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Introduction

Annie Jafalian¹

Intersected by high mountain ranges that extend between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea,² the Caucasus is traditionally presented as a strategic crossroads between Europe and Asia, comprising a mosaic of peoples.³ While the North Caucasus, also called Ciscaucasia, is made up of different regions and autonomous republics linked to the Russian Federation, the South Caucasus—or Transcaucasia, according to Soviet terminology—includes the independent republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. The border countries of this region are not only Russia (a nuclear power), but also Turkey (a member of NATO), and Iran.

Having emerged from the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia have each inherited diverse conflicts with major consequences for security: territorial disputes, on one hand, between Azerbaijan and Armenians in the autonomous Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh and, on the other hand, between Georgia and both the autonomous Abkhazian Republic and the autonomous region of South Ossetia. The main issues of contestation were the legitimacy of the borders drawn by the imperial Soviet power and the economic and cultural repression of certain sectors of the population by national governments in Baku and Tbilisi. The election of nationalist leaders to the presidencies of both Azerbaijan (Ebulfez Elchibey) and Georgia (Zviad Gamsakhurdia) was also a matter of concern for ethnic minorities in these nations. At the close of military hostilities, the central powers found that they had actually lost control over the regions of conflict. Relative stability was achieved later, partly facilitated by the rise to power of Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze and Azerbaijani President Heydar Aliyev. Although cease-fire agreements were signed in 1994, putting a freeze on both military conflicts, a political settlement of the disputes remains yet to be reached.⁴

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² The average altitude of the range is above 2,000 meters. The culminating points are, in the north, Mount Elbrus in Russia, (5,642 meters), and, further south, Mount Kazbek in Georgia (5,047 meters).

³ More than 40 languages are spoken in the region, belonging to different linguistic families—Indo-European, Caucasian, and Altaic. See Yves Lacoste, ed., *Dictionnaire de géopolitique* (Paris, Flammarion, 1995), 388. Religious diversity is overlaid on top of this ethnic diversity, since Christian and Muslim peoples have been cohabiting in the region for centuries.

⁴ Concerning the foundations and stakes of these conflicts, see Alexei Zverev, “Ethnic Conflicts in the Caucasus, 1988–1994”, in Bruno Coppieters, ed., *Contested Borders in the Caucasus* (Brussels, VUB University Press, 1996), 13–71.

With the collapse of the Soviet empire, the South Caucasus has also been the theater of new power struggles. Throughout its history, the region has been invaded by Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Persians, Ottomans, and Russians, each of whom has exerted a decisive influence on the region. Today Russia, Turkey, and Iran, along with the United States (most notably through the activities of the Partnership for Peace and NATO⁵) and the European Union, have been developing their presence in the region, creating new axes of cooperation with Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. This cooperation has at times taken the form of indirect interventions in internal conflicts, but has been focused above all on the stakes of exploitation and transportation of gas and oil from the Caspian Sea, the solution of which remains uncertain.⁶

Ten years have passed since Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia became independent. An analysis of the variables underpinning attempts to construct these new nation-states, of the evolution of stakes of security, as well as of the geopolitical environment of the region now seems to be possible. Beyond this examination, a reflection on the consequences for the Caucasus of the events of September 11 also appears to be necessary. Concerning internal conflicts, a process of political exploitation of the fight against terrorism has indeed developed in Azerbaijan⁷ as well as in Georgia,⁸ creating the risk of renewed outbreaks of violence in the region. As for rivalries over regional influence, they seem to be affected by a Russo-American rapprochement whose foundations, effects, and limits have yet to be ascertained.⁹

In order to comprehend the complexity of the South Caucasus, we have adopted an approach to the region using an image of concentric circles, distinguishing the three republics constituting the region—Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia—from their neighboring powers such as Russia, Turkey, and Iran, as well as from other actors, external to the region but nonetheless involved, namely the United States and the European Union. The objective has been to appeal to different actors in order to foster, around common issues, the development of cross-analysis and the expression of different perceptions and sometimes even diverse interpretations of the events in question.

