civil protection in transitional states. Some observers have posited an essential disagreement between the strategic perspective adopted by Russia since the first Putin presidency, which prioritizes the protection of state interests and the legitimate use of force over new threats, and the globally-oriented strategy professed by Brussels, which does not recognize a division between “hard” and “soft” security issues.⁶ Yet ironically, rather than transcending Cold War legacies, such assertions about fundamental differences between

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3 Adil Baguirov and Jason E. Strakes, “Former Soviet Republics” in Karl DeRouen Jr. and Paul Bel-lamy eds. *International Security and the United States: an Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, Praeger Security International and Greenwood Publishing Group, 2008, p. 181.

4 See Corneliu Bjola, “NATO as a Factor of Security Community Building: Enlargement and Democratization in Central and Eastern Europe”, EAPC-NATO Individual Fellowship Final Report 1999-2001; Michael C. Williams and Iver B. Neumann, “From alliance to security community: NATO, Russia and the power of identity”, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 29 (2). 2000, pp. 603-624; Sonia Lucarelli, “Final Report: Peace And Democracy: The Rediscovered Link: The EU, NATO and the European System of Liberal-Democratic Security Communities”, Research project funded by the NATO Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council Individual Research Fellowships – 2000-2002 Programme; and Emanuel Adler, “The Spread of Security Communities: Communities of Practice, Self-Restraint, and NATO’s Post-Cold War Transformation”, *European Journal of International Relations*, vol. 14 no. 2, June 2008, pp. 195-230.

5 See NATO 2020: Assured Security; Dynamic Engagement, Analysis and Recommendations of the Group of Experts on A New Strategic Concept for NATO, 17 May 2010, pp. <http://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/expertsreport.pdf>; and “Strategic Concept For the Defence and Security of The Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation”, Adopted by Heads of State and Government in Lisbon, 2010. <http://www.nato.int/lisbon2010/strategic-concept-2010-eng.pdf>

6 Andrey Makarychev, *Hard, Soft, or Human? Security Discourses in the EU, NATO, and Russia*, PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo No. 129, 2010, pp. 1-5. http://www.ponarseurasia.org/sites/default/files/policy-memos-pdf/pepm_129.pdf

Perhaps the most relevant NATO administrative structure concerned with non-conventional threats specific to the former Soviet area is the Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme, which was consolidated into a single Committee staffed by civilian scientists and experts from partner countries in 2006, but placed under the jurisdiction of ESCD after initially being discontinued in November 2010.

Russian and Euro-Atlantic security imperatives may contribute to the burgeoning discourse of renewed opposition between incompatible worldviews or “civilizations” reminiscent of the bipolar era.⁷ This dilemma has been underscored in particular by the crisis that ensued in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea following the Ukrainian revolution of February-March 2014, which provoked the suspension of NATO-Russia relations, deployment of air forces, mobilization of troops, and plans for defense upgrades and renewed deterrence postures among several member states. The occupation of the territory by Spetsnaz and other elite units and its subsequent annexation via irregular referendum have been portrayed by various observers as the geopolitical fault line of a new Russian irredentism in Eastern Europe (buoyed by popular analogies to the Sudetenland and *Anschluss* strategies pursued by Nazi Germany in 1938). However, these

actions might be more accurately understood as an essentially limited exercise utilizing elements of soft power, which exploited existing strategic levers such as popular support by the predominantly ethnic Russian population and networks of Diaspora and civil society organizations, the projection of influence by the previously established military and intelligence presence in the region (the Black Sea Fleet/*Chernomorskiy Flot*), and lingering resentment over the reduction of Crimean political autonomy by Kiev since the late 1990s.⁸ In addition, they were mounted in response to perceived non-military threats: in particular, an interim Ukrainian administration composed of center-right nationalists (All-Ukrainian Union “Fatherland”/*Batkivshchyna*) and former neo-fascists (All-Ukrainian Union “Freedom”/*Svoboda* and Right Sector/*Pravyi Sektor*) committed to a policy of ideological hostility toward “Russian imperialism” (including language and culture), which views European integration as synonymous with zero-sum confrontation with Moscow.⁹

