

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 Stokłosa

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.