



Vol. 7 • No. 1 • Summer 2017

25 Years of Independence
in the South Caucasus

CAUCASUS INTERNATIONAL

Vol. 7 • No. 1 • Summer 2017

25 Years of Independence in the South Caucasus



Publisher: Center for Strategic Studies under the
President of the Republic of Azerbaijan (SAM)
Responsible Editor: Azad Garibov
Type of Publication: Periodical
Publishing House: «VANUR POLİQRAF» MMC

Caucasus International is a Baku & Ankara-based academic journal that discusses policymaking in and on the Caucasus as well as the region's role in the global context. Each issue of the journal will focus on a global or regional theme and includes perspectives from authors from different countries and backgrounds. The journal focuses largely on the Caucasus neighborhood, but does so with a global outlook.



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Caucasus International is published by the Center for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan (SAM) in Baku. Since 2007, SAM has provided an impartial forum for discussion and debate on current regional and international issues. SAM is a government-funded non-profit think tank and is academically independent.



Publishing House

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Editor's Note

The current issue of the *Caucasus International* (CI) entitled '25 Years of Independence in the South Caucasus' is dedicated to the past quarter-century-long period of independence of the South Caucasus states. It tries to shed light on the challenges faced, achievements made and milestones passed by these three states since the disintegration of the Soviet Union and restoration of their independence in 1991. In this context, the issue examines the wide range of issues including foreign policy and security dynamics in the region, local alignments and alliances, conflicts and international law, cooperation and competition, the role of the regional and global powers in the region, democracy and state building and etc.

Authors from diverse regions of the world with diverse backgrounds have contributed to the current issue of the *Caucasus International*. The issue starts with two colloquys in which CI discussed the latest developments in US policy towards the South Caucasus and the Russia-Azerbaijan relations respectively with Glen Howard, President of the Jamestown Foundation in the US and Stanislav Chernyavskiy, Director of the Center for Post-Soviet Studies at the MGIMO University in Russia.

The issue continues with six articles. In his article, Dr. Javid Valiyev, Head of the Foreign Policy Analysis Department of the Center for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan (SAM), talks about the foreign policy of Azerbaijan in 25 years of independence, focusing on the priorities, principles, and achievements of this policy. Giorgi Kanashvili, Executive Director of the 'Caucasian House' in Georgia and Revaz Koiava, a Researcher in the same institution jointly authored an article on the struggle to bring democracy to Georgia ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Azad Garibov, Editor-In-Chief of the *Caucasus International*, writes about the security dynamics in the South Caucasus after independence, explaining why and how the major threats faced by the regional countries are interconnected and their security is interdependent. Dr. Araz Aslanli, a lecturer at the Azerbaijan State University of Economics, analyzes the global struggle in and around the South Cau-

causus, participants of which, according to him, are Russia, the US, the EU, China, Turkey, and Iran. Matthias Dornfeldt, an Assistant Professor at the University of Potsdam and Igor Korobov, a Research Fellow at the Free University of Berlin, contributed an article on the Azerbaijan-Germany relations in the past 25 years, which can be called a very good account of this mutually beneficial bilateral cooperation. In the final article, Dr. Najiba Mustafayeva, a Research fellow at SAM elaborated on the role of the UN Security Council with regard to the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, drawing the attention to the policy of double standards and unexecuted UNSC resolutions.

The issue also features three commentaries. Ambassador Giorgi Badridze, who currently serves as a Senior Fellow at the Rondeli Foundation in Georgia, examines the Georgia and Azerbaijan relations, and the way their cooperation transformed from partnership to interdependence. Maxime Gauin, a Ph.D. student at the Middle East Technical University and Scholar-in-residence at AVİM, Turkey, comments on the ideological blockades in Armenia's contemporary politics. The last commentary, authored by SAM's Researcher Fuad Shahbazov, evaluates the role of the EU in the South Caucasus after 25 years of independence, from the perspective of Azerbaijan's place in the geopolitical strategy of the EU.

The current issue also includes a comprehensive review of Michael R. Auslin's new book 'The End of the Asian Century: War, Stagnation, and the Risks to the World's Most Dynamic Region' published by the Yale University Press in 2017. Last but not least, CI presents readers with reviews of recently published books on the South Caucasus and Eurasian regions.

Finally, on behalf of the CI team, we hope this issue provides food for thought and for discussion!

Sincerely,
Azad Garibov
Editor-In-Chief, CI

COLLOQUY

Covering the Perspectives of the US Foreign Policy in the South Caucasus

Glen Howard*



* Glen Howard is the President of the Jamestown Foundation in the United States of America

The United States of America has always been an important player in the geopolitical scene of the South Caucasus, ever since the region regained its independence from the collapsing Soviet Union in 1991. While the US has never had the same level of interest or involvement in the South Caucasus as the region's three immediate neighbors, Russia, Turkey and Iran, relations with the US have always been very important for the South Caucasus countries as a counter-weight against the overwhelming influence of bigger neighbors, particularly that of Russia. US engagement with the South Caucasus countries has waxed and waned during the course of the past two and a half decades, depending on the global processes and the specific strategies of the administrations in Washington. It experienced its peak during the Bush Administration's military campaign in Afghanistan and has recently seen a significant decline after the Obama administration initiated the reset policy with Russia in 2009.

Now, marking the 25th anniversary of bilateral relations between the South Caucasus countries and the US, there are numerous questions up about the strategy of the new US president, Donald Trump, toward the region. CI discussed the historical background, present, and future US policy in the region with Glen Howard, President of the Jamestown Foundation, a leading American research and analysis center on the Eurasian region. Mr. Howard has previously served as a consultant to the private sector and

With a weak northern neighbor like Russia, this was an optimal time to create and strengthen state sovereignty. US policy helped to achieve this goal by backing strategic projects like the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline that helped solidify a role for the South Caucasus in US grand strategy. This remains, to date, the crowning achievement of the US and for that matter the Clinton Administration.

governmental agencies, including the US Department of Defense, the National Intelligence Council, and major oil companies operating in Central Asia and the Middle East. His articles have appeared in the Wall Street Journal, the Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst, and Jane's Defense Weekly. The Jamestown Foundation is a publisher of Eurasia Daily Monitor, a prominent online journal that analyzes the emerging security realities and long-term trends defining Eurasia and the post-Soviet space.

CI: We would like to start by discussing the general foreign policy interests of the US in the South Caucasus region. Why do you think this region is important for the US, and what kinds of interest have been driving the US policy in the region over the last 25 years? How successful was Washington with regard to its regional policies during the last quarter-century?

Glen Howard: I think during the last quarter of a century, US regional policies toward the South Caucasus region have been defined by helping the countries of the region to solidify their statehood and independence with strengthening of their sovereignty. This has been based on helping these states to build the instruments of statehood, and establish ties with the outside world via important multilateral institutions – UN, IMF, OSCE, etc. With a weak northern neighbor like Russia, this was an optimal time to create and strengthen state sovereignty. US policy helped to achieve this goal by backing strategic projects like the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline that helped solidify a role for the South Caucasus in US grand strategy. This remains, to date, the crowning achievement of the US and for that matter the Clinton Administration. Where the US goes in its policies toward the region over the next twenty-five years remains to be seen. Transportation issues like BTC pipeline and the Southern Gas Corridor helped transform the South Caucasus in US strategic thinking, as it went from some overlooked part of Eurasia to a key engine of energy development for both oil and gas. It also helped countries like Kazakhstan further strengthen their energy independence as well by providing Astana with other transportation routes to export its oil by rail through the South Caucasus and by sea using Baku’s port capacity.

US security policy entered another phase with the tragic events of 9/11. The war in Afghanistan also caused the US to think strategically about Azerbaijan and the South Caucasus as a major air transit corridor to Afghanistan; Baku became a key air hub for US forces transiting to our bases in Central Asia. The Baku-Ceyhan pipeline transformed Azerbaijan into a transport hub, but the war in Afghanistan also transformed the way American policymakers viewed Azerbaijan as a strategic air corridor to Eurasia. It is safe to say that Azerbaijan was defined again by its role as a strategic crossroads between Europe and Asia with these developments, just as it did during the days of the old Silk Road.

CI: We have seen declining US interest in the South Caucasus since Obama’s ‘reset policy’ with Russia was initiated back in 2009. How would you evaluate the attitude of the Trump Administration towards the region – do you think that there is a possibility of increased US engagement with the regional countries, or will US interests in the region further decline, taking into account Trump’s isolationist foreign policy agenda?

Glen Howard: The Trump Administration's attitude towards the South Caucasus will be vastly different to that of the Obama Administration, due to Obama's effort to retrench American power. Every American president tries to take steps that distinguish their administration from the previous government. Obama tried to do so by distancing himself from Bush's policies, and now Trump will be 'anti-Obama' in his policies. The Obama Administration was somewhat engaged in the South Caucasus but it was never a high priority and suffered during the US-Russia reset because we essentially forgot about the Russian invasion of Georgia in 2008 and forgave Moscow for its actions. I think the period of 'wait and see' for Trump is over, as his critics have argued that Trump would be eager to accommodate Putin - which has clearly not happened. Trump's national security advisers, H.R. McMaster, Mattis, and Tillerson, are no pushovers when it comes to Russia and in the last several months

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they have put Moscow on notice. This has stunned Moscow as they now view Trump as being unpredictable, and this is a good thing. It will make the Kremlin more cautious.

More importantly, as the recent US cruise missile strikes on Syria demonstrated, President Trump will be very 'Nixonian' in his use of military force to back up American statements, goals and objectives. The chief problem with this new administration is the question of time. Trump needs time to fill his administration with key positions and find the personnel who are capable of matching his vision for America, economically, strategically, and militarily. The appointment of McMaster as his National Security Adviser was a step in this direction. McMaster is a fan of the strategic concept 'Deterrence by Denial', which is a concept developed during the Cold War that now may re-enter American strategic thinking.

Aside from McMaster, we also have the new Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis, who I know quite well. Mattis understands the utility of American military power, and he knows when to use it and when not to use it. Mattis also does not believe in a sphere of influence between Russia and the United States in the borderlands of the former Soviet Union. A case in point is the February 16 meeting of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Joe Dunford in Baku, where he met the Chief of the Russian General Staff Valeriy Gerasimov. This meeting was focused primarily on Syria and was a chance for

the United States to talk directly to the Russian military about conflict ‘de-escalation’. Also, interestingly enough, the meeting in Baku demonstrated to Moscow that it does not consider Azerbaijan and the South Caucasus to be a part of the Russian sphere of influence. The Pentagon rejected Russian offers to meet in Moscow and also in Minsk for that meeting, which by itself is interesting. The two sides finally decided to meet in a country that it did not deem to be in the Russian sphere of influence - Azerbaijan. Therefore, the meeting in Baku can also be interpreted as American recognition that Azerbaijan is not outside the US sphere of interest. The fact that General Dunford stayed in Baku after the meeting with Gerasimov to meet with Azerbaijani officials at the Ministry of Defense for a meeting lasting several hours also underscores my point. Remember, the meeting in Baku with the Russians was to inform Moscow that the US planned military action in Syria and also to discuss ‘deconfliction channels’ to avoid an accidental conflict with Russia in Syria. By sending Dunford to Baku, Mattis, in my opinion, wanted to make it clear to the Russian military that he did not want Moscow to interfere in the US war against ISIS in Raqqa. This mission was accomplished and it also sent a powerful signal to the Kremlin. I think one of the key things about Trump is he knows how to make Moscow respect American military power, unlike Obama. When Trump says there is a red line that another country should not cross, he really means it. This differentiates Trump from his predecessor. The recent US cruise missile strikes on the Syrian air base at al-Shayrat on April 6 with over 59 Tomahawk cruise missiles showed that Trump knows how to use American military power in a calculated way.

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I also think that as a private businessman Trump knows the economic value of the South Caucasus, as these are two areas where he, or his friends and partners, have invested. As an industrialist, Trump believes in commerce and trade. I remain optimistic, and perhaps not immediately, but in the next year of the Trump administration, the US will pay closer attention to Azerbaijan, particularly in light of your neighbors to the North, and South, and to the renewed threat coming from the Taliban in Afghanistan. If relations remain tense with Russia, and with Pakistan, then the air corridor from Baku to Kabul becomes even more important to US national interests as it

prepares to renew its military role in Afghanistan due to the revived threat from the Taliban.

CI: *How might the developments around Syria and Ukraine affect the Trump administration's policies in the South Caucasus? Will these developments push the South Caucasus to the bottom of the US foreign policy agenda, or might they increase the importance*

of the region for US policymakers? Moreover, does the new Administration consider the South Caucasus as a part of Eastern Europe or the Greater Middle East, which presumably would influence its policy priorities in the region?

Although the Trump Administration does not have a policy for the South Caucasus region at this time, eventually it will have such a strategy. Until that day arrives, the policy, for the time being, will be to push back when necessary against Moscow.

Glen Howard: First of all, the fact that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff James Dunford visited Baku in February to meet with his counterpart, the Russian Chief of the General Staff, Valeriy Gerasimov was clear evidence to me that the South Caucasus region is indeed part of the Greater Middle East. Whether or not that was the strategic intention of the Trump Administration in asking for the meeting in Baku is another thing, and not altogether clear. Although the Trump Administration does not have a policy for the South Caucasus region at this time, eventually it will have such a strategy. Until that day arrives, the policy, for the time being, will be to push back when necessary against Moscow. That, to a certain extent, will affect how the US views the South Caucasus. Early on it was visible that President Trump has a deep interest in maintaining strong relations with Turkey and keeping Turkey as a strategic ally of the United States. And this is a good thing for Azerbaijan in its balanced diplomacy.

The developments around Syria and Ukraine will affect the Trump Administration in a different way. What you have seen occur since Trump became President in January is the creation of several steps to isolate the problem created by ISIS and President Trump's determination to fulfill his election pledge to the American people to destroy ISIS.

The first thing our friends in the South Caucasus must understand is that President Trump came into office with no specific plan to eradicate ISIS, and since appointing Jim Mattis Secretary of Defense those plans are only starting to be conceptualized. In terms of US grand strategy, what you have seen since January is an attempt by

Secretary Mattis to go to the Middle East to meet our allies there and first familiarize himself with their concerns and learn their perspectives on ways to defeat ISIS and obtain their perspectives, before developing a strategy. To avoid an unnecessary conflict with Russia, Secretary Mattis dispatched Dunford to Baku in mid-February to create de-escalation channels to avoid a clash on Syria.

Instead of traveling to the region, Secretary Tillerson followed a different strategy than Mattis. Tillerson opted to hold a diplomatic meeting with his counterparts in Washington on March 22, convening a two-day meeting at the State Department with the foreign ministers of 68 different states to listen to the concerns of American allies. The results of this meeting were to feed this into the planning and strategy for developing a diplomatic component for US plans to defeat ISIS. I might add that the first briefing Tillerson asked for when he became Secretary of State was on Turkey, which reflects his concern and interest in this important country that is so close to Azerbaijan.

With a primary goal of defeating ISIS, the Trump Administration has not necessarily created a strategy toward Ukraine or the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. It still remains early for the US to do so, as the new administration has only just passed its first 100 days. What they have done, however, is to push back against Moscow when necessary to remind the Kremlin that the post-Soviet space is not a part of its sphere of influence. Influenced by Vice President Mike Pence, Trump has sought to reassure Ukraine that the United States will support its territorial integrity, and reinforced the idea that the US is ready to support Ukraine against Russia. The visit to Lithuania in May by Secretary Mattis was a part of this strategy, and was designed to reassure the nervous Baltic States about US support for their security, particularly as the major Russian military exercise Zapad looms on the horizon.

In some ways, we can call US strategy under the Trump Administration an effort to bolster NATO's flanks to prevent Russian adventurism, followed by a powerful message of the US cruise missile strikes on Syria following their use of chemical weapons. And in this regard I consider Azerbaijan and the South Caucasus to be part of NATO's flanks. That

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being said, all of the items above can be construed as a form of pushback against Moscow and a form of US messaging to the Kremlin that the US was prepared to distance itself from the complacent policies of the Obama Administration. In short, you are seeing American pushback in the post-Soviet space with a goal of securing the flanks in advance of the key strategic goal of eliminating ISIS. How Trump may balance these efforts remains to be seen, particularly as NATO ally Turkey remains upset about future US cooperation with its Kurdish-led proxy, the SDF in Syria. Maintaining a balance in all these efforts, juggling ties with Ankara, Moscow, and to a certain extent with China during a crisis in North Korea has dominated the agenda of the Trump Administration, not too mention a domestic uproar at home over the recent dismissal of the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, James Comey.

CI: How, in your opinion, will the attitude of the United States towards the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict change during the Trump administration? Recently there has been comparatively little US activity with regard to conflict resolution, and Russia seems to be acting as the leading, if not a sole, broker in the process. Do you think that this trend will continue or will we see changes as the priorities of Trump's foreign policy become clearer in the near future?

Glen Howard: The absence of US activity in Karabakh is a temporary phenomenon and will not last too long. First of all, what is often overlooked is that this is not the Azerbaijan of 1991. It is much different country now and for the first time since independence is developing a modern Army to defend its national interests. The days of being totally dependent on the Minsk Group process or the United States are much different today than 20 years ago. Please do not get me wrong, the role of the United States and the OSCE remains important, but as the recent fighting from a year ago last April, and more recently in mid-May demonstrate, Azerbaijan is prepared militarily to push back and defend itself when pressed and its army is an instrument of its national policy. It is true that the Trump Administration policy toward the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is obviously taking a back seat to the other issues outlined earlier in my interview, namely defeating ISIS. The American path to defeating ISIS will revolve around bilateral relationships with Turkey, Russia, the Assad government in Damascus, our NATO allies, and Iraq.

With Rex Tillerson as the Secretary of State, there are a lot of positive things that Azerbaijan can look forward to under his leadership. As a former senior executive at Exxon-Mobil, Tillerson naturally has an interest in this part of the world and knows the Caspian region well. He understands the players and strategic interests of the competing parties in the South Caucasus and might be considered a younger version of James Baker, the former Secretary of State. This knowledge of the Caspian region will help equip Tillerson with a better sense of understanding than most of the previous Secretary of States before him. Another aspect is his sense of realpolitik, and a likely tendency to avoid lecturing countries about their domestic policies. I think it is safe to say that the entire Trump Administration will be different in this respect. Once Tillerson develops a staff at State and is able to fill key positions as Secretary, then he will start to formulate his policy and vision of foreign policy under Trump. Before Tillerson can develop a policy toward Karabakh, he must have the personnel in the right positions at the State Department to implement his policy objectives and those of President Trump. The same applies to Mattis, who has over 53 positions at the Pentagon that remain unfilled. These should be filled sometime soon by political appointees. To a certain extent, no policy can be adequately developed until these positions at State and DOD are filled. Then there is a policy review process of developing a policy. A key adviser to Tillerson is former Secretary of State James Baker, Condoleezza Rice, and Robert Gates. These are great voices to listen to and are genuinely supportive of the need to maintain a free and independent South Caucasus. My deepest fear is that a prolonged entanglement of the United States in Syria following a planned offensive against ISIS in Raqqa might bog the United States down in Syria in a way that distracts the United States from its interests in the South Caucasus. This may tempt Moscow to continue its malicious behavior in the post-Soviet space.

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CI: *The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict remains in a deadlock, as hopes for a breakthrough in the negotiations after the April 2016 escalation have faded. Local and international experts frequently claim that this deadlock paves the way to more violence, which might spiral into a fully-fledged war. Do you think that such a situation is dangerous for the interests of the US/West, and is there a clear need for more US contribution/involvement in the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process?*

Glen Howard: Great question. Let me address this in the following way. The dangerous precedent created by Putin's invasion and annexation of Crimea is that one country will, by force of arms, seek to change the borders of another neighboring state. What the hybrid war in Donbas and Crimea demonstrated is that we have passed the age of the 1990s when Russia was a weak state and relied on dividing its neighbors by use of frozen conflicts is now over. Russia is back and the use of military force is back in its toolkit against its neighbors. In the 1990s, countries like Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Moldova were weak states and barely had a functioning army. Russia could bully its neighbors, so the states affected by the frozen conflicts had to rely on outside support from the United States and other great powers to try to find a diplomatic solution to those conflicts. Of the three states affected by the frozen conflicts only one state – Azerbaijan - decided to build a real national army that is becoming a modern force in the South Caucasus. I fear that the deadlock in Karabakh is dangerously moving away from the auspices of the Madrid principles as agreed by the OSCE, and becoming a war of attrition along the line of contact. The events of last April and again this May show that open warfare can resume anywhere and anytime in Karabakh with deadly effect. Azerbaijan has a new defense minister who is building a modern army, and while peace remains a goal of Azerbaijan in resolving this dispute, Baku will defend its forces if provoked and will push back with a 'measured' degree of force to enhance its continuing diplomacy. Recent transfers of Iskander missile systems to Armenia by Moscow seem to be a dangerous turn in the arms transfer policies of Russia. A new phase is appearing in Nagorno-Karabakh, whereby Moscow is militarizing the Armenian side to a degree to correct what the Kremlin sees as a growing military advantage by Azerbaijan. In sum, Moscow seeks peace through the OSCE process but is arming both sides. The Trump Administration is busy sorting out its policies and strategy. Until they can do this I fear the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will remain on the back burner of US policies for the near future.

**Interview was conducted by Azad Garibov,
Editor-In-Chief of the Caucasus International**

COLLOQUY

On Azerbaijan's Relations with Russia

Stanislav Chernyavskiy*



* Professor Stanislav Chernyavskiy is the Director of the Center for Post-Soviet Studies at the MGIMO University of Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

For more than two hundred years Russia has been the key foreign actor in the South Caucasus, whose actions and policies influenced (if not shaped) the region the most. Accordingly, Moscow is one of the most important neighbors of Azerbaijan, a major economic and trade partner, and a key mediator in Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Relations between the two countries has experienced many ups and downs since Azerbaijan restored its independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, but they have been particularly conflict-free and cooperative during the last decade and a half.

It is true that relations between Azerbaijan and Russia during the first years of independence were not very friendly. There was no obvious conflict, but a degree of mutual suspicion prevailed.

Caucasus International discussed the past, current status, and future of the Azerbaijan-Russia relations with Professor Stanislav Chernyavskiy, Director of the Center for Post-Soviet Studies at the MGIMO University in Russia. The colloquy sheds light on the dynamics of bilateral cooperation in various spheres such as economics, politics, and security. Before joining academy, Professor Chernyavskiy was a carrier diplomat who served at the USSR embassies in Canada, Belgium, Algeria, Azerbaijan, and the USSR (later Russia) Representation at the United Nations in Geneva. He has authored more than 40 scholarly publications, including the monographs on Azerbaijan such as ‘Azerbaijan’s New Way’ (2002), ‘The Azerbaijan Republic’s Foreign Policy (1988-2003)’ (2003) and ‘Azerbaijan: Choosing the Policy Course’ (2004).

CI: After Azerbaijan re-gained independence following the collapse of the Soviet Union, relations between Azerbaijan and Russia were not always trouble-free. However, since the beginning of the 2000s, bilateral relations have become highly dynamic, and currently, encompass a wide spectrum of issues. What are the key interests and factors that drive this partnership?

Stanislav Chernyavskiy: It is true that relations between Azerbaijan and Russia during the first years of independence were not very friendly. There was no obvious conflict, but a degree of mutual suspicion prevailed. Mutual accusations dominated bilateral relations, which frequently tended toward the emotional rather than the rational. In short, Moscow and Baku faced difficulties in adapting to the new political landscape.

However, before that, as a part of the Russian Empire and then the Soviet Union for about two centuries, Azerbaijan was an important and integral part of the Imperial Russian/Soviet economy. The country exported not only gasoline and petrochemi-

cals but also products of metallurgy, high-quality oil equipment (over 70% of all oil equipment produced in the USSR), electrical and electronic appliances and equipment and radio-engineering products, as well as a wide range of consumer goods. Agricultural products from Azerbaijan were in great demand in Russia. There were no interethnic clashes or pogroms in the Azerbaijani SSR during the Soviet time.

As USSR disintegrated, the disruption of production ties between the enterprises of Azerbaijan, Russia, and other former Soviet republics inflicted a heavy blow to Azerbaijani economy. The economy of the country also suffered as a result of the war with Armenia in Nagorno-Karabakh, which emerged in the final years of the USSR and intensified after the collapse of the Union. The conflict resulted in the termination of all economic relations with Armenia, and a drastic reduction of international transport connections. The railways stopped working, agricultural products lost their consumers, and enterprises dependent on Russian market were frozen. Soon after, the war in Chechnya began and Russia closed its borders with Azerbaijan - both onshore and offshore. The country was completely blocked from the north. Nobody in Baku had expected this move by Russia, and many of those who still strongly identified themselves as Soviet were deeply distressed.

The nationalist, anti-Russian elites of Azerbaijan insisted that Russia was exploiting Azerbaijan and that disruption of economic relations with Russia would be good for Azerbaijan's economic prosperity. It is no secret that similar ideas circulated among economists serving the new Russian government, based on the view that being freed from the "burden of Soviet republics" would enable the Russian economy to flourish. At the governmental level, bilateral relations developed unsteadily. Politically, the short-term interests of nationalist leaders shaped the interactions, while the disruption of long-term economic ties created serious difficulties for the economy both in Russia and in Azerbaijan.

The phenomenon of mercenaries emerged as an unexpected but difficult problem for the two countries. Following the collapse of the USSR, many members of the Soviet army, who fought on both sides of the border, were used as contractors. Six former Russian soldiers (who fought on the side of Armenians against Azerbaijan) taken captive by Azerbaijanis in Nagorno-Karabakh

Six former Russian soldiers (who fought on the side of Armenians against Azerbaijan) taken captive by Azerbaijanis in Nagorno-Karabakh and condemned to death became a flashpoint. Although they were pardoned and released, this seriously harmed Azerbaijani-Russian relations and perception of Russia in Azerbaijan.

and condemned to death became a flashpoint. Although they were pardoned and released, this seriously harmed Azerbaijani-Russian relations and perception of Russia in Azerbaijan.

In both countries, political elites were being formed, and strong lobbying groups appeared, which disregarded state interests. The war in the North Caucasus continued, while innocent civilians were being killed in Nagorno-Karabakh. In both conflicts, Baku and Moscow held opposing positions - Moscow supplied arms to Armenia, while Baku welcomed Chechen insurgents “for rest and treatment”.

Until Heydar Aliyev assumed the position of acting President of Azerbaijan in summer 1993, Russian-Azerbaijani relations were so problematic that it was simply impossible to talk about any kind of partnership or collaboration. Both states were in opposition to each other, and mutual accusations and recriminations flowed ceaselessly. The collapse of the Soviet Union and transition of the former socialist republics into market economies resulted in major competition in the production and transportation of hydrocarbon products, traditional sources of hard currency. Competition for the development of the Caspian oil reserves intensified. The fierce dispute about the legal division of Caspian and the new pipeline projects by-passing Russia further exacerbated the situation. In addition to the political tensions with the Russian nomenklatura that came to power under the banner of democracy, economic disputes also emerged between Azerbaijan and Russia, with regard to the forced privatization of a number of Azerbaijani facilities on Russian territory also played a role. It should be noted that at that time Russia did not have a specific strategy for building good neighborly relations with Azerbaijan; moreover, a number of steps taken by Russia were not friendly and carefully planned.

Against this emotional background, Russian-Azerbaijani relations experienced certain development during the presidency of Boris Yeltsin. The first official visit by Russian president Vladimir Putin to Azerbaijan in January 2001 marked a milestone for Russian-Azerbaijani relations. Friendly contact established between the leaders of the two countries smoothed over many of the sore points, resolving problems that had previously seemed insurmountable. This mutual understanding developed into a friendly, trusting collaboration between Ilham Aliyev and Putin. Azerbaijan’s systematic, strategically verified approach to relations with Russia eliminated the most serious conflicts.

In terms of the factors that make Russia and Azerbaijan important partners for one another, the following is evident. First, this relationship is built between two successful states, meaning that both partners have stable state systems ensuring the fulfillment of their commitments within the framework of relevant legislation. This partnership is especially important considering the common frontier between the countries. Second, the relationship between Azerbaijan and Russia, with all its ups and downs, has always remained polite. They never drifted into anti-Azerbaijan or anti-Russian propaganda, which meant that the channels for dialogue always remained open. Thirdly, relations between Azerbaijan and Russia are first and foremost built upon mutually beneficial pragmatic dialogues on economic issues. This enables a high level of mutual understanding on political issues, including between the two leaders. Economic cooperation, even with the elements of market competition, is very important for the development of bilateral relations across the whole post-Soviet space.

CI: *How would you assess the current dynamics of bilateral cooperation between Azerbaijan and Russia in the areas of the economy, politics, and security?*

Stanislav Chernyavskiy: Economic cooperation is evident - today Russia ranks third place in terms of Azerbaijan's commodity turnover. It holds first place for imports, as one of Azerbaijan's key economic partners. Russian business invested more than \$3 billion in Azerbaijan's economy, while Azerbaijan's investments in Russia's economy exceed \$1 billion.

Increasing turnover is especially noticeable in the sphere of agriculture. The volume of agricultural products imported from Azerbaijan to Russia increased significantly over the course of recent years. During nine months in 2016, the volume of vegetable and fruits imported from Azerbaijan reached \$217 million, almost 24% more than for the same period in 2015. Such a rise of exports certainly contributed to the 2.6% growth of the agricultural sector in Azerbaijan in 2016.

The Azerbaijan market is also interesting for Russian farmers - mainly for exports of Russian grain crops and products. In terms of gross volume, Azerbaijan is among the top five importers of Russian grain. There are joint projects being implemented in the food production sphere; for instance, fruit and vegetable processing and tea fac-

The summit of the Azerbaijani, Russian, and Iranian presidents in August 2016 in Baku was of fundamental importance in political terms. Perspectives on the construction of the North-South transport route were discussed; this route would connect the railway systems of Russia, Azerbaijan, and Iran.

tories are being built in the Krasnodar region. The Azerbaijani company Benkons Group is planning to open juice factory in Tatarstan, with the production capacity of more than 50,000 tons annually. Products are geared towards both the Russian market and for export to Asian countries. We have also achieved noticeable development in the transport sector. The joint project between Russia, Iran, and Azerbaijan - North-South - is the most important among the transportation cooperation projects.

CI: What can you say about the future prospects for the Russia-Azerbaijan-Iran trilateral format and the North-South transport corridor? What advantages might trilateral collaboration offer for the three countries and the region as a whole?

Stanislav Chernyavskiy: The summit of the Azerbaijani, Russian, and Iranian presidents in August 2016 in Baku was of fundamental importance in political terms. Perspectives on the construction of the North-South transport route were discussed; this route would connect the railway systems of Russia, Azerbaijan, and Iran. This would create an economic corridor connecting the countries of Northern, Central and Western Europe with India and the Persian Gulf region. Obviously, this opens huge economic possibilities both for the initial participants and the transit countries. A significant part of the 7200-km route will pass through the territory of Azerbaijan. Based on current estimates, after the completion of this project and its full exploitation, Azerbaijan will earn approximately \$2.5 billion per year in transit fees.

Trilateral cooperation between Baku, Moscow, and Ankara on key regional problems can bring positive results, as any multilateral format is aimed at improving the general stability and predictability of international relations. At the same time, serious disagreements between Turkey and Russia, in particular regarding Syria, limit the prospects for this cooperation.

The trilateral format allows development in several directions. The first and most important is the development and transportation of energy resources. The development of transport communications in the Caspian coastal region and on Caspian is equally important. And, finally, the development and protection of the biological resources of the Caspian Sea, and preventing them from being plundered via “grey schemes” remains an important task.

The rapprochement between the three countries might speed up the signing of an Agreement on the delimitation of the Caspian shelf. Discussions of this issue have been ongoing for many years. The positions of Moscow and Baku are closely aligned on many points. The leaders of both countries support the delimitation of the Caspian Sea bottom along the modified median line in order to guarantee sovereign rights for the use of subsurface resources, with the aqueous space remaining in common

use, agreed on norms of fishing and protection of the environment. The position of Iran is quite different, however. Official Tehran supports the delimitation of the Caspian shelf equally between all coastal states. Despite this divergence, Moscow, Baku, and Tehran agree that the military forces of non-Caspian states should not be allowed in the Caspian basin.

CI: Recently, the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, M. Chavushoglu, raised the issue of Turkey-Russia-Azerbaijan trilateral cooperation. During his visit to Moscow, the President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan also talked about the possibility of such cooperation. Considering the role of Azerbaijan in the reconciliation between Russia and Turkey, what can you say about the prospects for this trilateral cooperation?

Stanislav Chernyavskiy: Trilateral cooperation between Baku, Moscow, and Ankara on key regional problems can bring positive results, as any multilateral format is aimed at improving the general stability and predictability of international relations. At the same time, serious disagreements between Turkey and Russia, in particular regarding Syria, limit the prospects for this cooperation.

Disagreements between Turkey and Iran also play a negative role, in general. Turkey is a member of NATO and in opposition to Tehran. In fact, Iranian and Turkish soldiers are firing at one another in Syria. Turkey does not have diplomatic relations with Armenia; Ankara fully supports Azerbaijan on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue; and the Iranian government is against the Madrid Principles as a way to resolve the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, as according to this document, international peacekeeping forces should be located in Nagorno-Karabakh. Tehran sees this as an attempt to besiege Iran and insists that only regional forces should be permitted to guard the peace in Nagorno-Karabakh (i.e. Russia, Iran, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia). At the same time, the Islamic Republic of Iran has repeatedly offered to mediate, trying to demonstrate to Turkey that they are equally interested in resolving the conflict.

All these being said, one must not exclude cooperation between these three countries, and this could happen, for instance in the spheres of economy or energy. However, any more substantial steps will draw protest from the Armenian side, an important partner for Russia, as well as can produce a negative reaction by Washington. This would harm Moscow, Baku, and especially Turkey as a NATO member. Therefore, until now the possibility

At the same time, Russia has the opportunity to put forward alternatives for Baku and Yerevan, based on the results of the Kazan meeting. According to those decisions, all Armenian controlled territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh must be handed over to Azerbaijan in exchange for the lifting of the blockade of Armenia imposed by Baku and Ankara.

of formation of such hypothetical alignment remain in verbal statements and does not transform into written documents or practical actions.

CI: *Unfortunately, the resolution process of Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is at a deep deadlock. Clashes on the front line are frequent, and experts are warning that we may see the resumption of full-scale hostilities. This puts the security of both the South Caucasus and its neighbors at risk. What measures, to your mind, could Russia offer to break the deadlock, considering that Moscow has serious interests in the region and is a key participant in the peace process?*

Stanislav Chernyavskiy: I consider that a compromise on the Nagorno-Karabakh problem can be achieved on the basis of decisions taken in 2011 at the meeting between the presidents of Russia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan in Kazan. Russia will continue playing the leading role in the process of political reconciliation. Russia, more than other members of the OSCE Minsk Group, is interested in the establishment of permanent peace in the region and the development of economic cooperation in the South Caucasus. The reaction of the US and France to Moscow's initiatives will most likely be friendly/neutral. Neither Washington, nor Paris will be actively engaged in this problem: in the US, after the recent presidential election, a campaign is being gradually waged aimed at the impeachment [of the President], whilst the newly elected French president is dealing with the change of political balance in the course of the forthcoming parliamentary elections. At the same time, Russia has the opportunity to put forward alternatives for Baku and Yerevan, based on the results of the Kazan meeting. According to those decisions, all Armenian controlled territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh must be handed over to Azerbaijan in exchange for the lifting of the blockade of Armenia imposed by Baku and Ankara.