7 For a detailed analysis of this effect, see Eiki Berg And Martin Mölder, *Janus-Faced Human Security Discourse: EU and Russia Talking Past Each Other in Kosovo and the Caucasus?*, Centre for EU-Russia Studies (CEURUS) EU-Russia Paper, May 2012. <http://ceurus.ut.ee/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/EU-Russia-Papers-4.pdf>

8 Yelena Osipova, “‘Russification’ of ‘Soft Power’: Transformation of a Concept”, Paper prepared for the 55th International Studies Association Annual Convention, Toronto, Canada, March 26-29, 2014, pp. 27-31.

9 See Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine, 15 April 2014*, Paragraph 4 and 67. <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/>

Further, such strong characterizations of an inherently progressive or “postmodern” European security doctrine beg the question of whether the EU and NATO share a wholly unified agenda concerning soft security, as well as the extent to which non-traditional threats are manifest in current NATO logistics, training and force structures, especially in regard to the issue of continued “double enlargement”. It was only in August 2010 that the Emerging Security Challenges Division (ESCD) was established within the International/Military Staff, which comprises four previously existing divisions and units responsible for counter-terrorism, cyber defence, energy security and strategic analysis, and the Weapons of Mass Destruction Non-Proliferation Centre (WMDC), which was originally founded in 2000.¹⁰ In contrast, given its lack of experience or mandate as an independent security provider, the EU’s approach to these issues has reflected a lacuna in equivalent internal restructuring needed to address different types of emerging threats, limited pooling of resources and difficulties in achieving cohesive policy implementation among decision-making bodies and governments of member states.¹¹ Secondly, the introduction of ESCD has invoked concerns about whether a coordinated response to future non-military attacks affecting an individual state can be subsumed under the core NATO doctrine of collective defense, or if it outstrips its function as a conventional military alliance. The latter concerns are based on the structural transformations necessary to implement non-military measures, including building partnerships with a wider range of actors such as international institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private firms.¹² Perhaps the most relevant NATO administrative structure concerned with non-conventional threats specific to the former Soviet area (including joint cooperation councils with Russia and Ukraine) is the Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme, which was consolidated into a single Committee staffed by civilian scientists and experts from partner countries in 2006, but placed under

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10 ISIS Europe Briefing Note: “NATO’s new division: A serious look at ‘emerging security challenges’ or an attempt at shoring up relevance and credibility?”, No. 51, September 2010.

11 Myrto Hatzigeorgopoulos, “The EU, NATO and Emerging Security Challenges in 2012”, *ISI European Security Review* 54, May 2012, pp. 3-4. <http://www.isis-europe.eu/sites/default/files/publications-downloads/esr54-EU-NATOemergingchallenges-May%202012%20MH.pdf>

12 Paul Shulte, *Globalized Risks, Transformative Vision, and Predictable Problems*, EDAM Centre for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies, Carnegie Europe. http://carnegieendowment.org/files/Schulte_Brief.pdf

the jurisdiction of ESCD after initially being discontinued in November 2010.¹³

In addition, it is necessary to consider the diverse range of motives and preferences for cooperation with or membership in NATO, which, despite the assumptions of the “transitology” paradigm of the early 1990s or popular narratives of former communist states perennially gravitating toward Western institutions to escape from Russian influence, have varied widely both within and across the post-Soviet space.¹⁴ For instance, all fourteen republics joined the former North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) in 1992, followed by the Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme initiated in 1994 (save for Tajikistan, where civil war and its aftermath delayed participation until 2002). This has included even Turkmenistan, which aside from the recent diplomatic opening pursued by current president Gurbanguly Berdimukhammedov (as exemplified by his attendance of the 2008 NATO Summit in Bucharest), has adhered to the isolationist policy of “positive neutrality” (*baky bitaraplyk*); and Alyaksandr Lukashenka’s Belarus, despite its pursuit of formal integration with the Russian Federation via the Union State since 1997, and commitment to the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and its Rapid Reaction Force in 2002 and 2009. Similarly, Azerbaijan, is often characterized by observers as an “ally” of the U.S. and its security partners and has periodically voiced aspirations for deepening relations with NATO in its public diplomacy, while adhering to the “balanced foreign policy” principle of abstaining from formal alliances in favor of multiple flexible partnerships with regional and global powers.

