
Scenarios

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WILL NEW CIS LEADERS REMAIN LOYAL TO MOSCOW WITH THE NEW PRESIDENT OF RUSSIA IN OFFICE?; The new president will have to rearrange the post-Soviet zone.

Russia strengthened its positions in the post-Soviet zone in eight years under President Putin. Military integration in the Commonwealth was particularly energetic these last 2-3 years

What will await Russia's military-political and military-technical cooperation with the CIS countries?

Six countries are all Russia has in terms of allies. They are members of the CIS Collective Security Treaty Organization. Will their political leaders remain loyal to Russia under its new President, Dmitry Medvedev? Let us consider each country individually.

Belarus. This country remains Russia's principal strategic ally in the post-Soviet zone. Problems with the Union remain unsolved. Rapprochement between the economies and legislatures of the two countries takes too long, their integration actually questionable since both countries insist on their sovereignty. The introduction of a monetary unit of the Union is postponed. Establishment of Russian-Belarusian joint air defense has been talked about for six years already with little to show for it. As a matter of fact, military integration has been accomplished. Developing a joint defense zone with Minsk, Russia will keep subsidizing Belarusian military needs. Two thirds of the Union budget provided by Russia, 13% of the budget is to be spent on military-technical cooperation, law enforcement, and security.

Kazakhstan is one of Russia's major allies. Its leadership promotes an independent policy. Kazakh servicemen serve in the international contingent in Iraq. The United States and other NATO countries help Kazakhstan with rearmament. Astana doubled its military expenditures since 2006. They remain under 1% of the GDP, but rearmament is pursued energetically.

The new president of Russia will have to keep Astana from falling under NATO's influence and prevent it from advancing active military-technical cooperation with the West in general and the United States in particular.

Kyrgyzstan. It is one of the poorest republics of the late Soviet Union. It lacks stability. Russia and the United States have military bases in Kyrgyzstan. The installation of a pro-Western regime in this country is unlikely.

Armenia. Second to Belarus alone in faithfulness to Russia. Armenia elected its new president earlier this year. The election was won by pro-Russian Serj Sarkisjan, former premier and defense minister. The possibility of renewed hostilities with Azerbaijan compel Armenia to rely on Russia. This is why even the opposition in Armenia (Justice bloc and National Unity) and Robert Kocharjan's followers are pro-Moscow.

Tajikistan. One of the poorest CIS countries heavily relying on Russian aid. This country enjoys an important geopolitical location in the post-Soviet zone. Drugs from Afghanistan reach Russia and Europe via Tajikistan. The liquidation of the Russian border guards contingent in this country was

a mistake. The new president of Russia may find it necessary to make additional decisions concerning the Tajik-Afghani border.

Uzbekistan. Political upheavals in this country remain a possibility. Its President Islam Karimov's pro-Moscow orientation is quite iffy. There was a period several years ago when Uzbekistan was in GUAM and actively pursued relations with the United States. It is in the CIS Collective Security Treaty Organization now, allegedly advancing relations with Moscow.

Neutral Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and Moldova may be listed as potential allies. As a matter of fact, Azerbaijan and Moldova and members of GUAM, a regional organization that is in serious trouble. Anyway, Moldova is actively pursuing relations with Moscow and Azerbaijan constantly emphasizes its neutral status and never speaks about membership in NATO the way other GUAM members (Georgia and Ukraine) do. In fact, these two countries are Russia's principal opponents in the post-Soviet zone.

The new president of Russia will have to drive a hard bargain in relations with Kiev and Tbilisi. Forcing Ukraine and NATO to abandon their plans to join NATO is Medvedev's primary military-strategic objective. Where the Russian-Ukrainian relations are concerned, Medvedev will have to elicit from Kiev the permit to leave the Black Sea Fleet in the Crimea. Moldova and Azerbaijan might get invitations to join the CIS Collective Security Treaty Organization. Where relations with Turkmenistan are concerned, Moscow had better remember that it is a major exporter of gas and that the future of Russian geopolitical interests depends to a considerable extent on the routes of Turkmen gas export to Europe and China.
