Международные процессы, Том 19, № 1e (64), сс. 18–40
DOI 10.17994/IT.2021.19.1.64.12

MANAGEMENT OF SECURITY COMMITMENTS IN ASYMMETRIC ALLIANCES

THE CASE OF RUSSIA

IGOR ISTOMIN
MGIMO University, Moscow, 119454, Russia
Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Harvard University, Boston MA 02138, USA

Abstract

From the second half of the 20th century onwards, military alliances have ceased to play an essential role in ensuring the security of major powers; meanwhile, asymmetric alliances, in which a major power remains an incontestable leader surrounded by weak parties, have proliferated across international systems. The literature on this topic explains these relationships in terms of an exchange in dissimilar benefits between states, following the formula "security for autonomy". This explanation seems generally plausible, but it does not reveal specific benefits for a major power from establishing control over the weak states. This article intends to deepen our theoretical understanding of why states resort to asymmetric alliances and to test the significance of suggested propositions through an in-depth analysis of the Russian record of alliances. Russia built allied relations with several neighbors but does not extend similar mechanisms to partners in other geographic areas. This policy is puzzling, since it contrasts with the foreign policy stance that international security and global order should be built on the principle of the indivisibility of security and inclusive international institutions. In its foreign policy discourse Russia strongly condemns exclusive formats with limited membership. The study addresses two interrelated issues: first, it helps to deepen understanding of Russia's foreign policy strategy and the role of various instruments of military-political cooperation in ensuring national interests; secondly, it tests the provisions of the theory of asymmetric alliances, assessing its applicability to a hard case. The article reveals Russia's sensitivity to direct and opportunity costs as well as to potential risks of binding security commitments; however, Russia relies on asymmetric alliances with neighboring countries to reap the benefits of increasing power projection opportunities, legitimizing its foreign policy initiatives, limiting freedom of maneuver for its competitors, and

This article is a result of a collaborative research project on the modern trends in the evolution of statecraft by the MGIMO School of Government and International Affairs and the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs at the Georgia Institute of Technology. A Russian version of this article is published in the second part of this special issue of International Trends. The Russian and English versions are not identical. The key term statecraft cannot be translated directly into Russian, that is why the Russian articles in this special issue use a variety of longer definitions of statecraft depending on the context. For a discussion of English and Russian definitions see the introductory article in this volume.

The article was supported by a grant from the International Studies Institute at MGIMO University, (Project No. 1921-01-07): "New Forms of Strategic Competition of the Great Political Powers in the 21st Century" as part of the "Analysis and Forecasting the Evolution of International Relations in the Context of a Changing Technology" project. A preliminary version of this study was tested at a research seminar at MGIMO and the Georgia Institute of Technology in March 2020. The author is grateful to Alexander Cooley, Yulia Nikitina, Mihaela Papa, and Nikolai Silaev for their comments and advice used in the preparation of the article.

Manuscript received: 07.11.2020
Manuscript accepted: 12.04.2021

Corresponding author:
Email: iaistomin@gmail.com

stabilizing its strategic surrounding. The Russian experience of building relations with allies differs significantly from the American one, which, due to the scale of the US alliance network, is often presented as a model experience. Nevertheless, it is quite consistent with the provisions of the theory of asymmetric alliances.

Keywords:

military alliance; asymmetry; hegemony; Russia; USA; Collective Security Treaty Organization; NATO.

The classic definition of international alliances in political science dates back to the 1960s: it is "the promise of mutual military assistance between two or more sovereign states" [Wolfers 1968: 268]. Unlike informal coalitions, alliances presuppose the treaty-based validation of mutual commitments, serving as a significant instrument, though not the only one, of political signaling. Throughout history, such alliances have been at the center of international political interaction. One of the pioneers in the study of alliances, George Liska, argued: "It is impossible to speak of international relations without referring to alliances; the two often merge in all but name" [Liska 1962: 3]. In this respect, the management of alliance relations acts as an integral element of the art of conducting foreign policy, as described by the authors of the introductory article of this issue [Jordan, Stulberg, Troitskiy 2021a; 2021 b].

However, alliances have ceased playing a significant role in ensuring the military security of major powers since the mid-twentieth century. Alliances between equal players have virtually disappeared from international practice. On the other hand, alliances where a major power acted as the unconditional leader, providing guarantees of protection to weaker countries, became widespread[1]. Examples include NATO, the Warsaw Treaty Organization, bilateral agreements within the framework of the 'hub and spokes' system in Asia, and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

The functioning of asymmetric alliances is associated with the exchange of dissimilar benefits, described by the formula "security for autonomy" [Morrow 1991]. However, it does not reveal what exactly a major power benefits from gaining influence over weak countries. As its allies only have a small material potential, this raises the question of how profitable it is to invest in their security; this question requires developing the theory of asymmetric relations.

Moreover, the proposed formula does not reveal the reasons why individual players shy away from providing commitments of a military or political character. What prevents major powers from providing security guarantees to a potentially unlimited number of weak countries? Whereas the United States has an extensive network of commitments in key regions of the world, by contrast, China and India are reluctant to promise military assistance even to those states with which they have close ties [Istomin, Baikov 2020].

Russia has built allied relations with a number of neighbors, but it does not seek to extend them to partners in other regions [Istomin, Silayev, Sushentsov 2018]. Allied relations imply the creation of exclusive clubs with high entry barriers, which contradicts Moscow's emphasis on enshrining the principle of indivisibility of security and is inconsistent with Russia's condemnation of exclusive formats with limited participation[2].

In this regard, this article seeks to explain the Russian approach to alliance commitments on the basis of the theory of asymmetric alliance. The study has two interrelated objectives: to deepen the understanding of Russian foreign

[1] Here, and further in the text, the concept of "weak countries" is used to refer to actors in international relations that have significantly less material capacity than their partners: that is, as a synonym of the concept of "small and medium countries", but not of the concept of "weak states", when the latter implies weak governance.

[2] See for example, Kontseptsija vneshnej politiki Rossijskoj Federatsii [Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation]. 30 November 2016. URL: http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/41451 (accessed: 10.11.2020); Putin V.V. Rossija i menjayuschijsa mir (Russia and the changing world). Rossijskaya gazeta. 27.02.2015. URL: https://rg.ru/2012/02/27/putin-politika.html (accessed: 10.11.2020);

policy and the role of military and political cooperation tools in its implementation; and to substantiate the original theoretical approach by assessing its applicability to a non-trivial case.

Most studies describing causal mechanisms of asymmetric alliances are based on the American experience [Troitsky 2002; Beckley 2015; Istomin 2017]. Conceptualization of the insufficiently studied Russian record can preempt possible doubts about the generalizability of the proposed theory.

The analysis of Moscow's policy shows its sensitivity to direct and opportunity costs, as well as potential risks associated with military and political commitments. Russia is cautious about providing guarantees based on an assessment of its own interests and capabilities. Asymmetric alliances can bring benefits related to projecting power, legitimizing foreign policy initiatives, limiting competitors' freedom of movement, and stabilizing the regional environment.

The present work demonstrates that managing alliance commitments requires strategic vision and great diplomatic skills. Even under conditions of disparity, alliances do not allow a major power to achieve everything it wants, so the desire to inflate the number of allies is not always justified. In our view, alliances should not be considered as an unconditional foreign policy asset: this view is expressed, in particular, by [Brooks, Ikenberry and Wohlforth 2013] and [Brands and Feaver 2017].

The first section of this article is devoted to the justification of differences in alliance relations between equal and asymmetric players. The theory of asymmetric alliances is outlined, characterizing the possible benefits and costs of this type of alliances for major players, as well as defining its significance in the context of other forms of dominance in international politics.

In further sections, the provisions of the theory of asymmetric alliances are compared with the experience of Russia in the 1990s-2010s. The significance of commitments to allies is demonstrated by comparing them with policies towards other partners. A wide range of sources used – including statistical information, expert publications, official documents, and news materials – allows us to reconstruct the Russian approach to alliances and ensure the validity of the conclusions.

1

Throughout history, alliances have been used extensively to balance opponents by compensating for the weaker players' lagging behind the stronger ones. Frequently, alliances exacerbated the fears of states that were not covered by mutual assurances, thus intensifying rivalries [Christensen and Snyder 1990; Vasquez 1993; Gibler and Vasquez 1998; Kenwick, Vasquez and Powers 2015][3]. Nevertheless, it was difficult for states to refrain from seeking allies for fear of vulnerability [Johnson 2017]: as a rule, a potential war concerned them less than a foreign policy defeat.

This logic does not explain why major powers participate in asymmetric alliances, with significant (manifold) disparity in material capabilities between the leader and other participants. For weaker allies, such arrangement remains an instrument to ensure security, but the leading country does not get a significant surplus to its own power from cooperation with obviously weak countries. Its main benefit lies in gaining leverage over states to which it provides military and political security guarantees [Morrow 1991]. For the major power, asymmetric alliances are a tool to formalize unequal relations. In order to explain the relevance of this tool, it is necessary to outline the reasons

Lavrov S.V. Vystuplenije Ministra inostrannih del Rossii na otkritii Ezhegodnoj konferentsii OBSE po obzoru problem v oblasti bezopasnosti [Speech by the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs at the opening of the OSCE Annual Security Review Conference], Vienne, 23 June 2009. URL: https://www.mid.ru/vistupleniya_ministra/-/asset_publisher/MCZ7HQuMdqBY/content/id/288306 (accessed: 10.11.2020); Lavrov S.V. K miru, stabil'nosti i ustojchivomy ekonomicheskomy razvitiju v Aziatsko-Tikhookeanskom regione [Toward peace, stability and sustainable economic development in Asia and the Pacific]. 5 October 2013. URL: https://www.mid.ru/atr/-/asset_publisher/0vP3hQoCPRg5/content/id/93642 (accessed: 10.11.2020).

[3] For criticism of such assumptions see [Kim, Woo, Lee 2020].

for seeking influence on weak countries[4], as well as the costs of acquiring it.

The assessment of the significance of asymmetric alliances cannot ignore the existence of other mechanisms of influence weak countries. An explanation of their role should clarify the question of why major powers resort to alliances rather than other instruments. Military and political commitments should provide better and more reliable ways of influencing as compared to available alternatives.

Consequently, in general terms, the value of asymmetric alliances can be described by the formula:

$$b - c \geq \forall a > 0,$$

where b is the benefits of alliance, and c is the costs. For the maintenance of alliance relations to be meaningful, the difference between them must be not only positive, but not less than in the alternative options (a).