Thirdly, there is a need to identify the actual intent behind the designation of new threat types by national leaders and defense establishments. Regional analyst Richard Giragosian has suggested that the regular formulation and public dissemination of a guiding concept of national security was first introduced as a practice by the U.S. government during the late stages of

the Cold War, and thus represents the institutionalization of a security policy and planning process which has been lacking in still-democratizing states such as Armenia.¹⁵ To be sure, while in some states the drafting of such documents is a collective effort that includes deliberation within legislatures or input from public interest groups, in others they are formulated solely at elite levels and are not publicly distributed. Thus, there is a possibility that like other forms of domestic legislation pertaining to issues such as electoral processes or human rights, the formal acknowledgment of soft threats by certain post-Soviet governments reflects a strategy of seeking to acquire greater international legitimacy as well as attracting moral and material support from Western powers. Additionally, responses to certain non-state threats such as religious extremism, terrorist groups or interdiction of WMDs tend to manifest themselves in conventional counterforce operations. This puts little pressure on national militaries to introduce new tactical approaches—or for that matter, security sector reform—despite their titular “soft” status. Most importantly, in certain domestic political settings, particularly in Central Asia, the need to mount responses to soft threats may be interpreted in more traditional Soviet-era terms, in which governments prioritize the preservation of stability and the protection of incumbent elites from political opposition and popular unrest.

In sum, these caveats suggest that rather than representing the inevitable inclusion of the erstwhile Russian/Soviet imperium into a liberal, post-national order, official definitions of new threats might be better recognized as either an expression of sovereignty by post-Soviet nations as they reach maturity as independent security actors, or, for those states which maintain an accommodative rather than antagonistic relationship with the Russian Federation and its subsidiary regional organizations (CIS, CSTO, SCO and EurAsEC), a distinctive Eurasian approach to security that does not recognize the hegemonic assumption of a global leadership role by Western institutions.¹⁶ These conditions indicate the need to address several empirical questions. First, what correlation, if any, exists between the bilateral relations of NATO and

13 Science for Peace and Security (SPS). North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), “Historical Context”, 31-May-2011. http://www.nato.int/science/about_sps/historical.htm

14 See Ella Ackerman and Tracey German, “From Soviet bloc to democratic security building?”, in Graeme P. Herd and Jennifer D.P. Moroney eds. *Security Dynamics in the former Soviet Bloc*, RoutledgeCurzon, 2003, pp. 3-14; and Tedo Japaridze and Ilia Roubanis, “Independence, Democracy And The Russian Taboo: A Comparative Perspective”, in Diba Nigâr Göksel and Zaur Shiriyev eds. *The Geopolitical Scene of the Caucasus: A Decade of Perspectives*, 2013, pp. 96-97.

15 Richard Giragosian, *Toward a New Concept of Armenian National Security*, Armenian International Policy Research Group Working Paper No. 05/07, January 2005, p. 12. <http://www.aiprg.net/UserFiles/File/wp/jan2005/WP0507.pdf>

16 Roy Allison “Virtual regionalism, regional structures and regime security in Central Asia”, *Central Asian Survey*, 27 (2). 2008, pp. 185-202.

post-Soviet states, and the identification of soft threats in their national security doctrines? To what extent do NATO policies account for the introduction of new threats in updated versions of strategic documents? How do these patterns compare across different subregions of the former Soviet Union, and between individual countries within those subregions?