⁵ For a look at the activities of NATO, see Robin Bhatti and Rachel Bronson, "NATO's Mixed Signals in the Caucasus and Central Asia," *Survival* 42:3 (Autumn 2000), 129–145.

⁶ About energy issues, see Robert Ebel and Rajan Menon, *Energy and Conflict in Central Asia and the Caucasus*, (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2000).

⁷ "Azeri Foreign Affairs Minister Speaks about Armenian Terrorism at Istanbul Forum," *ANS TV*, February 12, 2002.

⁸ Jean-Christophe Peuch, "Georgia: Attacks On Russian Checkpoints Heighten Tensions In Abkhazia," *RFE RL*, April 9, 2002.

⁹ "War of Words in the Pankisi Highlights Limits to US-Russian Rapprochement," *RFE RL Caucasus Report*, February 28, 2002, vol.5, no. 8.

Georgia: In Quest of a Niche Strategy

Archil Gegeshidze¹

It was about a decade ago that Georgia began receiving international media coverage with some regularity. It was a time of historical change, when the Soviet Union began giving caesarean birth to new states, eventually itself dying in childbirth. As Georgia's confinement was most difficult, the news items featuring its post-natal pains were especially depressing. Indeed, two inflamed ethnic conflicts and a bitter confrontation within Georgian society puzzled international audiences as to whether Georgia would pull through. Luckily, Georgia has survived the most dramatic times in its recent history, but it was an extremely complex geopolitical environment and historical legacy that had provoked inexperienced parvenu politicians of the early 1990s to make a series of costly mistakes, the results of which Georgia is still feeling.

Ten years later, policy analysts and media commentators are still puzzled. Georgia still has a long way to go until it irreversibly secures peace and stability and evolves into a viable and prosperous state. For the moment, the most difficult question is whether Georgia has the *vision* and *resources* to attain this goal. It is an appropriate moment to take stock.

Prerequisites for an Unfavorable Startup

Over the past decade, Georgia has gone through rapid and profound change. Georgia has not only regained its independence; it has also set out on a path of transformation of the features of its society. Such profound changes were unavoidably accompanied by difficulties, the primary cause of which was a very disadvantageous starting position. A set of geographic, geopolitical, and historical preconditions, as well as the cultural characteristics of the Georgian nation, has greatly influenced the subsequent developments in the country:

- Situated in a geographic buffer zone between Russia, Turkey, and Iran, Georgia has historically had to strike a careful balance in its external relations. In our time too, some regional powers consider control over Georgia as a prerequisite for domination in the South Caucasus and Central Asia.²

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² Russia considers Georgia, first and foremost, as a safety valve that, if under control, would allow Russia to prevent penetration of Turkey's political influence into the North Caucasus, as well as further to the East into Central Asia. Also, control over Georgia provides leverage for Russia to rule out any possibility of future NATO expansion from Turkey into the Caspian Basin. Additionally, a subdued Georgia would ease Russia's goal of obstructing the progress of the East-West energy corridor, as well as hindering the entrance into the Caspian Basin of Western corporate

- Over the past two centuries, the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union have contributed greatly to laying the foundation for current ethnic tensions in Georgia through deportations and resettlement of different ethnic groups, as well as artificially drawing and redrawing administrative boundaries.
- The Soviet legacy is also a primary cause of the lack of a diversified economy that would better meet the needs of an independent country. Also, the Russian totalitarian legacy is, perhaps, the major impediment to progress towards market democracy.
- Unlike some other countries in the region, Georgia lacks strategic natural resources that would enable it to earn hard currency through export.
- Georgian national values, perceptions, and attitudes towards the outer world have traditionally been and still are partly subject to misinterpretation, leading to inadequate policy design.³

Additionally, the *naïveté* of Georgian authorities in the early days of independence, or what Alexander Rondeli calls wishful thinking or strategic idealism,⁴ has unnecessarily led the country through civil conflict and political turmoil, including the overthrow of a democratically elected president and separatist struggles in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Also, Georgia's economy, already reeling from the loss of Soviet subsidies after independence, was severely damaged by these conflicts. The Georgian government could not manage to defend the country, keep order on the streets of the capital, pay state workers, collect taxes, or print currency. The vestiges of that pandemoniac episode have had an enduring impact on Georgian politics.