This article presents a detailed examination of the circumstances determining the possible values of these variables, a classification of the benefits, and a description of the costs and the alternatives that provide influence. Such an analysis will make it possible not only to justify the reasons for states to resort to asymmetric alliances, but also to outline the limits of their relevance.

2

What benefits does the major power gain from entering into an alliance with allies inferior in material terms? This question remains unanswerable if, in the spirit of neorealism, the motives of states are reduced solely to the desire to ensure their own survival[5]. Note that such a thesis does not fit well with another position neorealists hold: that major powers do not lend themselves to coercion and are therefore exceptionally resilient [Mearsheimer 2001: 83–114].

The margin of safety allows these states to take into account potential threats over a relatively long horizon[6]. The desire of states to gain long-term benefits with delayed and indirect effects on their security contributes to the transformation of international relations into a highly socialized system where actors compete not only for material resources, but also for status positions.

High status ensures that opponents will be hesitant to test the major power for strength[7]. Meanwhile, its social capital depends on how that state is perceived by other players. In a broad sense, the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu defined social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group" [Bourdieu 2002: 66]. Thus, the high status of a state implies demonstrative recognition on the part of other actors in international politics; this testifies to the presence of a hierarchy, even if informal, in the system of international relations[8].

[4] The assumption that states pursue influence for the sake of influence presents a Manichean picture of the world that is not shared by most contemporary scholars. Hans Morgenthau remains the only prominent theorist to assume that states pursue national interests, defined in terms of power [Morgenthau 1948]. On the motives of states in international politics see [Organski 1958]; [Morgenthau 1948]; [Waltz (1979]; [Lebow 2008].

[5] See e.g. [Waltz 1979].

[6] It is significant that neoclassical realists distinguish between the restrictive conditions of the state's external environment, which requires an immediate response to new challenges, and the permissive conditions when there are no existential challenges [Ripsman, Taliaferro, Lobell 2016: 52–55].

[7] Hans [Morgenthau 1948: 55–58] pointed out these consequences of status (or, more precisely, of foreign policy prestige). The literature on social recognition is extremely extensive. On the sources of status in the international arena, see, in particular [Major Powers and the Quest for Status 2011; Status in world politics 2014; Renshon 2017; Ward 2017; Larson, Shevchenko 2019].

[8] On the hierarchy in international relations, see [Gilpin 1981; Keal 1983; Clark 1989; Lake 2009]. Most authors agree that external recognition correlates with state resources (including military and economic), but this correlation remains flexible. A weakened power can, by inertia, maintain high social capital. Inversely, the potential of the rising giant is sometimes underestimated. For more on the under-recipients of recognition and status dependents, see [Major Powers and the Quest for Status 2011].

Table 1
Benefits of asymmetric alliances for major powers

Nature of objectives	Sphere of influence	
	A. Internal development of an ally	B. Foreign policy of an ally
1. Restrictive	prevention of the emergence of independent players	limiting the external ties of an ally
2. Transformative	strengthening the statehood of an ally	engaging an ally in support of the leader's initiative

Source: compiled by the author.

Major powers are capable of responding to more than just existential threats to their own territorial integrity and sovereignty. For example, they make efforts to prevent the cross-border "spillover of instability" from countries with weak statehood, whether in the form of terrorist activity, organized crime, mass migration, or the spread of radical ideologies.

Influencing weak countries, even if it does not increase the major power's chances of survival, gives the latter a number of advantages, which can be actualized in both domestic and foreign policy areas [Lake 2009]. The potential benefits of asymmetric alliances are summarized in Table 1.

By deterring the military and political capacity building of its allies (1A), the major power can prevent a relatively weak player from becoming an independent center of power that would compete with it in the future. In particular, the United States has kept Japan and Germany from rebuilding independent capabilities since the mid-20th century, by making commitments to these countries to protect them, whilst at the same time preventing them from acquiring nuclear weapons. This policy has been less successful in the case of France, which gained an independent deterrent capability that contributed to its opposition towards the United States[9].

The objective of preventing the transformation of an ally into an independent center of power is relevant to those states that initially have latent potential but underutilize it. Asymmetry in this case is a product of conscious efforts rather than a natural condition. It is possible when the ally is aware of the gravity of the costs and risks of building up their own military and political capabilities.

Another function of an alliance is to help strengthen the status of the major power by limiting the ties of its allies with potential competitors (1B). Such influence clearly confirms the recognition of leadership, reinforcing a major power's claim to privileged status in the international system [Istomin, Bolgova, Sokolov, Avatkov 2019].

During the Cold War, the United States restrained countries covered by Washington's guarantees from forming political and economic ties with the USSR. In the economic sphere, it formed the Coordinating Committee on Export Controls, which created barriers to technology transfer from developed capitalist countries to socialist states [Mastanduno 1988; 1992]. The United States tried to limit economic ties with Moscow when the allies themselves demonstrated an interest in establishing such relations. It sought similar loyalty from its allies in the context of intensified U.S.-Chinese rivalry in the 2010s[10].

In addition, restrictions on ties with third countries can act as an instrument of competition for economic markets. Military and political guarantees can be accompanied by expectations to redirect an ally's trade flows or to

[9] On the role of nuclear nonproliferation considerations in the development of asymmetric alliances, see [Security assurances... 2012; Frühling, O'Neil 2017; Lanoszka 2018].

[10] See, e.g., Nakashima E., Booth W. "Britain bars Huawei from its 5G wireless networks, part of a growing shift away from the Chinese tech giant". Washington Post. 15.07.2020. URL: https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/britain-to-bar-huawei-from-its-5g-wireless-networks-part-of-a-growing-shift-away-from-the-chinese-tech-giant/2020/07/13/44f6afee-c448-11ea-b037-f9711f89ee46_story.html (accessed: 10.11.2020).

open their economy to investment [Fordham 2010; Mansfield 2015].

Along with the restrictive objectives of deterring allies' domestic potentials and international activities, major powers resort to asymmetric alliances to modify the international environment in a favorable direction. Among other things, weak states can facilitate the projection of power and control of maritime spaces (2B).

Territories of allied countries can be used to base the armed forces of the major power as entry points for repairing and resupplying warships and aircraft. The major power can resort to diplomatic support of even weak countries in order to legitimize its initiatives in the global arena, including military interventions. In a number of cases, the potential of small countries is needed to solve auxiliary military tasks and, correspondingly, to reduce the costs of the major power [Weitsman 2013; Schmitt 2018].

Illustratively, since the Cold War, the United States has used the territory of its allies to maintain the infrastructure of the global military presence under the concept of "forward deployment"[11], which expanded Washington's capabilities for the projection of military power, including during regional conflicts and intense political crises. In addition, the United States exploited practical assistance and especially the political loyalty of its allies in the 1990s and 2010s, while conducting operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Yugoslavia[12].

Finally, from the perspective of a major power, one more function of asymmetric alliances can be the internal political stabilization of the allies themselves (2A) [Quirk 2017]. It is particularly relevant with regard to countries with weakened statehood that risk becoming a source of cross-border terrorist activity, the spread of radical ideologies, drug trafficking, and migration flows[13]. In contrast, stabilization of the situation can turn them into attractive economic partners.

By guaranteeing security against external threats, the major power helps a local government redirect resources toward solving domestic problems. In addition, formalized commitments can form the basis for broad economic assistance. In this regard, throughout the Cold War, domestic instability in Third World countries largely determined the logic of their rapprochement with superpowers [Barnett, Levy 1991; David 1991b]. For example, the desire to strengthen the local regime resulted in the American support for South Vietnam against the Viet Cong. Even earlier, the threat of aggravation of the internal political situation in South-East Asian states prompted the United States to initiate the Manila Pact [Buszynski 1983]. Such steps were taken as part of the global confrontation with the USSR, but were aimed more at preventing the strengthening of communist forces within the countries rather than protection against external invasion.

As illustrated above, cooperation with weak countries can bring benefits to the major power even without affecting its military and strategic capabilities. We should note that these functions are not always in equal demand, and some functions may contradict each other[14]. In this regard, major powers choose individual applications of asymmetric alliances from the menu available.

The ability of large countries to use this set of tools in foreign policy is limited by the costs associated with the development of allied relations. This factor has rarely been in the focus of the theory of asymmetric alliances [Morrow 1991]. At the same time, their impact on the

[11] U.S. military bases were stationed not only in the territory of allies, but also in other states. At the same time, as Alexander Cooley and Daniel Nexon point out, the latter's great autonomy increases the risks of losing the rights to deploy military forces. Not surprisingly, the main support bases of the global military presence are in such countries as Japan, the Republic of Korea, and NATO member states [Cooley, Nexon 2013].

[12] See, e.g., [Pechurov 2008; Istomin, Baykov 2019; Bogdanov 2019].

[13] The widespread belief in the 2000s that state weakness is the main source of threats to international security is telling in this regard (see, e.g., [Fukuyama 2004: 92]).

[14] For example, preventing the strengthening of an ally is poorly matched by assisting in the strengthening of its statehood.

policies of major powers justifies a closer examination of the emerging constraints.

3

Any kind of alliance has its costs, be it military-political cooperation between equal players or asymmetric alliance. Since the costs are not related to ensuring the state's survival but to acquiring advantages of relatively lower importance, one should expect states to be more sensitive to costs.

At the same time, asymmetric alliances make it possible – but do not make it certain – to gain the benefits described in the previous section. Empirical research demonstrated that states fulfill legally binding commitments in the majority of cases, with a probability of about 75% [Leeds, Long, Mitchell 2000].

As a rule, the benefits associated with the influence on weak countries are not contractually enshrined when establishing an alliance. Loyalty is not formalized, because such enshrining would put the sovereignty of the participants of the alliance into question. This would devalue its significance, including as an instrument of status signaling[15]. At the same time, disparity of material potentials does not always ensure the major power has the ability to impose its will on weak countries.

Differences in the level of determination or the availability of alternative ways of securing interests help them resist external pressure [Keohane, Nye 1977; David 1991a; Small states... 2003; Small states... 2012; Womack 2016; Long 2017a; 2017b]. Even when weak states agree to support the alliance leader, their cooperation is conditioned by demands that make it difficult for the major power to achieve its goals. This exacerbates the dilemma of choice between legitimization and maximizing practical returns[16].

Often states are more vulnerable to coercion by their close allies rather than by other players, since they depend on their help and have something to lose should relations deteriorate [Drezner 1999]. The possibility of withdrawing the security guarantees provided by the alliance leader acts as a trump card in his hands in the unfolding bargaining process[17]. The experience of U.S. relations with allies shows that the latter demonstrate more loyalty to Washington than other states [Istomin, Baikov 2019].