The following section presents a comparative content analysis of the recognition of soft threats in the national security concepts of states in four geographic subregions: the Baltic States, East Europe/the Slavic Republics, the South Caucasus and Central Asia. It relies upon several data sources, including publicly available foreign and security policy documents, government websites, and secondary literature. The historical trends of each state's admission to the respective levels of NATO integration and the identification of threat types are assessed in order to draw tentative conclusions concerning to what extent they represent the direct influence of NATO non-traditional security initiatives, the indirect influence of bilateral security assistance policies or the pursuit of more independent definitions of national or Eurasian security as an alternative to common presumptions of a renewed opposition between Europe and Russia in the "near abroad".

Analysis and Interpretation

The four tables presented below present a summary of three types of data. The first column contains a chronology of each state's bilateral relations with NATO since independence, including the year of accession to partnership instruments and programs and the specific policies implemented. The second presents a complementary timeline of the introduction of new threat types in successive versions of the national security concept, and the third indicates the estimated level of influence of NATO policies and structures on the evolution of soft security perceptions in each republic.

The Baltic States

As the first post-Soviet states to apply for NATO membership and the first to achieve accession in 2004, the Baltic republics would presumably serve as a "test group" for determining the impact of bilateral relations with Brussels on regional soft security doctrines. The lack of inheritance of Soviet-era military forces would also seem to position them for the direct transmission of defense policy innovations in a newly united Europe. Yet, the first strategy documents produced by the governments of Estonia (1996), Lithuania (1996) and Latvia (1997) respectively were distinguished by their almost exclusive emphasis on traditional threats to their territorial sovereignty and national independence from Russia.¹⁷ The concern about the perpetuation of hostile Cold War defense postures and potential commitment to a future confrontation with Moscow initially discouraged NATO representatives from offering membership during the first decade of independence, thus delaying their accession until the second post-Cold War enlargement in 2004.¹⁸ The first example of new threat conceptions among Baltic governments was the adoption of Huntington's "clash of civilizations" thesis by the Estonian foreign policy establishment, which downplayed Russian aggression in favor of cultural explanations for security deficits. On the other hand, the Baltics are widely recognized for their role in introducing cyber defense as a major feature of contemporary European security doctrines, as confirmed by the denial of service and spamming attacks orchestrated by unidentified actors in Estonia during April 2007. These events resulted in the establishment of the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (NATO CDC COE) in Tallinn in May 2008.

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¹⁷ Grazina Miniotaite, "The Baltic States: In Search of Security and Identity", in Charles Krupnick ed. *Almost NATO: Partners and Players in Central and Eastern European Security*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003, pp. 269-272.

¹⁸ Frank Möller, *Thinking Peaceful Change: Baltic Security Policies and Security Community Building*, Syracuse University Press, 2007, pp. 158-160.

Table 1. NATO Policies and Soft Threat Perceptions in the Baltic States¹⁹

Country	Relationship with NATO	Soft Threat Types included in National Security Concept	Level of Influence
Lithuania	1994: PfP 1995: PfP Planning and Review Process (PARP) 1999: Membership Action Plan (MAP) 2004: Accession to membership	1996: None 2002: International terrorism Political extremism Energy dependence Uneven social and economic development Corruption Organized and financial crime groups Uncontrolled migration	Moderate
Latvia	1994: PfP 1995: PfP Planning and Review Process (PARP) 1999: Membership Action Plan (MAP) 2004: Accession to membership	1997: Threats to ecological sphere 2002: Terrorism 2008: illegal trade of strategically important goods Distribution of narcotic and psychotropic substances	Moderate
Estonia	1994: PfP 1995: PfP Planning and Review Process (PARP) 1999: Membership Action Plan (MAP) 2004: Accession to membership 2008: Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (NATO CDC COE)	1996: None 2001: Clash of civilizations Nuclear catastrophes Refugee flows Crime Substance abuse Narcotics and arms smuggling 2004: Drug addiction, alcoholism, HIV/AIDS Fires and explosions, transport, radiation, and chemical accidents Energy dependence Instability/breakdown of information systems 2008: Cyber attacks 2010: Unfavorable population processes Environmental pollution Financial crisis Anti-Estonian subversive activity	Moderate