Returning to the key subject of our conversation, I would like to stress that Russia and Azerbaijan are united by the common historical fortunes of their people, and invaluable political, economic and spiritual potential. Reality has shown that Russia and Azerbaijan need one another. Relations between two sovereign states - Russia and Azerbaijan - have acquired a pragmatic, business-like and mutually beneficial character, considering first of all the national interests of each country.

**Interview was conducted by Azad Garibov,
Editor-In-Chief of the Caucasus International**

Foreign Policy of Azerbaijan in 25 Years of Independence: Priorities, Principles and Achievements

Dr. Javid Valiyev*

This year marks Azerbaijan's 25th anniversary of post-Soviet independence. During this time, it has emerged as a leading country in the South Caucasus in terms of economy, military and population. Over the past quarter-century, Azerbaijani foreign policy has been strongly influenced and shaped by the challenges and opportunities that have arisen as a result of its geography. An independent foreign policy has always been a guiding principle of Azerbaijan's international relations, viewed as a central pillar of national security. Azerbaijan has pursued a balanced foreign policy, avoiding undue external influences and maintaining opportunities for cooperation with all regional and international actors. This strategy was aimed at advancing its national interest. Azerbaijan's foreign policy also has a very strong regional focus: the country attaches major importance to relations with neighboring countries (including trilateral partnerships), which are also considered a geopolitical necessity. Along with the above-mentioned key characteristics and principles, the restoration of territorial integrity remains a major priority for Azerbaijan's foreign policy.



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Introduction

2016 marks 25 years since Azerbaijan re-gained its independence. Today, Azerbaijan is both more powerful and more experienced than it was in 25 years ago and is accepted as the leading country in the South Caucasus in terms of economy, military, and population. Many regional projects begin in Azerbaijan, pass through its territory, or otherwise, depend on its involvement. Azerbaijan has initiated many regionally and globally important projects, which in return strengthened its independence and sovereignty. However, given the country's complex location, the realization of these projects requires Baku to take geopolitics very seriously. Thus, both its domestic and foreign policies have been significantly influenced by its geographical location; decision makers have had to consider geographical realities. Geographical location has a dual effect on Azerbaijan foreign policy. On the one hand, it is a landlocked country surrounded by more powerful regional actors and an unpredictable, irredentist neighbor (Armenia). On the other hand, the country is located at the crossroads of east-west and north-south transport routes, which it has leveraged to overcome the difficulties created by the former. Under the vision of Heydar Aliyev, the country has transformed itself from a geographically landlocked country into a transit country. This policy has been further advanced by Ilham Aliyev, who has incorporated principles of independence and proactivity into the country's foreign policy. The strategy is aimed at securing the economic development via strong economic relations with powerful neighbors, and accordingly, at minimizing the tensions and opening up new opportunities for regional and global cooperation.

Nevertheless, the military occupation of Azerbaijan's territories by Armenia for the past 25 years and the international community's continued silence on this issue despite several international resolutions make Azerbaijan more cautious in its approach to regional politics, and more concerned with geopolitical realities. This paper thus elaborates the dynamics between Azerbaijan's peaceful relations with its neighbors and the existential and geopolitical threat posed by Armenia's continuing occupation and military hostility.

This paper is divided into five sections. The first section focuses on the geopolitical characteristics of Azerbaijan, trying to shed light on how geography influences and shapes the country's foreign policy. The second section examines Baku's regional policy and evaluates its effectiveness in relation to the country's geopolitical needs. The next chapter evaluates the restoration of territorial integrity as the key priority of the foreign policy of the country. Baku's balanced foreign policy, an important principle of the country's foreign policy for more than two decades, is examined in the fourth section of the article. The fifth section highlights the importance of an independent foreign policy in regard to the global and regional framework for Azerbaijan's national security. The final section of the article discusses the development of trilateral partnerships with regional neighbors as an important element of Azerbaijan foreign policy strategy.

Geopolitical characteristics and foreign policy identity

It is often said that geography defines the destiny of a country and this cannot be escaped. This has long been posited by scholars such as Friederich Ratzel, Rudolf Kjellen, Sir Halford Mackinder, Karl Haushofer, Alfred Mahan, and Nicholas J. Spykman and etc. The point is that geographical factors influence the relations of power units within the international system. Azerbaijan is a landlocked country, surrounded by territorial states and an internal sea which is also surrounded by land, leaving the Volga-Don Canal as the only route out to international waters. The Canal is under the sovereign control of Russia. This geographical location creates ontological vulnerabilities for Azerbaijan. This has forced Azerbaijan to make efforts to access the infrastructure and facilities of neighboring states in order, for instance, to export its goods through the territories of other states to participate in international trade. This has put serious constraints on Azerbaijan's foreign policy options and its ability to maneuver. It was, in fact, these very circumstances that led President Ilham Aliyev to state in the Munich Security Conference in 2014 that:

“Azerbaijan is a landlocked country. Therefore, in order to have major investments in production, we needed to

Azerbaijan is a landlocked country. Therefore, in order to have major investments in production, we needed to have routes of transportation.

have routes of transportation. We started to build gas pipelines, which connected the Caspian Sea with the Black Sea and with Mediterranean for the first time in the history.”¹

On the other hand, again from a geopolitical perspective, Azerbaijan’s vulnerability has wider regional implications – for instance, the Central Asian states rely on Azerbaijan for their sole secure (and profitable) export route to the Western markets and advanced and energy-consuming economies. If Azerbaijan’s independence were compromised, the Turkic countries could lose their direct land connection with the Western markets.² As described by Turkey’s former PM Ahmet Davutoğlu, Azerbaijan has a ‘labyrinth’ position between Russia, Turkey, and Iran.³

Thirdly, Azerbaijan’s geopolitical location and identity are intertwined. Azerbaijan has a complex and multilayered geopolitical identity that includes geographical, historical, religious and cultural components.⁴ Geographically, Azerbaijan is located in Europe and joined the Council of Europe in 2001.⁵ Culturally speaking, Azerbaijan is part of the Islamic world, though it is a secular member of this group. Azerbaijan joined the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in 1991. It has initiated several OIC projects in education, culture, and tourism. In May 2017, Baku hosted the Islamic Solidarity Games, and 2017 was declared the ‘Year of Islamic Solidarity’. In terms of different religious groups, 65% of the Azerbaijanis are Shia and 35% are Sunni. In this regard, Azerbaijan presents a model for the peaceful co-existence of two different confessions. Linguistically and ethnically speaking, Azerbaijan is a part of the Turkic World. It is a founding member of the Turkic Council, established in 2009 in Nakhchivan. Within the framework of the Turkic Council, and with its geographical location in the heartland of the Turkic countries, Azerbaijan cooperates

1 President.az (2015), İlham Aliyev attended “Diversification strategies” roundtable of the Munich Security Conference. Available at: <http://en.president.az/articles/14264> (Accessed: 06 February 2015).

2 Brzezinski Z. (1997), *The Grand Chessboard, American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*, New-York. Basic Books. PP. 46-47.

3 A. Davudoğlu (2009), *Stratejik Derinlik*, 34-cü Çap. İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, s. 317.

4 Mammadov Farhad, (2017) ‘Azerbaijan’s Geopolitical Identity in the Context of the 21th Century Challenges and Prospects’, *Valdai Papers*, No 62.

5 Mammadov Farhad, (2017) ‘Azerbaijan’s Geopolitical Identity in the Context of the 21th Century Challenges and Prospects’, *Valdai Papers*, No 62.

closely with other member states in terms of economic and transportation links.

Though the overwhelming majority of the population of Azerbaijan are Muslim, while the country, constitutionally and practically, is a secular state. One of the oldest mosques in Azerbaijan was built in 743 in Shamakhi city. One of oldest churches representing Azerbaijan's Christian past and heritage of Alban period still stands in Sheky city of Azerbaijan. One can find Armenian Church at the center of Baku, the capital city of Azerbaijan. Near to Baku city, there is an 'Atasgah Temple' - a holy place of ancient fire worshipers. All holy places are under the financial and spiritual protection of the government of Azerbaijan.⁶ Azerbaijan organized World Religious Leaders Summit in Baku in 2010. In October 2016, Pope Francis visited Azerbaijan where he praised the country for religious tolerance environment.⁷ In December 2016, during a visit to Azerbaijan, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu highlighted that "Israel-Azerbaijan ties is a beacon of tolerance and hope between Judaism and Islam."⁸ To sum up, Azerbaijan represents a model where all ethnic and religious groups co-exist together for centuries in harmony and with the respect to each other.

Thus, while Azerbaijan's geography poses certain challenges, it also provides a number of opportunities.

Effective regional policy as a geopolitical necessity

Former president Heydar Aliyev is the intellectual architect of Azerbaijan's foreign policy strategy, and the framework he developed has played a constitutive role in the configuration of Azerbaijan's new geopolitical thinking. His main contribution was his clear assessment

Former president Heydar Aliyev is the intellectual architect of Azerbaijan's foreign policy strategy, and the framework he developed has played a constitutive role in the configuration of Azerbaijan's new geopolitical thinking. His main contribution was his clear assessment of the relationship between power and geography. President Ilham Aliyev furthered this by prioritizing the maintaining of good relations with neighboring countries, rooted in an awareness of the country's geopolitical vulnerabilities.

6 Vestnikkavkaza (2015), Azerbaijan to warm Georgian and Armenian churches, Available at: <http://vestnikkavkaza.net/articles/Azerbaijan-to-warm-Georgian-and-Armenian-churches.html>, (Accessed: October 2015).

7 Reuters (2016), No more violence in God's name, Pope says on visit to mosque, Available at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-pope-azerbaijan-idUSKCN1220BV>, (Accessed: October 2, 2016).

8 Netanyahu: 'Israel-Azerbaijan ties, a beacon of tolerance and hope between Judaism and Islam' available at: <https://www.tv7israelnews.com/netanyahu-israel-azerbaijan-ties-is-a-beacon-of-tolerance-and-hope-between-judaism-and-islam/>, (Accessed: december 14, 2016).

of the relationship between power and geography. President İlham Aliyev furthered this by prioritizing the maintaining of good relations with neighboring countries, rooted in an awareness of the country's geopolitical vulnerabilities. This is confirmed by his statement that "Relations with neighbors is a priority for us. The safety of neighbors is our safety".⁹

Without regional cooperation, Azerbaijan would not have been able to realize the regional and global projects that are vital for its security, sovereignty, and independence. These projects have transformed Azerbaijan from a landlocked state to a bridge state.

This has been proven correct. Without regional cooperation, Azerbaijan would not have been able to realize the regional and global projects that are vital for its security, sovereignty, and independence. These projects have transformed Azerbaijan from a landlocked state to a bridge state. Without successful cooperation with Georgia and Turkey, the BTC, BTE pipelines, or BTK railway projects would not have been realized. These projects are all crucial to the increasing geopolitical importance of Azerbaijan. Equally, without successful cooperation with Russia and Iran, it would not have been possible to build North-South railway, which further enhances Azerbaijan's importance as a transportation route. Azerbaijan's global foreign policy is, in fact, a continuation of its regional foreign policy. The effective regional policy is not just an international relations instrument; it is also a survival tool.

As a result of the successful realization of all these projects, Azerbaijan's economy has witnessed massive growth. Since İlham Aliyev came to power, Azerbaijan's GDP has increased 8.5 times, budget revenues have increased by a factor of 14 times, and the military budget has grown 10-fold (from \$454 thousand in 2003 to \$4.8 billion 2015). Azerbaijan has always supported the peaceful resolution of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and advancing military capabilities is intended to bring Armenia to the negotiating table and compel Yerevan to accept a peace agreement.¹⁰

9 President.az (2016), Respublika Günü münasibətilə rəsmi qəbulda İlham Əliyevin nitqi, Available at: <http://www.president.az/articles/19986> (Accessed: 27 may 2017)

10 Seputyte, Milda and Ummelas, Ott. (2016), 'Oil Riches Help Azerbaijan Outgun Armenia in Military Spending', Available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-04-06/oil-riches-help-azerbaijan-outgun-armenia-in-military-spending>

Table 1: Main economic indicators during Ilham Aliyev's presidency

	2003	2016	Growth
GDP (billion USD)	7.15	60.4	8.5 times
Foreign Trade turnover (billion USD)	5.2	17.7	3.4 times
Budget incomes (billion USD)	1.22	17.5	14 times
Budget expenditures (billion USD)	1.23	17.78	14.5 times

Source: *The State Statistics Committee*

Table 2: Military spending of Azerbaijan

Year	Dollars spent	GDP %
2003	\$454.000.000	2.4 %
2004	\$550.000.000	2.6%
2005	\$644.000.000	2.3%
2006	\$1.322.000.000	3.4%
2007	\$1.438.000.000	2.9%
2008	\$1.936.000.000	3.3%
2009	\$1.708.000.000	3.3%
2010	\$1.618.000.000	2.8%
2011	\$3.079.000.000	4.9%
2012	\$3.078.000.000	4.6%
2013	\$3.600.000.000	4.85%
2014	\$3.800.000.000	5.1%
2015	\$4.800.000.000	9%
2016	\$1.200.000.000	3.2%

Source: <http://en.apa.az/azerbaijan-economy/finance-news/azerbaijan-to-increase-defense-spending-in-2016.html>, <http://militarybudget.org/azerbaijan/>

Azerbaijan's endeavor to transform itself into a strategic transit country and the land bridge between east-west and north-south have played a huge role in driving economic growth. Accordingly, as of today, Azerbaijan is at the center of three major regional and global energy and transportation projects: EU's TRACECA, China's Great Silk Road Project, and North-South corridor between Russia, Azerbaijan, and Iran. Azerbaijan is both an active participant and investor in the East-West

Accordingly, as of today, Azerbaijan is at the center of three major regional and global energy and transportation projects: EU's TRACECA, China's Great Silk Road Project, and North-South corridor between Russia, Azerbaijan, and Iran.

transport corridor, which will revitalize the historic Silk Road, and the North-South railroad corridor connecting Southeast Asia with the Black Sea region. The North-South corridor provides the shortest alternative route connecting southeast Asia and the Black Sea regions. Azerbaijan reacted positively when China announced its ambitions to promote the One Belt and One Road (OBOR) initiative in 2013. In December 2015, President Ilham Aliyev visited China and signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on the Silk Road Economic Belt.¹¹

Azerbaijan is committed to the principle of regional cooperation, and to securing a corridor between Europe and Asia for the free flow of trade, people, energy, resources, technology, and communications. Ensuring its openness in both directions in Eurasia is a crucial principle in terms of formulating its regional and global foreign policy strategy.¹²

Restoring territorial integrity as the key priority of the foreign policy

Before regaining of independence, Azerbaijan faced military aggression by Armenia, leading to the occupation of 20% of its territory. The National Security Concept of Azerbaijan lists the restoration of ‘territorial integrity’ as the first and foremost national security goal. In the last decade alone, the irredentist and further expansionist claims of Armenia led Azerbaijan to spend more than 25 billion USD on defense and security, primarily due to the ongoing Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh War.¹³ The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has been a significant factor in bilateral and multilateral relations. The lack of international attention to the occupation often damages Azerbaijan’s relations with its counterparts, adversely affecting Azerbaijan’s security, economy, and bilateral relations.

Azerbaijan has long proposed plans for resolution of the

11 Xinhuanet (2015), China, Azerbaijan sign deals on silk road cooperation, Available at: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-12/11/c_134904736.htm (Accessed: 11 april 2017)

12 Shaffer, Brenda, (2010), ‘Foreign Policies of the States of the Caucasus: Evolution in the Post-Soviet Period’, *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, Volume 7, No 26 P.54.

13 Azerbaijan military budget, Available at: <http://militarybudget.org/azerbaijan/> (Accessed: 20.10.2016). Armenian military budget, Available at: <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/armenia/budget.htm> (Accessed: 20.10.2016).

conflict. The latest one entails resolving the problem step-by-step, suggesting that Armenian forces must withdraw from the adjacent regions of Nagorno-Karabakh, followed by discussions on the future status of Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan accepts autonomous status for Nagorno-Karabakh, similar to Nakhchivan.

The mediation efforts of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs' are seen as inadequate by Azerbaijan. Baku tries to bring the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict onto the agenda of other international organizations such as the European Council, Islamic Cooperation Council, Non-aligned Movement, UN, and Turkic Council. One of Azerbaijan's main aims in international organizations is to raise international awareness of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. A range of international organizations including the UN Security Council, UN General Assembly, Council of Europe, European Parliament, Organization for Islamic Cooperation, Non-aligned Movement, and International Court of Justice have adopted many resolutions confirming that Azerbaijan's territories are under illegal occupation by Armenia, and that the conflict must be resolved in a way that restores the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Unfortunately, international powers are not as engaged with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as with the other conflicts in the region.

Thus the Azerbaijani authorities do not believe that relying on international law is sufficient in this sense; accordingly, they attempt to put pressure on Armenia in different ways in order to force Yerevan to adopt a peace agreement. One mechanism is isolating Armenia from regional projects like the BTC, BTE, BTK, and North-South corridor. Secondly, Azerbaijan works to keep the borders between Turkey and Armenia closed as long as the occupation continues. Thirdly, Azerbaijan continues to strengthen its military power and change the military balance of power in its favor across the region. Azerbaijan has established good military relations with Russia, Turkey, Israel, Belarus, and Ukraine, and has begun developing its own military industry.¹⁴ Azerbaijan is also dedicated to modernizing its Armed Forces;

14 Shiriyeve, Zaur (2016), 'Azerbaijan Looks to Greater Reliance on Domestically Produced Weapons', Available at: <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/80891> (Accessed: 31 may 2017)

the Five Day War in April 2016 demonstrated that Azerbaijan has successfully built up its military capacity.

Balanced foreign policy as the key principle of the foreign policy

The development of a balanced foreign policy was another priority in Heydar Aliyev's geopolitical thinking, and Ilham Aliyev has continued in the same vein.

The development of a balanced foreign policy was another priority in Heydar Aliyev's geopolitical thinking, and Ilham Aliyev has continued in the same vein. According to Novruz Mammadov, Assistant to the President for Foreign Policy Issues, pursuing a balanced foreign policy means finding a sustainable reconciliation point between global and regional actors, and between their opposing interests. The goal is to establish equal relations with all sides, and its main principle is to be open to all sides for cooperation and to formulate bilateral relations via diplomatic means.¹⁵ Azerbaijan tries to maintain good relations with all regional and global players. Accordingly, Azerbaijan has been an active participant of NATO's Partnership for Peace program since 1994 and has an advanced IPAP with the alliance. Azerbaijan supported ISAF operations in Afghanistan. At the same time, Azerbaijan cooperates with Russia on security and military industry issues. Russia has supplied Azerbaijan \$4 billion of military equipment based on agreements signed between 2009 and 2011.

An equally balanced policy is followed with the country's relations with another neighboring power, Turkey. Turkey was the first state to recognize Azerbaijan's independence. It is not only identity and culture but also state interests that bind these two states. Both sides identify bilateral relations as strategic. Energy pipelines such as BTC, BTE, and TANAP are already built, and the both countries are dedicated to successfully completing the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway, which is the central component of East-West transportation corridor. Turkey has provided valuable support in terms of strengthening Azerbaijan's Armed Forces. Since 1992, Azerbaijan and Turkey have signed more than 100 military protocols. Turkey also strongly

15 Məmmədov, Novruz (2013), *Xarici Siyasət: Reallıqlar və Gələcəyə Baxış*, Qanun Nəşriyyatı, Bakı. S. 77.

supports Azerbaijan's position in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and due to this has closed its borders with Armenia. In return, Azerbaijan has supported Ankara in numerous domestic and international cases and causes, including after the failed coup in July 2016.

In addition, Azerbaijan cooperates with the EU within the framework of many regional projects. In particular, the transportation project TRACECA and the energy initiative INOGATE have played a vital role in bilateral relations. On 7 November 2006, Azerbaijan and the EU signed a MoU on energy supply for the diversification the EU's energy resources, via the export of Azerbaijani energy resources to Europe.¹⁶ In February 2017, during President Ilham Aliyev's visit to Brussels, Azerbaijan started negotiations on a new strategic partnership agreement with the EU. Also, after following the successful implementation of an agreement to simplify visa regimes, Azerbaijan requested an action plan for a visa-free regime with Europe. Both sides have also launched negotiations on this issue.

Finally, Azerbaijan has also been careful to pursue a balanced policy towards Iran. As Baku's southern neighbor and providing a connection to the Middle East, Iran offers an alternative means for Azerbaijan to export its oil. Azerbaijan and Iran signed an agreement stating that neither country will allow third parties use their territories against one another. During the crisis between the West and Iran over Iran's nuclear program, for instance, Azerbaijan did not support the sanctions against Iran, and strongly opposed any military escalation in the region. However, Azerbaijan also strongly welcomed Iran-West nuclear deal and has tried to develop energy, economic and transportation relations with Iran in the post-sanction period. Azerbaijan has offered good opportunities for Iran to export its gas to Europe and to connect with Russia and Europe via rail. In this sense, two countries have signed an agreement on the North-South railway.

16 "President Barroso and the President of Azerbaijan sign a Memorandum of Understanding on energy partnership", European Commission, Available at: europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-06-1516_en.htm (Accessed: 31 may 2017)

An independent foreign policy entails three key principles for Azerbaijan. Firstly, an independent foreign policy aims to prevent foreign interventions into domestic politics. Secondly, an independent foreign policy means avoiding membership of any regional military blocs that may limit sovereignty. Thirdly, via independent foreign policy, Azerbaijan can maintain good relations with both of the sides of any regional conflict, and thus prevent external involvement in its foreign relations.

Independent foreign policy as a global and regional framework for national security

The National Security Strategy of Azerbaijan, adopted in 2007, indicates that any kind of military or economic dependence is a national security threat.¹⁷ President Ilham Aliyev has affirmed that an independent foreign policy entails three key principles for Azerbaijan.¹⁸ Firstly, an independent foreign policy aims to prevent foreign interventions into domestic politics. As seen during the recent elections, some foreign countries have attempted to influence Azerbaijan's domestic policies, including on energy and security. Secondly, an independent foreign policy means avoiding membership of any regional military blocs that may limit sovereignty. Thirdly, via independent foreign policy, Azerbaijan can maintain good relations with both of the sides of any regional conflict, and thus prevent external involvement in its foreign relations. For example, Baku has cooperative relations with neighboring Tehran but has also developed good relations with both Israel and Saudi Arabia. It was this policy that resulted in, for instance, hosting the meeting of the US Chief of General Staff and his Russian counterpart in Azerbaijan to discuss the Syrian crisis. Moreover, in accordance with this policy, during the Russian-Georgian war, Azerbaijan purchased Georgian goods despite Russian sanctions, as well as increased exports of natural gas to Georgia. As a result of this strategy, Azerbaijan has gained a reputation of a reliable partner in the region.

Since regaining independence, Azerbaijan's independent foreign policy has faced some challenges. Many states both within the region and externally hardly digested Azerbaijan's independent foreign policy. In that regard, they tried to adversely influence Azerbaijan's attempts to integrate with international organizations such as NATO and the CSTO. Azerbaijan has,

17 (2007) National Security Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Available at: <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/154917/Azerbaijan2007.pdf> (Accessed: 31 may 2017.)

18 Chatham House (2009) Aliyev, Ilham, 'Foreign Policy challenges for Azerbaijan', Available at: https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/14383_130709aliyev.pdf, (Accessed: 31 may 2017)

however, resisted these efforts. As a result, it is now the only country in the South Caucasus that has evaded direct control by outside countries. By contrast, Armenia has chosen to form a military alliance with Russia, and Moscow has a military base in Armenian territory and the two countries share a unified air defense system. Georgia has chosen to ally itself with the US. Azerbaijan, however, has adopted a balanced and independent policy between the global and regional powers, meaning that it can follow a more independent policy than other regional states.¹⁹

Moreover, Azerbaijan has avoided becoming embroiled in regional geopolitical competition between global powers. This is for two main reasons. Firstly, Azerbaijan is not happy with the position of either the CSTO or NATO on the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.²⁰ Azerbaijan left the CSTO in 1999 when Russia supplied \$1 billion worth weapons to Armenia. Baku also criticizes the Western states following their inconsistent positions on Georgian, Ukrainian, and Azerbaijani territorial integrity in regard to the conflicts. Secondly, membership in these military blocs entails dependence and limitations on sovereignty.

Accordingly, Azerbaijan joined the non-aligned movement in 2011, which helped Azerbaijan in three respects: (i) avoiding the pressures of regional organizations in the geopolitical struggle in the South Caucasus, and maintaining a balanced foreign policy; (ii) putting an end to the rumors about possibilities of Azerbaijani membership in either NATO or the CSTO; and (iii) making Turkey and Pakistan as its two main partners in terms of security and military relations.

Trilateral cooperation in Azerbaijan's foreign policy

Complementary to and within the scope of Azerbaijan's

19 Shaffer, Brenda, (2010), 'Foreign Policies of the States of the Caucasus: Evolution in the Post-Soviet Period', *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, Volume 7, No 26 P. 53.

20 Azertag (2016) Prezident İlham Əliyevin sərezident İlham Əliyevin setinin 2016-cı ilin sosial-iqtisadi inkişafının yekunlarına vətinin 2016-cı ilin sosial-iqtisadi inkişafının yekunla Available at: http://azertag.az/xeber/Prezident_Ilham_Aliyevin_sedriyi_ile_Nazirler_Kabinetinin_2016_ci_ilin_sosial_iqtisadi_inkisafinin_yekunlarina_ve_qarsida_duran_vezifelere_hesr_olunan_iclasi_kechirilib_YENILANIB_VIDEO-1025304 (Accessed: 01 June 2017)

These trilateral alignments are platforms for the realization of common energy, communication, and transportation projects, further aimed at establishing trust and deepening cooperation.

focus on maintaining good relations with neighboring countries, the country has also developed trilateral relations, with a specific purpose for each 'triangle'. These trilateral relation formats include Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey (the product of the 1990s and the implementation of the grand projects such as the BTC and BTE pipelines); Azerbaijan-Iran-Russia (a result of the North-South railway connection); and Azerbaijan-Turkmenistan-Turkey and Azerbaijan-Iran-Turkey (to resolve different issues via diplomatic means). These trilateral alignments are platforms for the realization of common energy, communication, and transportation projects, further aimed at establishing trust and deepening cooperation.

The Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey relationship is the only institutionalized trilateral format in the region. The fact that Azerbaijan and Georgia are aligned with Turkey's vision eliminates whatever concerns may arise regarding the realization of this axis. The results of the specific projects and activities that the three countries collectively developed throughout the 1990s have become visible during the 2000s. In accordance with the increasing opportunities and capabilities of Turkey and Azerbaijan, the development of a trilateral strategic alliance supported by shared experiences stimulates the implementation of regional projects and the expectation of a common future. After more than 20 years of independence, Azerbaijan and Georgia have overcome challenges to become an integral element of the international economic and political system by transforming themselves into active members of international institutions.²¹ Officials from all three countries have been meeting since the second half of the 1990s, but the first official trilateral meeting was in 2012. Since then, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defense, Economy, and Presidents have come together several times. New security circumstances and projects like the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway and Southern Gas Corridor have deepened the relations between these three countries.

21 Valiyev, Javid (2015), 'Azerbaijan-Georgian-Turkey Triangle: The Main Features of Cooperation', Caucasus International, Vol. 5, No: 3, Winter. pp. 27-44.

The Azerbaijan-Turkey-Turkmenistan trilateral relationship is another successful example of Azerbaijani foreign policy. This partnership seeks to minimize the political and economic disagreements between Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan. In particular, good relations between leaders of the three states have helped to minimize problems. The first trilateral meeting among the Foreign Ministers of Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Turkmenistan took place in Baku on 26 May 2014. The “Baku Statement” was released after the meeting, expressing the three countries’ determination to develop trilateral relations in various fields, particularly in energy, trade, transportation through joint projects and cooperation initiatives. In the energy field, Azerbaijan and Turkey are interested in bringing Turkmenistan onboard as part of the Trans-Anatolian gas pipeline (TANAP) project.²² Azerbaijan-Turkey-Turkmenistan has also cooperated in the transportation sector: Azerbaijan’s Alyat International Port, Turkmenistan’s Turkmenbashi port, and Turkey’s Samsun port have been declared sister ports. There is a ferry connection between Turkmenbashi and Baku port which carries passengers as well as trucks and other vehicles.²³

The trilateral talks involving the foreign ministers of Turkey, Azerbaijani, and Iran first took place in Istanbul on the margins of the Economic Cooperation Organization meeting in December 2010. This meeting occurred at a time when relations between Azerbaijan and Iran were tense.²⁴ The first official meeting between the Azerbaijani, Iranian, and Turkish Ministers of Foreign Affairs took place in Urmia on 16 April 2011,²⁵ in the shadow of tensions between Iran and Turkey on

22 Hurriyetdailynews (2014), Turkey, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan mull Eurasia benefits, Available at: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-turkmenistan-azerbaijan-mull-eurasia-benefits-----.aspx?pageID=238&nID=67006&NewsCatID=338> (Accessed: 26.05.2017)

23 Trend (2015), Turkmenistan’s new ferry to make voyage to Baku, Available at: <http://en.trend.az/casia/turkmenistan/2353063.html> (Accessed: 14.04.2017)

24 Hurriyetdailynews (2011) Turkey seeks thaw in Iran-Azeri ties, Available at: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=turkey-seeks-thaw-in-iran-azerbaycanti-ties-2011-04-12> (Accessed: 26 april 2017)

25 Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2014), Van Statement of the Third Trilateral Meeting of the Minister of foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Turkey, Available at: http://www.mfa.gov.tr/van-statement-of-the-third-trilateral-meeting-of-the-ministers-of-foreign-affairs-of-the-republic-of-azerbaijan_the-islamic-rep.en.mfa, (Accessed: 01 june 2017).

the future of Syria. Iran plays an important role for Azerbaijan as a bridge to the exclave of Nakhchivan. Moreover, Iran is an alternative transportation corridor for Azerbaijan. For instance, in 2008, the war between Georgia and Russia created security problems for Azerbaijan's energy and transportation projects. The destruction of bridges in Georgia also disrupted Azerbaijan's foreign export routes. As a result, the main export oil pipeline, BTC, stopped transporting oil and Azerbaijan sent oil to the Iranian port of Neka.

Another trilateral format involving Azerbaijan and Iran is the Azerbaijan-Russia-Iran trilateral relationship. Although there is no annual meeting between these states, the North-South corridor connecting the Indian Ocean to Russia and the Black Sea is a key linkage. In August 2016, presidents Putin, Rouhani, and Aliyev met in Baku and signed a memorandum of understanding on the North-South route, which opened up new ways for trilateral cooperation. Azerbaijan is especially interested in this cooperation because it will also help prevent tensions between its two large neighbors. Additionally, Azerbaijan can demonstrate that Baku is capable of cooperating with both Russia and Iran.

A new platform for trilateral cooperation emerged after the Turkish-Russian jet crisis in 2015. Azerbaijan wanted to avoid a confrontation between Turkey and Russia and played a positive role in normalizing Turkey-Russia relations. Subsequently, the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs proposed the establishment of a Turkey-Azerbaijan-Russia trilateral format.²⁶ During President Erdogan's visit to Russia in March 2017, he repeated this proposal. During the past five years, Azerbaijan-Russian military relations have further developed. After the normalization of Turkey-Russia relations, Turkey is pursuing a policy of balancing the West with Russia, and of developing relations with Asian countries. Russia has its own projects in relation to the Eurasian region. However, Russia's relationship with Kurdish terrorist group in Syria PYD/YPG upsets Turkey,

²⁶ Vestnikkavkaza (2016), Ankara proposes Russia - Azerbaijan - Turkey trilateral format, Available at: <http://vestnikkavkaza.net/news/Ankara-proposes-Russia-Azerbaijan-Turkey-trilateral-format.html> (Accessed: 26 april 2017).

while Moscow's policy towards Nagorno-Karabakh and militarization of Armenia continues to disappoint Azerbaijan.

Currently, the Azerbaijan-Turkey-Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan-Iran-Georgian trilateral cooperation formats are under discussion. While the Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey trilateral relationship is much more developed, Azerbaijan-Turkmenistan-Turkey trilateral relations have to build trust. The Azerbaijan-Turkey-Iran trilateral relationship has become much more successful during the Hasan Rouhani presidency. These trilateral relationships are promising for further cooperation between Azerbaijan and its regional neighbors.

Conclusion

Geography has defined Azerbaijan's foreign policy strategy for the last 25 years. The country has, accordingly, based its foreign policy on geopolitical and geo-economic concerns. This has enabled Baku to overcome certain disadvantages and focus on pursuing an independent, pro-active, and balanced foreign policy, devoting significant efforts to assuring territorial integrity, preserving good relations with regional countries, and building energy and transportation corridors. This has helped Azerbaijan to transform itself from a landlocked country to a transit country. While a balanced foreign policy made Azerbaijan capable of maintaining a balance between regional and global powers, its focus on maintaining independence means that Azerbaijan develops its own agenda based on nationally defined domestic, foreign, and security interests.

Although Azerbaijan has yet to restore its territorial integrity, there is a consensus in domestic politics that it will continue to be the principal national cause. Despite the continuing occupation, Azerbaijan has brought international recognition to the fact that Armenia is illegally occupying Azerbaijani territories. In this sense, Azerbaijan also made it clear that Azerbaijan has sufficient political will and military capabilities to restore its

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territorial integrity. Additionally, by excluding Armenia from the economic mega-projects such as BTC, BTE, and BTK, Azerbaijan has demonstrated its capacity to isolate Armenia in order to push Yerevan to a solution. Finally, the bilateral and trilateral relations Baku has developed with a diverse range of actors and its participation in several transcontinental projects prove that Azerbaijan's foreign policy has prevailed over the geographic and geopolitical traps.

The Struggle of Georgian Democracy

Giorgi Kanashvili* and Revaz Koiava**

The paper aims to review the democratization experience of post-Soviet Georgia. Due to the differences in geography, history, political culture, economy, and governance of each Soviet republic, the transition periods of these countries have eradicated all commonalities. Despite their common problems, the transformations are individual, due to local conditions and circumstances. Georgia's declared goal is the development of a stable and successful democracy. But how do Georgians understand democracy, and how is it supported via government policy? The social and educational diversity of Georgians shall be taken into consideration in assessing the functioning of judiciary, executive, administrative and legislative bodies. The various aspects of Georgian politics – informal deal making, attitudes of elites, generational specificities, and everyday concerns of citizens preclude the possibilities for generalization. The political culture of Georgia, social relations, local governance, employment problems, and daily political life was determined by the grotesque behavior of the Georgian elite and the Civil War, separatism and Russian intervention. This leads us to Tip O'Neill's maxim – "All politics is local".