Table 2
Costs of Asymmetric Alliances

1. Direct costs	military preparedness
	access to market
	military technical assistance / development assistance
2. Opportunity costs	deteriorating relations with allies' opponents
3. Potential risks	involvement in allies' adventurism
	failed expectations effect

Source: compiled by the author.

At the same time, in asymmetric alliances, the major powers make military and political commitments that inevitably come with the costs related to fulfilling their obligations to allies. The assessment of the ratio of gains to losses cannot be formalized; as the question "How much security in exchange for how much autonomy would be a fair price in an alliance?" cannot have a straightforward answer.

The costs of maintaining asymmetric alliances include direct costs, opportunity costs, and potential risks (see Table 2). Among the former are the costs of maintaining military forces that reassure the credibility of military and political commitment, as gaining an ally's confidence in the credibility of guarantees may require building capabilities beyond the measure of military sufficiency. The U.S. faced this problem during the Cold War, as they had to deal not only with balancing the Soviet Union, but also with deploying sufficient forces in Europe to convince NATO allies that Washington would indeed come to their aid if the need arises. The allies repeatedly expressed doubts

[15] Reference can be made, in particular, to the negative impact on American attempts to legitimize the war in Iraq in 2003 of claims that members of the "coalition of the willing" entered it under American coercion, rather than out of recognition of the justifiability of their actions [Newnham 2008].

[16] See, e.g., [Weitsman 2013; Schmitt 2018].

[17] See in this respect [Johnson 2015].

about the reliability of U.S. guarantees [Trachtenberg 2012].

Another type of possible cost is associated with the granting of economic preferences to allies. For example, in the 1950s the United States, seeking to limit Japan's ties with the USSR and China, unilaterally opened access to American market for it [Cha 2016].

The opportunity costs are manifested in the complication of interaction with states that are in strained relations with one's allies. This dynamic excerbates tensions when a major power does not have disputes with a state, but its alies do have them. The setback in relations can lead to entrapment in unncessary confrontation for a major power. In other words, gaining friends in international politics leads to the emergence of new adversaries. For example, close U.S. relations with Israel and Saudi Arabia reduce the chances of a constructive dialogue with Iran. Similarly, during the Cold War, the U.S. presence in South Vietnam, the Republic of Korea, and Japan caused China's distrust after the breakdown of Sino-Soviet relations.

Finally, the potential risks of asymmetric alliances are associated with a possible increase in the adventurism of weak countries. Relying on guarantees provided by the major power, they can initiate provocations against third states. As a result, the likelihood of dragging the alliance leader into unwanted confrontations grows. In this regard, the art of managing alliance relations often lies in the ability to prevent friends from attacking adversaries [Pressman 2011]. For example, throughout the 1950s, Washington faced repeated attempts by the governments of Chiang Kai-shek in Taiwan and Syngman Rhee in South Korea to draw the United States into armed confrontations with China and North Korea.

Historical experience shows that major powers usually manage to slip out of this trap, but such risks complicate the conduct of foreign policy. They increase the need to consolidate influence on allies, which requires additional expenditures [Kim 2011; Benson, Bentley, Ray 2013; Beckley 2015]. Moreover, such micromanagement can cause painful reactions on the part of weak countries.

Divergent expectations among allies regarding the nature of mutual commitments (especially informal ones) create risks of cooling relations. The lack of cooperation from allies (whether a major power or a weak country), even when there are no legally binding guarantees, generates frustration with a negative effect on the prospects of interaction[18].

The described costs, as well as the lack of firm guarantees of benefits, have a negative impact on the value of asymmetric alliances for major powers. At the same time, their willingness to use this tool in foreign policy depends not only on the ratio of gains and losses, but also on the availability or absence of alternatives that better secure the dominant influence on weak countries.

4

Military and political alliance is not the only option for consolidating hegemony. Throughout world history, states have used a wide range of mechanisms to get hold of their clients[19]. Up to the present day, a number of dependent territories have survived, constituting fragments of former vast colonial possessions: until the 1960s, this form of relations played a major role in securing political and economic dominance. Its abandonment was the result of the assertion of the norm of self-determination in the international arena [Simpson 1996].

From the second half of the twentieth century, most instruments imply the preservation of the formally legal autonomy of the participants (see Table 3). Without eliminating disparity, this approach provides weak countries with opportunities for self-organization and the assertion of their own interests, especially in comparison with the previous forms of direct influence[20]. The consolidation of asym-

[18] Awareness of such risks, in particular, influenced the behavior of states on the eve of World War I [Snyder 1997: 201–306].

[19] See, for example, the typology proposed by Michael Mann [Mann 2012: 18–20].

[20] On the other hand, in earlier eras, communication, transportation, and organizational barriers made it difficult for the colonial power to control the situation at the local level.

Table 3
Tools for Securing Political Domination

A. Military and strategic tools	B. Economic tools	C. Cultural tools
1. Colonial possession		
2.A. Protectorate	2.B. Common currency zone and financial integration	
3.A. Alliance	3.B. Trade and economic associations	3.C. Associations by language, history, religion
4.A. Military technical assistance	4.B. Promoting international development	4.C. Organizations for development of humanitarian cooperation

Source: compiled by the author.

metrical relations does not mean the obligatory subordination of the weaker party to the interests of the major power. Moreover, it does not even presuppose a clear prescription of the specific obligations of weak countries. Such consolidation clarifies the status ranking and signals the terms of subsequent bargaining with them. Alliance treaty provides a framework on the procedure for concluding further agreements[21].

Asymmetry can affect different areas of interaction to an unequal degree. In this regard, there is a functional distinction between instruments of influence: military-strategic, economic, and humanitarian[22]. Often, unrelated organizational formats are used to structure ties in separate areas. They are created both separately (for example, the transatlantic community has no economic analogue of NATO) and in parallel (for example, the CSTO and the EAEU have almost identical membership).

The instruments of economic domination ensure the influence of the major power on the weak countries by manipulating access to its market or establishing control over theirs. Mechanisms of cultural influence (such as Francophonie or the World Islamic League) form a common identity that perpetuates a positive image of the major power. It is achieved by appealing to similarities in historical experience, linguistic practices, and religious faith[23].

With all the advantages of these mechanisms, they cannot replace alliances, since they do not provide the weak country with protection from violent influence[24]. They do not function according to the formula "security for autonomy". Only instruments of military and political cooperation, such as the establishment of a protectorate and military technical assistance, can be considered a direct alternative to alliances.

The protectorate format implies a direct control over the foreign policy and security of the territorial community (see, for example, Andorra, Monaco, and Puerto Rico). Major powers have to assume serious political burden, while this format narrows down the field of maneuver and hurts the self-esteem of the junior partner[25]. This situation does not seem attractive to either side, so it seems logical that by now the protectorates has become almost as exotic as colonies.

Therefore, the only real alternative to alliances in the modern world is military and technological assistance in the form of arms supply and help with military training. This

[21] Regarding the specifics of bargaining, see [Fearon 1998].

[22] David Lake distinguished two areas of hierarchies: military-strategic and economic forms [Lake 2009], but in the context of increased interest in using cultural capital to achieve political goals, it is difficult to ignore the newly heightened interest in nonviolent and non-economic mechanisms of domination [Nye 2011].

[23] For more on the concept of cultural dominance, see [Tomlinson 1991].

[24] Alexander Wendt and Daniel Friedheim's conclusion that security guarantees are a necessary condition for the emergence of informal empire is illustrative in this regard [Wendt, Friedheim 1995].

[25] For more on this form of predominant influence see [Lake 2009: 53–55].

format implies fewer reputational risks for the major power, as it does not provide public security guarantees [Yarhi-Milo, Lanoszka, Cooper 2016].

Meanwhile, the complexity of modern weaponry increases its applicability as a tool to secure interest. The need to maintain the supplied armaments creates a strong dependence on the major power, constraining the ability of the weak country to reorient its foreign policy [Shaw 1983; Catrina 1988]. Nonetheless, the state supplying weapons is not always able to control their use [Kinsella 1998]. For example, in the 2000s U.S. supplies to Pakistan were intended to fight Islamist movements, but Islamabad used them in confrontation with India, continuing to cooperate with a number of Islamic groups that the United States was fighting against[26].

Military technical assistance is less suited to perform a number of functions of asymmetric alliances. In the case of a partnership between the major power and a state with significant latent potential, it creates prerequisites for increasing local arms production and, consequently, for gaining foreign policy independence as a result of technology transfer – an outcome that the alliance is designed to avoid[27].

If the receiver of military technical assistance is characterized by an unstable statehood, its organizational capacity may be insufficient to assimilate it. If institutions of power are weak, no supplies will help to ensure security. Moreover, armaments may end up in the hands of those groups whose reinforcement the major power would seek to avoid.

Military technical assistance can be not only a substitute for alliance, but also a complement to it. Binding allies through arms transfers and exports of military doctrine enhances the effect of security guarantees and simultaneously increases the interoperability of forces. It makes the weak country not only a more reliable but also a more useful ally for the major power, facilitating the interaction of its units with the armed forces of the alliance leader[28].

Earlier in this article we repeatedly provided illustrations from U.S. alliance practices. This is not surprising: the U.S. experience is extensive, well-studied, and therefore actively used in works on the theory of asymmetric alliances. However, the use of the same empirical material at the stages of constructing and testing scientific explanations creates the danger of unjustified generalizations.

In order to avoid limitations of the theory based on the experience of a single state, it is worth assessing its applicability to the understanding of the allied relations of other major powers. In this regard, we present an analysis of how the described advantages and associated costs are manifested in the interaction between Russia and its allies. By placing this study on a more solid scientific ground, it will also make it possible to reconsider stereotypical assessments of the Russian experience.

5

The study of military and political alliances with Russian participation is weakened by insufficient attention to the theory of international alliances. It is negatively influenced by stereotypes relayed mainly by Western researchers, which also affects publications of domestic specialists.

Foreign specialists often claim that Russia has no true allies, and alliances under its leadership are described as a smoke screen for neo-imperialism built on direct coercion[29].

[26] Felbab-Brown V. "Why Pakistan supports terrorist groups, and why the US finds it so hard to induce change". Brookings Institute. 05.01.2018. URL: https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/01/05/why-pakistan-supports-terrorist-groups-and-why-the-us-finds-it-so-hard-to-induce-change/ (accessed: 10.11.2020).

[27] See, e.g., the role of technology transfer in the development of the Chinese military-industrial complex [Meijer 2018].

