

# CAUCASUS UNDER REVIEW - RECENTLY PUBLISHED BOOKS

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The Caucasus is a region of both great diversity and potential; it is also a region about which much remains to be discovered. However, during the last decade, numerous publications on the region have enabled us to better comprehend this diversity and potential. In this sense, this section aims to introduce a number of these publications in order to keep our readers up-to-date with the available literature.



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In this issue, seven books are featured. All of these books are related to Caucasus and the region's relations with the rest of the world. In this regard, the first book examines the facts, trends, and future scenarios in the South Caucasus up to 2018. It is an edited book with contributions from several prominent analysts and experts from the region. Titled *'The South Caucasus 2018: Facts, Trends, Future Scenarios'*, this book is the result of a longer term intensive project involving several collaborative meetings and seminars among the authors aimed at formulating a comprehensive strategic vision of the region, with a focus on the political, economic and security dimensions of the South Caucasus. It is also worth mentioning that the year 2018 is the centenary of independent statehood in the region: it was in May 1918 that Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia declared independence.

The second edited book, *'Georgian Foreign Policy: The Quest for Sustainable Security'*, is a multi-author volume offering insights and analysis on the challenges and prospects of Georgian foreign policy. This publication provides a chronological account of Georgia's foreign policy along with an examination of the roles of identity and ethnicity in framing foreign relations. The book also considers Georgia's integration process into the Euro-Atlantic space as well as its relations with its neighbors and partners: the U.S., Russia, Ukraine, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Iran and the Baltic States.

Looking beyond the region, another recently published book is *Northern Distribution Network: Redefining Partnerships within NATO and Beyond*, which deals with the transportation route stretching across the Eurasia. The authors investigate what factors influence each segment of the NDN in each transit country, and also the goals pursued by the various stakeholders. The NDN is presented as one of many competing routes; it is also claimed that the NDN is becoming increasingly significant as an alternative transit route. In addition, while the authors emphasize that trade can only flow in an economically prosperous environment, they accept that investments in transport infrastructure are also vital for the region.

Behrooz Moazami's *State, Religion, and Revolution in Iran, 1796 to the Present* focuses on Iran, one of the biggest states in the Southern Distribution Network. The book describes and explains the transformation of the country's political and religious spheres from the Qajar period (1796) to the dramatic post-election crisis of 2009. Moazami challenges the dominant scholarly discourse

about the influence of Shi'ism in Iranian culture and the role of religious elites--the ulama--in its history. In doing so, he constructs a new synthesis of the history of state and religion in Iran, questioning traditional assumptions and engaging with theoretical understandings of large-scale political transformations.

Another country key member of the Southern Distribution Network is Turkey. In their book, *Turkey's Democratization Process*, Carmen Rodriguez, Antonio Avalos, Hakan Yilmaz, and Ana I. Planet put forth a detailed account of Turkey's democratization process since the 1980 coup d'état. The book is a very useful source for any reader looking to fully comprehend the global impact of the profound transformations that have taken place in Turkey, especially in relation to how this influences democratization.

Following Iran and Turkey, Jakob Tolstrup's work *Russia vs. the EU: The Competition for Influence in Post-Soviet States* deals with the impact of the Eurasian continent's two main powers - Russia and the EU- on Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova. The author delves into how the external factors have affected political movements in the aforementioned countries. One of Tolstrup's aims is to thoroughly analyze one of the main aspects influencing the political trajectory of these states by reviewing the positive and negative internal as well as external factors. He believes that this is the only way to represent the full dynamic of the forces turning the wheels of global political developments. Only then we will be better equipped to explain the striking regime diversity in the post-Soviet space and beyond.

This issue's final book for review is Professor Suha Bolubasi's comprehensive work *Azerbaijan: A Political History*. In this book, Bolukbasi attempts to identify historical and geopolitical determinants that could re-emerge in a new guise and under very different circumstances. He also focuses on the construction of modern Azerbaijani identity and statehood. The book examines Soviet and post-Soviet cultural and socio-political transformations that have contributed to the contemporary sense of nationality.

***The South Caucasus 2018:  
Facts, Trends, Future Scenarios***

By Dr. Canan Atilgan (Ed.)  
Konrad Adenauer Stiftung  
2013, 370 pp.

This book represents more than a unique effort at cross-border professional collaboration. More specifically, Dr. Canan Atilgan, the Director of the Regional Program South Caucasus for the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS), guides an assessment of “developments, trends and scenarios” covering the political, economic and security fields in each of the region’s three countries, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. In a collaborative effort, the contributing authors have also sought to “look forward” and analyze major trends and tendencies in the region, while offering specific scenarios and recommendations. In this context, the title of the book, the reference to the year 2018 marks not only the centenary of the first period of independence and statehood of each of the three countries in the South Caucasus, but was also chosen to provide a five-year framework for analysis. Finally, the book also provides “a set of recommendations in various policy fields for opinion-shapers and decision-makers of the respective countries”.