¹⁹ Sources: Ministry of Defence Republic of Latvia; Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Latvia; Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania; Estonian Ministry of Defence

East Europe/Slavic Republics

Among the East European or “Western littoral” states, Ukraine has exhibited the most intense interaction with NATO since independence, having established five administrative bodies governing bilateral relations between 1997 and 1999 alone. The civil emergency assistance during the massive flood disaster that occurred in Kharkiv during June 1995 constituted the first major cooperation between Brussels and Kiev, while the NATO-Ukraine Joint Working Group on Defence Reform (JWGDR) founded in 1998 has played a prominent role in advising on cyber security. The subsequent drafting of documents in direct consultation with NATO representatives thus provides the clearest evidence of a causal link between variables. Conversely, Moldova has exhibited the most subdued soft security agenda in the region, due to internal debates surrounding the maintenance of neutrality and the management of the Transnistria conflict up until the electoral unrest and resignation of President Vladimir Voronin in 2009. In contrast, while the Lukashenka government in Belarus has experienced an intermittently antagonistic relationship with Brussels due to its domestic political conditions and adherence to a traditional doctrine of mutually opposed alliances, this has not prevented the implementation of various SPS programs related to non-traditional security issues. Belarusian scientists have received grants for a total of 40 projects related to flood monitoring, protection against residual radiation from the Chernobyl disaster and detection of explosive ordinance, while Moldova has received funds for 18 projects and participated in 65 activities including seismic risk reduction and river monitoring.

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Table 2. NATO Policies and Soft Threat Perceptions in East Europe/Slavic Republics²⁰

Country	Relationship with NATO	Soft Threat Types included in National Security Concept	Level of Influence
Ukraine	<p>1994: PfP</p> <p>1997: Charter on Distinctive Partnership/NATO-Ukraine Commission (NUC)</p> <p>1998: NATO-Ukraine Joint Working Group On Defence Reform (JWGDR)</p> <p>1999: NATO Liaison Office</p> <p>2000: Transcarpathia disaster response exercise</p> <p>2002: PfP Trust Fund Project for destruction of land mines</p> <p>2002: NATO-Ukraine Action Plan</p> <p>2005: Intensified Dialogue</p> <p>2005: Joint Assistance disaster response exercise</p> <p>2006: Ukraine-NATO Partnership Network for Civil Society Expertise Development</p> <p>2009: Annual National Programme (ANP)</p> <p>2010: NATO-Ukraine Expert Staff Talks on Cyber Defence</p> <p>2011: SPS Flood risk Monitoring system</p> <p>2013: NUC agreement on project for neutralization of radioactive sources from former Soviet military sites</p>	<p>2003: Corruption and organized crime</p> <p>Criminal activities and international terrorism</p> <p>Use of nuclear weapons by terrorists</p> <p>illegal arms imports, radioactive materials and illicit drugs</p> <p>illegal paramilitary organisations</p> <p>Ethnic separatism</p> <p>Proliferation and supply of weapons of mass destruction</p> <p>Illegal migration</p> <p>Ethnic and religious extremism</p> <p>Separatist trends and movements</p> <p>Significant reduction in GDP, investments and innovation of scientific and technological research development</p> <p>Weakening of state regulation and control in market economics</p> <p>Insufficient economic growth and related infrastructure deficits</p> <p>Critical national economy dependence on external markets and a low rate of internal market expansion</p> <p>Critical levels of internal and external State debts and borrowing</p> <p>Alarming growth in foreign capital share holdings in the hub industries of the local economy</p> <p>Critical food quotas and supply for the population</p> <p>Ineffective use of fuel and energy resources</p> <p>Black or shadow Economy</p> <p>Deterioration of public health through spread of drug abuse, alcoholism, and social disease</p> <p>Aggravation of the demographic crisis</p> <p>“Brain drain” of highly skilled manpower;</p> <p>Ecological and environmental damage</p> <p>Cyber crime and terrorism</p> <p>2007: Internal political divisions</p> <p>Government ineffectiveness</p> <p>Energy dependence</p> <p>Transborder crime</p> <p>2012: World economic crisis</p> <p>Increased competition for resources</p> <p>Excessive human pressure on environment</p> <p>High level of corruption</p> <p>Lack of confidence in judicial system</p> <p>Dependence of internal market on external conditions, smuggling and monopoly</p> <p>Low technological level of the economy</p> <p>Inefficient use of budget</p> <p>Extra dependence on energy imports</p> <p>Insufficient use of energy transit potential of the state</p> <p>Spread of social ills, including drug addiction, alcoholism, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS epidemics</p> <p>infectious diseases</p> <p>Decrease in population and shortening in labor and small wages</p> <p>Irrational use of natural resources</p> <p>Technological overload of the environment and pollution</p>	High/ Moderate