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Introduction

“Georgian people have never accepted the loss of freedom,” declared Zviad Gamsakhurdia on 9 April 1991 at the Session of Supreme Council of Georgia. The issue of national independence was on the Session agenda. Zviad Gamsakhurdia, leader of the ‘Round Table – Free Georgia’ coalition who had controlled the Supreme Council since October 1990, debated the Russian – Georgian relations, Russian occupation of Georgia, the 1924 rebellion, the bloody tragedy of 9 April 1989, and the March 1990 referendum, in which 91% of Georgians voted for independence.¹ Gamsakhurdia promised the Georgian population that independent Georgia would be democratic: “the Republic of Georgia, aspiring to occupy decent place in the community of the world states, recognizes and equally ensures all rights and freedoms provided by international law for all national, ethnic, religious and language groups, as required by the UN Charter...”²

But 25 years after gaining independence, the government of Georgia does not control its own territory or citizens, nor does it ensure economic security. Despite some achievements, the development of democratic processes engaging society more broadly remains impossible.

But 25 years after gaining independence, the government of Georgia does not control its own territory or citizens, nor does it ensure economic security. Despite some achievements, the development of democratic processes engaging society more broadly remains impossible.

Georgia still faces fundamental challenges, an issue that has been long forgotten by the West. The Georgian political elite should: establish the bodies of sovereign statehood; develop national identity, which would include non-ethnic Georgians; substitute centralized planned economy with competitive market; establish democratic institutes and implement effective foreign policy. However, Georgia tried to achieve all these goals without experienced staff, respective institutes, effective executive government and necessary funds. As the American political scientist Alexander John Motyl suggests, political elite, wishing revolutionary changes, shall be exceptionally well provided with finances.³ The post-Soviet

1 Zviad Gamsakhurdia, (1995) *The Act on Restoration of Independence of Georgia*, Vol. 1, Voice of Nation, p. 80.

2 Ibid, 82-89.

3 Motyl A. (1999) *Revolutions, Nations, Empires: Conceptual Limits and Theoretical Possibilities*, New York: Columbia University Press, p. 32.

Georgian elite, working in a post-totalitarian environment, did not have the psychological or material resources for revolutionary changes, nor for the transformation of the country. Its development as a state began with independence of Georgia and remains underway. This process goes in waves, and can be divided into phases, which coincide with changes in government.

The goal of the article is to review the democratic processes in post-Soviet Georgia. Due to the differences in geography, history, political culture, economy, and governance of each Soviet republic, the transition periods of these countries have eradicated all commonalities. Despite their common problems, the transformations are individual, due to local conditions and circumstances. Georgia's declared goal is the development of a stable and successful democracy. But how do Georgians understand democracy, and how is it supported via government policy? The social and educational diversity of Georgians shall be taken into consideration in assessing the functioning of judiciary, executive, administrative and legislative bodies. The various aspects of Georgian politics – informal deal making, attitudes of elites, generational specificities, and everyday concerns of citizens preclude the possibilities for generalization. The political culture of Georgia, social relations, local governance, employment problems, and daily political life was determined by the *grotesque* behavior of the Georgian elite and the Civil War, separatism and Russian intervention. This leads us to Tip O'Neill's maxim – "All politics is local".

Ecstatic nationalism and the period of populism

Georgia's struggle for sovereignty and independence was underway at the end of 1980s, under the slogans opposing the Russian empire. According to Russian anthropologist Timur Muzaev, "in the middle of the 1980s, 'perestroika' and democratization of social life revealed the problems associated with nationalism in Soviet Union. Publicity and mitigation of party censorship enabled people to speak openly about own interests and goals".⁴

Consequently, the collapse of the USSR gave rise to ethnic nationalism and political archaism rather than the blossoming of

4 Музаев Т. М. (1999) Этнический сепаратизм в России. М.: Изд-во □Панорама□. p.25.

Consequently, the collapse of the USSR gave rise to ethnic nationalism and political archaism rather than the blossoming of civil society and social modernization promised by the leaders of the national democratic movement.

civil society and social modernization promised by the leaders of the national democratic movement. Progressivism (in its Marxist definition) was changed not by Bourgeois progressivism, but by an intensive search for the ‘golden age’. The concept of ‘bright future’ was substituted by the concept of ‘bright past’. The development of political authority and public organizations, based on medieval political-legal and social concepts, emerged as particular manifestations of ‘returning to the past’. Other than the development of civil society and healthy political competition, it was rather the factionalism that played a major role in social political processes. Outside the imperial context, the political elites of Georgia became much more provincial in their mentality and behavior.

Gamsakhurdia’s insulting rhetoric mobilized the population and demonized the opposition, shutting down any prospects for compromise or cooperation. He used the conflict in South Ossetia to justify censorship and restrictions on public criticism.

The first president of Georgia held a peculiar attitude towards democracy, considering elections, a constitution, and a multiparty system as sufficient constituent parts. Gamsakhurdia polarized political forces. His political rhetoric, directed against the opposition, was dominated by the terminology of the USSR in the 1930s. He called his opponents “enemies of nation”, “agents of the Kremlin”, “Judas”, and “criminals”.⁵ Gamsakhurdia’s insulting rhetoric mobilized the population and demonized the opposition, shutting down any prospects for compromise or cooperation. He used the conflict in South Ossetia to justify censorship and restrictions on public criticism.

Gamsakhurdia failed to modernize traditional Georgian society. Christopher Clapham has described cultures similar to Georgia as neo-patrimonial, wherein governmental structures are shaped by personal relations and status, and distinctions between official and private worlds are minimal.⁶ In such societies, people in office, become the source of political power and resources; other than the institutional structure. This yet promoted a policy of charisma. In the context of the neo-patrimonial culture of Georgia, the president could not express power without legitimate state institutes; yet as the charism was the main source of Gamsakhurdia’s political authority, the style

5 Newspaper, “The Republic of Georgia”, *NII*, 1990, p. 2

6 Clapham C. (1985) *The World Politics: An Introduction*, London and Sydney: Croom Helm, pp. 39-60.

of his governance undermined the embryonic state institutions. It was on this very ground that Gamsakhurdia urged people to overcome institutional barriers.

Economic chaos, however, promoted a hunt for scapegoats. In Georgia, these were communists, ‘red intellectuals’, and national minorities. In his work on populism, Ernesto Laclau calls these arguments the “simplification of political space”. The public struggle accordingly unites around one issue and political complexity is substituted by the vision of *ours* and *others*. Margaret Canovan states that populist movements entail a kind of exaltation and appeal to “people” - and all of them are somehow anti-elite.⁷ Features of a populist government include scapegoating of ethnic minorities, intellectuals or foreign governments; a state-managed economy; manipulation of the press; emphasis on charismatic power; a special destiny for the nation; cult of personality, all reinforced by a strong presidential system.

Erika Bener, in her review of nationalism, addresses changeable normative views. She notes that movements and ideologies developed on ethnic basis are complex. New circumstances may defeat the leaders within a couple of years, and transform their goals and forms of expression.⁸ Gamsakhurdia’s regime of ethnic nationalism fell within a year as a result of military coup. Gamsakhurdia, elected ‘with universal passion’, died in suspicious circumstances after three years.

Interregnum

On returning to Georgia, Shevardnadze faced a fundamental challenge – to restore the integrity of the state. Charles Tilly highlights three main functions of the state – collection, coercion, and integration.⁹ By that time, Georgia was unable to defend its borders, handle growing corruption, pay salaries and pensions, or ensure the operation of schools and hospitals. In the regions, the state’s ability to implement its policy was dependent on local authorities or field commanders. The new government of

7 Canovan M. (1981) *Populism*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, p. 294.

8 Bener, E. (1997) “Nationality without nationalism”, *Journal of Political Ideologies*; 2, p. 189-206.

9 Tilly C. (1990) *Coercion, Capital and European States, AD 990-1990*, Cambridge: Blackwell, Chapters 1-3.

The new government of Georgia needed to ensure all three of Tilly's functions: Shevardnadze should generate revenues, establish public order, and reconcile with alienated national minorities and supporters of the defeated Zviad Gamsakhurdia.

Georgia needed to ensure all three of Tilly's functions: Shevardnadze should generate revenues, establish public order, and reconcile with alienated national minorities and supporters of the defeated Zviad Gamsakhurdia. The most acute challenge was the solution of the problem of 'Mkhedrioni' and the National Guard, which controlled the military council, economy, and regions. They took revenge on the supporters of former President. It was necessary to suspend these operations and reconcile with these groups. At the same time, it was necessary to adopt new laws on citizenship, privatization, local self-government, the judiciary, elections, Parliament, and the executive government. It was necessary to implement an effective foreign policy, which would ensure stability. Shevardnadze needed to implement a proper economic policy, which would lead the country out of poverty.

During the transition period, Shevardnadze managed to obtain enormous power. Upon being elected as Chair of Parliament, he officially controlled both the executive and legislative branches. As the head of the state, Parliament granted him exclusive rights. He was responsible for foreign relations and had the authority to appoint the highest military personnel and state representatives in the regions (governors and mayors), without needing approval from Parliament. Shevardnadze's power grew further in July of 1993, when the Parliament granted him the right to issue legal acts pertaining to the economy, convoke and lead cabinet sessions, and replace senior officials without parliamentary approval.¹⁰

The development of the new Constitution was considered as Shevardnadze's main achievement. Modelled on the US Constitution, the new document significantly strengthened the Presidency. It became easier for Shevardnadze to dominate the legislative process. He appointed and dismissed ministers without approval from Parliament. The state minister, who presided over the cabinet of ministers, was accountable directly to the President. In contrast to the French presidential system, where the Prime Minister often had the grounds for parliamentary power, Shevardnadze did not face opposition from the ministers. The new

¹⁰ Jones S. (2013) "Georgia: Political History after Announcing Independence", Tbilisi: The Centre of Social Sciences, pp. 104-149.

Constitution was developed during a time of crisis, and instead of ensuring longer term prospects for constitutional stability, balanced short term needs. However, despite of the shortfalls, it had vital importance for Georgian politics. Shevardnadze improved Georgian state and established governing institutes.¹¹

'Trust gap' in democracy

Shevardnadze legalized democracy, but neglected to build up its practical pillars – a fair tax system, independent local governance, rule of law, opportunity for free economic activity. It was difficult for the state to enforce its laws; for example, in Adjara, where Aslan Abashidze was heading a feudal authoritarian creature. This was a major problem for democracy.¹²

Shevardnadze legalized democracy, but neglected to build up its practical pillars – a fair tax system, independent local governance, rule of law, opportunity for free economic activity.

With the help of neo-patrimonialism, Shevardnadze avoided Parliament and the judicial system. Using his Soviet networks, he maintained the basic functioning of country, and his own political power. However, ultimately he failed to control the networks of patronage. Edward Benfield calls describes these conditions as 'family' without morals; the absence of social confidence and dominance of an authoritarian state are, according to Benfield, caused by the experience of colonialism, and leads us to direct contacts rather than laws.¹³

The 'Trust Gap' in a democracy (drawing upon the terminology of Lipset and Schneider) emerged as a result of unsuccessful financial support that failed to bring tangible results to the population.¹⁴ International financial support was based on the donors' agenda, leading to a professional system of local activists was developed. The activists were bound to programs created outside of the country, instead of being focused on the needs of the intended program beneficiaries. The leaders of Georgian NGOs became a kind of labor aristocracy, being paid in foreign currency and enjoying a standard of living far beyond the reach of most Georgians. Consequently, by

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¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., p. 154.

¹³ Banfield E. (1958) *The Moral Basis to Backward Society*, Glencoe, Ill: Free Press.

¹⁴ Martin S. and Schneider W. (1983) *The Confidence Gap*, New York: Free Press.

2000, liberalism for the majority of Georgians was associated with corruption, criminality, and poverty.¹⁵

Under Shevardnadze's governance, weak functioning of state institutions seriously affected the public, and the non-collection of tax revenues seriously damages its ability to protect citizens from unelected violent groups and monopolies. There was almost no consensus in regard to the essence of the state and its political values and goals. Corruption and insolvency undermined development of the army, and weakened market infrastructure. Baseline economic welfare was beyond the reach of the majority of the population, which damaged the value of citizenship and widened the gap between the state and the citizen.

Edward Shevardnadze failed to narrow the gap between the governing and governed. He could not prevent the political asymmetry resulting from the extremely strong presidency, supported only by the dominant party, and was unable to control the transfer power or to engage citizens in political processes. Georgians understood Shevardnadze's focus on stability and consolidation of society, but by the end of 1990s, economic reforms had failed. In the last years of his presidency, the central government was dramatically weakened due to corruption, intrigues, un-investigated murders, and empty state coffers. The administration was no longer capable of building a well-organized state. The problem was further exacerbated by the unresolved conflicts on Georgian territory. Ultimately, Shevardnadze's regime collapsed following the revolution.

The period of liberal democracy

The protests against fraudulent elections on Rustaveli Avenue in 22 November 2003 had dramatic consequences. Opposition forces, led by Michael Saakashvili, entered parliament and forced Shevardnadze to leave the session mid-speech. This event became known as the 'the Rose Revolution'. The revolution reflected public dissatisfaction with the corrupt regime as well as appropriation of power in the absence of checks and balances. Reforms were now possible to be carried out, but it again failed due to the inability in the country in legally transferring the power. Georgia's institutional weakness were obvious, dubbed

¹⁵ Jones, "Georgia", p. 155.

the ‘Permanent Revolution’ of Georgia by Vicken Cheterian.¹⁶

The new government accepted responsibility for the development of liberal democracy and a liberal economic regime. However, its achievements, which included more transparent elections, reducing corruption, rapid economic growth and a balanced budget, revealed tensions between liberal economy and civil democracy. There emerged increasing contradictions between individual and collective rights, state regulations and private freedoms. In this vein, “scaling down the state”, which is considered the best way to develop a successful liberal democracy and market economy in Georgia, hinders the process of granting political rights to citizens and extending of participatory capacities.¹⁷ Georgia accordingly developed as a “society of limited access”, where mobility within and access to the political system of the country is blocked by poverty, inequality and system hierarchies.¹⁸

Since Saakashvili’s administration, economic liberalism has been shaped as utopian warrior, focusing, as Robert Reich has mentioned, on consumer rather than citizen values.¹⁹ The economic policy of Georgia has seen dramatic reductions to public investments in the labor market, healthcare and environmental protections, as well as weakening of public controls on the executive government. According to John Kenneth Galbraith, the weakness of the ‘balancing force’ has created a political system based on unstable charismatic populism. As a result of deregulation of the state, civil rights were reduced even further.

Pluralistic structures were imported to Georgia from abroad, and were based on Georgian idealistic values such as: ethnic tolerance and individualism. At the same time, economic problems created challenges for the country’s democracy. According to Galbraith, “nothing

Pluralistic structures were imported to Georgia from abroad, and were based on Georgian idealistic values such as: ethnic tolerance and individualism. At the same time, economic problems created challenges for the country’s democracy. According to Galbraith, “nothing more effectively limits freedom as the total lack of money”.

16 Vicken Cheterian (2008) “Georgia’s Rose Revolution: Democratization? State-Building? or Permanent Revolution?” Paper delivered at conference, *Georgia: Making of a National Culture* at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, May 15th-18th.

17 De Soto H. (1989) *The Other Path: The Invisible Revolution in the Third World*, New York: Harper and Row/Perennial Library.

18 North D., Wallis J. and Weingast B. (2006) “A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting Recorded Human History”, National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper, No. 12795.

19 Reich R. (2007) *Super capitalism: The Transformation of Business, Democracy and Everyday Life*, New York: Vintage Books, p. 13.

more effectively limits freedom as the total lack of money”.²⁰ This was obvious in Georgia, where one third-population lives below the poverty line.

According to the World Bank and IMF, focusing on the reduction of the state’s role was not an appropriate measure for post-Soviet societies in difficult conditions. Building market democracy in the post-Soviet environment requires resources which can only be provided by the state.

Conclusion

Adam Przeworski states that “democracy shall bring substantial results”. Youthful dynamism, counter corruption rhetoric/initiatives and EU integration are not enough to maintain public support. Georgians, who once stood out the most optimistic about democratic changes among the post-Soviet populations, are now ambivalent towards democracy.

The force balancing the political influence of the state is still not developed. The third sector has failed to actively engage citizens in social or political life. The media is under the influence of malign sponsors, strong owners, or the government. Despite the reduction of corruption, Georgian political and economic elites are isolated from ordinary citizens. The society is in a state of apathy, and national consensus remains a distant goal, considered a prerequisite of democracy by John Stuart Mill. It could be said thus that Georgia is facing unsustainability, created by the alienation of the population from the political system.

Nevertheless, the transition of Georgia was supported particularly by the Western states; the biggest support is provided by the US. Despite the level of financial support, however, the majority of population lives at or below the poverty line. The IMF’s plan has made a significant contribution rather however to political instability and economic decline. It, in addition, it increased the tensions between economic and political liberalization.

There are many hypotheses regarding democratic transitions. Seymour Martin Lipset states that economic development is the

20 Held D. (1995) *Democracy and the Global Order: From the Modern State to Cosmopolitan Governance*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, p. 253.

most important. Samuel Huntington and Ronald Inglehart argue that common cultural characteristics are decisive. Fareed Zakaria and Russel Bova highlight the experience of a liberal regime. Robert Putnam is focused on social capital and trust, while Adam Przeworski underscores equality of revenue. In the case of Georgia, political divisions, historic absence of statehood, and an under-developed and fragmented civil society led to weak national cohesion. This problem remains unsolved.²¹

The concept of democracy has acquired multiple meanings in Georgia. Formally, democracy is liberal; in reality it is often non-liberal. During the presidency of Zviad Gamsakhurdia, the reason for the failure of democracy was the oversimplified attitude towards independent statehood and majority rule. Under Shevardnadze, democracy was swallowed by corruption and unaccountable networks. Public policy since Saakashvili's leadership created a feeling of alienation among the middle class. No leader in Georgia has managed to ensure a balance between the needs of political elites and the middle class; the rule of law is still not ensured and nepotism remains a powerful force. Therefore, a functioning institutional order fulfilling certain obligations could not be achieved.

Recent government policy in Georgia, namely the development of a *market paradise* failed in terms of attracting foreign investments; on the other hand, it rendered democracy meaningless.²² Ambitious builders of democracy from the West exacerbated the general disappointment by importing abstract models and concepts. Now, the main obstacle to the development of democracy is not civil and ethnic divisions, or foreign threats, but rather the polarized, weak economy, non-existence of organized social groups and solidarity, and the lack of reliable public institutions. As Illia Roubanis states; "Georgian politicians do not have strings connecting with the government", they neither fulfill the articulated interests nor deal with organized electorate.²³

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21 Jones, "Georgia", p. 20.

22 Zinoviev A. (2002) *Russian Tragedy (The Destruction of Utopia)*, Moscow: Algoritm.

23 Roubanis I. (2009) "Georgia pluralistic feudalism: a frontline report", Available at: www.open-democracy.net/article/georgia-pluralistic-feudalism (Accessed: 15 April 2017).

In Georgia, democracy and personal freedoms are under a substantial threat; a threat worse than institutional crime or corruption. Soviet heritage has also impeded democratic development, in particular, with regard to the social and political gap between the elites and their ‘subjects’. The system of developed patronage was also a problem, whereby problems were solved using personal connections rather than transparent institutional mechanisms.

The concentration of power is damaging. In the case of Georgia, this has led to weak legislative body, a toothless judicial system, and powerless local self-governance. The system has seen periodic improvement through massive public protests. Georgian presidents have been overthrown and their governments forced to resign. This form of the right to democratic expression is characterized by the development of instability, and a tendency to political manipulation and violence. However, the recent history of Georgia demonstrates that Georgians can bring about change in government. In 1991-1992 this happened through force; in 2003 Shevardnadze was ousted through revolution; and 2012 saw the peaceful transfer of power.

Security Dynamics in the South Caucasus since Independence: Interconnected Threats and Security Interdependence

Azad Garibov*

The article examines the security dynamics in the South Caucasus using the Copenhagen School's Regional Security Complex theory, and seeks to uncover why and how the security of the three regional countries is interconnected and influenced by the region itself and its immediate neighborhood. It views the region as a distinct security complex, and argues that the South Caucasus can be best characterized as a region if viewed through the lens of security. Any major security dynamic affecting one of the three countries of the South Caucasus has clear implications for the remaining two. As small countries with limited capabilities, interests and agendas, the major security environment of the South Caucasus states is the region itself and its neighborhood, including immediate neighbors such as Russia, Turkey and Iran. The US, as the world's only superpower, also has certain security interests in and interactions with the South Caucasus.



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Introduction

Three former Soviet states, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia, are widely perceived as a single region – the South Caucasus, located at the juncture of Asia and Europe. However, a closer look reveals that the South Caucasus has never been a true ‘region’, as it lacks the common features that would qualify it as such. In fact, despite being called a region, the three countries have neither developed common and inclusive economic and security cooperation, nor established any kind of regional integration framework. Nor do they share a common culture, language or religion, and have never been a part of the same civilization. Two of the three countries of the region – Armenia and Azerbaijan - are at war with one another, due to Armenia’s occupation of 20 percent of Azerbaijan’s internationally recognized territory. Separatist sentiments in the Georgian Samtskhe-Javakheti region, supported by nationalists in Armenia, have generated fears of an additional inter-state conflict within the region. The three countries have also made divergent and sometimes conflicting foreign alliance and alignment choices, further deepening divisions within the ‘region’. Armenia is a close Russian ally and CSTO member; Georgia orients its foreign policy towards the United States and Europe; while Azerbaijan is allied to Turkey, and cooperates with both Russia and the United States.

While the South Caucasus lacks many attributes of a region, there is one key common denominator – the interconnectedness of security risks. It can only reasonably be described as a region from the security perspective. The major security threats as

While the South Caucasus lacks many attributes of a region, there is one key common denominator – the interconnectedness of security risks. It can only reasonably be described as a region from the security perspective.

perceived by these states emanate from within the region or its immediate neighborhood. Any security dynamic significantly affecting one of the three countries has clear implications for the other two. Thus, as the article argues, in terms of security studies, the South Caucasus qualifies as a distinct regional security complex (RSC). As small countries with limited capabilities, interests and agendas, the major security environment of the South Caucasus states is the region itself and its close neighborhood.

Based on the tenets of Buzan and Waever’s RSC theory, the paper examines the security dynamics in the South Caucasus Regional Security Complex in order to uncover why and how

the security of three countries is both interconnected as well as linked to the region and its neighborhood.

The article is divided into three chapters. The first chapter provides a brief overview of the RSC theory, explaining why it is applicable to the South Caucasus. The second chapter examines the interconnected and interdependent nature of security in the South Caucasus, focusing on the major threats from within the region itself, which strongly affect (even shape) security and foreign policies across all three south Caucasus countries. The third chapter sheds light on security linkages between the South Caucasus and its neighborhood, including immediate neighbors such as Russia, Turkey, and Iran. In the third chapter, the US, as the world's only superpower, is also examined in terms of security interests in and security interactions with the South Caucasus.

Regional Security Complex Theory: A right framework for the South Caucasus?

The Copenhagen School's materially/ideationally hybrid Regional Security Complex theory (RSCT) was first introduced in Barry Buzan's 1983 book 'People, State and Fear; The National Security Problem in International Relations'. However, it remained relatively underdeveloped for a decade, as the Cold War did not really lend itself to regional theories of security; international relations and international security were largely conceptualized in systemic terms.¹ The RSCT was first presented as a detailed monograph in 2003, in Buzan and Wæver's book 'Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security'. It argues that the "security environment of small states is their region", and "since most threats travel more easily over short distances than over long ones, security interdependence is normally patterned into regionally based clusters: security complexes."²

RSCT's regional and sub-regional approach (in contrast to realism's systemic level approach) improves accuracy as well

1 Azad Garibov (December 2015) Alignment and Alliance Policies in the South Caucasus Regional Security Complex, *SAM Comments*, Baku, Volume XV, p. 9, available at: <http://sam.az/uploads/PDF/SAM%20COMMENTS-5.pdf> (accessed 17 December 2016)

2 Barry Buzan & Ole Wæver (2003), *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge University Press, p. 4 Azad Garibov (December 2015) Alignment and Alliance Policies in the South Caucasus Regional Security Complex, *SAM Comments*, Baku, Volume XV, p. 9, available at: <http://sam.az/uploads/PDF/SAM%20COMMENTS-5.pdf> (accessed 17 December 2016)

as explanatory and predictive capacity.³ As Buzan and Wæver posit, “geographical proximity tends to generate more security interaction among neighbors”, and accordingly, regional level security interdependence is very important for understanding security dynamics in the various regions of the world.⁴ The main advantage of RSCT is that it benefits from both realist and constructivist approaches, and thus can better explain certain actors’ behaviors in the realm of security.⁵ Along with realist power calculations, it brings in ideational threats, domestic considerations, state incoherence, long-standing intra-regional enmities and amities, as well as foreign penetration, and most importantly introduces a securitization approach.

The RSCT offers a productive formulation for examining the nature of security dynamics in the South Caucasus, a region where security concerns are far from being system-driven, and are shaped by regional processes rather than global processes. Buzan and Waever also talk about the South Caucasus as a separate security sub-complex,⁶ “a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot reasonably be considered apart from one another.”⁷ One of the leading scholars on the South Caucasus, Svante Cornell, also identifies the South Caucasus as an RSC and argues that, in fact, without the “security variable”, the South Caucasus can hardly be called a fully-fledged region.⁸ The article agrees with the vision of the RSCT that in the post-Cold War world, sources of perceived threats and security dynamics should sought in regional dynamics rather than global processes.

The RSCT offers a productive formulation for examining the nature of security dynamics in the South Caucasus, a region where security concerns are far from being system-driven, and are shaped by regional processes rather than global processes.

The key variables that the RSCT analyzes are evident in the South Caucasus – the regional countries have dissimilar identities and ideologies, struggle with weak institutional capacity, fragile rule-of-law, ungoverned territories, territorial and inter-ethnic

3 Ibid, pp.480-483

4 Ibid, p.45

5 Ibid, p.11

6 Ibid, pp.419-423

7 Barry Buzan, *People, State and Fear; The National Security Problem in International Relations*, (Brighton: Wheatsheaf, 1983), p. 106

8 Svante Cornell (2001), *Small Nations and Great Powers: A Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus*, RoutledgeCurzon, p. 383

conflicts and disputes, foreign influence, etc. These factors will be very helpful in understanding the threat perceptions of the South Caucasus states, and the security dynamics they produce. Moreover, the RSCT focuses on long-standing enmities and amities to understand the security relationships among the regional actors. The South Caucasus states are very rich in terms of such intra-regional relationships. Therefore, the RSCT approach is well-suited to this research, and will enable consideration of as many independent variables as possible.

Interconnected and interdependent security in the South Caucasus: The inner triangle

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the South Caucasus region found itself caught in a web of self-sustaining conflicts, making it one of the most volatile regions in Europe's neighborhood. As the decolonization process unfolded, the countries in the region became embroiled in intra and inter-state conflicts, almost all of which remain unresolved. These ethno-territorial conflicts and intra-regional enmities closed the way to possible peace and cooperation, hindering the emergence of a cooperative regional environment, or any kind of security community in the South Caucasus.

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Security and survival were among the primary challenges of statehood for the newly independent states of the South Caucasus. The most important security threat for the regional countries is the armed conflicts in which they are currently involved. This small region is host to two frozen separatist conflicts (in Georgia), and has witnessed two interstate wars (between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and Russia and Georgia). None of the three enjoys highly developed strategic cooperation with both of the other two countries. While Azerbaijan has a strategic partnership with Georgia, it is locked in a protracted conflict with Armenia. Despite Georgia's formal cooperation with Armenia, relations suffer from Armenia's function as a Russian 'outpost' and military base, and the strong separatist sentiments in the Armenian populated Javakheti region of Georgia.

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The region's relations with its immediate neighbors are also problematic. Georgia does not have direct diplomatic relations with Russia, and despite some recent improvements, Tbilisi still holds the position that Moscow has violated Georgian territorial integrity. Armenia does not have diplomatic relations with Turkey; it claims that Ankara has committed a so-called 'genocide' against Armenians, and also formally holds territorial claims against Turkey. Ankara closed its borders with Armenia in 1993 due to Armenia's occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh (*Dağlıq Qarabağ* in Azerbaijani) and other adjacent regions of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan, though it has experienced a degree of unease in its relationship with Iran at certain points, has developed cooperative relations with all the neighbors of the South Caucasus, including a strategic alliance with Turkey.

Among the regional conflicts, the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict—stemming from Armenia's occupation

Among the regional conflicts, the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict—stemming from Armenia's occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh and seven adjacent districts (roughly 20% of Azerbaijan's internationally recognized territories)—is no doubt the most serious security threat in and for the region.

of Nagorno-Karabakh and seven adjacent districts (roughly 20% of Azerbaijan's internationally recognized territories) —is no doubt the most serious security threat in and for the region. The conflict began at the end of the 1980s, when Armenia sought to annex the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast of Azerbaijan (NKAO), moving to fill the power vacuum created by the collapse of the Soviet Union. The conflict gradually evolved into a full-scale war between Armenia and Azerbaijan once they gained independence, leaving approximately 30,000 dead and over a million IDPs and refugees.⁹ In contrast to the other ongoing separatist conflicts in the region, this is clearly an interstate war, where one regional country (Armenia) has occupied a significant portion of the territory of another (Azerbaijan), with tremendous

investments by both sides in terms of manpower and arms. The conflict has resulted in the securitization of almost everything related to Armenia in Azerbaijan and vice versa. Thus, anything that is seen as posing an advantage to Azerbaijan is perceived as to the detriment of Armenia, and vice versa, leading to zero-sum

9 Azad Garibov (2015) 'OSCE and Conflict Resolution in the Post-Soviet Area: The Case of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict', *Caucasus International*, Istanbul, Vol. 5, No: 2, p: 76, Available at: <http://cijournal.az/post/osce-and-conflict-resolution-in-the-post-soviet-area-the-case-of-the-armenia-azerbaijan-nagorno-karabakh-conflict-azad-garibov-98> (accessed 12 December 2016)

bilateral relations.¹⁰ The conflict is not frozen, although international experts have described as such. In reality, it is closer to a ‘no war, no peace’ situation.¹¹

Though this oldest and bloodiest war in the post-Soviet space has never been truly frozen, the increased intensity of clashes since the April 2016, more commonly known as the ‘Four-Day War’, demonstrated once again that the conflict can flare up at any time, destabilizing this already fragile region. As no peaceful solution is visible on the horizon, the Line of Contact (LoC) between the armed forces of Azerbaijan and Armenia has become the most militarized area of the former Soviet Union. Azerbaijani and Armenian societies have also seemingly grown more nationalistic as fighting intensifies and casualty rates on the frontline increase.¹²

Thus the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict represents the key security threat for Azerbaijan. The conflict has dominated foreign policy and national security discourse in Baku ever since independence. The country’s leadership repeatedly hails the restoration of territorial integrity as Azerbaijan’s top priority. Azerbaijan has made clear its preference for resolving the issue diplomatically, and if this is not possible, using military means to restore its territorial integrity. Azerbaijan and Turkey have also imposed trade bans – closing their borders with Armenia until the conflict has been resolved, or at least until there has been a significant improvement in the peace process, which is the only international effort to coerce Armenia to peace. Accordingly, Azerbaijan also tries to isolate Armenia as much as possible from regional economic projects. As the result of Armenia’s territorial aggression towards Azerbaijan, Yerevan has been excluded from large-scale economic projects such the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline, the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline, and

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¹⁰ Svante Cornel (2001), *Small Nations and Great Powers: A Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus*, RoutledgeCurzon, p. 385

¹¹ Azad Garibov (2015) ‘OSCE and Conflict Resolution in the Post-Soviet Area: The Case of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict’, *Caucasus International*, Istanbul, Vol. 5, No: 2, p: 77, Available at: <http://cijournal.az/post/osce-and-conflict-resolution-in-the-post-soviet-area-the-case-of-the-armenia-azerbaijan-nagorno-karabakh-conflict-azad-garibov-98> (accessed 12 December 2016)

¹² Azad Garibov (2017) A Year After The “Four-Day War”, Guns Continue to Speak Louder than Diplomats in Nagorno-Karabakh, *CACI Analyst*, Available at: <http://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/13439-a-year-after-the-%E2%80%9Cfour-day-war%E2%80%9D-guns-continue-to-speak-louder-than-diplomats-in-nagorno-karabakh.html> (accessed 20 May 2017)

the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway – all of which have changed the economic landscape of the region. In the absence of this conflict, Armenia would offer the most economic route for these oil, gas and rail transportation projects.

The conflict has also dominated and shaped Armenian foreign and security policy since the collapse of the USSR. In a quest for military and economic support, Armenia approached Russia, and has now become dependent on Moscow for its security and economic wellbeing. Armenia's isolation due to its occupation of Azerbaijani territories has further deepened the Yerevan's dependence on Moscow, as well as led Armenian politicians to seek opportunities for cooperation with Iran. Currently, Russia is not only the Armenia's sole provider of natural gas, it also controls the country's railway network, electricity distribution and production facilities, as well as many other strategic sectors of Armenia's economy.¹³ Armenian state borders are jointly protected with Russia within the framework of the Moscow-led CSTO, and Russia has one of its largest military bases abroad in Armenia. Armenia also joined Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union in the beginning of 2015. Armenia's unique situation is that despite having Russia and Iran as its key regional allies

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and partners, it has managed to maintain positive relations with the US and the West. In this regard, the existence of a wealthy and politically active Diaspora in the United States and Europe has enabled Armenia to sustain these relations, despite the occupation of Azerbaijani territories and its alliance with Russia. Moreover, it also succeeded in achieving the adoption of section 907 of the Freedom Support Act in the US Congress in 1992. This act prohibits all US state assistance to Azerbaijan due to its blockade of Armenia, ignoring the fact that Armenia has blockaded the Azerbaijani exclave of Nakhchivan and occupied Azerbaijani territories in and around Nagorno-Karabakh, factors which render the Act highly misleading.¹⁴ Moreover, due to the lobbying efforts of the Diaspora, Armenia has become one of the top per capita recipients of US aid.