Short-lived Success Story

Under E. Shevardnadze's leadership, Georgia has taken painstaking efforts to achieve by the mid-1990s a relative stabilization. The country started to enjoy steadily improving political stability and economic growth. A cease-fire in 1994 brought an end to the conflict in Abkhazia, and the conflict has been dormant for several years now. A new constitution was adopted, and presidential as well as parliamentary elections were held in 1995. With the help of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, a recovery has begun. Georgia's currency, the

interests. Turkey views Georgia as a gateway to the Caucasus and Central Asia as it aspires to build up trade with the countries in the region, while one of the driving forces of Iran's policy in the region is a perception of Georgia as a port-of-entry state of hostile U.S. influence.

³ For example, Georgia's historical gravitation towards Europe and receptivity to its values have been naively believed to automatically pave the way to membership in the Western community, often causing inattention to the utilization of other competitive advantages of the country.

⁴ A. Rondeli, "The Choice of Independent Georgia," *The Security of the Caspian Sea Region*, edited by G. Chufrin, SIPRI (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 195–196.

Lari, was introduced in September 1995 and has remained relatively stable with the backing of an IMF stabilization fund. Inflation has been brought under control, and GDP growth has resumed, although it has been moderated for the most part by the lingering negative effects of Russia's August 1998 financial crisis. Also, Georgia has adopted some of the best laws and institutional structures among the republics of the former Soviet Union.

Although Georgia does not border on the Caspian Sea, it has emerged as one of the key players in the development and transport of Caspian oil and gas. This is especially remarkable since the minuscule republic has faced two secessionist rebellions and several bids to topple its government since gaining independence in 1991.

While Georgia's geographic attributes made it a focus of interest from global oil companies, the country's foreign policy orientation found favor in Western capitals. Georgia was able to formulate its own foreign policy with a pro-Western orientation. This approach included:

- Seeking Western mediation of the conflicts in the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia,⁵
- Courting Western investment,
- Seeking Georgia's participation in European and Euro-Atlantic security structures,⁶
- Promoting Georgia as a transit country for commerce between the West and the states of Central Asia and the South Caucasus, and,
- Seeking direct political, economic, and security ties with the United States and Europe.

Georgia's potential as a partner in the transport of Caspian oil was recognized in October 1995, when Azerbaijan and a consortium of mostly Western oil companies selected a pipeline route from Baku to the Georgian Black Sea port of Supsa to serve as one of two pipelines carrying early Azeri oil to market. Thereafter, Georgia was ideally positioned to remain a player in the Caspian oil game. Indeed, as the main export pipeline on the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan route, intended to carry larger amounts of oil from the Caspian, and the Shah-Deniz-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas

⁵ Georgia has been making efforts to break up Russia's monopoly on the conflict resolution process by increasing the role of the Western community, which has resulted in the creation of the group called the "Friends of UN Secretary General on Abkhazia." The group consists of France, the U.S., Germany, the United Kingdom, and Russia.

⁶ Georgia has declared full integration into European Union and NATO as major foreign policy priorities. Georgia cooperates with the EU within the PCA framework, while actively participating in NATO's PfP process. Georgia is a Council of Europe and OSCE member country as well.

pipeline had both been scheduled to become operational by 2004-2005, Georgia has become the fulcrum for the East-West energy corridor.

Yet, here the pleasant part of the story ends.