***Georgian Foreign Policy:  
The Quest for Sustainable Security***

Kornely Kakachia and Michael Cecire (eds)  
Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and the Georgian Institute of Politics  
2014, 220 pp.

Georgia’s foreign policy has been the object of study in many books and articles. However, this book is the one of the first attempts to collect the perspectives and analyses of a variety of international experts within a single publication. The book contains various articles elaborating the directions, dilemmas, and opportunities of Georgia’s foreign relations. Contributing authors include Ghia Nodia (Ilia University), Stephen Jones (Mt. Holyoke College), Kornely Kakachia (Tbilisi State University), Mamuka Tsereteli (Johns Hopkins University), Dr. Neil MacFarlane (Oxford University), and many others.

***Northern Distribution Network:  
Redefining Partnerships within NATO and Beyond***

By Andris Sprūds and Diāna Potjomkina (eds.)

Latvian Institute of International Affairs

2013, 215 pp.

The aim of this publication is to analyze, raise awareness of and provide recommendations regarding the impact of the Northern Distribution Network (NDN) on NATO in general and Latvia in particular. The approach chosen by the LIIA is a broad one, taking into account different transportation and trade routes as well as the prospective commercialization of the NDN after 2014. This book has been produced by an international team of ten authors from Azerbaijan (Zaur Shiriyev), India (Gulshan Sachdeva), Germany/NATO Defence College (Heidi Reisinger), Latvia (Andris Sprūds, Māris Andžāns, Diāna Potjomkina), Russia (Andrei Kazantsev), the U.S. (S. Frederick Starr) and Uzbekistan (Guli I. Yuldasheva and Farkhod Tolipov).



***State, Religion, and Revolution in Iran,  
1796 to the Present***

By Behrooz Moazami

*Palgrave Macmillan*

November 2013, 224 pp.

Two basic assumptions have shaped understanding of recent Iranian history. One is that Shi'ism is an integral part of Iran's religious and cultural landscape. The other is that the *ulama* (religious scholars) have always played a crucial role. This book challenges these assumptions and constructs a new synthesis of the history of state and religion in Iran from 1796 to the present, questioning existing theories of large-scale political transformation. Arguing that the 1979 revolution has not ended, Behrooz Moazami relates political and religious transformations in Iran to the larger instability of the Middle East region and concludes that turmoil will continue until a new regional configuration evolves.

### ***Turkey's Democratization Process***

By Carmen Rodriguez, Antonio Avalos, Hakan Yilmaz,  
and Ana I. Planet *Routledge*  
October 2013, 464 pp.

Since the end of the 1980 coup d'état Turkey has been in the midst of a complex process of democratization. Applying methodological pluralism in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of this process in a Turkish context, this book brings together contributions from prominent, Turkish, English, French, and Spanish scholars.

*Turkey's Democratization Process* utilizes the theoretical framework of J.J. Linz and A.C. Stepan in order to assess the complex process of democratization in Turkey. This framework takes into account five interrelated features of Turkey's polity when making this assessment, namely: whether the underlying legal and socioeconomic conditions are conducive for the development of a free and participant society; if a relatively autonomous political society exists; whether there are legal guarantees for citizens' freedoms; if there exists a state bureaucracy which can be used by a democratic government; and whether the type and pace of Turkish economic development contributes to this process.

Examining the Turkish case in light of this framework, this book seeks to combine analyses that will help assess the process of democratization in Turkey to date and will also be of interest to scholars and researchers interested in Turkish politics, democratization and Middle Eastern Studies more broadly.



### ***Russia vs. the EU: The Competition for Influence in Post-Soviet States***

By Jakob Tolstrup  
*Holmes & Meier Publishers*  
October 2013, 295 pp.

Do Russia and the European Union have any substantial influence over the political trajectories of post-Soviet states? Shedding new light on the interplay between domestic and external drivers of regime change, Jakob Tolstrup analyzes the impact of Russia and the EU on the democratization and autocratization processes in Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine.

## ***Azerbaijan: A Political History***

By Suha Bolukbasi

*I. B. Tauris*

November 2013, 312 pp.

Azerbaijan's Soviet and post-Soviet political history has been tumultuous and varied, particularly with regard to the struggle for independence, democracy and sovereignty. Suha Bolukbasi illustrates how post-Stalin resilience, tolerance toward subtle nationalist expression and Gorbachev's liberal policy contributed to the central government's loss of control. As a result, issues such as Moscow's responsibility for environmental degradation, the depletion of Azerbaijan's oil, and unfavorable trade terms have been subject to open discussion. However, the Azerbaijan-Armenia dispute over Karabakh has had a dramatic impact on political discourse. The dispute has become not only an international conflict, but one which involves the lives of more than one million refugees and IDPs and the occupation of Azerbaijan's lands by Armenia. This book shows how Azerbaijan's recent political history - both domestic and international - has influenced the development of the country and the history of the surrounding region.