[28] The problem of interoperability in collective operations was the subject of active discussion by Western military experts in the context of the experience of the 1990s and 2000s see [Hura et al. 2000; Stewart et al. 2004].

[29] See, e.g. [Allison 2004; Blank 2007; Torjesen 2008; Wilson 2017].

Such speculations presume that Moscow's alliances include only those states, which are unable to evade its pressure, but even they do not actually cooperate with Russia. The refusal of the allies to recognize the independence of Abkhazia, South Ossetia, or the reunification of Crimea is often mentioned in this context[30].

Alternatively, some experts claim that weak countries exploit Russia's desire for status recognition to receive practical concessions. In fact, they exchange attendance of events under Moscow's patronage for material assistance and political support. Thus from this perspective, Russia's benefits from alliance are illusory, and the country is doomed to "strategic loneliness" [Trenin 2009].

Given such Western criticism, Russian authors often underplay the asymmetrical nature of alliances with Russian participation. They portray such alliances in terms of the common benefits for all member states. Under this approach, it becomes inconvinient to talk about the prevailing influence and benefits for Moscow [Kulik et al. 2011; Nikitina 2011; 2012; 2017; Zakharov 2012; Malinovskij, Paschenko 2016; Golub, Golub 2018; Troitsky, Zinoviev 2018].

An exception from this mainstream view was a collective monograph on Russia's allies in the Collective Security Treaty Organization [Allies 2020]. Its authors representing the Center for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies, assessed the five member states of this association in accordance with criteria of importance and loyalty to Moscow. This analysis allowed for a more nuanced evaluation of their interaction with Russia, with an explicit focus on the benefits to the alliance leader.

For all the wealth of empirical material presented and analyzed, this collective work suffers from a lack of theoretical grounding, sketchy justification of the variables used, and an inconclusive assessment of their values in connection to the conclusions drawn. Like other publications interpreting the Russian record, it lacks a comparison of Moscow's relations with the countries to which it provides security guarantees and with other partners[31].

The following analysis is intended to close the gap in the explanation of the choice of Russian allies based on the theory of asymmetric alliances. In this case, the main object of study, as in the aforementioned publications, is relations among states sharing treaty-based security commitments. At the end of the 2010s, Russia provided legally enshrined security guarantees to seven countries: Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan within the CSTO[32], as well as

[30] See, e.g. [Stronski 2020].

[31] For another example of a nuanced assessment of Russia's experience with the allies, see [Kropatcheva 2016].

[32] Collective Security Treaty of May 15, 1992. URL: https://odkb-csto.org/documents/documents/dogovor_o_kollektivnoy_bezopasnosti/ (accessed: 10.11.2020); Charter of the Collective Security Treaty Organization of October 7, 2002. URL: https://odkb-csto.org/documents/documents/ustav_organizatsii_dogovora_o_kollektivnoy_bezopasnosti_/ (accessed: 10.11.2020).

Commitments within the CSTO are duplicated in Russia's bilateral agreements with members of the multilateral alliance. See Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Armenia. 29.08.1997. URL: http://docs.cntd.ru/document/8306454 (accessed: 10.11.2020); Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan. 25.05.1992. URL: http://docs.cntd.ru/document/901764295 (accessed: 10.11.2020); Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kyrgyzstan. 10.06.1992. URL: http://docs.cntd.ru/document/901728231 (accessed: 10.11.2020); Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tajikistan. 25.05.1993. URL: http://docs.cntd.ru/document/1902068 (accessed: 10.11.2020); Charter of the Union of Belarus and Russia. 23.05.1997. URL: http://docs.cntd.ru/document/9043017 (accessed: 10.11.2020).

It is indicative that during the crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh in the fall of 2020, the Russian leadership confirmed its commitment to help Armenia by referring to the CSTO, rather than to the bilateral agreement (See "Putin zajavil o gotovnosti RF ispolniat' sojuznicheskije ob'azatelstva pered Armeniej [Putin said that Russia is ready to fulfill its allied obligations to Armenia]". Interfax 07.10.2020. URL: https://www.interfax.ru/russia/730360 (accessed: 10.11.2020).

Abkhazia and South Ossetia on the basis of bilateral treaties[33].

The last two states have limited international recognition and are not members of the United Nations. Their *de facto* status is closer to that of protectorates. Their low potential (in comparison, with the CSTO member states) determines their close dependence on Russia in the political, economic, and military fields[34].

In reproaching Moscow for its inability to keep even close states under its patronage, including in the military and political alliance, its critics refer to the example of Uzbekistan, which joined the CSTO in 2006 and left the organization in 2012[35]. At the same time, Russia has been in no hurry to formalize its alliance with a fairly wide range of partners to which it provides considerable assistance – Venezuela, Serbia and Syria – although the idea of a legally binding alliance with Moscow is periodically circulating in the political circles of those states[36]. Russia actually became the main guarantor of security for Syria in the 2010s by strengthening the government's position in the fight against hostile groups, but this role has not been formalized.

While actively using other instruments, including military technical assistance, Russia does not bind itself legally to assistance outside its immediate neighborhood[37]. Even after expanding the geography of its military presence, Moscow continues to use alliances to formalize privileged relations exclusively in interaction with countries of the post-Soviet area.

In alliances with Russian participation, security guarantees are complemented by extensive military technical armed assistance. Moreover, one of the advantages of CSTO membership is Moscow's commitment to sell weapons to allies at domestic Russian prices, which are cheaper than in other states [Khetagurov 2017]. Russia's contribution to the training of commanding officers and regular joint exercises ensure a high level of interoperability with the allies.

Thereby, having formed a relatively small network of military and political commitments, Russia did not seek to expand it beyond its geographic neighborhood throughout the 2010s, even in cases where there were prerequisites for such expansion. This demonstrates Moscow's sensitivity to the costs associated with the provision of security guarantees that it would later be unable or unwilling to fulfill[38].

At the same time, its continued willingness to invest in the CSTO requires explanation. It has already been noted in the literature that Moscow values the loyalty of the member states of this association [Allies 2020]. This claim is consistent with the theory of asymmetric alliances. In the context of the constructed typology of functions, the next section aims to provide thorough assessment of the specific benefits derived by Russia from allied relations.

This analysis is complicated by the intertwining of different forms of influence in Moscow's interactions with the countries in question. Russia's CSTO allies are simultaneously its partners in the Eurasian Economic Union, the Commonwealth of Independent

[33] The Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Abkhazia. 17 September 2018. URL: http://www.kremlin.ru/supplement/200 (accessed: 10.11.2020); The Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance between the Russian Federation and the Republic of South Ossetia. 17 September 2018. URL: http://www.kremlin.ru/supplement/199 (accessed: 10.11.2020).

[34] For a discussion of determining the status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in relation to the existing typological models, see [Kazin 2009].

[35] Saipov Z.S. "Factors that Influenced Uzbekistan's Decision to Pull out of the CSTO: The View from Tashkent". Eurasia Daily Monitor. 2012. Vol. 9. No. 136.

[36] See, e.g., Laru D. "Belgrad prizvali k ODKB (Belgrade called to CSTO)". Izvestia. April 3, 2018. URL: https://iz.ru/726511/dmitrii-laru/belgrad-prizvali-k-odkb (accessed: 10.11.2020).

[37] For a comparison of allied commitments and Russia's military technical assistance, see [Fomin et al. 2019].

[38] It is noteworthy in this regard that, despite its military operation since 2015 and intensive cooperation with Damascus, Moscow did not conclude a bilateral alliance with Syria in order to preserve the ability to withdraw support at any time.

Table 4
Material Potential of CSTO Member States

	Population (2019)		Gross domestic product (2019)		Defense expenditures (2019)	
	mln people	% of total CSTO	bln dollars	% of total CSTO	mln dollars	% of total CSTO
Armenia	3.0	1.6%	13.7	0.7%	673.3	1.0%
Belarus	9.5	5.0%	63.1	3.2%	780.1	1.1%
Kazakhstan	18.5	9.7%	180.2	9.1%	1766.4	2.6%
Kirghizia	6.5	3.4%	8.5	0.4%	124.1	0.2%
Russia	144.4	76.0%	1,699.9	86.1%	65,102.6	95.0%
Tajikistan	8.1	4.3%	8.1	0.4%	95.8*	0.1%

* Year 2015.

Source: compiled by the author with data of the World Bank and the Stockholm Peace Research Institute for 2019 (World Development Index DataBank. URL: https://data.worldbank.org/; SIPRI Military Expenditure Database. URL: https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex).

States, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization[39]. The beneficiaries of Russia's security guarantees are dependent on its market and investments and find themselves within its socio-cultural influence.

Therefore, it is sometimes difficult to measure the contribution of alliance relations to Moscow's influence. Nevertheless, the following analysis confirms that asymmetric alliances act as at least one channel for securing dominance.

The fact that security guarantees preceded the intensification of regional integration processes testifies in favor of their importance for the consolidation of Russian leadership. It may point to the "spillover effect" of dependence from the military-strategic field to other areas[40]. In some cases (in particular, Armenia's accession to the EAEU), there is a direct link between military and political commitments and Moscow's influence on the policies of its allies.

6

A comparison of the material potentials of Russia and its allies clearly shows a striking disparity between them. Moscow has an overwhelming predominance in terms of population, economy, and military strength (see Table 4). The existing gap gives every reason to characterize the CSTO as an asymmetric alliance. Therefore, the provisions presented in the theoretical sections of this article should be applicable to this association.

The scale of disparity makes the tasks of preventing the emergence of competing players irrelevant. Even the largest CSTO member states after Russia – Belarus and Kazakhstan – have no prerequisites for becoming peer competitors. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, they voluntarily renounced the nuclear arsenals deployed on their territories and do not intend to have any independent deterrence capability.

Henceforth, unlike Washington, Moscow does not have allies akin to Germany or Japan, which have to be kept from becoming independent centers of power. A number of Russian privileged partners, including China, India, Turkey, and Iran, have either achieved recognition as comparable international political powers or claim such a status. Nevertheless, Moscow has not considered the option of providing security guarantees as a means of curbing allies' strategic autonomy[41].

In any case, such attempts would have no chance of success, both because of Russia's

[39] Armenia and Belarus are not members of the SCO, but Minsk is part of the Union State with the Russian Federation.

[40] This effect is described in [Mastanduno 2009].

