



# *Caucasus*

## *Under review*

*Recently published books*  
*July-September 2012\**

### **Abstract**

*This quarter has seen an abundance of newly released books on the Caucasus and former Soviet territories, providing academic insights on compelling and disputed issues relating to the region, such as oil politics, regional cooperation, social and political history, and nuclear tension.*

---

*\* Report prepared by Husrev Tabak, Senior Editor of Caucasus International*

In this issue we feature six books, every one of which explores a different subject related to the broader Caucasus region. The first book investigates and addresses pipelines, oil politics, and geopolitics of oil transportation. In his book *Pipelines: Flowing Oil and Crude Politics*, Rafael Kandiyoti asks how the delivery of oil and natural gas affects international geopolitics in a world where oil and natural gas are central political driving forces. Through this line of inquiry, he demonstrates the importance of the delivery systems as well as the enjoyment of oil resources and their discovery. Thus he directs our attention to an entirely new field of inquiry and offers a novel way to view international politics of oil and natural gas. As Kandiyoti argues, once pipelines are built they create new diplomatic realities. These realities involve the inclusion of some states and isolation of others, whereby some states reap enormous economic benefits, and others miss out. However, the real impact of these realities becomes apparent in the context of small states-great powers relations and great power rivalry, namely because the direction of the flow and the geography through which the oil passes do not always match the interests of the great powers. Therefore in any tensions involving Central Asia, the Middle East, Russia, China, and Europe, the pipelines must be borne in mind.

Scholarly studies on the South Caucasus region predominantly embark on analyses with reference to structural determinants of peace and conflict within the region and geopolitical competition, rivalry, or tensions. The author of the second book featured in this issue, Dr Tracey German of King's College London raises a concern of this kind and endeavours to offer explanations regarding the extent of regional cooperation in the South Caucasus. In her analysis, she emphasizes the reasons for the relative lack of regional cooperation: the initial query is about the intra-regional aspects of uneven relations, and the central inquiry targets the external drivers of cross-border relations. To this, as German argues, each South Caucasus state is allying itself with a different power, thus polarizing the region. At this point, to German, the security challenges put regional relations at stake and the divisions further deepen. Hereby, Dr. German questions "how true is the Caucasus proverb 'better a good neighbour than a distant relative'?" Looking beyond regional cooperation in the South Caucasus to its neighbour, another recently published book, *Turkey: Thwarted Ambition*, deals with Turkey's self-managed redefinition of itself through foreign policy. In his book, Simon V. Mayall identifies the problems of defence and security, which have shaped post-Cold War Turkish foreign policy and its relations with the West. This book is a facsimile reprint of the first edition, published in 1997.



Two more recent publications on the South Caucasus deal with the history of the region. The first book is a micro-history that aims to shed new light on the multicultural character of the Russian Empire, which shaped the lives of individuals' and was in turn shaped by them. Given the on-going and multiple conflicts and tensions across the region, political history has been the main focus of researchers. Thus, Dr. Stephen Norris' *Russia's People of Empire: Life Stories from Eurasia, 1500 to the Present* is a rare and welcome study of the social and cultural history of the peoples of the Russian Empire and later the Soviet Union. It presents compelling and nuanced portraits of personalities that represent the varied practices of Russian/Soviet imperial multiculturalism. Dr. Norris narrates the enduring multicultural life stories of 31 individuals whose experiences represent the cross-cultural exchanges from the late 1500s to post-Soviet Russia. An edited work, *Georgian History (Caucasus Region: Political, Economic, and Security Issues)* complements this social history, offering political-historical accounts of regional politics, economy, and security in the South Caucasus. The collection gives particular emphasis to Georgia's commitment to Western values and the growing relationship between Georgia and United States. Coinciding with *Georgian History's* focus on Georgia's relations with the United States, *America's Collision Course with the Caucasus: Is Military Intervention Inevitable?* Addresses

the Caucasus' strategic relations with U.S. and assesses the possibilities for military intervention towards the Caucasus to end regional conflicts such as Nagorno-Karabakh and Osetia. Christopher Beckert in this reprinted manuscript presents three likely contingencies that may require U.S. force intervention: peacekeeping in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, stabilization of the Georgian or Azerbaijani governments, or prevention of ethnic cleansing. Although the circumstances that require intervention and the character of international intervention have largely changed since the book was first published in 2001, its republication is important as a reminder of the strategic position that the Caucasus occupies in the international arena and in the eyes of the great powers.

This issue's final book for review is a personal story, a memoir, published by the *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. In *The Iranian Nuclear Crisis: A Memoir*, Seyed Hossein Mousavian, the former head of the Foreign Relations Committee of Iran's Supreme National Security Council and spokesman for Tehran's nuclear negotiating team, provides the reader with a detailed account of the diplomatic struggle between Iran and the international community on the nuclear issue. The book provides a first-hand account of the Iranian nuclear crisis and reflects the way Iran understands the nuclear issue.

***Pipelines: Flowing Oil and Crude Politics***

By Rafael Kandiyoti  
July 2012, 320 pp.

Oil and natural gas are now acknowledged to be the driving forces of international politics. What has not yet been fully explored is how their delivery affects the geopolitics of the world. Pipelines, once built, create new diplomatic realities – some states are newly connected, others isolated. Some states benefit economically, others lose out. Often new energy supply routes fall across political fault-lines, as in the case of India and Pakistan. In the case of the former Soviet Union, the existing pipeline network reflects an old political reality, and causes tension between the newly independent states and their former Russian master. With energy demand soaring in industrializing Asia, and the resurgence of great power rivalry, the politics and practicalities of pipelines become central to a proper understanding of world affairs.