13 Vladimir Socor (10 December 2013) 'Armenia's Economic Dependence on Russia Insurmountable by the European Union', *Eurasia Daily Monitor Volume: 10 Issue: 221*, available at: http://www.jamestown.org/regions/russia/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=41740&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=48&cHash=408a5840473a1f08b45f64b8178116ba#.VrgpN_nhDIV (accessed 30 December 2015)

14 Svante Cornel (2001), *Small Nations and Great Powers: A Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus*, RoutledgeCurzon, pp. 259-260

For its part, Georgia has been put in a difficult position by the Armenian-Azerbaijani zero-sum relationship. While Georgia has an interest in maintaining good relations with both states, it has, for a number of reasons, developed better relations with Azerbaijan than Armenia. First of all, Baku is without a question the economic hub of the Caucasus, and arguably the economic center of the entire southern rim of post-Soviet states.¹⁵ By virtue of its oil resources and its geographical position on the Caspian shore, Azerbaijan holds a central position in the various transport corridor arrangements. Georgia, on the other hand, is one of the two possibilities for transport and other links between Azerbaijan and Turkey and the West, the other being Armenia. Due to the impossibility of any Armenian-Azerbaijani cooperation, Georgia's role in oil and gas transportation, TRACECA, and other transportation projects has dramatically expanded. In this sense, Georgia has a vested interest in Armenia's economic isolation.¹⁶

Similar to its regional neighbors, Georgia's security threats come from its immediate neighborhood. The country's main problem is the internationalized separatist conflicts. The country has two separatist entities - Abkhazia (*Apkhazeti* in Georgian) and South Ossetia (*Samxret' Oseti* in Georgian), which have been de facto independent since the beginning of the 1990s. In addition, the situation with separatism in Javakheti, the Armenian majority region of Georgia, is difficult due to support for separatist groups by both Russia and Armenia.¹⁷ From this perspective, both Georgia and Azerbaijan must deal with separatists who have gained control of parts of their respective territories. As a result, Tbilisi and Baku have a common stance with regard to separatism and minority questions; both support the preservation of territorial integrity and vehemently reject separatism and secession.¹⁸ At the same

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15 Svante Cornell (1999) 'Geopolitics and strategic alignments in the Caucasus and Central Asia', Perception, June - August, Volume IV – Number 2, available at: <http://sam.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/SVANTE-E.-CORNELL.pdf> (accessed 11 January 2015)

16 Svante Cornel (2001), *Small Nations and Great Powers: A Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus*, RoutledgeCurzon, p. 388

17 Nika Chitadze (2015) 'Samskhe-Javakheti as a Potential Flash Point in Georgia: Ethnic-Confessional Composition and Integration Challenges', *Caucasus International*, Istanbul, Vol. 5, No: 3, p: 113, Available at: <http://cijournal.az/post/samskhe-javakheti-as-a-potential-flash-point-in-georgia-ethnic-confessional-composition-and-integration-challenges-nika-chitadze> (accessed 13 January 2017)

18 Svante Cornel (2001), *Small Nations and Great Powers: A Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus*, RoutledgeCurzon, p. 386

time, efforts towards cooperation among these unrecognized entities— Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and South Ossetia –also pose a shared concern for Georgia and Azerbaijan.

The separatist conflicts also create fertile ground for foreign influence and intervention in Georgia. Georgia-Russia relations would not face the problems they currently do if these conflicts were not live. The conflicts were not, in fact, created by Russia

The separatist conflicts and the Russia's resulting military intervention in the country in 2008 have indirectly, but significantly, affected Georgia's relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey. The conflicts massively increase the incentives for Tbilisi to foster its alliances with Baku and Ankara.

as many argue, and primary responsibility lies within domestic dynamics. However, Russian intervention prolonged the conflicts, and led to Georgia's loss of military control over the region. The conflicts also resulted in a spillover of security dynamics in the Northern and Southern Caucasus due to support by the 'Confederation of the Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus' for Georgia's separatist entities in the early 1990s.¹⁹ The separatist conflicts and the Russia's resulting military intervention in the country in 2008 have indirectly, but significantly, affected Georgia's relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey. The conflicts massively increase the incentives for Tbilisi to foster its alliances with Baku and Ankara.

Georgia's conflicts with separatists and Russia have also created a dilemma for Armenia, as a country which hosts major Russian military base and is a staunch Russian ally. Its isolation by Azerbaijan and Turkey means that Georgia's territory and ports are vital for Armenia's foreign trade. According to the official Armenian sources, almost 70% of Armenia's foreign trade goes through Georgian ports and railway/motorway networks.²⁰ Therefore, while Armenia remains committed to its alliance with Russia, it faces challenges in maintaining good relations with Georgia. However, Yerevan is seen by Georgia as siding with Russia, a sort of Russian Trojan horse in the Caucasus. At times this has led to strained relations between Yerevan and Tbilisi.²¹ Despite being irritated by Armenia's function as a Russian

19 International Alert (July 2012) 'The North Caucasus factor in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict context', available at: http://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/publications/201209NorthCaucasianEN_0.pdf (accessed 21 January 2017)

20 Nika Chitadze (2015) 'Samtskhe-Javakheti as a Potential Flash Point in Georgia: Ethnic-Confessional Composition and Integration Challenges', *Caucasus International*, Istanbul, Vol. 5, No: 3, p: 113, Available at: <http://cijournal.az/post/samtskhe-javakheti-as-a-potential-flash-point-in-georgia-ethnic-confessional-composition-and-integration-challenges-nika-chitadze> (accessed 13 January 2017)

21 Svante Cornel (2001), *Small Nations and Great Powers: A Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus*, RoutledgeCurzon, p. 385

‘outpost’ as well as the situation in Javakheti, Georgia also needs to maintain relations with Armenia. Due to Armenia’s significant influence in Javakheti, the deterioration of relations with Yerevan could exacerbate the relationship between the Georgian central government and the Armenians of Javakheti with potentially dire consequences, a danger that is seen as clear and present in Tbilisi.²²

Moreover, the region’s separatist conflicts have produced (or at least served as a pretext for) the second interstate war in the South Caucasus – the August 2008 war between Georgia and Russia, making the region even more volatile than before. Along with Armenia, Azerbaijan also faced serious challenges during the war between Russia and Georgia. Azerbaijan had advanced cooperation with both Moscow and Tbilisi. But despite Moscow’s irritation, understanding the importance of independent and friendly Georgia for its security, Azerbaijan stepped in as an alternative supplier when Russian gas exports were cut after Tbilisi rejected a dramatic increase in price in 2007. At the same time, Azerbaijan opened up its market to Georgian goods for which Russia used to serve as the chief export market, and these actions effectively halted Moscow’s economic ‘choking’ of Tbilisi.

But despite Moscow’s irritation, understanding the importance of independent and friendly Georgia for its security, Azerbaijan stepped in as an alternative supplier when Russian gas exports were cut after Tbilisi rejected a dramatic increase in price in 2007.

Azerbaijan’s economic security is also closely linked to its regional allies, Georgia and Turkey. These two countries are the transit countries of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) and the Baku-Supsa oil export pipelines as well as the South Caucasus and Trans-Anatolian (TANAP) natural gas pipelines, and the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway, which is scheduled for completion this year. These major projects form the backbone of Azerbaijan’s energy and transportation strategy, and are responsible for the lion’s share of Azerbaijan’s export revenues. For Georgia, the pipelines are major source of economic revenue due to the significant transportation fees they bring. They also help guarantee Azerbaijani, Turkish, and Western support for Georgian independence. Any threat of conflict inside or involving Georgia threatens to create security implications for Azerbaijan and Turkey. During Russia-Georgia war in 2008, Russian military jets dropped bombs near the

²² Ibid p.387

BTC and Baku-Supsa pipelines.²³ Though the pipelines were not hit, Azerbaijan was still forced to temporarily suspend oil delivery, as well as its maritime oil exports from Georgia's Black Sea ports of Poti, Batumi and Kulevi, which resulted in the loss of considerable projected incomes.²⁴ Additionally, 're-borderization' attempts by South Ossetia – moving forward the de facto borders inside Georgian territory - left the 1.6 km section of the Baku-Supsa oil pipeline under separatist control in 2015, generating significant concerns in Baku.²⁵

Security linkages between the South Caucasus and its neighborhood: The outer quadrangle

The South Caucasus countries' relations with its three regional neighbors, namely Russia, Turkey, and Iran, as well as the US, are of the utmost importance for the security dynamics. At the same time, the security of the Caucasus has a direct bearing on the national security of these states, which justifies their inclusion into the security complex.²⁶ Certainly, these powers are much bigger than the small states of the South Caucasus, and accordingly they have broader security agendas and interests. Consequently, their importance for and influence over the South Caucasus is much bigger than vice versa. Moreover, relations with these countries are of vital importance for the South Caucasus, whereas the South Caucasus, despite its direct importance, is not an area of core national interest for any of the abovementioned powers. The internal dynamics of the South Caucasus facilitate their intervention in the regional affairs; their policies are capable of influencing and shaping the security dynamics in the South Caucasus. By contrast, the South Caucasus does not enjoy the same leverage in the 'outer quadrangle'. For instance, Georgia can hardly influence decision-making in the US, nor Armenia can do this in Russia, even in regard to issues directly related to the South Caucasus when the strategic priorities of Washington

23 Steve Levine, (2008) 'Targeting the Pipeline', *Steve Levine*, August 14, Available at: <http://stevelevine.info/2008/08/targeting-the-pipeline-2/> (Accessed: 1 January 2017)

24 Daly, C.K.J. (2008) 'Turkey and The Problems with the BTC', *The Jamestown Foundation, Eurasia Daily Monitor*, August 13, Available at: http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5btt_news%5d=33887&no_cache=1#.Vcx-u_ntmkq (Accessed: 28 January 2017)

25 Гамцемлидзе, Д. (2015) 'Почему Грузия разочаровывается в прозападном курсе', *Carnegie Moscow Centre*, 23 July, Available at: <http://carnegie.ru/2015/07/23/ru-60818/iddt> (Accessed: 8 January 2017)

26 Svante Cornell (2001), *Small Nations and Great Powers: A Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus*, RoutledgeCurzon, p. 383

or Moscow are at stake. Only Azerbaijan's relations with its ally Turkey could be considered exceptional here – this is a much more reciprocal alliance, and Baku possesses lobbying power and other political and economic leverages to influence the decision making in Ankara, as demonstrated by Azerbaijan's dissatisfaction and consequent failure of Turkey-Armenia protocols of 2009.

The South Caucasus region in comparison to its neighbors (in 2015)

Name	Territory (thousand km ²)	Population (million people)	Nominal GDP (billion USD)
Russia	17 000	144	1 326
Turkey	718.2	78.6	798.4
Iran	1 648	79.1	425.3 (2014)
The South Caucasus	186	16.3	77.4

Source: *The World Bank*

Looking to the separate neighboring powers, the South Caucasus is important for Russia as a part of the country's so-called 'near abroad', and as the entry point to the riches of Caspian and Central Asia. Similar to the rest of the post-Soviet region, Russia fiercely opposes any other influence in the South Caucasus, even though it fails to openly dominate the region on its own. It has extensive security and economic interests in the region, has played and continues to play certain roles in all intra and inter-state conflicts in the region, and is allied with Armenia, which hosts a formidable Russian military base in its territory. Russia also aligns with Iran in the South Caucasus, in order to block other foreign, particularly Western and Turkish influences in the region. Despite its lack of domination, Russia is no doubt the country that shapes the region most. It has more tools at its disposal to influence the South Caucasus, and much stronger interests in the region.²⁷

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As a power with growing aspirations, the South Caucasus is important for Turkey on the basis of its strategic location and resources. With an uncertain relationship with the western European states, towards which Turkey has been oriented for the last 100 years, Ankara is pondering its prospects as a regional

²⁷ Barry Buzan & Ole Wæver (2003), *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 419-423

power in its own right. As such it needs to exert a certain amount of influence in the neighboring regions, including the South Caucasus and Central Asia.²⁸ Moreover, Turkey is particularly interested in building partnerships with Turkic speaking nations. Therefore, Turkey is naturally interested in the Caucasus as both a home to a Turkic speaking nation - Azerbaijan - and as the gateway to Central Asia, a huge region that is also populated by Turkic speaking peoples. The South Caucasus is also a gateway to the Caspian region's oil and gas reserves, for which Turkey is very keen to serve as a transit route to global markets. Last but not least, Armenia's allegations against Turkey require Ankara's attention. Armenia continues to make territorial claims over six eastern provinces of Turkey, and has developed (together with its powerful Diaspora) an international campaign to achieve the recognition of the so-called 'Armenian genocide'. All these factors underpin Turkey's interest and involvement in the South Caucasus, and drive its interest in an alliance with Georgia and Azerbaijan, with the former as the key transit country and with the latter as the key regional ally.

The Georgian-Russian war of August 2008 served as a catalyst for raising Turkey's security concerns and interests with regard to the South Caucasus. The Georgian-Russian war of August 2008 served as a catalyst for raising Turkey's security concerns and interests with regard to the South Caucasus. Turkey's immediate quest for security intensified its focus on the South Caucasus, and within the context of the 'zero-problems with neighbors' policy, the Turkish leadership proposed the establishment of a 'Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform' to resolve conflicts in the South Caucasus region.²⁹ However, the highly ambitious proposal – which would have included Turkey, Russia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia – never materialized, partly due to deep divisions among the members-to-be.

Iran is another important neighbor of the South Caucasus, holding certain stakes in the regional security dynamics. Tehran, despite its publicly declared Islamic solidarity policy, has cultivated a comprehensive partnership with Armenia, which continues to occupy the territories of Azerbaijan. Many

²⁸ Svante Cornell (2001), *Small Nations and Great Powers: A Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus*, RoutledgeCurzon, p. 384

²⁹ Eleni Fotiou (June 2009) 'Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform': What is at Stake for Regional Cooperation?', *ICBSS Policy Brief no.16*, available at: file:///C:/Users/Kamal.Makili-aliyev/Downloads/PB_16.pdf (Accessed: 8 January 2017)

regional experts explain this by referring to Iran's fear of possible Azerbaijani national liberation aspirations in north-western Iran, which is a home to more than 25 million ethnic Azerbaijanis.³⁰ Iran is also concerned about the South Caucasus countries' relations with West, and has lined up with Russia to block this influence. It also opposes Turkey's influence in the region. Iran's interests are also linked to the South Caucasus via the Caspian Sea, where Iran has long rejected the existing maritime borders, and has repeatedly puts forward claims over the maritime territory of Azerbaijan.

The US constitutes the final key foreign power with interests in the South Caucasus. Despite its geographic distance, the world's sole superpower should also be included in the regional security complex, due to its capacity to influence the region with its enormous power projection, political, and economic capabilities. In the beginning of the 1990s, the US approach to the South Caucasus was mainly characterized by indifference and ignorance, and the region was viewed through the 'Russia-first' lens. But from the mid-1990s, Washington started to craft its own strategy towards the region. Throughout the 1990s, the US interests in the region were shaped by two important groups: the Armenian lobby and energy investors. The Armenian lobby in the US was able to take advantage of US ignorance of the region in the beginning of the 1990s to push through the adoption of infamous section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, which banned US state support to Azerbaijan.³¹ Later, the importance of the South Caucasus, particularly of Azerbaijan, increased with influence of oil companies as well as Washington's discovery of Azerbaijan's importance in unlocking Caspian resources for the West. The 9/11 terrorist attacks against the US increased Washington's security relations with the regional countries, leading to full-scale US involvement in the region. In particular, the US supported 'Rose Revolution' and government change in Georgia created a staunch US ally in the region. Along with Georgia, Azerbaijan's continued cooperation with the US in Afghanistan and on other security

Later, the importance of the South Caucasus, particularly of Azerbaijan, increased with influence of oil companies as well as Washington's discovery of Azerbaijan's importance in unlocking Caspian resources for the West.

30 Svante Cornel (2001), *Small Nations and Great Powers: A Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus*, RoutledgeCurzon, p. 43

31 Barry Buzan & Ole Wæver (2003), *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge University Press, p. 421

issues which increased US interests in and commitments to the region. However, since the Obama-initiated ‘reset policy’ with Russia in 2009, the region has witnessed declining American involvement in the region. Level of Washington’s involvement in the region still remains low following the inauguration of Donald Trump as US president in 2017.³²

Conclusion

At first glance, the South Caucasus seems to be ideally located to become a region of cooperation, with every chance of building a security community where internal conflict is unthinkable, to use Karl Deutsch’s words.³³ The region is small, comprised of

Due to the intra-regional conflicts, the region is exposed to the influences of its larger neighbors, which play a significant role in shaping the regional security dynamics and the course of hostilities.

nations that can benefit significantly from economic and security cooperation to strengthen their sovereignty, protect themselves from the negative influences of neighboring powers, and build a firm regional stability conducive to sustainable development. However, the reality is the opposite – the South Caucasus is a conflict-riven region which has experienced a number of separatist conflicts and interstate wars; there are multiple intra-regional contradictions and enmities; and the regional countries’ relations with their neighbors

are problematic. Due to the intra-regional conflicts, the region is exposed to the influences of its larger neighbors, which play a significant role in shaping the regional security dynamics and the course of hostilities. Membership within or orientation towards the conflicting alliances strengthens intra-regional rifts, further decreasing the chances of peaceful conflict resolution in the South Caucasus.

Thus, the South Caucasus region can be best characterized as a region if viewed through the lens of security. The most important commonality for the South Caucasus countries is interconnected nature of their security. The source of key security threats is the same, namely the South Caucasus region and its immediate neighborhood. This area forms a distinct

32 Azad Garibov (2017) A Year After The “Four-Day War”, Guns Continue to Speak Louder than Diplomats in Nagorno-Karabakh, *CACI Analyst*, Available at: <http://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/13439-a-year-after-the-%E2%80%9Cfour-day-war%E2%80%9D-guns-continue-to-speak-louder-than-diplomats-in-nagorno-karabakh.html> (accessed 20 May 2017)

33 Hasan Ulusoy, ‘Revisiting Security Communities after the Cold War: The Constructivist Perspective’, *Center for Strategic Studies of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey*, available at: <http://sam.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Hasan-Ulusoy3.pdf> (accessed 30 January 2017)

regional (in)security complex – an area where the security of each regional state cannot realistically be considered separately. Most of the security threats are located within this security complex, and the responses to these challenges should also be formulated from inside this space.

Militarization and confrontation tendencies persist across the region. Armenia continues to host a major Russian military base and Moscow is not expected to withdraw from this country anytime soon. Armenia seems unlikely to abandon its so-called ‘genocide’ recognition campaign against Turkey, or to make tangible compromises in the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process. Thus, Armenia serves as a source of instability in the region, and its policy opens the way to foreign penetration to the region. This non-reconciliatory position also ensures the continuation of Yerevan’s conflict with Baku and confrontation with Ankara, as well as the continuation of Armenia regional isolation and the closure of its borders with Turkey and Azerbaijan. Re-opening these borders would boost Armenia’s failing economy and counter the rapid depopulation of the country.

Georgia remains committed to its NATO and EU aspirations, despite its failure to achieve formal membership. Georgia also faces challenges resulting from its foreign alignment choices. Russia will likely maintain its grip over Georgia’s separatist regions and put pressure on Georgia in regard to its Euro-Atlantic aspirations. Thus, while integration to Euro-Atlantic structures brings certain benefits in the form of institutional reform, democratization, and economic development, it does not provide the much-needed security guarantees against the threat of Russian backlash. At the same time, Russia holds the key to Georgia’s most important challenge – the resolution of the separatist conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Among the three countries of the South Caucasus, Azerbaijan is most open to cooperation with regional countries and bigger neighbors, contributing to the overall stabilization of the region. Accordingly, Azerbaijan enjoys cooperation with all three of the neighboring big powers, and partners with Georgia within the region. Due to Armenia’s aggression against Azerbaijan, there

Thus, while integration to Euro-Atlantic structures brings certain benefits in the form of institutional reform, democratization, and economic development, it does not provide the much-needed security guarantees against the threat of Russian backlash.

are no political or economic relations between the two countries. Indeed, this conflict is currently the key obstacle to region-wide cooperation in the South Caucasus. Both Armenia and Georgia are keen to host foreign military bases that can provide national security guarantees at the risk of broader regional security. By contrast, Azerbaijan refuses to host any foreign military presence. Baku has repeatedly declared that its territory cannot be used against any regional or neighboring country.

The South Caucasus in the Global Struggle

Araz Aslanli*

The republics of the South Caucasus, which were under the control of the Moscow-centric authorities for most of the 20th century, gained political sovereignty within the modern international relations system following the disintegration of the USSR. This coincided with the South Caucasus' emergent role as one of the important arenas for regional and global struggles. Due to its geopolitical location, natural resource wealth, and other factors, the South Caucasus has since become a target for the influence of major world powers. Based on this general picture, this study focuses on the importance of the South Caucasus for the West (especially the US), Russia, Turkey, Iran, China and other powers. The paper analyzes their respective struggles to establish and increase sphere of influence in the region. The central argument is that compared to other regional powers and neighboring states, the US and Russia managed to develop effective and influential policies in the South Caucasus.



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Introduction

From a historical perspective, the nations coalescing around Baku, Yerevan, and Tbilisi were never important actors in the global struggle. During the shaping of the contemporary international relations system (especially following the two world wars), the manifestation of Russia's 'extreme imperialist aspirations' on the one hand, and the failure of the regional and global environment to prevent these steps on the other meant that the South Caucasus states were unable to develop their independent national identities within the structure of the nation state system. Thus, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia were only able to join the system of modern international relations following the disintegration of the USSR.

Despite the fact that the South Caucasus is controlled by Moscow-centric political entities during the majority of the 20th century, and accordingly, were sometimes completely isolated from the world, the region has been among the primary targets of the influence of global and regional actors. This was especially true following World War I and during World War II, largely due to Azerbaijan's petroleum resources. At various points following World War I (during 1918-1921), Britain, Turkey, and Germany were engaged in the Caucasus, seeking to defy the Russians. The Caucasian republics, who gained a chance of surviving for a short time, were seeking to take advantage of the struggles between the great powers in their own favours. However, after the Communists (Bolsheviks), who excelled in Russian civil, gained control in the Caucasus (1920-1921), the influence of foreign powers became very limited, if not absent at all.

With start of the Second World War, the Caucasus once again became a battlefield for great powers. After the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, Turkey did not support the plans of Germany (followed by Germany's attack on the USSR) to open a frontline towards Soviet Union (towards South Caucasus) via Turkey's Anatolia. Although Germany moved into the Caucasus through Ukraine in 1942, it was only effective in the North Caucasus, failing to gain control over the South Caucasus and Azerbaijani oil reserves, the latter being of particular importance.

Meanwhile, Azerbaijan's natural resources were described as

“the raw material that determines the fate of the World War II” (about 90% of the petroleum-based fuels used by the Soviet Union were provided by Baku¹), while Azerbaijan’s geography (‘South Azerbaijan’ or ‘Iranian Azerbaijan’) was considered a “starting point for the Cold War.”²

With the end of the Cold War, the South Caucasus has become a key arena of regional and global struggle. These young states, trying to protect their sovereignty without fully understanding what independence really is, have also faced the domestic political and military turmoil along with threats to their territorial integrity (both Azerbaijan and Georgia).

There are three important stages for South Caucasus in this new era: the end of the Cold War, the September 11 terror attacks, and the August 2008 War. The late 1980s and early 1990s offered opportunities and risks for the new independent republics. The focus was on maintaining independence, territorial integrity, and internal stability, as well as coping with ethnic and separatist conflicts, energy agreements, and seeking answers to the question of a united Caucasus against Russia, or war within the Caucasus.

The 9/11 attacks became the grounds for the US to intervene ‘everywhere’, its actions largely being unchecked. This was also the basis for the US’s involvement in the region in the early 2000s. The South Caucasus was targeted as part of Washington’s ‘Great Middle East’ project, a clear signal that Washington, in its desire to reshape the world, attaches special importance to the region. While the United States pursued this angle, other powers have tried to develop relations with the regional countries for their own purposes and to prevent the US and other competitors from gaining a strong foothold in the region.

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1 Aliyev-heritage.org (2016) ‘Oil strategy of Azerbaijan’, Available at: <http://aliyev-heritage.org/en/oilstrategy.html> (Accessed: 10 July 2016); Agayev, V., Akhundov, F., Aliyev, F., and Agarunov, M. (1995) ‘World War II and Azerbaijan’, *Azerbaijan International*, Summer (3.2), pp. 50-55, 78; Inews (2013) ‘Президент Азербайджана принял участие в торжественной церемонии по случаю Дня Победы’, 09.05.2013, Available at: <http://www.1news.az/chronicle/20130509104445890.html> (Accessed: 15 October 2014).

2 Fawcett, L. (2009) *Iran and the Cold War: The Azerbaijan Crisis of 1946*, Cambridge Middle East Library; Hasanli, C. (2006) *At the Dawn of the Cold War: The Soviet-American Crisis over Iranian Azerbaijan, 1941-1946*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, INC. Lanham-Boulder-New York-Toronto-Oxford.

The events of August 2008 imposed significant limitations on the US in the South Caucasus. Russian influence and opportunities in the region have increased, while the US's influence and reputation have suffered considerable damage. In terms of the struggle over the region, the effects of the recent Ukrainian crisis must also be taken into account.

The end of the bipolar system and new areas of tension

The second half of the 1980s saw significant changes in the global system. The bipolar global system of the Cold War era fell by the wayside. During the Cold War, the power struggle was between the Western Bloc (NATO) led by the US, and the Eastern Bloc (Warsaw Pact countries) led by the USSR. The vast majority of states were either members of these blocs or allies. Others states were, in general, areas of struggle for these great powers. During this period, the threats of either 'Soviet (communist) danger' or 'US imperialism' pressured the countries to take sides. Even states with widely divergent interests and even conflicting views could easily belong to the same bloc due to the scale of these threats.

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The disintegration of the Soviet Union was accompanied by the struggle for filling the emerging power gaps as well as with the ethnic conflicts within/between the newly independent republics. In this process, it was noteworthy that struggles emerged even between countries that were in the same bloc, or formerly allied. For example, at this stage, the US, the European Union (EU) led by France and Germany, and Japan began to draw more attention as separate power centres. In addition, the continuation of the existing struggles of Russia, China, and Iran gave rise to an interesting set of contradictions in terms of regional and global conflicts.³

The United States, a global superpower; Russia, trying to regain its position as a global power; the regional powers like China and the EU, trying to become global powers; and Turkey and Iran, both trying to strengthen their positions as regional powers, have continuously been developing and revising their strategies to attain their goals in Eurasia. At certain stages, Israel can also

3 Brzezinski, Z. (1998) *Büyük Satranç Tahtası*, Istanbul, Sabah Yayınları, pp. 40-42.

be included in this mix (in the context of energy interests and relations with Iran). In particular, these strategies were focused on the new republics emerging from the ruins of the Soviet Union. In this struggle, in which the United States, the only global superpower, and many regional powers and candidates for regional power are involved, there are multiple and ever-changing convergences and alliances.

When it comes to the South Caucasus - Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia – these new states only emerged with the disintegration of the Soviet Union. External forces fighting for regional influence have sometimes sought to take advantage of disputes between those states, either by treating them separately or as a whole.

The Importance of the South Caucasus for the Foreign Powers

So, why the [South] Caucasus?⁴

When the Cold War came to an end, the South Caucasus region was of great importance for the West, especially the US, Russia, Turkey, Iran, China and other states, in accordance with their strategic purposes.⁵ Below, the importance of this region for each external power fighting for regional influence in the post Cold War era is categorized.

For the West, especially the US:

1. Surrounding Russia which was viewed as a threat;
2. Surrounding Iran which was viewed as a threat;
3. Having a share and a voice in the exploitation of the region's natural resources (economic, commercial, and strategic reasons);
4. Providing safe transportation of the regions' natural resources to international markets (thus having both alternative natural resources and creating diversified routes for regional states);
5. Use as an alternative market;
6. Use as a security base ('anti-terrorist activities') and other

4 The Caucasus represents a wider geographical area and includes the North Caucasus consisting of Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria and other regions along with the South Caucasus consisting of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia. Undoubtedly, during the period we examined, important developments also took place in the North Caucasus, and these developments were in fact important in terms of the destiny of the Caucasus in general terms. However, here only the South Caucasus countries have been studied.

5 Dugin, A. (2003) *Rus Jeopolitiği - Avrasyacı Yaklaşım*, İstanbul, Küre Yayınları, pp. 365-367.

global policies; and, in line with these aims, as a bridge to reach Turkestan - Central Asia (the Turkestan region is also important as it is surrounded by Russia from the south, Iran from the east, and China from the north-west).

The first of these reasons remains relevant since the end of the Cold War, and the validity and importance of the second, the third and the fourth have only increased over time. The increasing importance of the second factor stemmed from Iran's nuclear program and especially from the Iran-West tensions, which escalated under Ahmadinejad. Even though the relations between the West and Iran have partially thawed under Rouhani, these problems have not been fully resolved, and with the first months of the Trump Administration in the US, both sides have made harsh statements against each other. The basis for the growing significance of the third and fourth factors is Russia's strategic use of the energy card in its foreign policy, and to a certain extent, the importance attached to the Europe's energy security by both the European Union and the US.

After the events of September 11, the importance of the sixth factor increased, and the US and the West, in general, ensured their connections with Central Asia through the South Caucasus region. Given that Central Asia is located between Iran and the four nuclear powers (Russia, China, India, and Pakistan), and in the context of the global assertions of these countries (other than Pakistan), the importance of the South Caucasus as a gateway to Central Asia is gradually increasing.

For Russia:

1. To achieve a shorter path southwards (to the Indian Ocean, as a part of its expansionist strategy) and to strengthen its aspirations to become a global power by keeping the region under control;
2. To keep Turkey and Iran (due to their ambitions in the north-eastward/ eastward directions) and other states (those who seek to reach Russia's borders through Iran and Turkey) away from its borders;
3. To limit/terminate the separatist attempts of different ethnic groups in its southern regions of Russia (the North Caucasus), thus reducing concerns about territorial integrity;

4. To prevent (or at least limit) the transportation of natural resources into the world market or to limit this process, thereby maintaining its market dominance; to prevent the new states from strengthening their independence and ensure that they remain dependent on Russia to the greatest extent possible;
5. To limit the possibility of the West, specifically the United States, from reaching 'Turkestan' through this region;
6. The Caucasus region has a strategic position in relation to the Caspian and the Black Sea regions. Losing the Caucasus would mean losing those two regions;
7. Russia's military presence in the Caucasus is important in terms of its global claims;
8. Russia's imperial past and desire to regain its position as a global power remain a factor in its continued attempts to control the Caucasus.

For Turkey:

As the Cold War came to an end, Turkey's interests in the Caucasus overlapped with those of the West. Although this became increasingly less applicable during the 2000s, some common issues have remained. In general, the importance of the Caucasus for Turkey has changed along with Ankara's priorities in its relations with the US, the EU, Russia, and Iran. Beyond the common approaches with the West, the followings also deserve attention:

As the Cold War came to an end, Turkey's interests in the Caucasus overlapped with those of the West. Although this became increasingly less applicable during the 2000s, some common issues have remained.

1. The application of the 'near abroad' doctrine (although officially this was not announced in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War). This doctrine was elaborated more precisely during Ahmet Davutoglu's time as Foreign Minister;
2. To limit the possible dangers and threats stemming from regional countries like Armenia, and other the regional countries towards itself, originating from Russia, Iran, China, and other countries;
3. To build good neighborly relations and strategic partnerships as much as possible;
4. To diversify energy sources by accessing natural resources in the region for its own domestic needs;

5. To facilitate the transportation of the Caspian's natural resources to international markets via Turkey, both to gain direct economic benefits and to create an alternative transit route for the countries of the region, and to secure the dependence of regional countries; to make Turkey a key energy transit country;
6. To gain a reliable way to reach 'Turkistan' (due to ethnic-religious reasons and goals, unlike the West and the US);
7. To gain additional leverage in relations with other great powers competing for influence in the region.

For Iran:

1. First of all, to create a space for expansion during the first years of regional countries' independence (drawing upon ethnic and religious factors in the southern Georgia and in Azerbaijan, home to significant numbers of Azerbaijani Turks, and the isolated situation of Armenia);
2. To prevent the projects of great powers (especially the US and Russia) pertaining to Iran;
3. To limit the effects of the influence of independent Azerbaijan over Azerbaijani Turks within its territory;
4. To foreign companies from extracting or transporting the region's natural resources to international markets (in addition to obstructing Western penetration into this region, and preventing them from creating alternative energy access routes);
5. As the controversy over the Iranian nuclear program intensified during the 2000s and Iran was increasingly positioned as a military and political target of the Western powers (especially the US and Israel), the neighbouring regions, especially the South Caucasus, emerged as 'national security risks' for Iran.

For China:

1. To gain a new market and area of economic interest to serve its emergence as a new global power;
2. To limit the threats from the region and over the region (in particular, American attempts to contain China and attempted incursions on China's territorial integrity), to reduce the activities of China's counterparts as much as possible in this region;

3. Accessing the energy resources in the region and improving its own resource diversity;
4. To hinder the energy routes that travel westward through the region, notably the Trans-Caspian energy cooperation, and projects that can challenge China's use of the natural resources of the eastern shores of the Caspian;
5. On the other hand, to benefit from the East-West transport projects ('Iron Silk Road');
6. Reduce escalation of ethnic problems in China and support for risky activities in terms of China's territorial integrity, for example, official and/or unofficial support for the 'Eastern Turkistan' region in China through the Caucasus.

It is possible to further expand the list of external forces competing for influence over the South Caucasus and the reasons for this struggle. For example, the EU and several European countries (especially France, Germany, and the United Kingdom) are occasionally seen as stakeholders to this struggle distinct from the United States. The EU attaches great importance to the South Caucasus in regard to energy security, as reflected in multiple official EU documents. It is also the main topic of the talks between senior EU officials and the South Caucasus states. The EU runs the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership program, as well as transport, transport and communication projects involving the South Caucasus countries. EU countries are investing heavily in the South Caucasus, and the Brussels is a leading model for the South Caucasus countries in terms of development, horizontal problem solving, integration etc.

Similarly, occasionally, Israel, Arab states, Japan, and others are entering this competition for influence. In this study, we will limit our focus to the most important states in this regard, and key driving factors of their behavior.

Regional policies of foreign powers

After the end of the Cold War, important powers with interests in the South Caucasus developed policies in line with the basic priorities mentioned above. The levels of engagement and success varied. However, almost all the powers 'followed a certain line' and they have not made sharp turns in their South Caucasus policies.

Regional Policy of the US

During and shortly after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the United States worked to develop good relations with the region's states and engaged in the region in line with its strategic objectives. However, especially since the beginning of 1993, the combination of a stronger Russia and unsuccessful foreign policies of the regional countries led the US to make some concessions to Russia. Since the US was afraid of Russia's potentially aggressive response to losing its sphere of influence, Washington, guided by Strobe Talbott, then Deputy Foreign Minister in 1994, followed a 'Russia first' track.⁶

This policy viewed the region as Russia's backyard and entailed reducing barriers to Russia's attempts to strengthen its position in the former Soviet geography, as well as limiting the attempts by young states to resist Moscow's imperialist endeavors and to

receive external (Western) support in this direction. It is interesting to note that in his speech at John Hopkins University on July 21, 1997, Talbott emphasized that the US "will no longer keep closed eyes towards Moscow's hegemonic policies in this area".⁷

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Indeed, the National Security Strategy document released in October 1998 highlighted the importance of the region for US regional policies.⁸

The "Silk Road Strategy Law", which envisioned a route linking the region to international markets, passed in 1999 by the US, clearly outlines the policies of the US towards Central Asia and the Caucasus.⁹ Likewise, the National Security Strategy Document, published in December 1999, emphasized that the US

6 MacDougall, J. (1997) 'A New Stage In U.S.-Caspian Sea Basin Relations', *Central Asia*, Available at: http://www.ca-c.org/dataeng/st_04_dougall.shtml (Accessed: 15 July 2016).

7 Elekdag, S. (1997) 'Second Sharing of World Petroleum', *Milliyet*, 18 August.

8 *A National Security Strategy for a New Century*, Available at: <http://clinton2.nara.gov/WH/EOP/NSC/html/documents/nssr.pdf> (Accessed: 15 July 2016).