20 Sources: North Atlantic Treaty Organization: Partners; Philipp Fluri, Marcin Koziel, and Andri Yermolaiev eds. *The Security Sector Legislation of Ukraine. Second Edition*. Center for Army, Conversion and Disarmament Studies, Kyiv, 2013

Belarus	<p>1995: PfP</p> <p>2004: PfP Planning and Review Process (PARP)</p> <p>2007: PfP Trust Fund Project for destruction of anti-personnel landmines</p> <p>2011: SPS Flood risk monitoring system</p>	<p>1995: Not publicly available</p> <p>2001: Crime, contraband and other illegal activity of the organized groups</p> <p>illegal spread of armaments, ammunition, drugs, psychotropic and other substances</p> <p>Potential emergence and provocative activity of extremist organizations</p> <p>Human trafficking and sexual abuse</p> <p>2010: Challenges to sustainable development</p> <p>Negative demographic trends</p> <p>Shortage of scientific and technology resources</p>	Low/ Moderate
Moldova	<p>1994: PfP</p> <p>1997: PfP Planning and Review Process (PARP)</p> <p>2006: Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP)</p> <p>2009: SPS/Centre of Excellence for Defence Against Terrorism Cyber threat training course</p> <p>2011: Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) Codrri exercise</p>	<p>1995: Attempts against constitutional order</p> <p>Provocation of social unrest</p> <p>Reduction of economic, technological and defensive capabilities</p> <p>Domestic terrorism</p> <p>2008: International terrorism, inter-ethnic tensions, organized crime, natural disasters, social, economic and information-technology threats</p>	Low/ Moderate

South Caucasus

The three independent republics of the South Caucasus have the distinction of being the last of the former Soviet states to produce formal national security concept documents: Georgia in 2005, and Armenia and Azerbaijan in January and May 2007 respectively. This notable delay is generally attributed to the crisis of national security fostered by the unresolved status of the Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh conflicts in all three states.²¹ Only one, Georgia, has produced an updated version (approved by Parliament on 23 December 2011; publicly released in January 2012), largely as a result of the 2008 South Ossetia War. The addition of new threat types such as cyber attacks might be attributed to the SPS conference hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the previous summer. Georgia also has the distinction of being the only former Soviet state to identify the destruction of monuments as a security issue. SPS has also provided financing to implement 38 projects on environmental security, crisis management and counterterrorism in Armenia, 30 in Azerbaijan, and several more in Georgia. The extended period of preceding NATO interactions with the region may therefore have contributed to a reverse effect, whereby the inclusion of more distinctive types of soft threats in national doctrines reflects the intent to solidify further Allied assistance and support.