***Regional Cooperation in the South Caucasus: Good Neighbours or Distant Relatives?***

By Tracey German  
*Ashgate Pub Co,*  
September 2012, 195 pp.

The South Caucasus region, comprising the former Soviet states of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia occupies a key strategic location, squeezed between the Black and Caspian Seas, Iran, Russia and Turkey. Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, the region has become an arena of geopolitical confrontation with regional powers such as Russia, Turkey and Iran vying for influence in the face of growing Western involvement. The Russian military intervention in Georgia in 2008 not only raised questions about Moscow's intentions towards its 'Near Abroad' and the future direction of its foreign policy, it also demonstrated that ostensibly local separatist disputes have serious ramifications for regional relations and the wider international community. In this book, German explores the extent of regional cooperation in the South Caucasus, analyses the reasons for the relative lack of regional cooperation and assesses the potential for deeper cooperation in the future.

### ***Turkey: Thwarted Ambition***

By Simon V. Mayall  
*Create Space Independent  
Publishing Platform,*  
July 2012, 126 pp.

This book gives an excellent (and concise) analysis of Turkish history and interests. Relevant to the student of Turkey or the broader region, this fine book belongs on every analyst's reading list. Anyone trying to make sense of the challenges in today's Middle East needs first to understand the history of the region and Turkey's struggles to define itself, "Turkey: Thwarted Ambition" provides a first-rate perspective on these timeless issues. Accordingly, it is the aim of this book to assess Turkey's post-Cold War security policy to the present day, based on an examination of the foundations and exercise of both Turkey's defense and foreign policies. From this, the paper will assess how far Turkey's security policy has changed since the end of the Cold War, and the implications for its relationship with the West.

### ***Russia's People of Empire: Life Stories from Eurasia, 1500 to the Present***

By Stephen M. Norris  
*Indiana University Press,*  
July 2012, 384 pp.

A fundamental dimension of the Russian historical experience has been the diversity of its people and cultures, religions and languages, landscapes and economies. For six centuries this diversity was contained within the sprawling territories of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, and it persists today in the entwined states and societies of the former USSR. *Russia's People of Empire* explores this enduring multicultural world through life stories of 31 individuals - famous and obscure, high born and low, men and women - that illuminate the cross-cultural exchanges at work from the late 1500s to post-Soviet Russia. Working on the scale of a single life, these micro-histories shed new light on the multicultural character of the Russian Empire, which both shaped individuals' lives and in turn was shaped by them.

***Georgian History  
(Caucasus Region Political,  
Economic, and Security Issues)***

By David Muskhelishvili,  
Mikheil Samsonadze, and Alexander  
Daushvili (Eds)

*Nova Science Pub Inc,*  
September 2012, 573 pp.

**I**n the scientific work on the basis of rich factual materials, modern specific literature and new archival documents, a new conception of the Georgian nation and Georgian states historic development are represented from ancient times until the 21st century. Important stages of material and religious culture of Georgian people are reviewed and peculiarities of historic development are elucidated. We must emphasize the devotion of Georgian people towards the Western values (Christian religion, advantage of democratic system, respect towards personal rights of a man and etc.) and the struggle against totalitarian ideology and antidemocratic system of ruling. In this book, special attention is paid to the fact that the relationship of Georgia and America is building a new Georgia which has been of great importance.

***America's Collision Course  
with the Caucasus: Is Military  
Intervention Inevitable?***

By Christopher Beckert  
*Biblio Scholar,*  
September 2012, 60 pp.

**T**he Caucasus is developing into a vital strategic region. It emerged from the Soviet Union's shadow in 1991 and spawned wild oil and gas speculation, and U.S. policy makers developed relationships with the region's countries as it matured. However, ethnic tensions and separatist movements in the Caucasus still pose a significant threat to American interests. Will the U.S. military intervene to stabilize the Caucasus by 2010? This monograph explores this question. It introduces the reader to the Caucasus' complexity and presents factors affecting a military intervention decision. It presents three likely contingencies that may require U.S. force intervention: peacekeeping in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, stabilization of the Georgian or Azerbaijani governments, or prevention of ethnic cleansing. It also provides a summary of each contingency compared to the 1999 National Security Strategy's criteria for deploying U.S. forces to assess the probability of intervention. The monograph is a passport to the Caucasus, removing the mystery from it to assess its operational challenges.

***The Iranian Nuclear Crisis:  
A Memoir***

By Seyed Hossein Mousavian  
*Carnegie Endowment for  
International Peace,*  
June 2012, 612 pp.

The first detailed Iranian account of the diplomatic struggle between Iran and the international community, *The Iranian Nuclear Crisis: A Memoir* opens in 2002, as news of Iran's clandestine uranium enrichment and plutonium production facilities emerge. Seyed Hossein Mousavian, previously the head of the Foreign Relations Committee of Iran's Supreme National Security Council and spokesman for Tehran's nuclear negotiating team, brings the reader into Tehran's private deliberations as its leaders wrestle with internal and external adversaries. Mousavian provides readers with intimate knowledge of Iran's interactions with the International Atomic Energy Agency and global powers. His personal story comes alive as he vividly recounts his arrest and interrogations on charges of espionage. Dramatic episodes of diplomatic missions tell much about the author and the swirling dynamics of Iranian politics and diplomacy -undercurrents that must be understood now more than ever. As intense debate continues over the direction of Iran's nuclear program, Mousavian weighs the likely effects of military strikes, covert action, sanctions, and diplomatic engagement, considering their potential to resolve the nuclear crisis.