9 Erhan C. (2003) 'The Central Asian Policy of the U.S. and New Expansion after 11 September', *Stradigma*, November, Available at: <http://www.stradigma.com/turkce/kasim2003/vizyon.html> (Accessed: 10 August 2016).

should actively pursue regional policies.¹⁰

After the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the US's global expansionist policies gained strength and Washington increased its engagement in the South Caucasus within this framework. Concrete steps towards the realization of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, strong deployment initiatives in Georgia, the implementation of long-term programs to train the Georgian army in this framework and Mikheil Saakashvili's coming to the power, the aims for acquisition of a military base in Azerbaijan confirmed by Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld¹¹, and statements by US officials that the safety of the Caspian has always been their security¹² were among the indicators of increasing US interests towards the region at the time. But the August 2008 war destabilized the US position and image in the South Caucasus.

The image of the US in Azerbaijan was also damaged by the failure to meet the expectations regarding the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the efforts to improve Turkey-Armenia relations. Interventions by the Obama administration positively affected the US-Armenian relations. The question on whether Bidzhina Ivanishvili's election to the post of Georgia's prime minister (and Saakashvili's departure from Georgia to settle in Ukraine) is "a new 'counterrevolution' of Russia against the US or 'Georgia's own game', has not yet found its answer.

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Regional policy of Russia

Following an initial period of confusion, Russia soon recovered from the collapse of the USSR. The concept of the 'near abroad', which expresses the special interests of Russia in the former Soviet Union, was first expressed in the article written by then Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozirev on 2 January 1992. In

¹⁰ *A National Security Strategy for a New Century*, Available at: http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/other_pubs/nssr99.pdf (Accessed: 10 August 2016).

¹¹ At a joint press conference with Azerbaijani Defense Minister in Baku on December 3, 2003, Rumsfeld explained that they had negotiated the issue of military deployment in Azerbaijan for two years and informed on the nature of the military power they planned to deploy (see Azerbaijan's official News Agency Azertac, Available at: <https://azerbaijan.usembassy.gov/uploads/images/1liV-VuTVhSiSJzY1pp0E0A/PR-120203.pdf> (Accessed: 30 August 2016).

¹² Kirach, G. (2004) 'What the US is pursuing in the Caspian', 14 Mart, Available at: <http://www.habernaliz.com/detay.php?detayid=893>, (Accessed: 15 August 2012).

his speech at the CSCE Conference in Stockholm at the end of 1992, Kozirev explained that the former Soviet Socialist Republics (SSR) should be united in a federation or confederation in terms of military and economy.¹³ The view that Russia should have special privileges in its near abroad solidified among the official circles of Russia following Yeltsin's new year speech in early 1993, in which he declared that Russia should be more active in protecting Russians in this area. In February 1993, Boris Yeltsin demanded that the UN should grant authority to the army of the Russian Federation to intervene as a peacekeeping force in the conflicts in the territory of the former Soviet Union. In the same month, the Foreign Policy Doctrine - based on the philosophy of near abroad - was announced by the Russian Security Council and came into force in April.¹⁴ After resolving the internal opposition via the parliamentary raid in October 1993, Russian dominance began to strengthen in the region, and the Kremlin declared a new doctrine in November 1993.¹⁵ During this time, anti-Russian and nationalist leaders in the South Caucasus countries were ousted from power. Russia has sought to regain its authority in the region, aware that there was no counter initiative on the part of the US. But the mid-1990s onwards witnessed a growing US-Russia battle for the region.

In particular, Russia was unhappy with Georgia's policies – for utilisation of Georgia by the US as base' in the framework of Washington's expansion in the region, as well as for Georgia's support provided for Chechen fighters. Russia supported Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Ajaria, territories which were trying to break away from Georgia. The relations between these two countries were strained in the Saakashvili era because of Georgia's unwavering NATO aspirations, the support given by Russia to separatist regions, and Russia's military bases in the country. The real rupture in relations came with the August 2008 war. Russia invaded Georgia and then recognized the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Relations only began to thaw after Bidzina Ivanishvili became prime minister.

13 Jafersoy, N. (2000) *From State-Center Level to Equal Status: Azerbaijan-Russia Relations (1991-2000)*, Ankara, ASAM, pp. 19-20.

14 Tuncer, I. (1998) 'New Security Doctrine of the Russian Federation: Near Abroad and Turkey', Ed. Özcan, G., and Kut, S., *Longest Ten Years*, Istanbul, Bükre, p. 450.

15 FAS, 'The Basic Provisions of the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation', Available at: <https://fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/russia-mil-doc.html> (Accessed: 15 September 2016).

Armenia the country in the region where Russia is enjoying the greatest influence. In addition to its existing military bases in Armenia, Russia relocated major part of its military equipment and soldiers from the bases in Georgia to Armenia. In addition, Russia owns major economic assets of Armenia, in return for the country's debts to former. Armenia is dependent on Russia for its energy needs. However, at times the Armenian public and even the authorities have expressed views on the inconveniences of Armenia-Russia relations.

Azerbaijan, on the other hand, is a country where Russian interests are generally balanced. Here, the notion of equilibrium means balancing the interests of Azerbaijan and Russia in bilateral relations, as well as balancing Azerbaijan-Russia relations with Azerbaijan's other external relationships. Azerbaijan's Nagorno-Karabkh territory remains under occupation by Armenia, and Baku believes that it will be very difficult to solve this problem without the contribution of Russia. Thus and while continuing to develop relations with the West, Azerbaijan does not ignore Moscow. Nonetheless, Azerbaijan did not extend the lease on Russia's Gabala Radar Base in contravention of Russia's wishes. Baku's rationale was that this was necessary in order to achieve complete independence, and similarly denied US requests for military bases in Azerbaijan.

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Regional policy of Turkey

Turkey was one of the first states to recognize the independence of all three South Caucasian republics. In the following periods, Turkey's relationship with each of the regional countries was different. The attitudes of the region's countries to Turkey and Turkey's own priorities played an important role in this regard. For example, Armenia responded to Turkey's first positive steps with territorial claims and allegations of the so-called 'Armenian genocide'.¹⁶

On the other hand, the relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan became multidimensional, while the relationship (especially the military dimension) between Turkey and Georgia also underwent

¹⁶ For the recent history of Turkey-Armenia relations and the current situation, see: Cabbarli, H., and Aslanli, A. (2003) 'Turkey-Armenia Border Gate: Aim or Tool?', *Strategic Analysis*, Vol.4 (42), October, pp. 56-62.

On the other hand, the relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan became multidimensional, while the relationship (especially the military dimension) between Turkey and Georgia also underwent important developments. The Turkey-Georgia-Azerbaijan trilateral regional cooperation format has been developed, along with the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil, the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum natural gas pipelines, and Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway line, all of which connected these countries.

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Russia has been unsettled by Turkey's 'bold' position in the South Caucasus. However, former Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Chiller's statement in Moscow in 1993 - "We look at the region from the different window with Russia"¹⁷, - alleviated Russia's concerns in part. In subsequent periods, Turkey did not make any attempts to undermine Russia's interests in the region and tried to develop common policies with Moscow in the South Caucasus. The attitude of Ankara during the August 2008 events and other important developments demonstrated this position.

One of the key factors in Turkey's policy towards the region in recent years has been its efforts to develop relations with Armenia, and the consequences of this for Turkey-Azerbaijani relations. Secret initiatives seeking to change improve relations between Turkey and Armenia emerged at the beginning of 2008, resulting from the aggressive policies of Armenia in the early 1990s.¹⁸ The Zurich Protocols were signed with great ceremony in Switzerland on October 10, 2009.¹⁹ However, the process ended with mutual recriminations. In terms of Turkish-Azerbaijani relations, the signing of the "Strategic Partnership and Mutual Assistance Agreement between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey"²⁰ and the establishment

17 Mahirgizi, V. (2010) 'Russia and Turkey: Azerbaijan's importance in cooperation', *Hurriyet Daily News*, 30 June.

18 *Hürriyet* (2008) 'The traffic of meeting with Yerevan is very important', 18 July; Akgun, M (2008) 'Does Azerbaijani mortgage leave?', *Referans*, 23 July; *Hürriyet* (2008) 'We have problems with Armenia', 24 July.

19 CBC (2009) 'Turkey, Armenia agree to forge ties', Available at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/story/2009/10/10/turkey-armenia.html> (Accessed: 26 February 2016); BBC (2009) 'Armenia and Turkey normalise ties', Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8299712.stm> (Accessed: 26 February 2016).

20 TBMM, 'Report of the Foreign Affairs Commission with the Draft Law on the Approval of Strategic Partnership and Mutual Assistance Agreement between the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Azerbaijan (1/979)', Available at: <http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/sirasayi/donem23/yil01/ss645.pdf> (Accessed: 26 February 2016); Mediaforum (2010) 'Strategic Partnership and Mutual Assistance Agreement between Turkey and Azerbaijan', Available at: <http://www.mediaforum.az/az/2010/12/15/AZ%C6%8FRBAYCANLA-T%C3%9CRK%C4%B0Y%C6%8F-ARASIN-DA-STRATEJ%C4%B0-T%C6%8FR%C6%8FFDA%C5%9ELIQ-054430699c02.html> (Accessed: 26 February 2016).

of the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council of Turkey and Azerbaijan²¹ in Istanbul on 15-16 September 2010 restored good bilateral relations.

In regard to relations between Turkey and Georgia, progress has been made in some directions (mutual investments, visa free regime, reciprocal travel via national identity card, etc.), while the expectations in the other directions have not been fully realized. Notably, despite the Council of Europe's decision, Georgia has not fully fulfilled its obligations on the return of Akhiska Turks to their homeland. In the first years of the Saakashvili administration, Georgia made amendments to the status of the Ajaria, contrary to international agreements to which Turkey is also a party. On the other hand, Turkey's attitude towards the Abkhazian issue (even in the context of unofficial actors) has not fully satisfied Georgia.

Regional policy of Iran

Iran's response to the independence struggles of the South Caucasus republics was cautious; Tehran even warned the Muslims majority 'not to hurry up' in declaring their independence from the USSR. Within the framework of the interests expressed in the first part, Iran had a strong relationship with Armenia and Azerbaijan from the beginning, but a limited one with Georgia.

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Iran's policy towards Azerbaijan during June 1992 - June 1993 was negative, meanwhile, its policy towards Armenia was positive.²² This stemmed from both the strategic preferences of Iran and the policies of then President Ebulfez Elchibey towards Iran. As soon as Heydar Aliyev came to power, he introduced policies that reduced Iran's concerns. However, tensions periodically surfaced between Azerbaijan and Iran, in particular, due to debates on the Caspian's legal status and support for one another's opposition groups.²³

Iran has not limited its relations with Armenia despite its occupation of Azerbaijan territories, and Tehran and Yerevan

21 Hurriyet (2010) 'Turkey-Azerbaijan strategic signing', 15 September, Available at: <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/15791668.asp> (Accessed: 26 February 2016).

22 Shaffer, B. (2002) 'Is there a Muslim Foreign Policy?', *Current History*, November, pp: 382-387.

23 Kohen, S. (2001) 'Caspian is Restless', *Milliyet*, 14 August.

continue to cooperate on electricity and natural gas-based projects. The excessive willingness of Iran in this direction have not brought the Iranian-Armenian relations to the desired level because of obstacles by Russia and to a certain extent the West.

Despite high-level visits, there have not been significant developments in Iran-Georgia relations, and Georgia's military relations with the US have impeded the deepening of relations.

Regional policy of China

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, China was more focused on Central Asia With regard to the South Caucasus; there was a 'Cold War' with Azerbaijan during the Elchibey administration.

However, China and Georgia (along with Azerbaijan) continue their partnership, especially in the context of the Silk Road project and the importance accorded to territorial integrity. It is noteworthy that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization did not openly support Abkhazia and South Ossetia after the August 2008 war, despite Russia's insistence.

The former Azerbaijani government's 'East Turkistan' rhetoric annoyed China to the extent that China even sold missiles to Armenia.²⁴ Today, China has particularly good relations with Azerbaijan and to a lesser degree with Armenia. However, China and Azerbaijan have ensured high-level mutual cooperation, due to China's growing interest in the region's energy resources and and transport potential.

Although China was one of the first countries to recognize Georgia's independence, relations are not especially developed. However, China and Georgia (along with Azerbaijan) continue their partnership, especially in the context of the Silk Road project and the importance accorded to territorial integrity. It is noteworthy that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization did not openly support Abkhazia and South Ossetia after the August 2008 war, despite Russia's insistence.

Conclusion

First of all, predictions about regional and global events at the end of the Cold War have not been fully realized. Neither the EU nor Japan has developed to the extent envisioned back in 1991, while some new powers emerged, and others have developed faster than anticipated. On the one hand, the EU is experiencing severe economic problems due to integration problems brought

²⁴ Our Century (2003) 'China attaches special attention to developing relations with Azerbaijan', February, Volume 41 (757).

by enlargement, the economic system, and the global economic crisis. These factors all pose a threat to the continued cohesion of the EU.

Japan has learned from the regional and global economic crises, due to the impact of natural disasters on the Japanese economy and oil prices. On the other hand, the global influence of China, India, and Brazil, along with Turkey's regional strength, have all grown beyond expectations. Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), led by Russia and China, began to gain international attention as an alternative to Western structures.

Over the past decade, the South Caucasus has grown in importance because of its strategic location, natural resources, etc., as well as its borders with the Black Sea, Caspian basin, Iran and Central Asia, which are the key important areas in the new global struggle. In particular, the South Caucasus (a source of oil and natural gas) has gained permanent position on the Western agenda due to the region's significant role in ensuring the European energy security. The importance of the South Caucasus as a transit route has increased for the West due to the military presence of the US and its allies in Afghanistan after the September 11 attacks, and for Iran and Russia due to the encirclement of Iran from almost all directions. This list includes scenarios related to the geography of the developments in Syria, the Iranian scenarios, and the Arab uprisings. All these indicate that the challenges faced by the South Caucasus and the struggle for regional influence will increase.

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The US and Russia have maximized their interests in the Southern Caucasus. These two governments successfully pursue regional strategies based on current opportunities as well as historical relations, following active policies to that effect. On the other hand, it is worth emphasizing that the EU has only been active in the recent years, while Turkey, despite its serious attempts in recent years, was able to develop relations below its capability. Among the EU countries, noteworthy are: the UK's major achievements in the context of natural resources; France's achievements in political and economic relations with regional states and its active role in regional problems related to the Armenian occupation of

Azerbaijan's territories; Germany's activities in the region on education, health, financial issues, and military cooperation. The EU has taken steps to improve relations with the South Caucasus countries. Initiatives by NATO, especially the US, to engage in the region are not endorsed by Russia.²⁵

While the Russian-US conflict in the region continues in the form of a 'Cold War', Turkey, Iran, China, Israel, Germany, and some Arab countries are expected to be active to varying degrees in this competition.

25 NATO (2003) 'Interview with Russia's NATO Ambassador', *NATO Review*, Available at: <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2003/issue3/turkish/interview.html> (Accessed: 31 March 2016).

The Azerbaijan-Germany Relations in the Past 25 Years: The Milestones of the Past as the Basis for the Achievements of the Future

Matthias Dornfeldt and Igor Korobov^{*}

The article focuses on the history of German-Azerbaijani relations, namely, the dynamics over the last two centuries. There have been times when the relationship has been limited, if it has existed at all, due to the political circumstances of the time. The bilateral relationship can be divided into two stages: during the first stage, Azerbaijan was a dependent political entity inside the Russian Empire, and then a union member within the USSR. The second stage is characterized by the relationship between two independent states, with economic and political freedom in decision-making, as the countries have enjoyed for the past quarter of a century. The article traces the important moments in the relationship, and outlines achievements, as well as areas for further cooperation.



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Introduction

25 years after having declared independence, Azerbaijan is not only politically but also economically the most prosperous and stable country in the Caucasus, with impressive economic growth rates. In term of political outlook, the Caspian state decided to integrate partially into the West, and actively cooperates with European structures. The immigration of settlers from Southwest Germany to Azerbaijan and Georgia began 200 years ago. Since then, Germany has maintained close political, economic, and cultural relations with the South Caucasian state. The restoration of diplomatic relations took place on 20 February 1992. Azerbaijan is an important supplier of oil to Germany, and Berlin sees Baku as an important partner in the Caspian region. The foundation of the German-Azerbaijani Chamber of Commerce in Baku in 2012 testifies to the high level of economic cooperation. Moreover, the last two decades have seen numerous mutual official political visits and meetings. The cooperation in the field of science and intercultural exchange has reached a high level, and is continuing to develop successfully.

The History of Germany-Azeri Relations

Establishment of the first German settlements in Azerbaijan in 1818

Ties between Germany and Azerbaijan go back two hundred years. At the invitation of the Russian Tsar Alexander I, families from Swabia started settling in the western regions of today's Azerbaijan in 1818. Fleeing economic hardship and absolutist rule, they abandoned their native lands to found new settlements in the Caucasus. The first and most significant village was Helenendorf, today known as Göygöl. The local Azerbaijani population cordially received the immigrants. The German winegrowers were among the largest producers of wines and spirits of Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union. They brought new wine production and transportation technologies to Azerbaijan, and built their own schools, churches, and hospitals. By 1914, there were eight German settlements in Azerbaijan with a total population of over 6000. Lorenz Kuhn, the representative of the German minority, made a noteworthy contribution to the country's agricultural development, when he was the chairman of

the Agrarian Commission in the Parliament of the first Republic of Azerbaijan (1918– 1920).

Besides the German settlers, there were multiple other avenues for contact. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe described the 12th century Azeri poet and thinker Nizami Gancavi as ‘The teacher of all Poets’. The travel notes of Adam Olearius (1600-1671) from Aschersleben and Engelbert Kämpfer (1651-1716) from Lemgo laid the ground for German perceptions of the Caucasus. One of the most successful books of the 19th century ‘The Songs of Mirza Schaffy’, produced in over a hundred editions, was translated by Friedrich Bodenstedt and published in Germany. Siemens built a telegraph line Moscow-Tiflis-Poti-Vladikavkaz in 1863 and Tiflis-Baku in 1868, gaining international renown. The first 45-km naphthalene pipeline in the world was built in 1889-1894, made of seamless Mannesmann pipes to feed the Siemens copper plant in Kedabeg, where a German consulate was situated. In 1898, oil production on the Absheron Peninsula outstripped the USA to become the world’s largest oil-producing region. That led to the construction of the longest oil pipeline of that time, running from Baku to the coast of the Black Sea. The pipeline, commissioned in 1907, was constructed of Mannesmann pipes. The equipment for the pipeline, electrification and construction were primarily of German origin. German chemists von Liebig and Engler played a significant role in the construction of first oil refinery in the Baku region.

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German consulates in Kedabeg and Baku

The first German consular representations in Azerbaijan were in Kedabeg and Baku. The technical and administrative head of the copper mine in Kedabeg was Georg William Bolton, who was also in charge of the German Consulate in Tiflis. In connection with his move to Kedabeg on 5 December 1877, Bolton was authorized to provide consular services in the Elisabethpol Governorate, where many Siemens employees were working. Bolton was the first and the last German Consul in Kedabeg.¹

¹ Deutsche Konsulate Rußland (1918) *Akten betreffend die Kaiserliche Konsular-Agentur in Kedabeg*. Politischen Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes No. 46 (R 252214). Berlin: Deutsches Auswärtiges Amt.

In 1874, the brothers Ludwig and Robert Nobel started their oil venture in Azerbaijan. During the 1877-78 Russian-Turkish War, they had been engaged in goods procurement for the Russian Army; they used the resulting profits to establish the company 'Naphtaproduktionsgesellschaft' in 1879. Baron Gustav Schenck zu Schweinsberg, who was German minister in Tehran, took a great deal of interest in economic development for that period in Azerbaijan. He visited Baku for the first time in 1886, and wrote to the German Chancellor on 15 November 1888 about the remarkable flourishing of the city and a growing significance of the local oil industry. The completion of the Transcaucasian Railway would strengthen Baku as a trading center, signaling

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the importance of a consular presence. "Baku is the only place where reliable information about trade and other conveyance conducted from Russia to Central Asia and Persia can be obtained."² Therefore, a consulate in Baku would be extremely valuable for the embassy in Tehran. There was a person perfectly suited for the position, due to his knowledge of the state of affairs in Baku, his skills, social position, and excellent relations with the Russian authorities: Carl Deney, a German national from the trading company Burkhardt & Cie.

The ambassador recommended that the Chancellor appoint Carl Deney for the position of consul. On 7 March 1890, the German Emperor Wilhelm II approved his appointment. The consulate in Baku, along with the consular missions in Batumi, Kedabeg and Poti, were subordinate to the consulate in Tbilisi. In addition to the German consulate, Baku also hosted a Turkish diplomatic mission. The German consulate was open until the Germany's declaration of war to Russia in August 1914. The last German Consul, Otto Tiedemann, left Baku by ferryboat for Astrakhan, where he was captured.

The history of Azerbaijani independence dates back nearly a century and so the history of relations between independent Azerbaijan and Germany. The monarchy in Russia was abolished by the February Revolution in 1917. On 28 May 1918, the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic (ADR) proclaimed its independence. The German government supported independence

2 Deutsche Konsulate Rußland (1918) *Akten betreffend das Kaiserliche Konsulat in Baku*. Politischen Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes. Band 42 (R 252212). Berlin: Deutsches Auswärtiges Amt.

for military reasons. New official representations were established in the Caucasus in order to protect German interests, but formal recognition of Azerbaijan was not approved due to the Imperial Germany's peace treaty with Russia. According to Rudolf Nadolny of the Russia Unit of the Foreign Office of Germany, the withdrawal of the Russian troops from the Transcaucasus did not have any legal effect on the status of the territory, and would not entitle countries to enter into international relations with the newly-created states.³

The newly-founded Transcaucasian Republics were not recognized as an independent state by Russia, or by other governments, and therefore remained a Russian territory in the eyes of the Germany. With Russian consent, the German government was prepared to accept Georgian independence, but recognition of Armenia and Azerbaijan was not planned. Germany considered that the right to self-determination was applicable, in the first instance, between the Bolshevik government and the new states. Therefore, there was a need for an inter-Russian legal arrangement, to proceed to recognition of independence.

However, on 23 September 1918, Mehemed Talaat Pasha, the State Secretary of the Turkish Foreign Office and the German Secretary of State Paul von Hintze, signed a secret protocol stating that Turkey acknowledges Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan as independent states. According to the protocol, Germany only recognized Georgia but would also appoint consuls for Armenia and Azerbaijan.⁴ The head of the delegation in the Caucasus was already trying to reopen or rebuild consular missions. However, the ADR could not withstand Bolshevik aggression and fell two years later following the Bolshevik occupation of the South Caucasus. This led to the establishment of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Azerbaijan on 28 April 1920. In the new political framework, the independence of Azerbaijan was de facto suspended for the next seven decades.

However, on 23 September 1918, Mehemed Talaat Pasha, the State Secretary of the Turkish Foreign Office and the German Secretary of State Paul von Hintze, signed a secret protocol stating that Turkey acknowledges Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan as independent states.

³ Deutsche Konsulate Rußland (1918) *Akten betreffend Russisch-Asien*. Politischen Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes. Band 97a (R 11058). Berlin: Deutsches Auswärtiges Amt.

⁴ Deutsche Konsulate Rußland (1918) *Telegramm Hintzes an Kreß*. Politischen Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes. Band 97a (R 11060). Berlin: Deutsches Auswärtiges Amt.

Independence from the USSR and the diplomatic recognition by Germany

With the fall of the Soviet Union, the independence of Azerbaijan was officially restored on 18 October 1991, when the Supreme Council of Azerbaijan Republic passed the Constitutional Act ‘About the State Independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan.’ A referendum on 29 December 1991 finalized the process of restoring sovereignty. Germany was one of the first countries to recognize the independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan on 12 January 1992. Diplomatic relations between the two countries were launched on 20 February 1992. On 2 September 1992, the Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the Federal Republic of Germany opened, and just twenty days later, Germany opened its Embassy in Azerbaijan. The Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan in Germany was the first Azerbaijani embassy in Western Europe.

Post-Independence Relations

Bilateral political relations between Azerbaijan and Germany

Current relations between Azerbaijan and Germany are conflict-free and friendly. Germany is one of Azerbaijan’s most important political and economic partners; to date, 73 bilateral documents have been signed and 11 documents are still in progress. Germany is an active supporter of the EU Eastern Partnership program, initiated by Poland and Sweden, which advocates for closer EU cooperation with some post-Soviet states. Political relations between the two countries are supported by high-level official visits and intensive parliamentary cooperation.

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Political discussions undertaken in a climate of mutual trust have created a constructive bilateral relationship at the highest levels. The former President of the Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev, visited Germany in 1996, and his successor, the incumbent President Ilham Aliyev undertook eight official visits to Germany in the period 2004-2016. The latest official visit of President Ilham Aliyev took place on 6-7 June 2016 at the invitation of the German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Ilham Aliyev, the vice-chancellor, and then-Federal Minister of Economics and Energy of the Federal Republic of Germany Sigmar Gabriel all took part in the

German-Azerbaijani Economic Forum at the German Federal Ministry of Economics and Energy on 7 June 2016. In 2016 and 2017 President Aliyev participated in the Munich Security Conference. German Foreign Ministers visited Azerbaijan six times during 1995-2012. The most recent visit by the former Federal Foreign Minister and the recently elected President of Germany Frank-Walter Steinmeier to Baku took place within his South Caucasus trip on 30 June 2016.

The inter-parliamentary cooperation between the two countries is carried out in Azerbaijan through the Azerbaijani-German parliamentary working group. Numerous reciprocal visits contribute to the promotion of the bilateral relations. The last visit took place in May 2015, when the German-South Caucasus parliamentary group of the German Bundestag, headed by Karin Strenz, CDU, came to Baku.

Numerous bilateral visits, the growing interest of German companies in projects in Azerbaijan, and an increasing number of business events have further strengthened German-Azerbaijani relations over recent years.

Economic cooperation

The cooperation between Azerbaijan and the countries of the European Community started right after the restoration of Azerbaijan's independence. Germany has been one of the most active actors in Azerbaijan, with German companies playing a significant role in the economic development of Azerbaijan. More than 100 German companies are operating in Azerbaijan. There is growing interest among Azerbaijani companies seeking opportunities to benefit from doing business with Germany, a source of modern technologies and industry know-how.

Currently, Azerbaijan is Germany's chief economic and trade partner in the South Caucasus. According to the German Ministry of Economics and Energy, trade with Azerbaijan constituted around 80% of the total trade volume between Germany and the South Caucasus in 2015.⁵

Currently, Azerbaijan is Germany's chief economic and trade partner in the South Caucasus. According to the German Ministry of Economics and Energy, trade with Azerbaijan constituted around 80% of the total trade volume between Germany and the South Caucasus in 2015.

⁵ Federal Foreign Office (2017) *Bilateral relations*. Available at: http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Laenderinformationen/Laenderuebersicht_node.html (Accessed: 4 February 2017).

According to the Ministry of Economic Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the trade turnover between Azerbaijan and Germany in 2015 was \$1.914 billion, consisting of \$0.69 billion of imports and \$1.223 billion of exports. Therefore, Azerbaijan had a positive balance of trade of \$0.534 billion. In 2015, 9.27% of Azerbaijan’s total foreign trade turnover was with Germany. The German-Azerbaijani working group for trade and investment was founded on 5 May 2011.

Table 3: Trade turnover of Azerbaijan with Germany, \$ million.

Year	Import	Export	Trade Turnover	Balance
2012	779,8	964,8	1744,6	185
2013	823	1356,7	2179,7	1274,4
2014	703,6	1925,6	2629,2	1221,9
2015	690,08	1223,96	1914,04	533,88

Source: The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan (2016).

In order to expand economic relations, the German Chamber of Commerce (AHK) was officially opened on 12 November 2012. A high-ranking government and economic delegation, headed by the German State Minister Cornelia Pieper and a former Federal Minister of Economics Michael Glos, came to Baku. This is Germany’s second Chamber of Commerce in the CIS region.⁶ At present, about 130 companies are registered with

Even though German businesses are not represented directly in the two largest oil projects in Azerbaijan, it had an important role in service contracts.

AHK Baku, representing both sides. The Azerbaijani companies SOCAR, Azerbaijan Airlines, and Azerbaijan International Bank all have offices in Germany.

Even though German businesses are not represented directly in the two largest oil projects in Azerbaijan, it had an important role in service contracts. Out of \$3 billion provided for implementation of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline project, British Petroleum (BP), as the main stakeholder, paid \$1 billion for its orders to contractors, including

⁶ Commonwealth of Independent States.

\$250 million to German companies.⁷ A striking example of the long-term interest of German business community in energy domain of Azerbaijan is the joint venture between Uniper and SOCAR, established in May 2015.⁸ According to the German Department of Economics and Export Control, Azerbaijan is the sixth largest oil supplier of Germany.⁹ In 2015 Germany imported US\$ 1.2 billion worth of Azerbaijani oil.¹⁰ German companies act as the end buyers of the Azerbaijani oil, which arrives in southern Germany for processing at local refineries. This successful example of the cooperation in oil trade between Azerbaijan and European companies can be applied for Azeri gas.

As Azerbaijan passed its oil peak in 2010 with 50.8 million tons, its oil production has been gradually declining, down to 41.04 million tons in 2016.¹¹ However, Baku sees significant opportunities for future EU energy cooperation in the gas sector. The resource base for the future gas export is Azerbaijan's largest gas field, Shah Deniz, which contains 1.3 trillion cubic meters of natural gas.¹² In regard to the development of its gas sector, Azerbaijan has remained true to its energy strategy, following the same model of cooperation as for its oil sector. Shah Deniz has been operated by a seven-party joint venture (JV) since 2006. The JV expects to start exporting 10 billion cubic meters of gas per year to the EU following the completion of the second stage of Shah Deniz in 2020. Azerbaijan's European exports are enabled by a series of gas pipeline projects: South Caucasus Pipeline (SCP), Trans-Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP), and the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP). This export strategy is consistent with the EU energy supply diversification policy, crucial for Europe's energy security.¹³

7 British Petroleum (2016) <http://www.bp.com/> (Accessed: 4 February 2017).

8 formerly E.ON SE.

9 Caspian Energy (2015) *We want to use the full potential of our relations – Ambassador of Germany to Azerbaijan*. Available at: <http://www.baku.diplo.de/contentblob/4693526/Daten/6197314/InterviewCaspianEnergy.pdf> (Accessed: 3 February 2017).

10 Federal Foreign Office (2016) *Azerbaijan*. Available at: http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Aussenpolitik/Laender/Laenderinfos/01-Nodes/Aserbajdschan_node.html (Accessed: 4 February 2017).

11 SOCAR (2017) *SOCAR figures. Oil production*. <http://socar.az/socar/en/home> (Accessed: 4 February 2017).

12 British Petroleum (2016) *Shah-Deniz 2*. Available at: http://www.bp.com/en_az/caspian/operations/projects/Shahdeniz/SDstage2.html (Accessed: 4 February 2017).

13 European Commission (2011) *On security of energy supply and international cooperation – The EU energy policy: engaging with partners beyond our borders*. Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/>

Diversification beyond the energy sector is a part of the joint development policy. The German Association for International Cooperation (GIZ) supports economic diversification through advising the government on the improvement of the regulatory environment, establishing a needs-based vocational education and training system, and strengthening export potential. Another important project is the development of the credit system through a series of financial and technical joint measures (microfinance bank ‘Accessbank’, German Azerbaijani Fund, Support for Private Banking). A politically important area of cooperation is support for legal and judicial reform. The purification of the water supply for more than 145 thousand inhabitants in selected provincial centers, as well as the preservation of biodiversity, are additional priorities for German-Azerbaijan cooperation.

The 200-year history of relations between the people of Azerbaijan and Germany provides a strong basis for the sustainable development of cultural relations between the two countries.

Cooperation in the field of culture and science

The 200-year history of relations between the people of Azerbaijan and Germany provides a strong basis for the sustainable development of cultural relations between the two countries. In 2008, the ‘Cultural Year of Azerbaijan’ was held for the first time in Germany, while a ‘Culture Week of Germany’ took place in Azerbaijan in 2009. Within the ‘Cultural Year of Azerbaijan’, up to 100 different events were organized across 12 German cities. During 2013-2015, several Azerbaijani cultural evenings were hosted in Munich, Stuttgart, Cologne, Hamburg, Hanover, Düsseldorf, Dresden, and Frankfurt am Main, supported by the Heydar Aliyev Foundation and the Azerbaijani Embassy.

In 2010, the chair of ‘History of Azerbaijan’ was opened at Humboldt University in Berlin. ‘Azerbaijan’s Educational and Culture Week’ was organized by the Federal Ministry of Education and Science between 29 November and 2 December 2010. Azerbaijan works with leading universities in Germany and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) to implement the ‘State Program for Foreign Studies’. DAAD awards numerous scholarships each year and promotes the exchange of scientists. There are 21 university partnerships. DAAD lecturers promote the quality of German language teaching in Azerbaijan.

The Azerbaijani diaspora in Germany is active and well-organized. As of 2014, around 15 thousand Azerbaijani nationals were registered in Germany, according to the Consular Section of the Embassy in Berlin.

The ‘Coordination Center of the Azerbaijanis living in Germany’ (KAD) was founded in 2008, aimed at linking the Azerbaijanis living in Germany with their diaspora organizations. The KAD is located in Berlin and organizes national celebrations and remembrance days, as well as supporting diaspora organizations and conducting lectures on Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan is successfully represented in various areas of Germany through the Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Azerbaijan in Stuttgart, the German representation of the European Azerbaijan Society (TEAS), the Azerbaijan Student Network (ASN), the Azerbaijani House in Germany, the Azerbaijani-German Solidarity Society, the Azerbaijani-German Culture Society, and other diaspora organizations.

One of the most important organizations in the promotion of Azerbaijani-German relations is the German-Azerbaijani Forum (DAF), made up of well-known social, political, economic, cultural, scientific, and media figures. The DAF, founded in 2006 in Berlin, aims to promote bilateral relations and to deepen political, economic and cultural relations, and to develop scientific exchange.

Since 1995 there has been a bilateral cultural activity agreement between Azerbaijan and Germany. An important pillar of this is the German-Azerbaijani Cultural Association, which is located in ‘Kapellhaus’ in Baku, a meeting place and a former music hall of the neighboring German evangelical church. The historical building hosts numerous cultural events, partly funded by donations to the regional Goethe Institute in Tbilisi.

German is the most important foreign language after Russian and English, and is taught at numerous schools and several universities throughout Azerbaijan. There are four PASCH schools in Baku, where German language teaching is sponsored by the Goethe Institute and by the Central Office for Foreign Schools (ZfA). The language work of the Goethe Institute in Tbilisi is conducted in cooperation with the local Language

Centre. In 2017, the Goethe Institute is planning to open a branch in Baku. The cities of Ludwigshafen and Sumgayit, and Baku and Mainz, are twinned.

Since the restoration of Azerbaijan's independence, relations between Azerbaijan and Germany have developed into full-scale political cooperation. The high-level political relations have been supported by mutually beneficial economic interactions.

Conclusion

Since the restoration of Azerbaijan's independence, relations between Azerbaijan and Germany have developed into full-scale political cooperation. The high-level political relations have been supported by mutually beneficial economic interactions. In addition, scientific cooperation and cultural exchanges over the years have been fruitful.