21 Teymur Huseynov, “Towards Crafting A National Security Doctrine In Azerbaijan”, CACI Analyst, 03/26/2003. <http://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/7905-analytical-articles-caci-analyst-2003-3-26-art-7905.html>

Table 3. NATO Policies and Soft Threat Perceptions in the South Caucasus

Country	Relationship with NATO	Soft Threat Types included in National Security Concept	Level of Influence
Azerbaijan	1994: PfP 1997: PfP Planning and Review Process (PARP) 2005: Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) 2006: PfP Trust Fund Project to clear unexploded ordinance 2008: Conclusion of SPS Mélange Project 2008: 2 nd IPAP 2011: Conclusion of SPS unexploded ordinance project 2011: 3 rd IPAP	2007: Separatism, ethnic, political and religious extremism Terrorism and proliferation of WMDs Regional conflicts and transnational organized crime Sabotage of energy infrastructure External political, military or economic dependence Economic destabilization Inadequate professional human resources Environmental challenges	Moderate
Armenia	1994: PfP 2002: PfP Planning and Review Process (PARP) 2005: Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) 2010: EADRCC civil emergency exercise 2011: National Disaster Observatory and Crisis Management Situation Centre	2007: Terrorism and transnational crime Energy dependence Isolation from regional projects Decline of national and cultural identity in Diaspora Epidemics and natural disasters Insufficiency of political system Insufficiency of Polarization Urbanization Negative demographic trends	Low/ Moderate
Georgia	1994: PfP 1999: PfP Planning and Review Process (PARP) 2003: PfP Trust Fund Project on demilitarization of missiles 2004: Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) 2006: Intensified Dialogue 2008: NATO-Georgia Commission 2010: NATO Liaison Office	2005: Contraband and transnational organized crime Corruption Inefficient public administration Deterioration of natural environment Energy dependence 2012: Cyber attacks Low economic growth Challenges to civic integration Destruction or damage of cultural heritage monuments	Moderate

Central Asia

Since the post-9/11 era, the five Central Asian republics have become the frontier of Euro-Atlantic security in what was once exclusively the Russian sphere of influence. Regional governments have granted essential logistical support via basing, transit and overflight rights to facilitate NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) operations in Afghanistan, followed by their participation in the Northern Distribution Network since 2009. Yet, it is noteworthy that countries such as Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan were among the first post-Soviet states to refer to non-traditional security issues as threats in formal legislation, although the earliest laws were circulated within the presidential administration and defense establishments and were not publicly released. While the first Concept ratified by the Uzbek Supreme Assembly (*Oly Majlis*) in 1997 emphasized external threats emanating from the Afghan and Tajik civil wars, the Indo-Pakistani rivalry and competition for influence by regional powers, it was among the first to identify the export of Islamic extremism and illicit weapons from outside the country's borders, several years before the Tashkent bombings of 1999.²² As such, various observers have noted the emphasis of NATO security assistance in the region has been on increasing the technical capacity of existing military and police forces to conduct counterterrorism or interdiction operations, rather than restructuring them in accordance with "soft" security norms.²³ However, SPS has also provided financing to implement a total of 20 projects related to environmental security, counter-terrorism and cyber defense in Kazakhstan, and 8 in Turkmenistan, while civilian scientists have led 49 related activities in Kyrgyzstan.

Since the post-9/11 era, the five Central Asian republics have become the frontier of Euro-Atlantic security in what was once exclusively the Russian sphere of influence.