[41] On the possibility of a military-political alliance between Russia and China, see [Kireeva 2019; Lukin, Kashin 2019].

limited capabilities and because of the foreign policy ambitions of countries that are very sensitive about their own positioning in the global arena [Neumann 2008; Clunan 2009; Forsberg, Heller, Wolf 2014; Larson, Shevchenko 2014][42]. At the same time, their rise throughout the 2000s and 2010s did not contradict Moscow's strategic priorities, which sought to weaken American hegemony by establishing a polycentric configuration of the international system.

Russia did not engage many of its allies in actions involving the use of force: only once in the 1990s, the armed forces of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan took part in a CIS peacekeeping operation in Tajikistan. The allies did not join similar missions in other conflicts in the post-Soviet countries (although the CSTO worked out procedures for the formation of collective forces) [Nikitina 2014; Godovannyj 2019]. Moscow did not expect military assistance from the CSTO and its individual members in Syria either[43].

Russia also relies on allies to meet projection-of-power challenges, as there are Russian military facilities on the territory of all CSTO member states. There are bases in Abkhazia, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and South Ossetia, expanding Moscow's military presence in the South Caucuses and Central Asia. In the mid-2000s, following Uzbekistan's accession to the CSTO, the deployment of Russian military facilities in that country was discussed[44].

Minsk's regular refusals to deploy Russian military forces on its territory, which has caused disagreements in its relations with Moscow, became an anomaly in this context[45]. This is further evidence that even in conditions of disparity, heavy reliance does not lead to complete subordination and the major power has to reckon with the policies of its allies.

Meanwhile, both Belarus and other CSTO member states demonstrate a high level of political support to Russia at international bodies. As already noted, Russia's allies did not recognize Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states. They also avoided supporting Moscow on the issue of the reunification of the Crimea and in the conflict in eastern Ukraine. At the same time, they did not join the ranks of critics on these topics either[46]. In general, CSTO member states are more likely than other countries to support Russia in international organizations, including the UN General Assembly (see Figure 1)[47].

In addition, allied relations enable Russia to significantly limit ties between CSTO member states and those Western countries with which Moscow has had tensions, and this reinforces Russia's status ambitions[48].

The example of Armenia is illustrative in this regard. Since the 1990s, Yerevan has been actively cooperating with NATO, taking part in NATO exercises and seeking its assistance in reforming the armed forces. Starting from 2010, the Armenian contingent was present in Afghanistan as part of the International

[42] Iran's painful reaction to the disclosure of information about the presence of Russian air and space forces on its territory in 2016 is illustrative. See Kuprijanov A. "Neletnaja pogoda (Nonflying weather)". Lenta.ru. 24 August 2016. URL: https://lenta.ru/articles/2016/08/24/hamadan/ (accessed: 10.11.2020).

[43] Chernenko E. "ODKB ukrepit mir slovom [The CSTO will strengthen peace with words]". Kommersantъ. 18.07.2017. URL: https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3360030 (accessed: 10.11.2020).

[44] Solovjov V, Safronov I, Tsuverink T. "Smena karaulov [Changing of the guards]". Kommersantъ. 24.11.2005. URL: https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/629202 (accessed: 10.11.2020).

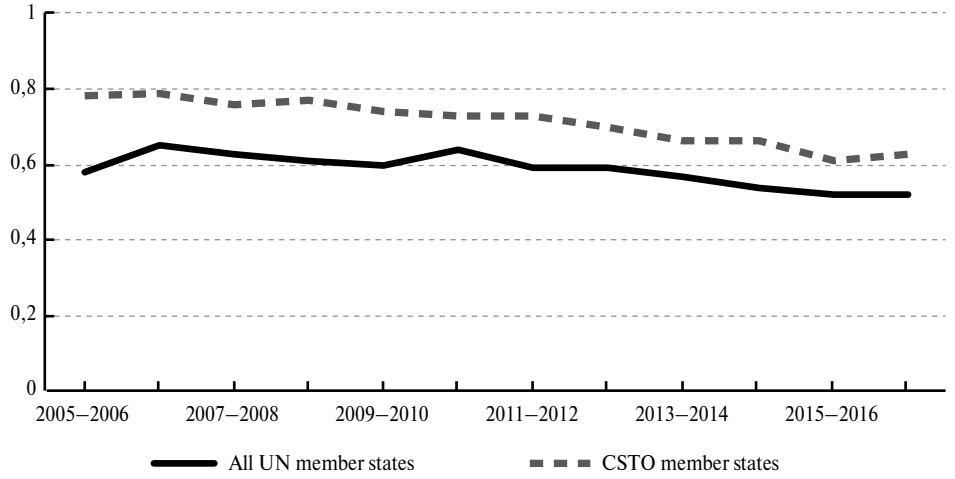
[45] Karmazin I. "Beorusskij front: pochemu Lukashenko otkazals'a on voennoj bazy Rossii [Belarusian front: why Lukashenko refused a Russian military base]". Izvestia. 3 October 2019. URL: https://iz.ru/927892/igor-karmazin/belorusskii-front-pochemu-lukashenko-otkazalsia-ot-voennoi-bazy-rossii (accessed: 10.11.2020).

[46] In particular, they voted against or abstained during the adoption of UN General Assembly Resolution 68/262 on Crimea in 2014 (the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution in support of the territorial integrity of Ukraine). TASS. March 27, 2014. URL: https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/1079720 (accessed: 10.11.2020)).

[47] Similar results are presented in [Fomin et al. 2019].

[48] Regarding Russia's desire to secure recognition of its leading status in the post-Soviet space, see [Troitskiy 2017].

Fig. 1
Degree of convergence between the positions of Russia and other states when voting on resolutions at the UN General Assembly



Source: compiled by the author on the basis of UN data, with the methodology described in [Istomin 2018].

Security Assistance Force[49]. Despite all this, in 2013 Armenia renounced the Association Agreement with the EU and joined the Eurasian Economic Union. This decision was crucial for Moscow, because its opposition to signing similar documents by Moldova and Ukraine (which are not Russian allies) had been ignored. Armenia's choice in favor of the EAEU was driven not so much by economic motives as by the strategic importance of Russian security guarantees [Ghazaryan and Delcour 2017; Ter-Matevosyan 2017].

Finally, asymmetric alliances play an important role in Russia's policy of strengthening the statehood of its neighboring countries, in such a way preventing threats of cross-border transfer of instability. This objective is particularly relevant in cooperation with Russia's Central Asian allies: Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan [Basharat'yan 2012; Gusev 2018]. Moscow supports the arming and training of military personnel, as well as border control and law enforcement services of these states. Within the CSTO, there is cooperation on counter-terrorism and counter-extremist issues [Shchekoldina 2019]. Regular "Kanal" (*Channel*) and "Nelegal" (*Illegal*) operations are conducted to track drug trafficking and illegal migration. For a long time, Russian forces have been directly involved in the protection of Tajikistan's borders.

Military-technical assistance to allies complements socio-economic assistance. Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan have traditionally been among the main recipients of Russian official development assistance [Zaitsev and Knobel 2019]. Although assistance is provided without a direct link to allied relations, it is an evidence of the coherence of efforts to strengthen the statehood of these countries through various channels.

From Moscow's point of view, assisting its allies in strengthening their statehood is determined by the risks posed by instability in their regions. Since the 2000s, Central Asia has been the main source of migrants to Russia, who become a cause of social tension. Therefore, management of migration flows falls within the

[49] "Armenija prodolzhaet uchastie v missii NATO "Reshitel'naja podderzhka" [Armenia to Continue Participation in NATO Resolute Support Mission]." TASS. December 20, 2018. URL: https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/5934903 (accessed: 10.11.2020).

scope of foreign policy objectives [Ryazantsev and Pis'mennaya 2019].

In addition, drug trafficking from Afghanistan pass through the countries of the region, with a significant increase in the 2000s and 2010s. Finally, people originating from Central Asia are increasingly involved in terrorist activities in Russia[50]. Thus, Moscow's price of maintaining allied relations can be seen as an investment in its own security.

As a result, Russia's foreign policy demonstrates three of the four functions of asymmetric alliances. The experience of Russia's relations with allies does not contradict the theoretical provisions: in exchange for security guarantees, it receives influence on the allies to exploit the benefits associated with the projection of force, legitimization of foreign policy initiatives, limiting the freedom of maneuver of competitors, and stabilization of the regional environment.

Russia did not always obtain concessions from its allies, but it has gained sustainable benefits at limited direct costs, mainly expressed in favorable terms for arms transfers. Moreover, Moscow has so far avoided serious opportunity costs, despite its allies' involvement in acute confrontations with third countries.

More specifically, whereas Armenia is in a protracted conflict with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, Moscow maintains generally constructive relations with Baku. Similarly, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, contradictions persisted between Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Tashkent remained an inconsistent partner for Russia during this period. The difficulties in interaction with this country were mainly due to its desire to diversify relations. Uzbekistan's distancing from Moscow was explained primarily by its reorientation toward deepening ties with other major players (the United States, the European Union, and China), rather than by transferring its disagreements with Central Asian states over to Russia [Troitsky 2008; Meshcheryakov 2014; Plotnikov 2015].

In the context of relatively limited direct and opportunity costs, Russia has repeatedly faced the risks posed by asymmetric alliances. For example, the internal political crisis in Kyrgyzstan in 2010, triggered by ethnic clashes, prompted the country's interim government to ask Moscow to deploy CSTO peacekeepers. Russia faced the possibility of unwanted involvement in the internal conflict, and a refusal would have damaged the reputation of the alliance it led. It called into question the credibility of informal guarantees even though in this instance Russian would not violate it legal obligations to defend against armed attack. As a result, Russia refrained from sending its own forces.

Russia pursued a similar strategy in its relations with Armenia. Yerevan was displeased, with Russian arms deliveries to Azerbaijan. Nevertheless, Moscow refused to extend security guarantees to Nagorno-Karabakh, based on a literal reading of legally enshrined obligations[51].

The aforementioned examples are not sufficient for making extensive generalizations, but they do show that Russia, in response to the risks posed by its alliances, tends to shy away from an extended interpretation of promises, even when this is associated with reputational losses. At the same time, it is comfortable with its allies' lack of loyalty, at least as long as Moscow does not have concerns that the allies are attempting a strategic reorientation.

The Russian record of alliance relations differs significantly from the American experience, which is often presented in the literature as an exemplary model. Still, it is consistent with the theory of asymmetric alliances. The limited range of states to which Moscow ex-

[50] For example, immigrants from this region were convicted of preparing and carrying out a terrorist attack in St. Petersburg in 2017.