The successful implementation of energy projects aiming at transporting Caspian hydrocarbon resources to Europe will meet an important part of German and EU energy needs. At the same time, this also represents an important contribution to diversification and long-term energy security. Over the past 20 years, Germany has become an important partner of Azerbaijan in the field of energy, and this cooperation should be continued at all levels. Oil and natural gas are the major factors shaping Azerbaijani foreign policy, and mutual economic interests - particularly in the energy sphere - will continue to be a strong pillar in bilateral relations. Azerbaijan and Germany are also cooperating on renewable energy initiatives, which have even higher potential than fossil fuels projects. Non-energy cooperation is outlined as a 'priority' for Azerbaijan, and can significantly enhance the scope of bilateral cooperation.

At the outset, Azerbaijan and Germany built up relations via economic cooperation, which created a solid base for political relations, both when Azerbaijan declared its independence in 1918 and when it regained sovereignty in 1991. With the restoration of independence, bilateral relations were also revitalized and developed rapidly, in large part due to the strong historical ties.

The UN Security Council and the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: Policy of Double Standards and Unexecuted Resolutions

Najiba Mustafayeva*

The Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is undoubtedly the most complex, as well as the most dangerous conflict in the South Caucasus. In 1993, the United Nations Security Council adopted a series of resolutions (822, 853, 874, and 884) demanding the immediate cessation of hostilities and the complete and unconditional withdrawal of all occupying forces from Azerbaijani territories. Despite the legally binding nature of the Security Council resolutions, they still remain unrealized. One of the main reasons for the ineffectiveness of the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, is its inability and in some cases unwillingness to ensure the implementation of its resolutions. The failure of resolutions not only undermines the credibility of the United Nations, but also threatens international peace and security. However, the UN Security Council has the authority to apply sanctions to member states that fail to execute its resolutions. The resolutions of the Council adopted according to Chapter VII of the UN Charter (Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace and Acts of Aggression) contain the legal elements of international responsibility. Measures taken by the UN Security Council in accordance with Article 41 and 42 of the UN Charter are coercive measures intended to encourage the offender to fulfill the obligations arising from its international legal responsibility.



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Introduction

The end of the Cold War and the collapse of totalitarian Soviet rule and the Warsaw Treaty Organization transformed the global political environment, and led to the emergence of a new geopolitical context. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the new post-Soviet independent states immediately joined the international system and began crafting new foreign policy courses that reflected their own national interests. This resulted in the formation of a new world order.¹

Once the newly independent states had shaped their foreign policy trajectories, the international organization with which they first established relations was the United Nations, as the key universal international platform for the cooperation of sovereign states.

Since joining the United Nations on 2 March 1992, Azerbaijan has consistently demonstrated its strong commitment to the principles and purposes of the UN Charter, and the internationally recognized norms and principles of international law. From the outset Azerbaijan used the UN platform to draw attention to the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, to provide the international community with accurate and comprehensive information in order to shape public opinion. Baku's aim was to harness the potential of the United Nations as a mechanism for the peaceful settlement of the conflict².

From the outset Azerbaijan used the UN platform to draw attention to the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, to provide the international community with accurate and comprehensive information in order to shape public opinion.

Among the conflicts in the South Caucasus, the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is the most complex, as well as the most dangerous. As Farhad Mammadov notes, “it holds the most serious security and humanitarian implications not only for the South Caucasus, but also for the whole Eurasian region”³.

1 Mehdiyev, R. (2012) ‘Foreword’ in Fariz Ismayilzade and Glen E.Howard (eds.) “The South Caucasus 2021: Oil, Democracy and Geopolitics”, Center for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and The Jamestown Foundation, pp.7-9.

2 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan (2014) ‘Azerbaijan and UN relations.’ Available at: <http://mfa.gov.az/en/content/751> (Accessed: 20 February 2017)

3 Mammadov, F. (2016) ‘The Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict as the Key Threat to Peace and Cooperation in the South Caucasus’, *Caucasus International*, 6(1), pp. 159-160

The conflict started at the end of the 1980s, following Armenia's territorial claims on Nagorno-Karabakh and, in parallel, the systematic expulsion of Azerbaijanis from the Armenian SSR. In fact, the collapse of the Soviet Union empowered the Armenian nationalists. During the 1992-1993 period, a considerable area of Azerbaijan fell under Armenian occupation, including Nagorno-Karabakh and seven adjacent districts. The conflict gradually evolved into a full-scale war between newly independent Armenia and Azerbaijan.

In 1993, the United Nations Security Council adopted four resolutions (822, 853, 874, and 884) in connection with the armed seizure of Azerbaijani territories. The resolutions demand the unconditional and immediate withdrawal of troops from Nagorno-Karabakh and other occupied regions of Azerbaijan. The resolutions also call for the restoration of economic, transport and energy connections in the region, and return of refugees and IDPs. However, Armenia has not adhered to the terms of these resolutions and continues to occupy Azerbaijani territories.

“The active phase of the conflict ended in 1994 with the signing of a ceasefire agreement in Bishkek. The war left the Nagorno-Karabakh and seven other regions – roughly 20 percent of Azerbaijan's internationally recognized territory – under Armenian occupation. It also resulted in over 30,000 military and civilian deaths and made about a million Azerbaijanis IDPs and refugees”⁴.

“As a mark of its deep concern about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Azerbaijan and the number of refugees and IDPs, the UN General Assembly adopted the resolution ‘Emergency international assistance to refugees and displaced persons in Azerbaijan’ (A/RES/48/114) in 1993”. Furthermore, “during 1992-1996 the UN Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council made several statements on the conflict, confirming the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Azerbaijan and supporting the OSCE Minsk Group's efforts towards its peaceful resolution”⁵.

4 Garibov, A. (2015) ‘OSCE and Conflict Resolution in the Post-Soviet Area: The Case of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict’, *Caucasus International*, 5(2), p.76.

5 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan (2014) Azerbaijan and UN relations.

The resolution of the UN General Assembly, ‘Cooperation between United Nations and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)’, reaffirms the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan (‘the conflict in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan’). The resolution on ‘The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan’, adopted on March 14, 2008 by the UN General Assembly, condemns the resettlement of Armenians in the occupied territories and the setting of fires there. The resolution calls for the implementation of the four Security Council resolutions and the withdrawal of Armenian armed forces from the occupied territories. The resolution confirms the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan and demands the return of refugees to their homelands⁶.

Despite the legally binding nature of Security Council resolutions, they remain unrealized. However, the UN Security Council has the legal authority to apply sanctions to member states that fail to execute its resolutions.

Despite the legally binding nature of Security Council resolutions, they remain unrealized. However, the UN Security Council has the legal authority to apply sanctions to member states that fail to execute its resolutions.

What are the reasons for the apparent failure of the execution of these resolutions and the sanctions mechanism of the United Nations Security Council in this case, and what are the implications of this failure for the subsequent peace process? The article argues that the failure to enforce the legally binding Security Council resolutions, resulting in a policy of double standards, and Armenia’s uncompromising position have led to the failure of the peace process, leaving military measures as the only option for restoring the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.

The article is divided into two sections. The first section examines the sanctions mechanism of the United Nations Security Council and the failure of the resolutions in the case of Nagorno-Karabakh. This has not only undermined the credibility of the United Nations, but also puts international peace and security at risk. The second part focuses on the threat posed by nuclear fuels and radioactive waste from Armenian

Available at: <http://mfa.gov.az/en/content/751> (Accessed: 20 February 2017)

6 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan (2013) ‘Refugees and IDPs.’ Available at: <http://www.mfa.gov.az/en/content/117> (Accessed: 20 February 2017)

Metsamor NPP, and shells containing chemicals such as white phosphorus used by Armenian armed forces during the April 2016 escalation of hostilities. In addition, the author analyzes the UN Security Council's activity in regard to the nuclear talks with Iran and nuclear test by North Korea, in the context of its indifference towards other potential nuclear vulnerabilities such as the nuclear/WMD threat coming from Armenia.

The sanctions mechanism of the UNSC: The Nagorno-Karabakh case

In the theory of international relations, sanctions are defined as measures to enforce obligations arising from the responsibility of the legal relationship. The problem of the application of sanctions as coercive measures to enforce international law has been one of the most complex and hotly debated issues in the theory and practice of international law in recent years. For obvious reasons, the problem of coercion has always attracted considerable attention from lawyers. Force and violence play a crucial role in international relations. One of the main functions of international law is to limit the use of force⁷.

The main feature of modern international law is the thorough and robust regulation of coercive measures⁸. In cases where coercion is permitted by international law, it is not violence, but a means of law enforcement. The necessary feature of legal force is legitimacy. The use of force is governed by the principles of necessity and proportionality. Generally, coercion is a necessary component of the decentralized functioning of international law (*Ubi jus, ibi remedia* – where there is a right there is a remedy). One of the main features of international law is the absence of central enforcement machinery authorized to compel the subjects of international law to uphold the principles and norms of applicable international rights and obligations. In this regard, the means of coercion are held by the subjects of international law – states and international or inter-governmental organizations – which apply those means on an individual or collective basis.⁹

7 Лукашук, И. (2004) 'Право международной ответственности.' *Москва*, с. 306.

8 Черниченко, С. (1999) 'Теория международного права.' *Москва*, Т. 1, с. 221.

9 Лукашук, И. (2004) 'Право международной ответственности.' *Москва*, с. 306-307.

It should be noted that in international law, the use of sanctions as tools of coercion is widely acknowledged. Tunkin has argued that in “international law, as legal norms inherited in the sanction”¹⁰. Monaco has noted that, “in any legal system compliance is ensured by sanctions”¹¹.

The modern doctrine of international law also stipulates that sanctions should be classified as coercive measures used only by international organizations, endowed by states – the primary actors of international law – with the appropriate rights. This, in turn, fundamentally differentiates between actions by international organizations, and the individual actions of states.

Such a provision was first introduced following the adoption of the Statute of the League of Nations. It was subsequently further developed, receiving its final affirmation after the adoption of the Charter of the United Nations. The Charter laid the foundations for the universal cooperation of states within the framework of a new international platform – the United Nations.

Not only does the UN occupy a central place in the system of international organizations, it also plays a unique role in the international affairs and political development. The primary responsibility for maintaining of international peace and security is assigned to the UN Security Council, which is the main executive body of the Organization, and whose decisions (resolutions) are legally binding¹².

It should be underscored that the UN has established a procedure whereby even a state that is not a member of the Organization must act in accordance with the principles of the Charter to the extent necessary to maintain international peace and security¹³. The UN Security Council holds the decisive role in regard to the implementation of this norm.

Despite the fact that the Security Council is a body representing

10 Тункин, Г. (1970) ‘Теория международного права.’ *Москва*, с. 470.

11 Monaco, R. (1968) ‘Course generale du droit international public,’ *Recueil des Cours*, Vol. 3, p.313.

12 Mustafayeva, N. (2015) ‘Why do we need strong United Nations’, *The Modern Diplomacy*. Available at: http://modern diplomacy.eu/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=1053:why-do-we-need-strong-united-nations&Itemid=150 (Accessed: 21 February 2017)

13 Лукашук, И. (2005) ‘Международное право. Особенная часть.’ *Москва*, с.45.

only a limited number of member states – less than 10% – it is agreed the Council “acts on their behalf” (p. 1, article 24 of the UN Charter). In other words, the Security Council takes unilateral actions that are considered as measures of the UN as a whole¹⁴.

The Security Council determines “the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression”. Under this provision, the Council may “permit a state that is threatened or subjected to aggression to act on its right to secure its interests through the United Nations”¹⁵.

Having identified the existence of a threat to peace and security, the Council may “make a recommendation to stakeholders”, and may “accept decisions on coercive measures against the offender”, “utilizing its sanctions mechanism”, which has been used with varying degrees of success.

The UN Charter authorizes the Security Council to undertake a critical function – the maintenance of international peace and security. As a result, the UN Security Council should play an important role in shaping collective responses to any violation of the rules, as determined by the international community. Violations of these rules are classified as threats or breach of international peace and security¹⁶.

The UN Charter authorizes the Security Council to undertake a critical function – the maintenance of international peace and security. As a result, the UN Security Council should play an important role in shaping collective responses to any violation of the rules, as determined by the international community.

The resolutions of the Council adopted according to Chapter VII of the UN Charter (Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace and Acts of Aggression) contain all the legal elements of international responsibility. In accordance with Article 39, the determination of a threat to peace or an act of aggression is a violation of fundamental norms. The resolutions of the Security Council call to end such behavior(s), provide guarantees to avoid similar situations in the future, and to provide reparations. Measures taken in accordance with Article 41 and 42 are coercive measures

14 Лукашук, И. (2005) ‘Международное право. Особенная часть.’ Москва, с. 45.

15 The United Nations (1945) ‘Charter of the United Nations.’ Available at: <http://www.un.org/en/charter-united-nations/index.html> (Accessed: 23 February 2017).

16 Gowland-Debbas, V. (2000) ‘The functions of the United Nations Security Council in the International Legal System’, *The Role of Law in International Politics*. New York.

intended to encourage the offender to fulfill the obligations arising from its international legal responsibility.

The UN Charter gives the Security Council the right to use temporary and coercive measures. Temporary measures are aimed “at preventing the situation from worsening, and should not prejudice the rights, claims or position of the parties concerned”. Such measures may include “requiring the parties to cease hostilities, withdraw troops to certain areas, and/or to resort to a procedure for peaceful resolution, including entry into direct negotiations, recourse to arbitration, and/or the use of regional organizations and bodies”. Temporary measures are not legally binding on the parties, but in accordance with article 40 of the UN Charter, the Security Council “properly takes into account the fact of non-enforcement of these temporary measures”¹⁷.

Coercive measures are divided into measures that do not involve the use of armed forces, and those that do (articles 41 and 42 of the Charter). Activation of these articles falls under the exclusive competence of the Security Council, and is one of the key pillars of its authority.¹⁸

According to article 41 of the Charter, enforcement measures that do not involve the use of armed forces may include “complete or partial interruption of economic relations and of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio and other means of communication, and the diplomatic service, as well as other measures of this nature”. The Council has previously applied of such measures against South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, and North Korea.

In cases when the aforementioned measures are insufficient or ineffective, the Security Council – on the basis of article 42 – has the right to take actions that are necessary for the maintenance of international peace and security via the armed forces of the United Nations. All members of the United Nations make available their armed forces, assistance, and facilities, including the right of transit through the territory, territorial waters and airspace to the Security Council at its request. For

¹⁷ Лукашук, И. (2005) ‘Международное право. Особенная часть’. Москва, с.46.

¹⁸ Ibid. с.47.

this purpose, special agreements are reached.¹⁹

In terms of historical precedent, the application of sanctions against Iraq can serve as an illustration of the capabilities of the Security Council. When Iraq attacked Kuwait (August 2, 1990), the Council adopted a resolution that determined the fact of breach of the peace (article 39 of the Charter), and further recommended the immediate cessation of aggression (article 40). In the following resolution the Council noted Iraq's failure to comply with the previous resolution, and determined measures to restore the authority of the legitimate government in Kuwait. These were not recommendations, but decisions. Moreover, the resolution not only addressed the UN members, but also the non-member states, as per clause 6, article 2 of the Charter. What followed was the cessation of all economic relations and the refusal to recognize any occupational government. The following resolution (August 25) considered the use of the armed forces. The resolution dated September 25 is particularly interesting from a legal point of view. It determined that all legal acts by Iraq that contradicted the Council resolutions were not legally binding. According to article 103 of the Charter on the primacy of obligations under the Charter, the Council obliged all states regardless of their previous agreements to terminate aviation ties with Iraq. In other words, binding Council resolutions are equated to obligations under the Charter. The resolution also established and the terms of the cessation of hostilities, as well as the procedure for compensation. As a result, not only did the resolution replace the truce agreement; it also functioned as a peace agreement.²⁰

A special kind of coercive measure involves the suspension of the exercise of the rights and privileges of any member state against which the Security Council has taken the decision to authorize enforcement action. This measure is also an exclusion from membership of the UN for violation of the Charter (article 6).

Thus, the international community can act through the UN and specifically the Security Council. These institutions have

19 The United Nations (1945) 'Charter of the United Nations.' Available at: <http://www.un.org/en/charter-united-nations/index.html> (Accessed: 23 February 2017).

20 Лукашук, *op.cit.* с.46-47.

The inconsistent execution of resolutions cannot be called anything other than a policy of double standards. Sadly, this policy is prevalent in today's international system, particularly in the activities of international organizations.

been designed to maintain international peace and security (quite effectively according to the above-mentioned precedents). They oversee responses to violations of the norms and principles of international law, bringing to justice the states which have violated international law.

However, it turns out that the UN Security Council has a kind of policy of 'differentiation' in selection of questions of the 'largest' or 'smallest' importance.

How else can one explain the fact that none of the aforementioned measures have been applied to Armenia as a result of its aggressive policy, whereby it has occupied 20% of Azerbaijani territory (Nagorno-Karabakh and 7 surrounding districts), and repeatedly failed to comply with the legally binding resolutions of the UN Security Council²¹?

The inconsistent execution of resolutions cannot be called anything other than a policy of double standards. Sadly, this policy is prevalent in today's international system, particularly in the activities of international organizations.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev has repeatedly underlined during numerous speeches before international organizations that certain resolutions adopted by the Security Council on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict have been ignored for over 20 years, while other resolutions are executed within a matter of hours.

The failure of the Security Council resolutions led the transfer of conflict resolution to the OSCE Minsk group, which has been working for more than two decades without success. The inefficacy of the OSCE Minsk group, along with the non-execution of the UN Security Council resolutions, can be attributed to the lack of international pressure on Armenia. This is the consequence of the lack of political will among the mediating countries – from which, oddly enough, Armenia also receives most of its foreign aid.

21 Мустафаева, Н. (2015) “Санкционный механизм международных организаций: политика двойных стандартов, проблема исполнения решений и необходимость реформы”, *World of Diplomacy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan*, Vol. 40, pp. 147-159. Available at: http://www.mfa.gov.az/files/file/Diplomatiya_Alemi_40.pdf (Accessed: 21 February 2017).

Armenian nuclear intimidation as a threat to international peace and security

Another threat is 'nuclear deterrence', which has been voiced by some of Armenia's current and former officials. After large-scale armed clashes between Armenian and Azerbaijani troops during April 2-5 2016, Armenian politicians made international headlines by declaring 'the presence of nuclear weapons in Armenia'. The former Prime Minister of Armenia, MP Hrant Bagratyan, claimed at a press conference on April 29 2016 that, "We have the capacity to create nuclear weapons [...] we have nuclear weapons [in order] to protect Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh against further attacks."²² Armen Rustamyan, the head of the parliamentary faction of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsutyun), gave a supporting statement saying, "Hrant Bagratyan has grounds for such a statement as he has been a prime minister, [...] who said that we are banned from producing the weapons."²³

The nuclear fuels and radioactive wastes from Metsamor, an outdated Chernobyl-type NPP located in an earthquake-sensitive zone, are kept in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan by Armenia. The Nagorno-Karabakh region is also used for the illegal smuggling of nuclear materials.

Moreover, the nuclear fuels and radioactive wastes from Metsamor, an outdated Chernobyl-type NPP located in an earthquake-sensitive zone, are kept in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan by Armenia. The Nagorno-Karabakh region is also used for the illegal smuggling of nuclear materials²⁴. In addition, the NPP uses outdated technology and is failing to comply with safety procedures. It therefore poses serious environmental threats to Armenia and the region, leading to radioactive pollution of water basins and trans-regional rivers.²⁵

The United Nations and its specialized agencies, including the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), must strengthen their efforts to suspend the operation of Metsamor NPP, which

²² Euractive.com (May 10, 2016) 'Former Armenian PM says his country has nuclear weapons'. Available at: <http://www.euractiv.com/section/europe-s-east/news/former-armenian-pm-says-his-country-has-nuclear-weapons/> (Accessed: 24 February 2017)

²³ *ibid*

²⁴ Mustafayeva, N. (2017) 'Armenia's dirty bomb a new threat to international peace and security', Turkish Weekly. Available at: <http://www.turkishweekly.net/2016/07/13/op-ed/armenias-dirty-bomb-a-new-threat-to-international-peace-and-security/> (Accessed: 03 August 2016)

²⁵ Azvision.az. (2017). *Metsamor – the only nuclear plant based on Chernobyl technology - Azerbaijani MFA*. Available at: <https://en.azvision.az/news/63920/metsamor-%E2%80%93-the-only-nuclear-plant-based-on-chernobyl-technology-azerbaijani-mfa.html> [Accessed 12 January 2019].

poses a nuclear threat for the whole region. The international organizations should use coercive measures against Armenia, on the grounds that it is violating its agreement with the IAEA (1993) for the application of safeguards in connection with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as well as the UN Security Councils 1373 (2001) and 1540 (2004) resolutions on developing, acquiring, manufacturing, possessing, transporting, transferring or using nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their delivery systems, which were adopted in the Chapter VII of the UN Charter (Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace and Acts of Aggression). The resolutions address, among other things, the threat of nuclear terrorism and nuclear proliferation, calling for national, regional, and international cooperation to strengthen the global response to these challenges to international security.²⁶

In recent escalation and offensive actions in April, 2016, there were numerous instances of deliberate shelling of civilians and civilian objects of Azerbaijan by the armed forces of Armenia, using artillery and large-caliber weapons. Armenian forces also used shells containing chemicals such as white phosphorus.

Furthermore in recent escalation and offensive actions in April, 2016, there were numerous instances of deliberate shelling of civilians and civilian objects of Azerbaijan by the armed forces of Armenia, using artillery and large-caliber weapons. Armenian forces also used shells containing chemicals such as white phosphorus. As reflected in the statement by the Azerbaijani Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “one of these projectiles was dropped on Askipara village of the Tartar region of Azerbaijan. It missed its prime target and landed on a cultivated cotton field. It was found as an unexploded ordnance by the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA) on May 10. If it had landed on the densely populated part of Askipara village, the projectile would have inflicted serious casualties and injuries among the civilians”. The investigation has revealed that ammunition used by the armed forces of Armenia, is a D-4 type (smoke bomb) 122 mm artillery shell. It weighs 27.07 kg and contains 3.6 kg of P4 (the chemical symbol for white phosphorus).²⁷

Under international humanitarian law, “attacks on civilians or civilian objects as well as attacks on forests or other kinds of

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan (2016) ‘Statement on the use of white phosphorus bomb by the armed forces of Armenia against civilians and civilian objects of Azerbaijan.’ Available at: <http://www.mfa.gov.az/en/news/909/4104> (Accessed: 15 February 2017)

plant cover (such as the cultivated area in Askipara) with white phosphorus shells are prohibited”. The specific prohibition can be found under Protocol III on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Incendiary Weapons of the United Nations Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW or CCWC) of 1980²⁸.

Through intentional strikes on civilian objects of Azerbaijan via high-explosive white phosphorous, Armenia is grossly violating its obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law, including the 1949 Geneva Conventions, and in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention²⁹. Weapons containing white phosphorus also qualify as “incendiary weapon or device” under the 1997 International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings³⁰ to which Armenia acceded in 2004. The Convention applies to any “explosive or incendiary weapon or device that is designed, or has the capability, to cause death, serious bodily injury or substantial material damage”, or a weapon that has these effects through toxic chemicals, biological agents, toxins, or radiation.³¹

“Over the past several years, the world community has tended to focused exclusively on the nuclear talks with Iran, while neglecting other potential nuclear arms spots in the neighborhood. The bellicose rhetoric of Armenian politicians about the possible “utilization of nuclear weapons” is not so different from North Korea’s warnings of a possible nuclear attack in March 2016”³². North Korea (DPRK) conducted its fourth nuclear detonation on 6 January 2016. The UN Security Council immediately began working on counter measures. The UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called North Korea’s nuclear test “deeply troubling” and “profoundly destabilizing for

28 International Committee of the Red Cross, Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Incendiary Weapons (Protocol III). Geneva, 10 October 1980. Available at: <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ihl/INTRO/515> (Accessed: 27 February 2017)

29 International Committee of the Red Cross, Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Geneva, 12 August 1949. Available at: <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ihl/INTRO/380> (Accessed: 26 February 2017)

30 The United Nations (1997), International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings, New York. Available at: <https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/Special/1997%20International%20Convention%20for%20the%20Suppression%20of%20Terrorist.pdf> (Accessed: 02 March 2017)

31 Azvision.az. *Metsamor – the only nuclear plant.. op.cit.*

32 Gurbanov, I. (2016) ‘Nuclear alarm from Armenia.’ Available at: <http://www.euractiv.com/section/all/opinion/nuclear-alarm-from-armenia/> (Accessed: 27 February 2017)

regional security”³³. The head of the UN International Atomic Energy Agency said that “if the nuclear test is confirmed, it is in clear violation of UN Security Council resolutions and is deeply regrettable”³⁴.

The most recent nuclear test – the fifth – along with a series of missile launches were conducted by North Korea in contravention of UN resolutions on April 16, 2017. US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson took the matter to the Security Council, “urging member states to cut financial ties with Pyongyang and freeze access to funds that could be used to build up that nation’s nuclear arsenal”. Tillerson called on the international community “to fully implement UN sanctions and to suspend or downgrade diplomatic ties as well with North Korea”. The UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres

also “condemned North Korea’s record of violations of Security Council resolutions on nuclear and missile testing and development”³⁵.

North Korea conducted its first nuclear test on October 9, 2006. The Security Council responded immediately to the challenge to international peace and security, and on October 14 adopted a resolution demanding that the DPRK refrain from conducting any more nuclear tests or ballistic missile launches. The resolution ensured the introduction of sanctions against North Korea, along with a ban on arms supplies and materials associated with the production of weapons of mass destruction. North Korea conducted two more underground nuclear tests in 2009 and 2013, leading to sanctions from the UN Security Council.

In evaluating the effectiveness of the sanctions mechanism of the UN Security Council, the following points should be underlined: 1) the deterrent effect on the offenders,

The effectiveness of international sanctions, particularly ones imposed by the UN and its Security Council, depend first of all on the policies of great powers holding the necessary economic and military resources, plus political leverage, to ensure the effectiveness of sanctions and accountability of states which violate the universally recognized norms and principles of international law

33 The United Nations News Center (6 January, 2016) ‘UN deplors ‘deeply troubling’ hydrogen bomb test announced by DPR Korea.’ Available at: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=52945#.WK7qHoVOLIW> (Accessed: 02 March 2017)

34 Ibid.

35 Tillerson presses for economic sanctions on North Korea in special UN meeting. Available at: <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2017/04/28/tillerson-presses-for-economic-sanctions-on-north-korea-in-special-un-meeting.html> (accessed: 29.04.2017), Korean Peninsula: Conflict prevention ‘our collective priority’ but onus also on DPRK, says UN chief, United Nations News Centre. Available at: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=56647#.WQhgdQqmqV> (accessed: 29.04.2017)

limiting the scope of their wrongful conduct; 2) the power to demonstrate the position of the international community and states toward an offence, providing preventive action against potential infringement; 3) limitations on the financial capabilities of the offender. The arms embargo impedes the modernization of the armed forces, and economic sanctions reduce a state's economic potential, which in turn limits expenditure on armaments.³⁶

At the same time, we must acknowledge that the effectiveness of international sanctions, particularly ones imposed by the UN and its Security Council, depend first of all on the policies of great powers holding the necessary economic and military resources, plus political leverage, to ensure the effectiveness of sanctions and accountability of states which violate the universally recognized norms and principles of international law.

The inconsistent approaches of international institutions to conflicts clearly indicate that these platforms serve to promote the own interests of member states, as well as the interests of their unions and groups at the global and regional levels. In the current context, when we face a host of with new threats and when our common fate depends on the successful resolution of these challenges, this approach is wholly unacceptable. International organizations are designed to function as universal platforms for cooperation among states. Moreover, the selective applications of sanctions may lead to the emergence of new conflicts³⁷.

Conclusion

“The Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is the South Caucasus’ biggest threat to peace and security, and the most significant obstacle to regional cooperation and development. Although the conflict has dominated foreign and security policy in both Azerbaijan and Armenia ever since independence, the international community has largely neglected the conflict, and

The Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is the South Caucasus’ biggest threat to peace and security, and the most significant obstacle to regional cooperation and development.

36 Лукашук, И. (2005) ‘Международное право. Особенная часть’. Москва, с.407.

37 Məmmədov, F. (2015) ‘Yaxın gələcəkdə yeni münaqişələrin şahidi ola bilər’, Trend News Agency. Available at: <http://az.trend.az/azerbaijan/politics/2365724.html> (Accessed: 23 February 2017)

furthermore has misleadingly labeled it as 'frozen'".³⁸

However, the April escalation of hostilities “has altered the long-held myth about the 'frozen' nature of the conflict”.³⁹ The “ramifications of the armed clashes between Armenian and Azerbaijani military forces along the line of contact at the beginning of April 2016 also demonstrated that the status quo has already shifted. As a result of the successful counterattack by Azerbaijani armed forces – in response to a provocation by Armenia armed forces – strategic heights were recaptured for the first time since the 1994 ceasefire agreement”.⁴⁰

Any failure in the renewed peace negotiations risks a new round of escalations, and potentially render resort to military force as the only viable option for Azerbaijan in regard to the restoration of its territorial integrity.

The new United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres in his remarks to the UN Security Council Open Debate on Conflicts in Europe in February 2017, said: “The term 'frozen conflict', which is often used about conflicts in Europe, including the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, is misleading”. He mentioned that, “until peace agreements are signed and implemented, the risk of renewed violence remains, as we saw last April in Nagorno-Karabakh in the South Caucasus”⁴¹.

After the April escalation, the line of contact between the armed forces of Armenia and Azerbaijan around Nagorno-Karabakh became the most militarized area in the whole post-Soviet space. After the escalation, Armenia pushed forward with the delivery of new weapons and sophisticated equipment from Russia, based on the \$200 million military loan agreement from July 2015. The Armenian military received Russian-made Iskander-M ballistic missile systems, some of which were demonstrated at the Independence Day military parade in Yerevan on September 21, 2016.⁴²

38 Mammadov, ‘The Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict...’, *op.cit.*, pp.162-163.

39 Mammadov, ‘The Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict...’, *op.cit.*, pp.162-163.

40 Pashayeva, G. (2016). The major stumbling block of the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process. *Euractiv*. Available at: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/europe-s-east/opinion/the-major-stumbling-block-of-the-nagorno-karabakh-peace-process/> [Accessed 12 Jan. 2019].

41 The United Nations (21 February, 2017) ‘Never Take Peace in Europe for Granted, Say Speakers as Security Council Holds Open Debate on Region’s Protracted Conflicts’, *Security Council 7886th meeting*(AM), SC/12724. Available at: <https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/sc12724.doc.htm> (Accessed: 25 February 2017)

42 Garibov, A. (2016). Armenia and Azerbaijan Flex Military Muscles While Nagorno-Karabakh Peace Negotiations Stall. The Jamestown Foundation, Eurasia Daily Monitor Volume: 13 Issue: 190.

'The four day war' brought “renewed dynamism to international mediation efforts, underlining the necessity of genuine conflict resolution efforts in order to prevent the resumption of full-scale war. The Presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia met in Vienna and Saint Petersburg, and the ceasefire has largely held on the line of contact. However, any failure in the renewed peace negotiations risks a new round of escalations, and potentially render resort to military force as the only viable option for Azerbaijan in regard to the restoration of its territorial integrity”.⁴³ As described above, the violation of the country’s territorial integrity has been affirmed by numerous international documents, including the UN Security Council resolutions.

As argued in this article, one of the main reasons for the ineffectiveness of the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, is its inability and in some cases unwillingness to ensure the implementation of its resolutions. The non-execution of the resolutions not only undermines the credibility of the United Nations, but also threatens international peace and security.

Azerbaijan accorded special attention to the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions during 2012-2013, when the country served as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the first time in its history. It was awarded the seat following a vote in the UN General Assembly on 24 October 2011. One seat on the 15-member body is made available for the Group of Eastern European states. Guided by the universally accepted principles of international law and supremacy of international norms enshrined in the Charter of the UN, Azerbaijan argued that “it is unacceptable that a resolution of the Security Council containing imperative demands for concrete action should be ignored or interpreted in a way to avoid their implementation”. “Special attention should be given to situations involving regional arrangements referred by the Security Council with a view to encouraging the development of the peaceful settlement of disputes or conflicts. Needless to mention, that the silence of the Security Council concerning the apparent disregard of its resolutions on issues pertaining to

Available at: <https://jamestown.org/program/armenia-azerbaijan-flex-military-muscles-nagorno-karabakh-peace-negotiations-stall/> [Accessed 12 Jan. 2019].

43 Mammadov, ‘The Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict...’, *op.cit.*, pp.162-163.

international and regional peace and security and attempts to undermine them with ambiguous considerations in dangerous and cannot constitute an accepted practice of the Council's working methods"⁴⁴.

At the beginning of this year the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres shared his new vision for the organization's work, highlighting that "the United Nations was born from war. Today, we must be here for peace"⁴⁵.

Azerbaijan has stated its preference for resolving the conflict through peaceful efforts and negotiation, based on the principles of international law, and with particular regard to the territorial integrity, sovereignty and internationally recognized borders of Azerbaijan. "But the continued failure of these efforts threatens to leave military means as Azerbaijan's only option for restoring its territorial integrity"⁴⁶.

44 The Republic of Azerbaijan in the United Nations Security Council: 2012-2013, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations (2014), compiled and edited by Mehdiyev, A. and Musayev, T. New York, p. 375.

45 The United Nations (2017) 'Secretary-General-designate Antonio Guterres' remarks to the General Assembly on taking the oath of office', Available at: <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2016-12-12/secretary-general-designate-ant%C3%B3nio-guterres-oath-office-speech> (Accessed: 02 March 2017)

46 Mammadov, 'The Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict...', *op.cit.*, pp.162-163.

COMMENTARIES

Georgia and Azerbaijan:
From Partnership to
Interdependence

Understanding the
Ideological Blockades in
Armenia's Contemporary
Politics

The EU and the South
Caucasus 25 years since
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Georgia and Azerbaijan: From Partnership to Interdependence

Giorgi Badridze*

The fates of Georgia and Azerbaijan have been closely linked for most of their histories, and now this is true more than ever. The past twenty-five years have demonstrated that without their close strategic partnership, neither country would be able to sustain its independence or achieve greater economic prosperity.

This commentary discusses the ways in which Georgia and Azerbaijan have faced similar challenges since the restoration of their independence: armed conflicts and the occupation of significant parts of their territories, internal strife, and destabilization. These challenges have been followed by partnerships on international energy projects that have drastically changed their strategic importance on the world's geopolitical map. Thus far, this partnership has helped to consolidate the independence of both Georgia and Azerbaijan, but in order to sustain this achievement, the two countries must seek to amplify their international geo-economic role. While the world around us is undergoing dynamic changes, Georgia and Azerbaijan must reach out to the neighbors on the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea, in order to encourage them to place greater priority on the South Caucasus transport corridor. Beyond the existing function of supplying/transporting energy to Western markets, Azerbaijan and Georgia must reinvent themselves as the bridge between the Greater Caspian and Greater Black Sea regions.