22 Marina Pikulina, *Uzbekistan in the Mirror of Military Security: A Historical Preface to Current Events*, Conflict Studies Research Centre, November 1999, p. 4. <http://www.da.mod.uk/colleges/arag/document-listings/ca/K27>

23 Jos Boonstra, Erica Marat and Vera Axyonova, *Security Sector Reform in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan: What Role for Europe?*, EUCAM Working Paper No. 14, pp. 14-17. http://www.fride.org/download/EUCAM_WP14_SSR_Kazakhstan_Kyrgyzstan_Tajikistan.pdf

Table 4. NATO Policies and Soft Threat Perceptions in Central Asia

Country	Relationship with NATO	Soft Threat Types included in National Security Concept	Level of Influence
Kazakhstan	1994: PfP 2002: PfP Planning and Review Process (PARP) 2003: Steppe Eagle counterterrorism exercise 2007: IPAP Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC). ZHETYSU 2009 field exercise	1998: Political extremism Environmental degradation and natural and man-made disasters Damage to economic security Deterioration of the demographic situation Deterioration in the quality of education Deterioration of food security 2012: Loss of cultural and spiritual heritage Ethnic and religious tensions Organized crime Corruption Uncontrolled migration Dissemination of unreliable information Weakening of protection of information space	Moderate
Kyrgyzstan	1994: PfP 2006: EADRCC aid program for heavy snowfall 2007: Planning and Review Process (PARP) 2008: SPS training course "Use of Force in Countering Terrorism" 2010: SPS training program in cyber security	2009: International terrorism Separatism Religious extremism Drug trafficking and organized crime Environmental risks Proliferation of WMD 2012: International drug trafficking Water and energy problems Demographic problems Increasing separatist tendencies Interethnic animosities, ethno-regionalism and provincialism in social relations Deterioration in public education, ethics and culture Greater influence of nontraditional religious sects in social life Demographic challenges Unregulated external and domestic migration Ineffective system of government Critical economic climate and energy supply vulnerability Growth of the gray economy and corruption Crime, drug addiction, alcoholism and unemployment Underdeveloped information technology and a poorly protected information space; Ecosystem degradation, exhaustion and unsustainable utilization of natural resources Ineffective early warning and response system for natural and man-made emergencies	Moderate

Tajikistan	2002: PfP 2006: NATO-Russia Council (NRC) Project on Counter-Narcotics Training 2010: SPS training program in cyber security	Not publicly available	Low
Turkmenistan	1994: PfP 1995: Individual Partnership Programme (IPP) 2007: NATO-Russia Council (NRC) Project on Counter-Narcotics Training 2009: NATO seminar on civil emergency planning	Not publicly available	Low
Uzbekistan	1994: PfP 1996: Individual Partnership Programme (IPP) 1996: PfP Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) 2003: EADRCC Ferghana 2003 disaster relief exercise 2008: Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme mélange conversion project NATO-Russia Council (NRC) Project on Counter-Narcotics Training	1997: Islamic extremism 1999: Political extremism Terrorism Organized crime of a trans-national character Illegal arms and drug trafficking Migration Environmental damage :	Low

Conclusion

This overview of the mutual evolution of soft security strategies between NATO and its Eastern partners reveals a significant number of contrasts that call into question common generalizations about changing security doctrines in the post-Soviet space. First, while the Baltic States would seem to represent a natural laboratory for the evolution of post-Cold War European security doctrines, the maintenance of fundamental perceptions of possible future Russian challenges to sovereignty—most recently exemplified by their governments' insistence on a renewed commitment to collective defense by the U.S. under Article 5 of the NATO Charter during the 2014 Crimea crisis—delayed the recognition of soft threats until after the turn of the century, when they assumed a leading role in institutionalizing cyber defense.

While the exemplary level of interaction between NATO and Ukraine has likely influenced its extensive adoption of soft security perspectives since 2003, Belarus and Moldova have exhibited more limited and independent definitions of soft threats given their contrasting foreign and domestic policies. In the South Caucasus, the delay in formalization of security doctrines, combined with Azerbaijan's adherence to independent foreign and defense policies, Armenia's CSTO membership, and Georgia's delayed membership aspirations have fostered a strategic approach in which the identification of soft threats is designed to attract further Western support, while also reflecting concerns around national identity. Lastly, it is the Central Asian republics that have led the introduction of non-traditional threats into official doctrines, despite being farthest afield from the influence and policy agendas of Continental security institutions.