[51] The importance of Russian guarantees for Armenia and at the same time their limits were clearly demonstrated by the armed conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh in the fall of 2020. Moscow confirmed that it would fulfill its obligations to protect the internationally recognized territory of Armenia, which do not apply to Nagorno-Karabakh and the adjacent regions of Azerbaijan. The desire of Azerbaijani forces during the conflict not to allow their actions to cause Russian military intervention is quite indicative.

tends security guarantees, even compared to the number of countries with which it cooperates, reveals sensitivity to the costs of asymmetric alliances.

Russia's reliance on allies in its immediate neighborhood confirms the need for asymmetric alliances as a tool to consolidate influence. Russia's willingness to resort to it is all the more revealing, because joining exclusive military and political alliances is at odds with its normative position – the assertion that international security is best promoted by inclusive formats that reflect the principle of the indivisibility of security[52].

Such a divergence of the value system and practice increases the relevance of the case study for substantiating of the theory of asymmetric alliances. A solid evidence base is ensured by the relevance of the specific empirical experience for the provisions of this theory. It can be argued that the analysis of Russian policy undertaken in this work ensures better validation of the theory as compared to the studies of U.S. alliances.

* * *

The purpose of this article was to expand the theoretical understanding of asymmetric alliances and to deepen the understanding of Russian foreign policy. The relevance of the analysis undertaken is determined by the fact that the traditional definition of "alliance" as a mechanism for aggregation of states' potentials for joint balancing against adversaries is not applicable to a large number of modern cases of military and political cooperation.

Meanwhile, the major powers regularly provide military and political commitments to weak countries as part of the "security for autonomy" formula. Such asymmetric alliances make it possible to consolidate influence on allies, ensuring the prevention of their transformation into independent players, limiting their political and economic relations with their opponents, involving them in maintaining the leader's initiatives, and preventing the spread of instability across borders.

Allied relations do not guarantee these advantages, but they increase the likelihood of gaining them by reinforcing the dependence of weak countries on large ones. At the same time, they entail direct and indirect costs of protecting allies, opportunity costs related to jeopardizing relations with third countries, and the risks of getting involved in unnecessary conflicts or frustration due to inflated expectations. Thus, the functional niche that asymmetric alliances occupy cannot be comfortably filled with other instruments. For example, arms supplies, which often acts as a supplement to security guarantees, is unlikely to become the full equivalent.

Moscow's policy with regard to alliances corresponds to the expectations derived from the theory of asymmetric alliances. Russia has not always succeeded in attracting states of interest into alliance relations. At the same time, it does not seek to expand the network of military and political commitments, even in those cases where there are prerequisites for this. Currently, Russia provides guarantees to seven countries in its immediate vicinity.

Moscow's ambitions are limited by its unwillingness to make commitments it may later be unwilling or unable to fulfill. When it provides security guarantees, it benefits from ex-

[52] Meanwhile, in its criticism of NATO, Moscow appeals to the principle of the indivisibility of security, pointing out the incompatibility of the Alliance's expansion as well as its actions in Central and Eastern Europe. For example: "In the late 1990s, the leaders of Europe, the United States, and Canada solemnly proclaimed the principle of the indivisibility of security, declaring that security can only be common, only equal, and only indivisible, so that no one would take steps that would compromise the security of others. This is written on paper, in the documents of OSCE summits and in the documents of NATO-Russia Council summits. This does not imply the preservation of military-political blocs, but the development of a common legal framework that would equalize all those who are in the Euro-Atlantic space. The admission of Montenegro to NATO, as well as the "waves" of Alliance expansion that took place in the last 15 years, show that NATO does not want common equal security" (Lavrov, S.V. "Speech and answers to questions by the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs at the Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal State University, Kaliningrad, June 6, 2017." URL: https://www.mid.ru/vistupleniya_ministra/-/asset_publisher/MCZ7HQuMdqBY/content/id/2777284 (accessed: 10.11.2020)).

panding the geography of power projection, legitimizing regional leadership, limiting the freedom of maneuver of Western opponents, and stabilizing the post-Soviet environment.

The case of Russia contributes to the justification of the theory of asymmetric alliances. Examples from the record of other major powers, including rising centers of power, can further support this theory. First of all, it is worth paying attention to cases where military and political cooperation is carried out in the absence of other forms of consolidation of the dominant influence. Such an analysis will give a more clearly defined characterization of the degree of dependence caused by asymmetric alliances.

References

Allison R. (2004). Regionalism, regional structures and security management in Central Asia. *International affairs*. Vol. 80. No. 3. pp. 463–483. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2346.2004.00393.x

Barnett M.N., Levy J.S. (1991). Domestic sources of alliances and alignments: The case of Egypt, 1962–73. *International Organization*. Vol. 45. No. 3. pp. 369–395. DOI: 10.1017/S0020818300033142

Basharat'yan M.M. (2012). Voenno-politicheskaya bezopasnost' Tsentral'noj Azii i rol' ODKB v yeyo obespechenii [Military and Political Security in Central Asia and the Role of CSTO in its Assurance]. *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya*. No. 12. pp. 15-23.

Beckley M. (2015). The myth of entangling alliances: Reassessing the security risks of US defense pacts. *International Security*. Vol. 39. No. 4. pp. 7–48. DOI: 10.1162/ISEC_a_00197

Benson B.V., Bentley P.R., Ray J.L. (2013). Ally provocateur: Why allies do not always behave. *Journal of Peace Research*. Vol. 50. No. 1. pp. 47–58. DOI: 10.1177/0022343312454445

Blank S. (2007). *US interests in Central Asia and the challenges to them*. Washington D.C.: Strategic Studies Institute.

Bogdanov K.V. (2019). Flexible Coalitions: Origins and Prospects. *Russia in Global Affairs*. Vol. 17. No. 3. pp. 132–150. DOI: 10.31278/1810-6374-2019-17-3-132-150

Brands H., Feaver P.D. (2017). What Are America's Alliances Good For? *Parameters*. Vol. 47. No. 2. pp.15–30.

Brooks S.G., Ikenberry G.J., Wohlforth W.C. (2013). Don't come home, America: the case against retrenchment. *International Security*. Vol. 37. No. 3. pp. 7–51. DOI: 10.1162/ISEC_a_00107

Bourdieu, P. (2002). Formy kapitala [Forms of Capital]. *Ekonomicheskaya sotsiologiya*. Vol. 3. No. 5. pp. 60–74.

Buszynski L. (1983). *SEATO, the Failure of an Alliance Strategy*. Singapore: Singapore University Press.

Catrina C. (1988). *Arms transfers and dependence*. New York: UNIDIR.

Cha V.D. (2016). *Powerplay: The origins of the American alliance system in Asia*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Christensen T.J., Snyder J. (1990). Chain gangs and passed bucks: Predicting alliance patterns in multipolarity. *International organization*. Vol. 44. No. 2. pp. 137–168.

Clark I. (1989). *The hierarchy of states: reform and resistance in the international order*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Clunan A.L. (2009). *The Social Construction of Russia's Resurgence: Aspirations, Identity, and Security Interests*. Baltimore: JHU Press.

Cooley A., Nexon D.H. (2013). "The Empire Will Compensate You": The Structural Dynamics of the US Overseas Basing Network. *Perspectives on Politics*. Vol. 11. No. 4. pp. 1034–1050. DOI: 10.1017/S153759271300281

David S.R. (1991a). *Choosing Sides: Alignment and Realignment in the Third World*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

David S.R. (1991b). Explaining third world alignment. *World Politics*. Vol. 43. No. 2. pp. 233–256. DOI: 10.2307/2010472

Drezner D.W. (1999). The sanctions paradox: Economic statecraft and international relations. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fearon J.D. (1998). Bargaining, enforcement, and international cooperation. *International organization*. Vol. 52. No. 2. pp. 269–305. DOI: 10.1162/002081898753162820

Fomin I. et. al. (2019). Soyuzniki Rossii: formal'nye obyazatel'stva i fakticheskie sotrudnichestvo [Allies of Russia: Formal Commitments and Practical Cooperation]. *Mezhdunarodnye protsessy*. Vol. 17. No. 2. pp. 101–130. DOI: 10.17994/IT.2019.17.2.57.6

Fordham B.O. (2010). Trade and asymmetric alliances. *Journal of Peace Research*. Vol. 47. No. 6. pp. 685–696. DOI: 10.1177/0022343310381689

Forsberg T., Heller R., Wolf R. (2014). Status and emotions in Russian foreign policy. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*. Vol. 47. No. 3-4. pp. 261–268.

Frühling S., O'Neil A. (2017). Nuclear weapons, the United States and alliances in Europe and Asia: Toward an institutional perspective. *Contemporary Security Policy*. Vol. 38. No. 1. pp. 4–25. DOI: 10.1080/13523260.2016.1257214

Fukuyama F. (2004). *State-building: governance and world order in the 21st century*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Ghazaryan N., Delcour L. (2017). From EU integration process to the Eurasian Economic Union: the case of Armenia. In: R. Petrov, P. Van Elsuwege (eds.). *Post-Soviet Constitutions and Challenges of Regional Integration*. N.Y.: Routledge. 2017. pp. 131–152.

Gibler D.M., Vasquez J.A. (1998). Uncovering the dangerous alliances, 1495–1980. *International Studies Quarterly*. Vol. 42. No. 4. pp. 785–807. DOI: 10.1111/0020-8833.00106

Giplin R. (1981). *War and change in world politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Godovannyj A.V. (2019). Mirotvorcheskaya sostavlyayuschaya deyatel'nosti "Organizatsii dogovora o kollektivnoj bezopasnosti (ODKB)" [Peacekeeping Aspect of the Activity of the "Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)". *Voprosy rossijskogo i mezhdunarodnogo prava*. Vol. 9. No. 1–1. pp. 126–131.

Golub K.Y., Golub Y.G. (2018). ODKB: istoki mnogoprofil'nogo mandata i sovremennye instrumenty ego realizatsii [CSTO: Sources of Multi-profile Mandate and Modern Instruments of Its Implementation]. *Vestnik mezhdunarodnykh organizatsij: obrazovanie, nauka, novaya ekonomika*. Vol. 13. No. 1. pp. 197–203.

Gusev L.Y. (2018). Bor'ba s terrorizmom i ekstremizmom v stranakh Tsentral'noj Azii i Afganistane. Rol' ODKB [Struggle against Terrorism and Extremsim in the Countries of Central Asia and Afghanistan. The Role of CSTO]. *Rossiya i novye gosudarstva Evrazii*. No. 1. pp. 126–133.

Hey J.A.K. (ed.) (2003). *Small states in world politics: Explaining foreign policy behavior*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Hura M. et al. (2000). *Interoperability: A continuing challenge in coalition air operations*. Santa Monica: Rand Corp.