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Historical background

Both nations declared their independence in Tbilisi two days apart in May 1918 and embarked on building two of the most progressive states of their time. Azerbaijan was one of the world's first democratic and secular Muslim republics and the very first to grant women equal rights. Georgia became the world's first social democracy with a political system far ahead of many European nations, widely admired by Western European socialists. In the words of Professor Stephen Jones: “[The Democratic Republic of Georgia] was, at the time, a genuine beacon of hope (a beacon of liberty too) among social democrats such as Emile Vandervelde, Karl Kautsky and Ramsay MacDonald, all of whom visited the republic and wrote about it as a viable democratic alternative to other authoritarian and more statist models.”¹

Georgian and Azerbaijani independence was initially championed by Germany, whose military forces were briefly stationed in the South Caucasus at the very end of World War I. After their military defeat, the Germans left but were replaced by another European power – Great Britain, which was also supportive of the newly independent states in the Caucasus. Aside from purely geopolitical considerations, both German and British interests in supporting Georgia and Azerbaijan were based on the prevailing geo-economic conditions. Azerbaijan was one of the major sources of oil, and a pipeline through Georgia provided a route to the world markets. Oil had been a strategic commodity since at least 1912 when the British Navy switched to liquid fuel.² It was followed by other powerful nations, sparking the worldwide race for control over oil-rich regions.

German and British interests in Caspian oil and their resulting support for Azerbaijani and Georgian independence were overtaken by Russia's desperate need for oil, which hastened the Bolsheviks' plan to invade and annex first Azerbaijan and then Georgia.

However, German and British interests in Caspian oil and their resulting support for Azerbaijani and Georgian independence were overtaken by Russia's desperate need for oil, which hastened the Bolsheviks' plan to invade and annex first Azerbaijan and then Georgia.

The Bolshevik military campaign in 1920 and 1921 was made

1 Dr. Stephen Jones, *On the 90th Anniversary of the DRG*, 30 August 2009, Available at: <http://matiane.wordpress.com/2009/08/30/stephen-jones-on-the-90th-anniversary-of-the-democratic-republic-of-georgia/> (Accessed: 10 May 2017).

2 Eric J. Dahl, *Naval Innovation: From Coal to Oil*, 2001.

considerably easier by the internal divisions and conflicts within the South Caucasus; specifically, territorial disputes and armed conflicts with Armenia, another shared reality for both Georgia and Azerbaijan.

Baku fell during the Bolshevik invasion of April 1920, and it took only a few months for Georgia to follow in February 1921. Without an independent Azerbaijan, Georgia lost its strategic and economic value for the British Empire, which withdrew its forces and left the Democratic Republic of Georgia alone against the advancing Red Army. It is worth noting that just after taking Baku, the Bolshevik government signed a treaty with the government of Georgia on May 7, 1920, recognizing Georgian independence in exchange for its pledge of neutrality and other political concessions. However, within just eight months, Bolshevik Russia reneged on its international commitment and invaded the sovereign country, violating its security guarantees.

As dramatic as these developments were, this period taught Georgians and Azerbaijanis several valuable lessons: they discovered that together, they attracted the geopolitical and economic interests of major powers. While Western nations demonstrated interest by supporting independence, Russia sought to crush it at the first opportunity. The second lesson is that territorial disputes within the South Caucasus not only prevent regional cooperation but also undermine its security, and ultimately, saw all three countries lose their independence. The third lesson is that Georgia and Azerbaijan are unlikely to sustain their independence without one another.

The first republic highlights the fundamental reality that for both countries, independence and economic development are based largely on an international geo-economic function.

In other words, the first republic highlights the fundamental reality that for both countries, independence and economic development are based largely on an international geo-economic function. They share this function and, therefore, the two nations must actively cooperate to attract international partners whose interests in keeping the South Caucasian nations independent are more powerful than any Russian attempts to undermine them.

Rebuilding independence, seeking a new geopolitical role

Let us examine the continued relevance of these historical

experiences, and how well we have absorbed those lessons.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in late 1991, the national borders and geopolitical fault lines shifted once again. The three Caucasian republics of Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia re-emerged as independent states. One of the most important implications was that a potential Azerbaijani-Georgian partnership was re-opening the Caspian region to the West.

However, this new era presented not only great opportunities but also old challenges: Azerbaijan and Armenia clashed over Nagorno-Karabakh, the internationally recognized territory of Azerbaijan. Georgia, the only non-Baltic republic which had refused to join the CIS, was soon punished by Russia. Georgia's first democratically elected government was ousted following an armed coup, while Moscow-friendly separatists in Abkhazia and South Ossetia received full Russian support. Russia sought to fuel regional conflicts in order to maintain its influence over the South Caucasian countries.

While Russia's "divide and rule" approach significantly affected the region, these impediments were not enough to completely halt the region's cooperation with the West. While conflict with Azerbaijan left Armenia isolated from the regional cooperation, Azerbaijan and Georgia collaborated with the US leadership to develop the infrastructure for delivering Caspian energy to Western markets. At the first stage, the Baku-Supsa early oil pipeline was built. This served as a pilot project that became known as the 'Project of the Century' – the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) main oil pipeline. The Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum natural gas pipeline soon followed.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of these projects for the region. Not only did they jumpstart Azerbaijan's economic development but, more importantly, they became a defining factor in reinforcing Azerbaijani and Georgian political independence.

The West has put billions of dollars into developing the Caspian oil and gas fields, and with that has come huge political investment. Anyone involved in the process of multinational negotiations over the BTC pipeline is well aware that without the hands-on political involvement of the US administration in the 1990s and throughout the entire planning and implementation process,

the pipeline probably would never have been constructed. This is perhaps the most important - although not the only - reason behind Russia's hostility. As President Putin declared in 2005, the collapse of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century. But even before Putin came to power, Russia did everything in its power to assert its exclusive sphere of influence over the former Soviet Union republics, its self-declared 'near-abroad'. Beyond geopolitical motives, Russia is also driven by financial interests; most notably, in the hydrocarbon sector, which remains the single largest source of its revenues.

From Moscow's perspective, every barrel of oil and every thousand cubic meters of natural gas that bypasses the Russian pipeline system in its journey from the Caspian region to the Western markets represents lost revenue. Not only that, this is also a lost political leverage in the manipulation of both the European energy market and the suppliers in the Caspian region.

From Moscow's perspective, every barrel of oil and every thousand cubic meters of natural gas that bypasses the Russian pipeline system in its journey from the Caspian region to the Western markets represents lost revenue.

The future of the entire region was seriously threatened in 2008 when Russian tanks rolled into Georgia, a blatant act of intimidation and aggression. Under international pressure, they were forced to retreat, but 20% of Georgia's territory remains occupied and under Russian control, while the Kremlin continues to exert political and economic pressure over Tbilisi.

At this stage, Russia is directing its efforts towards to the region's economic and political cooperation with the West. Russian opposition to its neighbors' NATO membership aspirations is widely known; in addition, Russian leaders have made it very clear that Eastern Partnership countries will be made to pay a hefty price for closer integration with the European Union.

Once Russia stops pursuing a zero sum game and reconciles itself to the independence of the former Soviet republics – which seems highly unlikely under President Putin – it will realize that the benefits of stable and prosperous neighbors outweigh any gains made by undermining their security. Russia can still play a positive role in the Caspian energy projects; Russian companies have already been invited to join the international

consortium that operates oil and gas fields in Azerbaijan. There is a possibility that Russia's own oil could be transported via the BTC if, as discussed by Russian and Azerbaijani officials, the Baku-Novorossiysk pipeline could be used for reverse flow.

Prospects of greater regional role

While Russia has no right to claim a monopoly over the transportation of Caspian oil and gas to Western markets, a cooperative Russia should not be excluded from the potential benefits of regional collaboration.

Let us now take a broader look at our region, going beyond transportation of energy. For centuries Georgia and Azerbaijan were an important part of the historic Silk Road. The South Caucasus should try to revive and expand its historical function by offering the countries on the eastern side of the Caspian region an alternative gateway to Western markets. This would entail diversifying rather than replacing the existing transport and energy arteries. While Russia has no right to claim a monopoly over the transportation of Caspian oil and gas to Western markets, a cooperative Russia should not be excluded from the potential benefits of regional collaboration.

In order to fully utilize their potential, the Caspian region countries must cooperate more closely. At this stage, only Azerbaijan and Georgia (in conjunction with Turkey) can be described as strategic partners in the region. The other countries around the Caspian Sea have closer ties with Russia than with one another. If unaddressed, this lack of cooperation will make it impossible to develop the infrastructure that is necessary for the region to maximize its geostrategic potential, located as it is between the world's economic giants, Europe and China. In the absence of strategic collaboration, the regional countries will also forgo the full economic benefits of their hydrocarbon resources, which can

By joining the Russian-led Customs Union and creating artificial barriers to trade with more developed partners, member states have taken a step towards self-isolation, and a step away from fully realizing their economic and social potential.

only be achieved via proper access to the European and global markets. Furthermore, they will remain vulnerable to security threats.

By joining the Russian-led Customs Union and creating artificial barriers to trade with more developed partners, member states have taken a step towards self-isolation, and a step away from fully realizing their economic and social potential.

The region is strategically positioned to play an increasingly significant role in the globalizing world through its natural

resources, and potentially through future transport infrastructure. But to realize this potential, change is needed.

There are two fundamental determinants of the role and future prospects of the Caspian region: first, the region's ability to effectively harness its enormous energy resources; and second, its location midway between two major global economic forces – Europe and China. Energy demand will continue to grow both east and west of the Caspian. If the necessary infrastructure is developed, the region could attract a considerable share of the cargo transit between the Caspian region's eastern and western neighbors.

Azerbaijan must be commended for a number of strategic initiatives it has taken. The Trans-Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP), designed to deliver Azerbaijani natural gas to the countries of southern Europe, is one such example. Currently, TANAP has the relatively modest ambition of supplying 10 bcm of gas to Italy via the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP).

According to some experts, the selection of TAP as a partner project for TANAP has sounded the death knell for the much-discussed Nabucco project, failed to materialize due to dithering on the part of European partners. But a larger gas project may still be possible. Once the infrastructure to carry large volumes of Caspian gas directly to European consumers is in place, the eastern Caspian states – in particular, Turkmenistan – will need to give much more serious consideration to the proposed Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline (TCP) project, which has fallen off the agenda. The European market has been buying Turkmen gas for years via Russian pipelines and on Russian terms. With TANAP, the prospect of Turkmen participation in the TCP project is much more plausible.

While the political obstacles to an agreement on the TCP are obvious (that are not limited by objections by Russia and Iran), Turkmen involvement in TANAP could significantly increase the viability of this pipeline and even revitalize Nabucco as the second phase of the project. Of course, if Europe remains passive, Turkmenistan will direct the larger share of its 17.7 trillion cubic meters of proven gas reserves towards China, or reach a new deal with Russia.

Kazakhstan has been the most cautious of all of the Central Asian countries, seeking to avoid irritating Russia through involvement in energy projects that do not have Moscow's approval. However, there is a precedent for the transport of Kazakh oil via the Southern Energy Corridor. Since the 1990s, Chevron has sent modest amounts of oil from Kazakhstan over the Caspian Sea and onwards to the Georgian Black Sea coast by railway. Given the right political climate, there is a solid commercial rationale for Kazakh participation in the future trans-Caspian energy supplies. The same can be said of the 'sleeping energy giant' Uzbekistan, although chances of Uzbek involvement are probably more remote.

As mentioned above, it is difficult to imagine the world that will not require a more developed transport infrastructure. The Caspian region, particularly Kazakhstan, is already playing an increasing role in the transportation of goods between China and Europe (via Russia).

Over the last decade, Turkey has significantly developed its transport infrastructure, creating new opportunities for the closer integration of the South Caucasus and Caspian regions into European road and railway networks. The project connecting the Turkish and Georgian railway systems is due to be completed in the near future. The project will, potentially, provide an additional route for the rail transportation of goods between Western Europe and China. Again, this project does not have global ambitions and is not an alternative to the Russian route. But as well as providing much-needed rail access between Azerbaijan and Turkey, the project can also offer new capacity for additional volumes of cargo, and thus quite literally pave the way for economic growth both within the Caspian region and across the continent.

In addition to road and railway infrastructure, Azerbaijan is committed to creating an air transportation hub near Baku. The strategic location and unlimited supply of local fuel are strong factors in this regard.

Conclusion

To sum up, the past 25 years have entailed truly historic challenges, achievements, and opportunities for Georgia and Azerbaijan. After 70 years of Soviet rule, we both had the opportunity to

rebuild our independent states. At the same time, Georgia faced tremendous opposition in the form of hostility from the former imperial ruler. Both countries have had to cope with separatist conflicts, which remain the greatest security, political and economic challenge in the form of territorial occupation and the hundreds of thousands of IDPs and refugees.

Nonetheless, our two countries have managed to overcome the chaos of the early 1990s. Through close cooperation and support from our strategic ally Turkey along with Western partners, we have achieved considerable success in building viable states and becoming respected members of the international community.

The Georgian and Azerbaijani leaders have wisely drawn upon the strategic geographic location and mineral wealth of their respective countries to forge a strong alliance, in accordance with the South Caucasus's important international geo-economic function.

Thus far, this partnership has helped to consolidate the independence of both Georgia and Azerbaijan. But in order to sustain it, the two countries must seek to expand their international geo-economic role. The world around us is undergoing dynamic changes; we must try to reach out to our neighbors on the eastern side of the Caspian Sea in order to encourage them to place greater priority on the South Caucasus transport corridor. Beyond their existing function in supplying and transporting mainly Azerbaijani energy to Western markets, Azerbaijan and Georgia must reinvent themselves as a bridge between the greater Caspian and greater Black Sea regions.

This is no easy task. Even the Central Asian countries are vulnerable to Russian pressure. So far, they have not managed to develop effective regional economic or political cooperation, remaining more closely connected to Russia than with one another.

Together, via their vision for transport infrastructure, Georgia and Azerbaijan could provide Central Asian nations with the shortest and the most reliable access to the West, including markets in Turkey, Europe, and the Mediterranean.

The Georgian and Azerbaijani leaders have wisely drawn upon the strategic geographic location and mineral wealth of their respective countries to forge a strong alliance, in accordance with the South Caucasus's important international geo-economic function.

Europe's need to reduce its dependence on Russia and diversify its energy supplies creates a historic opportunity for the countries of the entire Caspian region. This opportunity must be grasped with both hands because this window of opportunity will not be there for much longer. This is a competitive environment, and if the Central Asian nations do not act now, they will not only miss out on the chance to gain a share in the lucrative European energy market but also on the prospect of consolidating their political sovereignty.

Obviously, Georgia and Azerbaijan alone cannot be able to persuade their eastern neighbors to collaborate on energy and transportation initiatives that risks irritating Russia. In the current context, when Turkey is undergoing historic changes, the European Union is coping with Brexit, and the United States is unsure of its role on the world stage, Georgia and Azerbaijan should promote the idea of greater trans-Caspian cooperation to both their Western and Central Asian partners.

Having already established the South Caucasus as an important energy and transport corridor, Georgia and Azerbaijan should prepare the ground for an expanded role, serving as a gateway between the greater Caspian and the greater Black Sea regions. As ambitious as it sounds, this goal is not unrealistic if the leaders of our countries make it their strategic priority. Not long ago, some people called the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan project 'a pipedream'. But this pipeline was built and has made its mark on the world energy market due to the vision, dedication, and partnership of our leaders supported by many professionals.

I think it is time for Georgia and Azerbaijan, together with their partners, to unite once again for the greater good of our region.

Understanding the Ideological Blockades in Armenia's Contemporary Politics

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Armenia has been consistently violating international law since the declaration of independence in 1990 – a political choice which impedes not only regional peace, stability, and security, but also the interests of its own people. As a sovereign yet an unreliable member of international community, Armenia, has invaded a neighboring country, Azerbaijan, and refused to implement relevant UN resolutions. It has repeatedly made irredentist claims against the territorial integrity of another neighboring state, Turkey, and when the Zurich protocols were signed between Turkey and Armenia to establish diplomatic relations and develop bilateral relations in 2009 Armenia suspended the ratification.¹ Even worse, Armenian President Serj Sargsyan recently expressed territorial claims towards Turkey, saying that “liberating the historic territories in Western Armenia” (implying eastern Turkey) “depend on younger generations”. This followed his statement that

“I think my generation has managed to fulfill its debt when it was necessary to protect the part of our Motherland, [Nagorno-Karabakh], from the enemies. We managed to do it. I just want to say that every generation has its own responsibilities and must be able to fulfill them well.”²

This irredentist, expansionist and hostile approach towards Azerbaijan and Turkey is accompanied by complicated relations with Georgia, leaving the country isolated and landlocked.

This irredentist, expansionist and hostile approach towards Azerbaijan and Turkey is accompanied by complicated relations with Georgia, leaving the country isolated and landlocked.

Historically speaking, this policy is the result of the complex and occasionally contradictory relationship between official Yerevan, Karabakh Armenians, and the extremist parties of the diaspora. On the other hand, it has been the *ideologies* historically produced/

¹ The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Armenia (2010) *The Decision of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Armenia on the Case on Determining the Issue of Conformity with the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia of the Obligations Stipulated by the Protocol on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Turkey and by the Protocol on Development of Relations between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Turkey Signed in Zurich*, 10 October, Available at <http://www.concourt.am/english/decisions/common/pdf/850.pdf> (Accessed: 10 April 2017).

² *Hürriyet Daily News* (2011) “‘Western Armenia’ return depends on youth, Sarkisian says”, July 26, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=8216western-armenia-8217-return-depends-on-youth-sarkisian-says-2011-07-26> (Accessed: 20 April 2017); Presidency of the Republic of Armenia (2015) “Pan-Armenian Declaration on the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide,” Press Release, January 29, Available at <http://www.president.am/en/press-release/item/2015/01/29/President-Serzh-Sargsyan-visit-Tsitsernakaberd-Genocide/> (Accessed: 15 April 2017).

reproduced by all three parties that have led Armenia to disregard historical borders and the ethnic composition of the territories of its neighboring states. These factors, as this paper will argue, continue to shape the ethnic-nationalist and expansionist policies of Armenia.

The first part of this commentary analyses the basis of the specific ideology in power in Armenia, namely racism. The second and third parts describe the concrete manifestation of ethnonationalism, namely ethnic cleansing and terrorism, as well as their relevance in today's Armenia.

'The religion of race'

Ethnocentrism and political racism were fundamental to the thinking of one of the first Armenian nationalist theorists, Grigoriy Artsruni (1845-1892),³ but the decisive turn for racist theories took place during the first decade of the 1910s, when the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF, established in 1890), also known as Dashnaksutyun, officially adopted the belief of the superiority of the 'Aryan race'.⁴ This was confirmed in 1922, when the Delegation of the Armenian Republic in Paris (an ARF organization) submitted a request to the French government, asking for the implementation of the Sèvres treaty and justifying the inclusion of provinces such as Van and Bitlis into a 'Wilsonian Armenia' (note dated 9 February 1922),⁵ and when the United Armenian Delegations (the ARF and the Ramkavar) submitted a note to the Lausanne conference (20 December), reiterating the same racist argument.⁶

In addition to these statements, the ARF signed an agreement with the first Kurdish nationalist party, the Hoybun, the year it was established (1927), in the name of 'Aryan fraternity'. The main goal was to establish an 'Aryan confederation' led by Iran, directed against the USSR and Turkey,

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3 Perinçek, M. (2015) *Ermeni Milliyetçiliğinin Serüveni*, İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, pp. 31-40.

4 See, in particular, the editorial of *Hayasdan* (Sofia), 19.08.1914 in *Aspirations et agissements révolutionnaires des comités arméniens, avant et après la proclamation de la Constitution ottomane*, İstanbul: Matbaai Orhaniye, 1917, p. 155; and Varandian, M. (1917) *L'Arménie et la question arménienne*, Laval: Imprimerie moderne, pp. 14-15 and 23-27 (Varandian was the main ideologue of the ARF from 1905 to his death in 1934).

5 Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères (AMAE), La Courneuve, microfilm P 16676.

6 AMAE, P 16677.

but on friendly terms with Fascist Italy.⁷ Not surprisingly, the ARF welcomed the arrival of Adolf Hitler in Germany, and several of its leaders, such as Drastamat ‘Dro’ Kanayan, Vahan Papazian and Alexandre Khatissian, collaborated with the Third Reich for ideological reasons but also because the Nazis promised to give Karabakh, Nakhchevan, and a part of southern Georgia to Armenia after the expected victory against the USSR.⁸ The most vocal proponent of the alliance between the ARF and the Third Reich was probably Garegin Nzhdeh (1886-1955), one of the main military leaders of the Armenian national movement after the Balkan wars (1912-1913), when he led Armenian volunteers for the Bulgarian army (he later did the same for the Russian army, during the First World War). In 1933, Nzhdeh was in charge of organizing a youth branch for the ARF in the US; he initiated the *Tzeghagron*, “the religion of race,” as an Armenian counterpart of the Hitlerjugend.⁹ On 10 April 1936, the issue of the *Hairenik Weekly*, Nzhdeh stated: “Today Germany and Italy are strong because as a nation they live and breathe in terms of race”, a statement made after the Nuremberg laws in Germany and the racist turn in Fascist Italy.¹⁰ Thus, Nzhdeh’s move to Germany, where he became a member of the ARF-dominated Armenian National Council, established in 1942 under the patronage of Alfred Rosenberg,¹¹ was fully consistent with his pre-war activities.

Nzhdeh is the main source of ideological inspiration for most of the political parties in today’s Armenia. The only person cited as a doctrinal reference in the Republican Party of Armenia’s statement of principles is Nzhdeh,¹² and the ARF, the junior partner of the Republican Party of Armenia from 1998 to 2008 and since 2016, also continues to claim Nzhdeh’s intellectual

7 Gorgas, T. J. (2007) *Le Mouvement kurde de Turquie en exil : continuités et discontinuités du nationalisme kurde sous le mandat français en Syrie et au Liban (1925-1946)*, Berne: Peter Lang, pp. 153-154, 225-228 and 253 ; Penati, B. (2008) “‘C’est l’Italie quiest prédestinée par l’Histoire’: la Rome fasciste et les nationalistes caucasiens en exil (1928-1939)”, *Oriente Moderno*, 88(1), pp. 66-69.

8 Perinçek, M. (2015) “Nazi-Dashnak Collaboration During World War II,” in AVIM (ed.), *Turkish-Russian Academics*, Ankara: Terazi, pp. 199-231.

9 John Roy Carlson (Arthur Derounian) (1943), *Under Cover: My Four Years in the Nazi Underworld of America*, New York: E. P. Dutton & Co, pp. 81-82.

10 Ishida, K. (2002) “Racisms compared: Fascist Italy and ultra-nationalist Japan,” *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 7(3), pp. 380-391.

11 “Document Reveals Dashnag Collaboration With Nazis,” *Congressional Record*, 1.11.1945, pp. A4840-A4841; Ternon, Y. (1983) *La Cause arménienne*, Paris, Le Seuil, p. 132.

12 Tuncel, T. K. (2014) *Armenian Diaspora*, Ankara: Terazi, pp. 309-311.

legacy.¹³ The situation is hardly different among the political opposition. The name of Nzhdeh was given to the second largest square in Yerevan and to a metro station in 1991, during the presidency of the ‘moderate’ Levon Ter-Petrossian, responsible for the invasion of 20% of Azerbaijani territory. Correspondingly, in autumn 2014, when the municipal council of Yerevan decided to build a second statue of Nzhdeh, the only dispute was over the location,¹⁴ and in 2013, the leader of Heritage party Raffi Hovhannisyan laid flowers at Nzhdeh’s grave.¹⁵

That ideological framework is a key to understanding why in 2003 President Robert Kocharian justified the ethnic cleansing of the Azerbaijanis of Armenia, Karabakh, and seven other districts of Azerbaijan under the Armenian occupation on the basis of alleged “ethnic incompatibility”.¹⁶

Continuity of ethnic cleansing

Ironically, for a country whose leaders constantly ask their neighbors to ‘face up to history’, the Republic of Armenia exists due to a continuous process of ethnic cleansing, sometimes unstated, sometimes explicitly celebrated. Indeed, before the Russian conquest of 1828, the Khanate of Yerevan was mostly populated by Muslims (about 80%), and the overwhelming majority of these Muslims were ethnic Azeris. Regardless, it can be argued that the main perpetrator of the policy of expulsion of Azeris and immigration of Armenians from Anatolia and Iran at the time was Russia. The role of the Russian authorities in the bloody clashes of 1905 between Armenians and Azeris - certainly through passivity, and likely through provocations - cannot be ignored.¹⁷ However, the

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13 Armenian Youth Federation, official website, Available at <https://ayfwest.org/about/history/> (Accessed: 01 April 2017).

14 *Armenia Now* (2014) “Hero’s Statue: Location chosen for GareginNjdeh’s monument in Yerevan sparks controversy,” October 30, Available at http://armenianow.com/society/58107/armenia_garegin_njdeh_statue_yerevan (Accessed: 15 April 2017).

15 Lurer (2013) “Raffi Hovannisian laid flowers at Garegin Nzhdeh’s grave,” April 1, Available at lurer.com/?p=89147&l=en (Accessed: 01 April 2017).

16 *Asbarez* (2003) “Armenia’s Azeris ‘Ethnically Incompatible,’” January 16, Available at <http://asbarez.com/48242/armenias-azeris-ethnically-incompatible/> (Accessed: 02 April 2017).

17 Constant, A. (2002) *L’Azerbaïdjan*, Paris, Karthala, pp. 228-230; Swietochowski, T. (1985) *Russian Azerbaijan, 1905-1920. The Shaping of National Identity in a Muslim Community*, Cambridge-New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 37-46; McCarthy, J. (1995) *Death and Exile. The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821-1922*, Princeton: Darwin Press, pp. 123-125.

war crimes perpetrated by Armenian units of the Russian army in eastern Anatolia from 1914 to 1917 (to create a ‘Greater Armenia’) was a somewhat different situation, because the Russian central government and at least some of the officers present were concerned by this extreme violence. The resistance among Muslims provoked by these killings, destructions, and rapes made the Russian domination only more difficult.¹⁸ The widespread devastation and massacres during the Russian retreat (1917-1918) are precisely due to the collapse of the Russian army, and the resulting lack of manpower.¹⁹ Correspondingly, if the massacre of Azeris in Baku in 1918 is the result of an alliance between the ARF and the Bolsheviks,²⁰ the campaign of ethnic cleansing in Armenia, from 1918 to 1920 – today euphemized as ‘Armenization’ in ARF and pro-ARF publications²¹ – is the sole responsibility of the ARF government.

In this regard, it is essential to note that the Armenian cabinet continued the expulsions and massacres in 1920 in the face of domestic opposition, and despite the cost of ethnic cleaning for Armenia itself.²² Indeed, on April 8, 1920, Lord Curzon firmly warned the representative of Armenia Avetis Aharonian

“We have decided, when the treaty with Turkey is signed, to send several commissions which shall settle the boundaries of the three states. I am compelled, however, to observe that your people, especially the Dashnak Party, of which I think you, Mr. Aharonian, are a member, have given frequent cause for the break of the peace. Your three chiefs, Dro, Hamazasp and Kulkhandanian are the ringleaders of the bands which have destroyed Tartar (Azerbaijani) villages and have staged massacres in Zangezour, Surrnalu, Etchmiadzin, and Zangibasar. This is intolerable. Look - and here he pointed to a file of official

18 Reynolds, M.A. (2011) *Shattering Empires*, New York-Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, pp. 156-159.

19 Lieutenant-colonel Vladimir Nikolaevitch Twerdokhleboff (1919) *Notes d'un officier supérieur russe sur les atrocités d'Erzeroum*, İstanbul, Available at http://louisville.edu/as/history/turks/notes_sur_les_atrocites_d_erzeroum.pdf (Accessed: 10 March 2017).

20 Kazemzadeh, F. (1952) *The Struggle for Transcaucasia*, New York-Oxford: Philosophical Library/George Ronald Publisher, pp. 71-75; Montefiore, S. S. (2008) *Young Stalin*, New York: Vintage Books, p. 374.

21 Even a political scientist of Armenian heritage and hostile to today's Azerbaijan criticized this euphemism: Minassian, G. (2005) *Géopolitique de l'Arménie*, Paris: Ellipses, p. 16-17.

22 McCarthy, J., *Death and Exile...*, p. 216.

documents on the table - look at this, here in December is the reports of the last few months concerning ruined Tartar villages which my representative Wardrop has sent me. The official Tartar communique speaks of the destruction of 300 villages. This may do great harm to your cause.”²³

Curzon continued: “Your interests demand that you be peaceful otherwise we cannot help you, we cannot supply you arms and ammunition because you will be using them against the Tartars.”²⁴ However, the ARF cabinet ignored this crystal clear warning from the Foreign Secretary. Indeed, when asked by Paris about Yerevan’s demand for weapons, Damien de Martel, the French High Commissioner in the Caucasus, did not answer yes or no, but expressed an implicit and strong disapproval. One of his main arguments was the continuation of ethnic cleansing in June 1920, namely two months after Lord Curzon’s strong statement. During this month alone, in villages close to the Turkish-Armenian boundary, 4,000 ‘Tatars’ (Azerbaijanis) were massacred by Armenian soldiers, including women and children, and 36,000 expelled “by canon shots.”²⁵ Correspondingly, *Le Temps*, a daily notoriously close to the Quai d’Orsay, wrote that several dozens of thousands Muslims had been killed in Armenia during the months of June and July 1920.²⁶ It is clear that the priority of the ARF cabinet was the physical elimination of non-Armenians, in spite of the Soviet threats (the Soviets had invaded Azerbaijan in April 1920, profiting from the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict) and of the risk of war with Kemalist Turkey.

It is clear that the priority of the ARF cabinet was the physical elimination of non-Armenians, in spite of the Soviet threats (the Soviets had invaded Azerbaijan in April 1920, profiting from the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict) and of the risk of war with Kemalist Turkey.

As already observed, the ARF still sees the ‘Armenization’ in 1918-1920 as an achievement. Regarding the Republican Party of Armenia, the clearest example is furnished by the official commemorations of Andranik Ozanian (1863-1927), including by President Sargsyan.²⁷ An officer for an Armenian volunteer

23 Aharonian, A. (1963) “From Sardarapat to Sèvres and Lausanne (A Political Diary) (Part IV),” *Armenian Review*, 16:3, p. 52.

24 Ibid., p. 53.

25 Télégramme de Damien de Martel au ministère des Affaires étrangères, 20 Juillet 1920, AMAE, P 16674.

26 *Le Temps* (1920) “Les musulmans en Arménie”, July 25, p. 4.

27 Presidency of the Republic of Armenia (2013) “President Serzh Sargsyan Visited The Erablur,” Press Release, April 9, Available at <http://www.president.am/en/press-release/item/2013/04/09/Presi->

unit during the First World War, Antranik Ozanian organized massacres and reportedly involved in the rape of women and children in the eastern Anatolia, particularly in 1916.²⁸ He even refused to halt the ethnic cleansing by the ARF in mid-1918 (interrupted by the advance of Ottoman forces): “Andranik forces crushed one Tatar [Azeri] village after another,”²⁹ as Richard Hovannisian, a historian strongly identified with hardline Armenian nationalism, writes.

It is not difficult to see the ideological continuity between the 1918-1920 cleansing, and the massacres - especially in Khojaly - during the war of 1992-1994 occupation of Azerbaijani territories by Armenia. Indeed, the issue of the personal responsibilities of current Armenian leaders, President Sargsyan first, has to be raised in this regard. When he was still a minister, Mr. Sargsyan stated: “Before Khojaly, the Azerbaijanis thought that we were joking with them, they thought that the Armenians were people who could not raise their hand against the civilian population. *We* [author’s emphasis] were able to break that [stereotype]. And that’s what happened.”³⁰ By definition, “we” includes “I,” and

Terrorism, motivated by the historical legacy of the so-called liberation movements, is one of the clearest elements of historical continuity in Armenian nationalism.

in fact, Mr. Sarkissian was the officer in charge in and around Khojaly in February 1992.

Continuity with terrorism

Terrorism, motivated by the historical legacy of the so-called liberation movements, is one of the clearest elements of historical continuity in Armenian nationalism.³¹ In the case of today’s Armenia, the first attack to consider is the one perpetrated by members of the (banned) United

dent-Serzh-Sargsyan-Erablur-visit/ (Accessed: 10 April 2017); Presidency of the Republic of Armenia (2015) “President Attends Concert Evening Devoted To Andranik Ozanian’s 150th Anniversary,” Press Release, February 25, Available at <http://www.president.am/en/press-release/item/2015/02/25/President-Serzh-Sargsyan-visit-event-dedicated-Andranik-Ozanyan/> (Accessed: 1 April 2017).

28 See the report of the mayor of Ilica and of the legal advisor of the province of Erzurum, 14 June 1916, in Schemsi, K. (1919) *Turcs et Arméniensdevantl’histoire*, Genève: Imprimerie nationale, pp. 52-56 Available at http://louisville.edu/a-s/history/turks/turcs_et_armeniens.pdf (Accessed: 30 March 2017).

29 Hovannisian, R. G. (1967) *Armenia on the Road to Independence. 1918*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, University of California Press, p. 194. See also Ter-Minassian, A. (2006) *1918-1920, la République d’Arménie*, Bruxelles: Complexe, pp. 84-85.

30 de Waal, T. (2003) *Black Garden*, New York-London: New York University Press, p. 172.

31 Gunn, C. (2016) “Getting Away with Murder: Soghomon Tehlirian, ASALA and the Justice Commandos, 1921-1984,” in *War and Collapse*, Hakan Yavuz and Feroz Ahmad (eds), Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, pp. 896-917; Lowry, H. (1984) “Armenian Terrorism: Threads of Continuity,” in *International Terrorism and the Drug Connection*, Ankara: Ankara University Press, pp. 71-83; Tölölyan, K. (1992) “Terrorism in modern Armenian political culture,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 4:2, pp. 8-22.

Nation Party (UNP), not to say by the UNP itself, in the subway of Moscow on 8 January 1977. Officially seven,³² possibly 35 persons were killed³³—in that case, twice the number of victims of the terrorist attacks in Paris in January 2015.³⁴ During the trial, Stepan Yatikyan, the main perpetrator, was particularly arrogant and expressed his anti-Semitic beliefs (the myth of Judeo-Bolshevism) very clearly.³⁵ Yet, the Republican Party of Armenian considers him the successor of the UNP, which existed underground from 1967 to 1987.³⁶

The UPN terrorists were firmly supported during and after their trial, in 1979, by the Armenian Secret Army for Liberation of Armenian (ASALA).³⁷ A decade later, ASALA terrorists joined the Armenian armed forces that invaded Azerbaijan. The most emblematic example is Monte Melkonian (1957-1993). No. 2 of the ASALA from 1980 to 1983, namely during the bloodiest period of the group, Melkonian established his dissident terrorist organization in mid-1983, the ASALA-Revolutionary Movement. Arrested in Paris in 1985, he was sentenced in 1986 to six years in jail (including two suspended) for conspiracy, illegal possession of a gun and explosives, and possession of a fake passport. During his trial, Melkonian was similarly arrogant and tried to deny his crimes, but the hearings were a disaster for the image of Armenian terrorists, especially when the presiding judge publicly read Melkonian's own documents on the false flag attacks by the ASALA against Armenian targets in France.³⁸ Released in 1989, Melkonian moved to Hungary and then to Armenia, when he became an officer of the invasion forces and was killed in 1993 during a clash with the Azerbaijani army. However, Melkonian's case is not an isolated one. Gilbert Minassian, a member of the

32 Russia Today (2010) "Recent history of terror attacks in Moscow," 29 March, Available at <https://www.rt.com/news/moscow-blast-background-attacks/> (Accessed: 20 April 2017).