Ingebritsen C., Neumann I., Gstohl S. (2012). *Small states in international relations*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Istomin I.A. (2017). "Dilemma Al'ansov" v razvitii voenno-politicheskikh soyuzov SSHA ["Alliance Dilemma" in the Development of Military Alliances of the United States]. In: Shakleina T. A. (eds) *Situatsionnye analizy: mezhdunarodnye instituty v sovremennoj mirovoj politike*. Moscow: MGIMO Universitet. pp. 215–265.

Istomin I.A. (2018). Vox populi, vox Dei? Vilike derzhavy i golosovanie v General'noj Assamblee OON [Vox populi, vox Dei? Great Powers and Votes in the UN General Assembly]. *Mezhdunarodnaya analitika*. No. 2. pp. 7–18.

Istomin I.A., Baykov A.A. (2019). Dinamika mezhdunarodnykh al'ansov v neravnovesnoj mirovoj sisteme [Dynamics of International Alliances in the Unbalanced World System]. *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya*. Vol. 63. No. 1. pp. 34-48. DOI: 10.20542/0131-2227-2019-63-1-34-48

Istomin I.A., Baykov A.A. (2020). Al'ansy na sluzhbe gegemonii: dekonstruktsiya instrumentariya voenno-politicheskogo dominirovaniya [Alliances Serving Hegemony: Deconstruction of the Instruments of Military and Political Domination]. *Polis. Politicheskie issledovaniya*. No. 6. pp. 8–25. DOI: 10.17976/jpps/2020.06.02

Istomin I.A., Bolgova I.V., Sokolov A.P., Avatkov A.V. (2019). A "Badge of Honour" or a "Stamp Of Infamy"? NATO as a Marker of Status in International Politics. *Vestnik MGIMO Universitet*. No. 2. pp. 57–85. DOI: 10.24833/2071-8160-2019-2-65-57-8

Istomin I.A., Silaev N.Y., Sushentsov A.A. (2018). Strategii soyuznichestva kontinental'nykh i morskikh derzhav. *Mezhdunarodnye protsessy*. Vol. 16. No. 4. pp. 42–62.

Johnson J.C. (2015). The cost of security: Foreign policy concessions and military alliances. *Journal of Peace Research*. Vol. 52. No. 5. pp. 665–679. DOI: 10.1177/0022343314565434

Johnson J.C. (2017). External threat and alliance formation. *International Studies Quarterly*. Vol. 61. No. 3. pp. 736–745. DOI: 10.1093/isq/sqw054

Jordan J., Stulberg A.N., Troitskiy M. (2021a). Statecraft in U.S.-Russia Relations: Meaning, Dilemmas, and Significance. *Mezhdunarodnye protsessy*. Vol. 19. No. 1e. P. 4–17.

Jordan J., Stulberg A.N., Troitskiy M. (2021b). Statecraft in U.S.-Russia Relations: Meaning, Dilemmas, and Significance. *Mezhdunarodnye protsessy*. Vol. 19. No. 1r. P. 6–25.

Kazin F.A. (2009). Vzaimootnosheniya Rossii s Yuzhnoj Osetiej i Abkhaziej v stavnitel'noj perspective [Interaction of Russia with South Ossetia and Abkhazia in Comparative Perspective]. *Polis. Politicheskie issledovaniya*. No. 1. pp. 130–142.

Kenwick M.R., Vasquez J.A., Powers M.A. (2015). Do alliances really deter? *The Journal of Politics*. Vol. 77. No. 4. pp. 943–954. DOI: 10.1086/681958

Keal P. (1983). *Unspoken rules and superpower dominance*. N.Y.: St. Martin's Press.

Keohane R.O., Nye J.S. (1977). Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition. Boston: Little, Brown.

Khetagurov A. (2017). *Voenno-tekhnicheskoe sotrudnichestvo Rossii: strany SNG* [Military and Technical Cooperation of Russia: CIS Countries]. Rossijskij sovet po mezhdunarodnym delam. URL: https://russiancouncil.ru/analytics-and-comments/columns/geopolitics-arms-market/voenno-tekhnicheskoe-sotrudnichestvo-rossii-strany-sng/

Kim H.M., Woo J., Lee J.C. (2020). What Is the Relationship Between Alliance and Militarized Conflict? Analysis of Reciprocal Causation. *Armed Forces & Society*. Vol. 46. No. 4. pp. 539–563. DOI: 10.1177/0095327X18819253

Kim T. (2011). Why alliances entangle but seldom entrap states. *Security Studies*. Vol. 20. No. 3. pp. 350–377. DOI: 10.1080/09636412.2011.599201

Kinsella D. (1998). Arms transfer dependence and foreign policy conflict. *Journal of Peace Research*. Vol. 35. No. 1. pp. 7–23. DOI: 10.1177/0022343398035001002

Kireeva A.N. (2019). Buduschnost' rossijsko-kitajskogo soyuznichestva v kontekste teorii mezhdunarodnykh otnoshenij [Future of Alignment between Russia and China in the Context of Theory of the International Relations]. *Mezhdunarodnye protsessy*. Vol. 17. No. 4. pp. 84–114. DOI: 10.17994/IT.2019.17.4.59.6

Knopf J.W. (2012). *Security assurances and nuclear nonproliferation*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Kropatcheva E. (2016). Russia and the collective security treaty organisation: Multilateral policy or unilateral ambitions? *Europe-Asia Studies*. Vol. 68. No. 9. pp. 1526–1552. DOI: 10.1080/09668136.2016.1238878

Kulik S.A. et al. (2011). *ODKB: otvetstvennaya bezopasnost'* [CSTO: Responsible Security]. Moscow: Insor.

Lake D.A. (2009). *Hierarchy in international relations*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Lanoszka A. (2018). *Atomic Assurance: The Alliance Politics of Nuclear Proliferation*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Larson D.W., Shevchenko A. (2014). Managing Rising Powers: The Role of Status Concerns. In: T.V. Paul, D.W. Larson, W.C. Wohlforth (eds.). *Status in World Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. pp. 33–55.

Larson D.W., Shevchenko A. (2019). *Quest for Status*. Yale University Press.

Lebow R.N. (2008). *A cultural theory of international relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Leeds B.A., Long A.G., Mitchell S.M.L. (2000). Reevaluating alliance reliability: Specific threats, specific promises. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. Vol. 44. No. 5. pp. 686–699. DOI: 10.1177/0022002700044005006

Liska G. (1962). *Nations in alliance: The limits of interdependence*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press.

Long T. (2017a). It's not the size, it's the relationship: from 'small states' to asymmetry. *International Politics*. Vol. 54. No. 2. pp. 144–160. DOI: 10.1057/s41311-017-0028-x

Long T. (2017b). Small states, great power? Gaining influence through intrinsic, derivative, and collective power. *International Studies Review*. Vol. 19. No. 2. pp. 185-205.

Lukin A.V., Kashin V.B. (2019). Rossijsko-kitajskoe sotrudnichestvo i bezopasnost' v ATR [Cooperation between Russia and China and Security in the Asia Pacific region]. *Sravnitelnaya politika*. Vol. 10. No. 2. pp. 135–151. DOI: 10.24411/2221-3279-2019-1002

Makienko K.V. (2020). *Soyuzniki* [Allies]. Moscow: Tsentr analiza strategij i tekhnologij.

Malinovskij O.N., Paschenko I.Y. (2016). Problemy razvitiya ODKB i povysheniya yeyo roli v obespechenii kollektivnoj bezopasnosti v Evrazii [Challenges for Development of CSTO and for Increase of Its Role in Provision of Collective Security in Eurasia]. *Istoricheskaya i sotsial'no-obrazovatel'naya mysl'*. Vol. 8. No. 3–1. pp. 17-21.

Mann M. (2012). The Sources of Social Power, Volume III: Global Empires and Revolution, 1890–1945. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mansfield E.D., Bronson R. (2015). Alliances, Preferential Trading Arrangements, and International Trade. *The Political Economy of International Trade*. Vol. 46. pp. 51–64. DOI: 10.1142/9445

Mastanduno M. (1988). The management of alliance export control policy: American leadership and the politics of COCOM. In: D. Rusk (ed.). *Controlling East-West Trade and Technology Transfer: Power, Politics and Policies*. Durham: Duke University Press. pp. 241–279.

Mastanduno M. (1992). *Economic containment: CoCom and the politics of East-West trade*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Mastanduno M. (2009). System Maker and Privilege Taker: US Power and the International Political Economy. *World Politics*. Vol. 61. No. 1. pp. 121–154.
Mearsheimer J.J. (2001). *The tragedy of great power politics*. N.Y.: WW Norton & Company.
Meijer H. et al. (2018). Arming China: Major powers' arms transfers to the People's Republic of China. *Journal of strategic studies*. Vol. 41. No. 6. pp. 850–886. DOI: 10.1080/01402390.2017.1288110
Mescheryakov K.E. (2014). Bor'ba Kazakhstana i Uzbekistana za regional'noe liderstvo v tsentral'noj Azii i pozitisya Rossii [Struggle of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan for Regional Leadership in Central Asia and Russian position]. *Klio*. No. 8. pp. 100–103.
Morgenthau H. (1948). *Politics among Nations: the Struggle for Power and Peace*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
Morrow J.D. (1991). Alliances and asymmetry: An alternative to the capability aggregation model of alliances. *American Journal of Political Science*. Vol. 35. No. 4. pp. 904–933. DOI: 10.2307/21114
Neumann I.B. (2008). Russia as a great power, 1815–2007. *Journal of International Relations and Development*. Vol. 11. No. 2. pp. 128–151.
Newnham R. (2008). "Coalition of the bribed and bullied?" US economic linkage and the Iraq War coalition. *International Studies Perspectives*. Vol. 9. No. 2. pp. 183–200. DOI: 10.1111/j.1528-3585.2008.00326.x
Nikitina Y. (2012). The Collective Security Treaty Organization Through the Looking Glass. *Problems of Post-Communism*. Vol. 59. No. 3. pp. 41–52. DOI: 10.2753/PPC1075-8216590304
Nikitina Y.A. (2011). ODKB i ShOS kak modeli vzaimodejstviya v sfere regional'noj bezopasnosti [CSTO and SCO as models for interaction in the sphere of regional security]. *Indeks bezopasnosti*. Vol. 17. No. 2. pp. 45–53.
Nikitina Y.A. (2014). Potentsial Rossii i ODKB v sfere uregulirovaniya konfliktov [Potential of Russia and CSTO in the sphere of the conflict settlement]. *Rossiya v sovermennykh integratsionnykh protesessakh*. Moscow: MGIMO Universitet. pp. 137–156.
Nikitina Y.A. (2017). *ODKB – 2017: skol'ko let imeninnitse i s chem yeyo pozdravlyat'?* [CSTO – 2017: how old is the birthday child and with what it is to be consgratulated?]. URL: https://russiancouncil.ru/analytics-and-comments/analytics/odkb-2017-skolko-let-imeninnitse-i-s-chem-ee-pozdravlyat/
Nye J.S. (2011). *The Future of Power*. New York: Public Affairs.
Organski A.F.K. (1958). *World Politics*. New York: A.A. Knopf.
Paul T.V., Larson D.W., Wohlforth W.C. (eds.) (2014). *Status in world politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 306 p.
Pechurov S.L. (2008). *Koalitsionnye vo'ny anglo-saksov: istoriya i sovremennost'* [Coalition Wars of Anglo-Saxons: History and Modern Record]. Moscow: URSS.
Plotnikov D.S. (2015). Regional'nye ambitsii Uzbekistana skvoz' prizmy rossijskoj politiki v Tsentral'noj Azii [Regional Ambitions of Uzbekistan through the Prism of Russian Policy in Central Asia]. *Vestnik Permskogo universiteta*. Seriya: Politilogiya. No. 2 (30). pp. 46–55.
Pressman J. (2011). *Warring friends: Alliance restraint in international politics*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
Quirk P.W. (2017). *Great Powers, Weak States, and Insurgency: Explaining Internal Threat Alliances*. New York: Springer.
Ripsman N.M., Taliaferro J.W., Lobell S.E. (2016). *Neoclassical realist theory of international politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Renshon J. (2007). *Fighting for status: hierarchy and conflict in world politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Ryazantsev S.V., Pis'mennaya E.E. (2019). Mezhdunarodnaya trudovaya migratsiya v Rossii [International Labour Migration to Russia]. *Mezhdunarodnye protsessy*. Vol. 17. No. 4. pp. 65–83. DOI 10.17994/IT.2019.17.4.59.5
Schekoldina T.I. (2019). Kontrterroristicheskaya i antiekstremistskaya deyatel'nost' ODKB [Counterterrorist and Anti-extremists Activity of the CSTO]. *Postosovetskie issledovaniya*. Vol. 2. No. 6. pp. 1373–1384.
Schmitt O. (2018). *Allies that count: junior partners in coalition warfare*. Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press.
Shaw H.J. (1983). US Security Assistance: Debts & Dependency. *Foreign Policy*. No. 50. pp. 105–123. DOI: 10.2307/1148283
Simpson G.J. (1996). The diffusion of sovereignty: Self-determination in the post-colonial age. In: M. Sellers (ed.). *The New world order: sovereignty, human rights, and the self-determination of peoples*. Oxford: Berg.
Snyder G.H. (1997). *Alliance Politics*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
Stein A.A. (2013). Power Politics and the Powerless. In: M. Finnemore, J. Goldstein (eds.). *Back to the basics: State power in a contemporary world*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Stewart K. et al. (2004). *Non-technical interoperability: The challenge of command leadership in multinational operations*. Qinetiq Ltd Farnborough (United Kingdom) Centre For Human Sciences. URL: http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a465749.pdf

Stronski P. (2020). *There Goes the Neighborhood: The Limits of Russian Integration in Eurasia*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. URL: https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/09/16/there-goes-neighborhood-limits-of-russian-integration-in-eurasia-pub-82693

Ter-Matevosyan V. et al. (2017). Armenia in the Eurasian Economic Union: reasons for joining and its consequences. *Eurasian Geography and Economics*. Vol. 58. No. 3. pp. 340–360. DOI: 10.1080/15387216.2017.1360193

Tomlinson J. (1991). *Cultural imperialism: a critical introduction*. London: Pinter Publishers.

Torjesen S. (2008). Russia as a military great power: The uses of the CSTO and the SCO in Central Asia. In: *The multilateral dimension in Russian foreign policy*. Routledge. pp. 195–206.

Trachtenberg D.J. (2012). US extended deterrence: How much strategic force is too little? *Strategic Studies Quarterly*. Vol. 6. No. 2. pp. 62–92.

Trenin D. (2009). *Moscow the Muscular: The Loneliness of an Aspiring Power Center*. Carnegie Moscow Center Briefing. URL: https://carnegie.ru/2009/01/01/moscow-muscular-loneliness-of-aspiring-power-center-pub-23567

Troitskiy E.F. (2008). Vneshnyaya politika Uzbekistana v 2004–2007 gg.: ot strategicheskogo partnerstva s SSHA k soyuznicheskim otnosheniyam s Rossiej. *Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*. No. 310. pp. 93–96.

Troitskiy E.F., Zinoviev V.P. (2018). Organizatsiya dogovora o kollektivnoj bezopasnosti: stanovlenie, evolutsiya i krizis voenno-politicheskogo soyuza [Collective Security Treaty Organization: Creation, Evolution and Crisis of the Military and Political Alliance]. *Rusin*. No. 4 (54). P. 335–351.

Troitskiy M. (2002). Kontseptsiya "programiruyuschego liderstva" v evroatlanticheskoj strategii SSHA [Concept of "Programming Leadership" in Euro-Atlantic Strategy of the USA]. *Pro et Contra*. Vol. 7. No. 4. pp. 86–103.

Troitskiy M. (2017). Negotiating Russia's Status in Post-Soviet Eurasia. In: Hampson F.O., Troitskiy M. (eds) *Tug of War: Negotiating Security in Eurasia*. Waterloo: Centre for International Governance Innovation. pp. 19–33.

Vasquez J.A. (1993). *The War Puzzle*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Volgy T., Corbetta R., Grant K., Baird R. (eds.) (2011). *Major Powers and the Quest for Status in International Politics: Global and Regional Perspectives*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Waltz K. (1979). *Theory of International Politics*. Boston: McGraw Hill.

Ward S. (2017). *Status and the challenge of rising powers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Weitsman P.A. (2013). *Waging war: Alliances, coalitions, and institutions of interstate violence*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Wendt A., Friedheim, D. (1995). Hierarchy under anarchy: informal empire and the East German state. *International Organization*. Vol. 49. No. 4. pp. 689–721.

Wilson J.L. (2017). The Russian pursuit of regional hegemony. *Rising Powers Quarterly*. Vol. 2. No. 1. pp. 7–25.

Wolfers A. (1968). Alliances. In: *International encyclopedia of the social sciences*. Vol. 1. New York: Macmillan. pp. 268–271.

Womack B. (2016). *Asymmetry and International Relationships*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Yarhi-Milo K., Lanoszka A., Cooper Z. (2016). To arm or to ally? The patron's dilemma and the strategic logic of arms transfers and alliances. *International Security*. Vol. 41. No. 2. pp. 90–139. DOI: 10.1162/ISEC_a_00250

Zaitsev Y.K., Knobel A.Y. (2019). Prioritety rossijskoj pomoschi razvitiyu v 2018 g. [Priorities of the Russian Development Aid in 2018]. *Ekonomicheskoe razvitie Rossii*. Vol. 26. No. 12. pp. 23–30.

Zakharov V.M. (2012). Sostoyanie i perspektivy razvitiya Organizatsii Dogovora o kollektivnoj bezopasnosti [Current State and Prospects of the Collective Security Treaty Orgnization]. *Problemy natsional'noj strategii*. No. 3. pp. 84–97.

УПРАВЛЕНИЕ ОБЯЗАТЕЛЬСТВАМИ В АСИММЕТРИЧНЫХ АЛЬЯНСАХ

ОПЫТ РОССИИ

ИГОРЬ ИСТОМИН
МГИМО МИД России, Москва, Россия
Центр российских и евразийских исследований имени Дэвиса Гарвардского университета, Бостон, США

Резюме

В международной политике широко распространены асимметричные альянсы, в которых крупная держава сотрудничает с заведомо уступающими ей по силе союзниками. Возникновение такого рода объединений в литературе объясняют формулой «гарантии безопасности за внешнеполитическую автономию», которая, однако, не раскрывает, в чём именно заключается выгода крупной державы от влияния на заведомо слабые страны. Настоящая статья призвана развить теоретические представления по этому вопросу и проверить их обоснованность на основе анализа российского опыта. Исследование решает две взаимосвязанные задачи. *Во-первых*, оно призвано углубить понимание российской внешнеполитической стратегии и роли различных инструментов военно-политического сотрудничества в обеспечении национальных интересов. *Во-вторых*, оно позволяет проверить положения теории асимметричных альянсов, оценив их применимость к трудному для объяснения случаю.

Россия приняла на себя военно-политические обязательства в отношении ряда соседних государств на основе двусторонних соглашений и Договора о коллективной безопасности. На начало 2020-х годов она предоставляет гарантии защиты на случай нападения Абхазии, Армении, Белоруссии, Казахстану, Киргизии, Таджикистану и Южной Осетии. Таким образом, Москва полагается на асимметричные альянсы в отношениях с рядом близлежащих стран для извлечения преимуществ, связанных с проецированием силы, легитимацией её внешнеполитических инициатив, ограничением свободы манёвра конкурентов, а также стабилизацией собственного окружения. При этом она не стремится вступать в аналогичные альянсы с географически удалёнными партнёрами. Такая сдержанность сохраняется даже в отношении стран, с которыми Москва выстраивает привилегированное сотрудничество. Политика России свидетельствует о её высокой чувствительности к прямым расходам, вероятной упущенной выгоде и потенциальным рискам предоставления военно-политических обязательств. Хотя российский опыт выстраивания отношений с союзниками существенно отличается от американского, который в литературе нередко рассматривается в качестве модельного, тем не менее он подтверждает положения теории асимметричных альянсов.

Ключевые слова:

военно-политический союз; асимметричный альянс; гегемония; Россия; США; НАТО; ОДКБ; военно-техническое сотрудничество; статус; внутриполитическая нестабильность.

Материал подготовлен в рамках гранта ИМИ МГИМО №1921-01-07: «Новые формы стратегической конкуренции великих держав в XXI веке» по направлению «Анализ и прогнозирование эволюции международных отношений в контексте смены технологического уклада». Предварительный вариант настоящего исследования был апробирован на научном семинаре МГИМО и Технологического института Джорджии в марте 2020 года. Автор также выражает признательность Александру Кули, Ю.А. Никитиной, Михаэле Папа, Н.Ю. Силаеву за их комментарии и советы, использованные при подготовке статьи.