33 Hyland, F.P. (1991) *Armenian Terrorism. The Past, the Present, the Prospects*, Boulder-Oxford: Westview Press, p. 79.

34 L'obs (2015) "Chronologie: 3 jours d'attentats terroristes sur la France," January 10, Available at tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/charlie-hebdo/20150110.OBS9671/charlie-hebdo-chronologie-3-jours-d-attentats-terroristes-sur-la-france.html (Accessed: 15 March 2017).

35 Youtube Video, "Armenian Terrorists Attack in Moscow Metro – 1977" published on 17 September 2013, Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8SKU9Lkp3k> (Accessed: 01 April 2017).

36 Tuncel, T.K., *Armenian Diaspora...*, p. 55.

37 Hay Baykar (1979) "Brejnev assassin!", février-mars, p. 6.

38 Le Monde (1986) "Les archives sanglantes du terrorisme arménien", December 1; Le Monde (1986) "Monte Melkonian est condamné à six ans de prison dont deux avec sursis" December 15; Hay Baykar (1986) "Un verdict scandaleux," December 20, pp. 3-7.

political wing of the ASALA in France, sentenced *in absentia* to life imprisonment in 1989 for a hold-up perpetrated in 1984. He later became a colonel of the Armenian army for his participation in the war of 1992-1994.³⁹

As another example, Mardiros Jamgotchian was sentenced to 15 years in jail in Geneva in December 1981 for the murder of Mehmet Yergüz, a secretary of the Turkish consulate in that city.⁴⁰ He was welcomed in Armenia by the Armenian Benevolent Association ‘Gtutium’ – the very first NGO created in Armenia – after his release from a Swiss prison, in 1991.⁴¹ Even more remarkably, Varoujan Garbidjian was sentenced to life in prison for his involvement in the Orly attack (eight persons killed on 15 July 1983). After his release and deportation in 2001, he was welcomed in Yerevan by the Prime Minister, Andranik Markarian, and by the mayor of Armenia’s capital, Robert Nazarian, who pledged to provide him with employment and accommodation.⁴² Correspondingly, in 2009, the Armenian Ministry of Culture financially supported the publication of a book glorifying the bloody hostage-taking at the Turkish consulate of Paris (1981), which was presented in 2010 to the press by its author, Grigor Janikyan, with two of the perpetrators.⁴³ More recently, a memorial was erected in Yerevan for the deceased ASALA terrorists.

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Conclusion

The occupation of Western Azerbaijan by Armenia continues primarily because the ideology of the current Armenian leadership considers the dream of an ‘integral Armenia’ inhabited by ‘Aryans’ to be more important than reality. It is, in a sense, the continuation of the Dashnak policies in 1918-1920. A solution to the conflict must identify its ideological roots and individual responsibilities in Yerevan. As far public opinion is concerned, the campaigns of information on Khojaly –

39 La Provence (2013) “Retour à Marseille de ‘Gib’ héros national arménien,” August 09.

40 Richardot, J.P. (1982) *Arméniens, quoi qu’il en coûte*, Paris: Fayard, pp. 95-122; Şimşir, B. N. (2000), *Şehit Diplomatlarımız (1973-1994)*, Ankara: Bilgi yayınevi, Vol. I, pp. 40-422.

41 Letter of Gtutium, 8 April 1991. I express my thanks to Sevil Kaplun, who sent to me a copy of this document.

42 Radio Free Europe (2001) “Gusinsky says there si no respect for free press in Russia,” May 7, Available at <https://www.rferl.org/a/1142396.html> (Accessed: 02 April 2017).

43 See <http://hyeforum.com/index.php?showtopic=31988> (Accessed: 02 April 2017).

and more generally the ethnic cleansing in Armenia from 1987 to 1989 and in occupied Azerbaijan from 1992 to 1994 – should include the historical background, stressing the continuity with past action such as the ones of 1918-1920 and the ideological dimension. At the legal level, after the *Chiragov v. Armenia* decision of the European Court of Human Rights, the issue of the personal accountabilities of current Armenia leaders should be raised.

The EU and the South Caucasus 25 years since Independence: Azerbaijan in the Geopolitical Strategy of the EU

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The South Caucasus is an extraordinarily complex region in many senses. Having re-gained independence in 1991, the South Caucasus remains one of the world's most security-challenged regions, facing a host of internal and external security threats.

Azerbaijan became a point of interest for the international organizations, as well as major external powers, such as the United States and the European Union.

Despite its small size and relatively small population, the South Caucasus occupies an important place in international geopolitics.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 brought new stakeholders to the region. The South Caucasus had the potential to become a prosperous region due to its natural resources and strategic location between Europe and Central Asia, but before that, the region sank into violence and years of political and economic turmoil. Ethnic and religious diversity, old territorial disputes and the rapid growth of the post-Soviet nationalism seriously impeded development. Long-standing claims by neighboring Armenia over the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan erupted into separatist ethnic violence by 1988, and a full-scale war with by 1991, with Armenians, backed by Russia. Despite the devastating impact of the wars in the South Caucasus in the beginning of 1990s, Azerbaijan became a point of interest for the international organizations, as well as major external powers, such as the United States and the European Union.

In this respect, within the abovementioned parameters, close cooperation with the EU can provide an access to the world economic and cultural space for Azerbaijan.

There are several areas in which international organizations worked in Azerbaijan: humanitarian aid, educational and cultural programs, support for non-governmental organizations, joint economic projects, and so on. In the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the world witnessed the rise of liberal values across the whole post-Soviet space. In this respect, within the abovementioned parameters, close cooperation with the EU can provide an access to the world economic and cultural space for Azerbaijan.

Specifics aspects of the EU's geopolitical interests in the South Caucasus

Throughout the 1990s, the EU kept a low profile in the South Caucasus. The EU's only office in the region was opened in Tbilisi in 1995, focusing on delivering aid and humanitarian assistance

management. The EU's real institutional involvement in the South Caucasus began with the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements with Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan, which were signed in 1996 and entered into force in 1999. The region gained importance for the EU, above all, due to its energy resources and as a transportation corridor between East and West, North and South.¹

Nonetheless, for the most part, the South Caucasus remained *terra incognita* for many EU members until the late 1990s; only a few nations (France, the UK, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Greece) opened embassies in all three Caucasus countries. In this respect, the willingness of some EU countries to engage with the region was a rational course of action; the EU does not conceal its intention to build 'a ring of friends', primarily via the involvement of non-member regional countries outside its borders.

The EU joined the mix of actors and organizations engaged in the South Caucasus in the early 1990. Eventually, the activities of international organizations accompany with globalization, liberalization, and democratization slogans, intensifying its engagement over the years with the three states, who eventually became a part of the EU's European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) and the Eastern Partnership (EaP).² In particular, the ENP, first outlined by the EU Commission in 2003, is aimed at the democratization of the EU's southern and eastern neighbors via economic integration and cooperation with various EU institutions, including non-governmental organizations. In order to achieve this goal, the EU presented an action plan to Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia, envisaging the implementation of the EU regulations such as respect for human rights, modernization of economic systems, democratic election procedures, and so on. Although the ENP project allowed the regional countries to collaborate with the EU in various sectors, the Eastern Partnership program (EaP), initiated in 2009, has served as the key platform in terms of the

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1 Gafarli O., Anapiosyan A., Chapichadze K. (2016) 'The Role of Global and Regional Actors in the South Caucasus.' Available at: http://caucasusedition.net/analysis/3581/#_Toc452716266 (Accessed: 22 February 2017).

2 Paul A. (2016) 'The EU and the South Caucasus 25 Years since Independence,' *Heinrich Böll Stiftung*, Available at: <https://eu.boell.org/en/2016/11/25/eu-and-south-caucasus-25-years-independence> (Accessed: 22 February 2017).

gradual integration of the South Caucasus countries into Europe.

The EaP offers a wide-ranging platform for cooperation between the EU and the South Caucasus and has set ambitious goals. The Eastern Partnership supports stability by contributing to conflict resolution, the creation of free trade zones, and provision of financial support. It also provides assistance in fostering cross-societal contacts through, inter alia, visa liberalization, and educational programs. The EaP also seeks to facilitate institutional reforms, including through the adoption of EU regulations.³ In this way, Europe is eager to create a “civilized European space” in the region, as the stability of the South Caucasus is an important element of the EU stability. Thus, by helping the South Caucasus to become more democratic and stable, the EU will gain a strategic partner on its borders.

Although the EU does not hide its intentions regarding the South Caucasus, it avoids providing a clear definition of its main priorities in the region. In this respect, as stated by the EU

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Commissioner of the European Neighborhood Policy, Benita Ferrero-Valdner, “The EU is deeply interested in the South Caucasus with a stable strategic economic situation.”⁴ Nevertheless, after 25 years since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the South Caucasus remains plagued by conflicts, mostly referred to as *frozen conflicts*. But the EU has remained an outside actor when it comes to the region’s frozen conflicts, on the basis that other actors are facilitating or mediating the negotiation processes. The EU has been involved, at most, as an observer and future guarantor of a possible final settlement agreement; by contrast, other, particularly Turkey and Russia have acted as both supporters and financiers of peace talks.⁵

The EU’s low-level involvement in security issues can be explained by both external and internal factors. Another key regional actor

3 Bolshakov A. and Mansurov T. (2013) ‘Conflicts of identities in the South Caucasus and Problems of Integration of the states of the region into European Structures.’ Available at: [https://idosi.org/wasj/wasj27\(elelc\)13/10.pdf](https://idosi.org/wasj/wasj27(elelc)13/10.pdf) (Accessed: 22 February 2017).

4 Regnum.ru (2009) ‘Грузия, Армения и Азербайджан являются важными для Евросоюза странами: Комиссар ЕС.’ Available at: <https://regnum.ru/news/1128591.html> (Accessed: 22 February 2017)

5 Raquel M. and Simão L. (2008) ‘The EU’s Neighborhood Policy and the South Caucasus: Unfolding New Patterns of Cooperation,’ *Caucasus Review of International Relations*, 1(2), pp. 225-239, Available at: http://cria-online.org/5_6.html (Accessed: 22 February 2017).

– Russia – has played a major role in external mediation of conflicts (Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia). The EU’s involvement has been made possible through the channels of other Western organizations, such as OSCE and the United Nations. In this regard, it is worth noting that the EU’s conflict resolution efforts within, inter alia, the proposed EaP framework have failed to gain any real traction. This is mainly because they have not set forth an implementation scheme for peace building among conflict parties.

Since independence, over the past 25 years, the South Caucasus republics have made progress towards building national identity, improving welfare, increasing stability, etc. But the role of the EU in this process has been limited, both in terms of technical and financial assistance, as it has never had a strategic vision or clear policy for the region. Thus, despite the variety of tools at its disposal, and promises of strategic cooperation, the latter is still far from being the strongest external player of the region.

EU – Azerbaijan cooperation in the context of common European geopolitical interests in the South Caucasus

From the point of view of the EU, Azerbaijan is a critical partner in the South Caucasus due to its natural resource wealth, and the fact that it has the largest population potential in the region. After gaining independence in 1991, Azerbaijan focused on strengthening its sovereignty, both on a political and economic level.

After being a part of Soviet Union for more than 70 years, one of Azerbaijan’s most important foreign policy priorities was to develop relationships with Western actors, in particular the European Union. Following the EU’s successful enlargement policy and the “color” revolutions in Ukraine and Georgia, Azerbaijan was included in the EU’s European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) when it was launched to replace the TACIS program.⁶

The EU – Azerbaijan partnership is mainly based on the support

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⁶ Hug A. (2012), ‘Spotlight on Azerbaijan,’ *The Foreign Policy Centre (London)*. Available at <http://fpc.org.uk/publications/spotlight-on-azerbaijan> (Accessed: 23 February 2017).

The EU – Azerbaijan partnership is mainly based on the support to peaceful settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, empowerment of democratic institutions, support of balanced economic development with a focus on diversification of the domestic market, development of agriculture, and other principles.

to peaceful settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, empowerment of democratic institutions, support of balanced economic development with a focus on diversification of the domestic market, development of agriculture, and other principles.⁷

Although the EU aims to diversify its cooperation with Azerbaijan, there is no doubt that the energy cooperation remains the main priority of the partnership. Given the importance of Azerbaijani natural gas in improving European energy security and reducing dependency on Russian gas, the EU is seeking to integrate Azerbaijan (and other South Caucasus republics) into a pan-European energy market in order to liberalize and modernize its energy sector.

EU officials assured Baku that intensive energy cooperation would provide for speedier integration into the European energy market than has been borne out by the reality. As a part of this policy, the European Commission proposed the Southern Gas Corridor in 2008, intended to transfer natural gas from Azerbaijan’s Shah Deniz gas field to Europe via the South Caucasus Pipeline (SCP). The total investment of this initiative is estimated at \$45 billion. In 2006, Azerbaijan started to export around 8.6 billion cubic meters (bcm) of natural gas annually to Georgia and Turkey via the SCP.⁸ “All eyes are on Azerbaijan on this day”, said Minister of Energy and Industry of Azerbaijan Natiq Aliyev during the recent Baku meeting of the advisory board of the Southern Gas Corridor.⁹ Official Baku is seeking to leverage its importance as an energy producer in order to attract additional foreign investment in its energy sector, and develop east-west energy transit infrastructure amid economic turbulence.

The EU’s policy towards Azerbaijan shows that its geopolitical aims and priorities are aligned with Azerbaijan’s balanced integration policy. Unlike other regional countries, Azerbaijan

7 ENP EU – Azerbaijan Action Plan (2004) Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/sites/ecas/files/azerbaijan_enp_ap_final_en.pdf (Accessed: 23 February 2017).

8 Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (2017) ‘Southern Gas Corridor.’ Available at: <https://www.tap-ag.com/the-pipeline/the-big-picture/southern-gas-corridor> (Accessed: 24 February 2017).

9 APA Information Agency (2017) “Natiq Əliyev: ‘Avropa ölkələrinin gözü Azərbaycandır’”. Available at: <http://apa.az/iqtisadiyyat-xeberleri/senaye-ve-energetika/natiq-eliyev-avropa-olkelerinin-gozu-azerbaycandadir.html> (Accessed: 24 February 2017).

has avoided adopting either the strict ideology of “Euro-Atlantic integration at all costs”, or the ideology of Russian supremacy. Instead, Baku attempts to combine and implement the best practices of both approaches in a way that reflects its national interests.¹⁰ In addition to the EU, the other important regional player in the energy sector in the South Caucasus is Russia. Any developments in this sector must be considered against the backdrop of the confrontations between major powers. The deep engagement of the EU with the South Caucasus republics, in particular Azerbaijan, is undoubtedly a source of concern for Russia. Therefore, unlike its neighbors – Armenia, which is trapped between its traditional ties to Russia and Georgia, for whom integration into the Euro-Atlantic zone is its main priority, Azerbaijan has chosen its own geostrategic trajectory.

Thus although the EU is attempting to strengthen bilateral cooperation in the economic, cultural, and energy sectors, official Baku prefers to maintain a degree of distance in its relations with Brussels. On the other hand, Azerbaijani authorities do not hide their disappointment over the EU’s apathy towards the unresolved Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Azerbaijan has been campaigning for the recognition of the illegal occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh region by Armenia for years. However, Baku faces what it considers to be double standards, and has accused Western countries of tacitly approving Armenian occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh. This issue was repeatedly highlighted by Baku following the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia, which led to economic sanctions against Russia.

Azerbaijan believes that the same approach should be applied to Armenia in relation to its ongoing occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh. Ultimately, Baku would like the EU to explicitly recognize Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity in the same way it has done in regard to other territorial disputes in the EaP region, namely Moldova, Georgia, and most recently Ukraine. The attempt by the EU to maintain distinctions between - and thus different approaches to - these conflicts in terms of territorial integrity is not credible.¹¹ This raises a new question:

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10 Kamal A. (2013) ‘Azerbaijan’s Foreign Policy: Between East and West,’ *Istituto Affari Internazionali*, Available at: <http://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/iaiwpl305.pdf> (Accessed: 24 February 2017).

11 Gotve G. (2016) Euractive “Azerbaijan’s rejection of EU association was an eye-opener for Brus-

Perceptions of the EU's passivity and dissatisfaction with its overall position on the unresolved conflict contributed to negative tome in bilateral relations between 2014 and 2015.

should the EU be more involved in the settlement of ongoing conflicts in the South Caucasus, in particular, Nagorno-Karabakh, considering that the aim of this organization is to contribute to the development of political and economic stability in the region? Perceptions of the EU's passivity and dissatisfaction with its overall position on the unresolved conflict contributed to negative tome in bilateral relations between 2014 and 2015.

Thus it seems that despite its neutrality on key diplomatic issues, Azerbaijan needs the EU, which remains the country's leading trade partner. For Azerbaijan, Brussels is an increasingly important element in its balanced foreign policy strategy.

However, in mid-2016, official Baku signaled its readiness to start talks for a new agreement. This long-awaited rapprochement coincided with a period of economic turbulence in Azerbaijan following the collapse in global oil prices. Thus, on 14 November 2016, the European Council adopted a mandate for the European Commission and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to negotiate a comprehensive agreement with the Republic of Azerbaijan. The agreement will also extend cooperation to such new areas such as defense and security, as well as intercultural dialogue. Ultimately, Azerbaijan wants a strategic relationship based on mutual interests and objectives where interests are more narrowly and clearly defined.¹²

Thus it seems that despite its neutrality on key diplomatic issues, Azerbaijan needs the EU, which remains the country's leading trade partner. For Azerbaijan, Brussels is an increasingly important element in its balanced foreign policy strategy. The pro-Armenian foreign policies of neighboring Iran and Russia mean that

Azerbaijan needs to cooperate with the EU. In order to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute, Baku requires more international support and engagement with Euro-Atlantic structures.

Conclusion

Since the end of the Cold war and the fall of the Soviet Union, the EU has progressively increased its involvement in the South Caucasus, by establishing multilateral cooperation mechanisms

sels' Available at: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/europe-s-east/news/azerbaijan-s-rejection-of-eu-association-was-an-eye-opener-for-brussels/> (Accessed: 24 February 2017).

12 European Commission (2016) 'Mandate for a new framework agreement with Azerbaijan, European Commission.' Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/roadmaps/docs/2016_eas_021_framework_agreement_azerbaijan_en.pdf (Accessed: 24 February 2017).

as well as specific models of engagement with individual countries. However, the EU still lacks a clear position or coherent policies for the region. As mentioned above, the EU policy towards the South Caucasus has produced limited results.

In the case of Azerbaijan, Baku has made clear its unwillingness to advance political agenda of Brussels, opting instead for cooperation in the fields of energy, economy and culture, which do not entail certain political obligations. Likewise, Azerbaijan decided to postpone the signing of its EU Association Agreement during the Vilnius and Riga summits. Obviously, Baku seeks to pursue a clear and balanced foreign policy that responds to the complexities of the current geopolitical environment, wherein Russia still maintains a decisive role. Baku has chosen to develop good relations both with Moscow and with Brussels based on common interests, while avoiding falling within the orbit of either of these powers. Thus, Azerbaijan is willing to cooperate with the EU on its own terms. Baku expects political support from the EU in realizing the mutually beneficial SGC project and resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, but to date the EU has failed to fulfill expectations in regard to the latter.

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The End of the Asian Century: War, Stagnation, and the Risks to the World's Most Dynamic Region

Michael R. Auslin*



Michael R. Auslin, a former history professor at Yale University, opens his book with the statement, “Since Marco Polo, the West has waited for the Asian Century”. According to Auslin, the world believes that this century has now arrived, but that Asia is a fractured region threatened by stagnation and instability.

His book is based on a quarter-century of engagement with and study of Asia, and years of travel throughout the Indo-Pacific region, including three major research trips and several shorter trips starting in 2010. Auslin interviewed dozens of politicians, military officials, academics, business leaders, media figures, and ordinary citizens during these journeys.

In this book, Auslin assesses the current situation in Asia as well as its future challenges and prospects. In doing so, he separates the book into seven sections, and provides a pragmatic overview of the region. He starts by presenting the ‘risk map’ of Asia, mapping out five discrete yet interrelated risk regions, aimed at demonstrating that, “the most promising way to reduce risk is to push for greater liberalism and a strengthened rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific” (p. 10). In the second section, Auslin focuses on Asia’s economic miracle. He posits that the region has taken over the mantle of ‘the world’s workshop’ from Western countries, and alleges that this transformation has not been driven by China alone, but by many Asian countries. His main point in this section - and in this book as a whole - is that “today the economic miracle of Asia is at risk from the failure of economic reform to deal with the costs of growth, whether in advanced countries like Japan or developing nations like India and Indonesia” (p. 14).

The third chapter of the book, the Goldilocks Dilemma, explores Asia’s demographic picture based on three case studies, each of which represents a different facet of demographic risk: Japan, which has too few people; China, which is making a transition from too many people to too few; and India, whose population is still growing. In this sense, the author approaches Asia’s demographic risk in light of both its economic and political challenges.

In the following chapter, Auslin continues to detail the risks that Asia faces. He declares that, “next to the failure of economic reform, the political challenges facing Indo-Pacific nations are perhaps the largest risk area the region faces” (p. 82). In this sense,

the author hypothesizes that economic and social pressures across Asia threaten domestic political stability, and charts the challenges to democratic and authoritarian regimes alike.

Chapter five explores the questions “why can’t we all just get along?” and “why Asia isn’t a real region like Europe, meaning, why isn’t it united?” The author’s basic response to these questions is that “the Indo-Pacific may be the world’s most economically dynamic area, but [...] it is also the most politically diverse region imaginable” (p. 122). Auslin comes to conclusion that this diversity has so far prevented the nations of Asia from uniting in the way that Europe has. In addition, he suggests that this diversity has prevented the giants – China, Japan, and India – from creating formal alliances among their neighbors. In addition, there are few close partnerships.

Chapter six focuses on the potential military conflicts in the region. Auslin points out that Asia’s security is as dynamic as its politics. This, he argues, stems from the nature of Indo-Pacific nations, and adds that they are too busy getting rich to waste time on territorial disputes and making shows of military strength. From a realist perspective, states prioritize ensuring national security in an anarchic world. However, the countries in Asia have been seeking to assure their security cooperatively. Auslin alleges that “since the 1940s, Asia, like much of the rest of the world, has been living in a historically abnormal period of relative peace, making us forget that competition and conflict are endemic to human nature” (p. 152).

In chapter seven specifically, as well as in the book as a whole, the author maps a series of risk areas in an effort to diagnose dangers that may spell the end of what many have come to call the ‘Asian Century’. Through these maps, he defines five risk areas: the failure of economic reform, demographic pressure, unfinished political revolutions, the lack of regional political community, and the threat of conflict.

Since the region’s rise or fall will have a huge impact on the rest of the World, mapping the risks in Indo-Pacific region is evidently a valuable endeavor. Although the title of the book suggests that Auslin believes the Asian century is over, he urges the countries in the region to recognize the risks they are facing. In addition,

he urges them to tackle these risks so that the twenty-first century will indeed be an Asian Century, and influence the course of world history for the benefit of all nations.

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CAUCASUS UNDER REVIEW

RECENTLY PUBLISHED BOOKS

While the Caucasus is a region of enormous diversity and potential, it is also a region about which relatively little is known. However, during the last decade, numerous publications on the region have expanded both regional and international understanding of this diversity and potential. This overview of recent publications provides an up-to-date reading list for anyone interested in the region.



This issue presents seven recently published books which delve into a range of issues, from ethnicity to gender; nationalism to Islam; the crisis in Ukraine and EU-Russia relations to Azerbaijan's foreign policy.

*The first book, **Everyone Loses: The Ukraine Crisis and the Ruinous Contest for Post-Soviet Eurasia***, provides a timely, thoughtful and insightful account of a complex region during a complicated period. **Samuel Charap** (Senior Fellow for Russia and Eurasia, IISS), **Timothy J. Colton** (Morris and Anna Feldberg Professor of Government and Russian Studies and Chair of the Department of Government, Harvard University) examine the roots of the Ukraine crisis, which saw the Russian annexation of the Crimean peninsula. The book offers a coherent narrative of Western and Russian policies in post-Soviet Eurasia since 1991, providing a balanced assessment of both Russia and the West's actions post-2014. The authors argue that all governments involved must recognize the failure of current policies and commit to finding mutually acceptable alternatives.

*The second book, **The Main Directions of the Foreign Policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan (1991-2016)*** is published by the Center for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan (SAM), and collectively authored by the SAM's researchers. The book is dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the restoration of the independence of Azerbaijan, and analyzes the different directions and issues surrounding national foreign policy. It is an in-depth and comprehensive account of the foreign policy of Azerbaijan over the past quarter-century, and is a valuable resource for scholars and students of the South Caucasus region and post-Soviet regions.

*The next book, **Neighbourhood Perceptions of the Ukraine Crisis: From the Soviet Union into Eurasia?***, is edited by **Gerhard Besier** (Director of the Sigmund Neumann Institute in Berlin; teaches at Stanford University, USA) and **Katarzyna Stoklosa**, (Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science and Public Management, Centre for Border Region Studies at the University of Southern Denmark, Denmark). The book primarily incorporates an interdisciplinary and a comparative approach. Historians, sociologists, anthropologists,

political scientists, philologists, psychologists and religious scholars from a diverse range of European universities analyze Ukrainian and Russian neighborhoods and fears of Russia in its neighboring countries from different perspectives.

Vocabularies of International Relations after the Crisis in Ukraine is a collection of articles on the relations between academic vocabulary and the Russia-related crisis. The editors, **Andrey Makarychev** (Guest Professor at the Johan Skytte Institute of Political Science, University of Tartu, Estonia) and **Alexandra Yatsyk** (Visiting Researcher at the Centre Russian and Eurasian Studies, University of Uppsala, Sweden, and Head of the Centre for Cultural Studies of Post-Socialism, Kazan Federal University, Russia) investigate whether the crisis has altered previous assumptions, fostering a new academic vocabulary, or rather confirm the validity of well-established schools of thought in international relations. In this sense, this text will be of great interest to students and scholars studying international relations, politics, and Russian and Ukrainian studies.

Constructing Nationalism in Iran: From the Qajars to the Islamic Republic is a collection of essays edited by **Meir Litvak**, Associate Professor at the Department of Middle Eastern History, Director of the Alliance Center for Iranian Studies at Tel Aviv University. Litvak is also the author of *Shi'i Scholars of Nineteenth Century Iraq: The 'Ulama' of Najaf and Karbala*. This volume originated in an international workshop on the construction of nationalism in Iran held at the Alliance Center for Iranian Studies of Tel Aviv University in June 2013. The chapters offer new interpretations and fresh insights of Iranian history and Iranian nationalism.

Two academics at George Washington University, Robert W. Ortung and Sufian Zhemukhov, argue in their book **'Putin's Olympics: The Sochi Games and the Evolution of Twenty-First Century Russia'** that what we are seeing is a return to the national purpose of the Soviet megaprojects, though without an explicit ideology. The authors seek to illuminate Putin's Russia through a case study of the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics. The Games highlight many of the triumphs and tragedies of contemporary Russia, and the authors use the nearly universal

appeal of the Olympics to shine a light on an important aspect of international politics, namely the way Russia's political system works under President Vladimir Putin.

The EU and Russia in Their 'Contested Neighbourhood': Multiple External Influences, Policy Transfer and Domestic Change is written by Laure Delcour, Scientific Coordinator and Senior Research Fellow under the EU-funded FP7 project "Exploring the Security-Democracy Nexus in the Caucasus". She offers an extensive transnational and cross-sector comparison of the EU's influence on policy and institutional change against domestic preferences and Russia's policies. The book also analyzes reforms requested by the EU within the broader temporal context of post-Soviet transformations.

The last book is **Stalin: From the Caucasus to the Kremlin**, written by Christopher Read, Professor of Later Modern European History at the University of Warwick. His first biography was on Lenin, which was published by Routledge in 2005. In this volume, Christopher Read examines Stalin's contribution to and impact on Russian and world events in the first half of the twentieth century. As another myth-busting biography, it will be of interest to students of modern Russian history.

Everyone Loses: The Ukraine Crisis and the Ruinous Contest for Post-Soviet Eurasia

By Samuel Charap, Timothy J. Colton

Disorder erupted in Ukraine in 2014, involving the overthrow of a sitting government, the Russian annexation of the Crimean peninsula, and a violent insurrection, supported by Moscow, in the east of the country.

This *Adelphi* book argues that the crisis has yielded a ruinous outcome, in which all the parties are worse off and international security has deteriorated. This negative-sum scenario resulted from years of zero-sum behavior on the part of Russia and the West in post-Soviet Eurasia, which the authors rigorously analyze. The rivalry was manageable in the early period after the Cold War, only to become entrenched and bitter a decade later. The upshot has been systematic losses for Russia, the West and

the countries caught in between.

All the governments involved must recognize that long-standing policies aimed at achieving one-sided advantage have reached a dead end, Charap and Colton argue, and commit to finding mutually acceptable alternatives through patient negotiation.

The Main Directions of the Foreign Policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan (1991-2016)

Edited by Farhad Mammadov, Javid Valiyev and Agshin Mammadov

This book provides a comprehensive analysis of the Azerbaijan Republic since it regained its independence following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Various chapters in the book are dedicated to Azerbaijan's bilateral relations with its regional neighbors, such as Turkey, Russia, Iran and Georgia, as well as the neighbors across the Caspian Sea – the five former Soviet states of Central Asia. It sheds light on the country's cooperation with global power centers such as the United States, the European Union (including some individual European countries), and China. Along with Azerbaijan's bilateral relations, the book analyzes the Baku's participation in international cooperation platforms such as the UN, CoE, CIS, OIC, NATO, Turkic Council, Non-Aligned Movement, BSEC, ECO and others. Last but not least, the volume examines key issues in Azerbaijan's foreign policy, such as the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the country's humanitarian policy and energy diplomacy, contribution to international security, etc.

Neighbourhood Perceptions of the Ukraine Crisis: From the Soviet Union into Eurasia?

Edited by Gerhard Besier, Katarzyna Stoklosa

Recent events in Ukraine and Russia and the subsequent incorporation of Crimea into the Russian state, with the support of some circles of inhabitants of the peninsula, have shown that the desire of people to belong to the Western part of Europe should not automatically be assumed. Discussing different perceptions of the Ukrainian-Russian war in neighboring

countries, this book offers an analysis of the conflicts and issues connected with the shifting of the border regions of Russia and Ukraine to show how 'material' and 'psychological' borders are never completely stable ideas. The contributors – historians, sociologists, anthropologists and political scientists from across Europe – use an interdisciplinary and comparative approach to explore the different national and transnational perceptions of a possible future role for Russia.

Vocabularies of International Relations after the Crisis in Ukraine

Edited by Andrey Makarychev, Alexandra Yatsyk

The conflict in Ukraine and Russia's annexation of Crimea has undoubtedly been a pivotal moment for policy makers and military planners in Europe and beyond. Many analysts see an unexpected character in the conflict and expect negative reverberations and a long-lasting period of turbulence and uncertainty, the delegitimation of international institutions and a declining role for global norms and rules. Did these events bring substantial correctives and modifications to the extant conceptualization of International Relations? Does the conflict significantly alter previous assumptions and foster a new academic vocabulary, or, does it confirm the validity of well-established schools of thought in international relations? Has the crisis in Ukraine confirmed the vitality and academic vigor of conventional concepts?

These questions are the starting points for this book covering conceptualizations from rationalist to reflectivist, and from quantitative to qualitative. Most contributors agree that many of the old concepts, such as multi-polarity, spheres of influence, sovereignty, or even containment, are still cognitively valid, yet believe the eruption of the crisis means that they are now used in different contexts and thus infused with different meanings. It is these multiple, conceptual languages that the volume puts at the center of its analysis.

Constructing Nationalism in Iran: From the Qajars to the Islamic Republic

Edited by Meir Litvak

Nationalism has played an important role in the cultural and intellectual discourse of modernity that emerged in Iran from the late nineteenth century to the present, promoting new formulations of collective identity, and advocating a new and more active role for the broad strata of the public in politics. The essays in this volume seek to shed light on the construction of nationalism in Iran in its many manifestations: cultural, social, political and ideological, by exploring on-going debates on this important and progressive topic.

Putin's Olympics: The Sochi Games and the Evolution of Twenty-First Century Russia

By Robert W. Orttung, Sufian N. Zhemukhov

President Vladimir Putin's Olympic venture put the workings of contemporary Russia on vivid display. The Sochi Olympics were designed to symbolize Russia's return to great power status, but subsequent aggression against Ukraine, large-scale corruption, and the doping scandal has become the true legacies of the games. The Kremlin's style of governance through mega-projects has had deleterious consequences for the country's development. Placing the Sochi games into the larger context of Olympic history, this book examines the political, security, business, ethnic, societal, and international ramifications of Putin's system.

The EU and Russia in Their 'Contested Neighbourhood': Multiple External Influences, Policy Transfer and Domestic Change

By Laure Delcour

The literature on the European Union's influences in its Eastern neighborhood has tended to focus on EU-level policies and prioritize EU-related variables. This book seeks to overcome this EU-centric approach by connecting EU policy transfer to the domestic and regional environment in which it unfolds. It looks at the way in which the EU seeks to influence domestic change in the post-Soviet countries participating in the European Neighbourhood Policy/Eastern Partnership, and domestic receptivity to EU policies and templates. It seeks to disentangle the dynamics behind domestic change (or lack thereof) in Eastern

Partnership countries, including EU policy mechanisms, domestic elites' preferences and strategies, regional interdependences and Russian policies. Based upon extensive empirical investigation on EU policies in four countries - Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine – as well as two pivotal policy sectors - the book provides a systematic and nuanced understanding of complex forces at work in the policy transfer process.

This text will be of key interest to scholars and students of international relations, European studies, democratization studies, and East European Politics and area studies, particularly post-Soviet/Eurasian studies.

Stalin: From the Caucasus to the Kremlin

By Christopher Read

This new biography of Stalin offers an accessible and up-to-date representation of one of the twentieth-century's defining figures, as well as new insights, analysis and illumination to deepen our understanding of his actions, intentions and the nature of the power that he wielded. The biography brings together the avalanche of sources and scholarship which followed the collapse of the system Stalin constructed, including the often neglected writings and speeches of Stalin himself. In addition to a detailed narrative and analysis of Stalin's rule, chapters also cover his early years and humble beginnings in a small town at a remote outpost of the Russian Empire, his role in the revolution, his relationships with Lenin, Trotsky and others in the 1920s, and his rise to become one of the most powerful figures in human history. The book closes with an account of Stalin's afterlife and legacy, both in the immediate aftermath of his death and in the decades since.

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