Georgia Going Lamé

Late 1998 has to be considered a watershed moment between the period of effective policymaking and that of defective policymaking. Economic growth and reform slowed in 1998, due to the Russian financial crisis, drought, and political events, such as an outbreak of hostilities in Abkhazia and an assassination attempt against the President. More importantly, however, the fading of any political will to improve governance has to be emphasized. The following brief summary outlines the major problems that Georgia has failed to effectively address:

- Georgia has struggled to establish its sovereignty without the benefit of a properly structured economy.
- Georgian society suffers from a lack of traditional social services that can address the problems of poor and elderly citizens in the transitional economic period. This is further complicated by an inefficient health system.
- Georgia is a classic weak state, which has still not fully formed an effective and integrated administrative system that can provide the necessary security guarantees for its citizens.
- The absence of national unity weakens feelings of loyalty to the Constitution and a sense of common citizenship among the citizens.
- The lack of a credible, effective, and reliable law enforcement system is another challenge that Georgia faces.
- The state has not been able to consolidate its finances, largely due to problems with governance and corruption. The existing level of corruption casts into doubt the effective functioning of state institutions, hinders the development of local businesses and the attraction of foreign investments, seriously undermines the credibility of the Government and its reforms, and erodes the moral foundations of the civil society.⁷

⁷ *Georgia Country Commercial Guide FY 2001*, U.S. & Foreign Commercial Service and U.S. Department of State, 2001.

National Security Challenged

Without doubt the Georgian state has become relatively stronger over the years. Yet, due to the alternating ups and downs in the state-building process, Georgia has been wavering in and out of the “failed state” category. Although internal weaknesses take the lion’s share of the blame for Georgia’s instability and poverty, there are other factors as well that make the country increasingly vulnerable to existing and new challenges in ever-changing world.

Globalization. The process of globalization is slowly penetrating Georgia. More precisely, as the telecommunications infrastructure is still grossly inadequate and the relevant state institutions are either corrupt or underdeveloped, the positive aspects of globalization associated with increasing volumes of trade, flows of investment and information, etc., go around Georgia without positively affecting it. On the contrary, political fragility and the very weakness of the economy, along with widespread corrupt practices, promote religious extremism, separatism and nationalism, drug trafficking, arms proliferation, illegal migration, and an HIV epidemic—phenomena otherwise referred to as negative aspects of globalization. As a net result, Georgia may find itself among the losers of globalization.

Proliferation of International Terrorism. The September 11th events have demonstrated that, due to globalization, international terrorists, furnished with modern technology and abundant financial resources, can easily deploy their personnel, finances, and technology in any target country and region. The continued crisis in Chechnya has made Georgia such a target, as international terrorists have networked with some of the Chechen militants using Pankisi Gorge, where several thousand refugees from Chechnya had found shelter.⁸ The gorge has become a center of kidnapping and drug trafficking. In addition, the situation in Pankisi Gorge has become a major source of tension in relations between Georgia and Russia, as Moscow describes the area as a training ground and arms smuggling route for the Chechen rebels. Georgia, although incapable of dealing with the problem on its own, has been persistently rejecting Russia’s demand to jointly conduct a cleanup operation.⁹ This has served as a cause for repeated violations of Georgia’s air space, including bombing raids.

Russia. The very attributes that have made Georgia a favorable partner for Western governments, global energy companies, and certain regional states have also made the country a target for Russia. Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, Moscow has shown little willingness to witness the emergence of Georgia as a

⁸ “U.S. diplomat says some Afghan terrorists linked with al-Qaeda hide in Georgia,” Associated Press Newswires, February 11, 2002.

⁹ Instead, Georgia has recently made a request to the U.S. to help uproot armed rebels and criminals. The prompt U.S. decision to send to Georgia 200 instructors to train some 1200 Georgian special forces and provide them with light arms and communication systems has infuriated Russia.

regional transport hub aligned solidly with the West. Indeed, Russia has actively, if covertly, manipulated Georgia's domestic vulnerabilities in an effort to retain the republic within its sphere of influence. Throughout the conflict in Abkhazia, Russia covertly provided the separatists with arms, ammunition, and intelligence, and Russian soldiers participated directly in the hostilities on the Abkhaz side.

In the last two years, Russia has again intensified its long-standing efforts to control the focus of Georgia's foreign policy by imposing a unilateral visa regime, cutting off energy supplies, and backtracking on prior commitments to withdraw military bases.¹⁰ These punitive actions exemplify Russian objections to Georgia's Western foreign policy orientation, demonstrated by Georgia's desire to join NATO, its support for the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline and Shah-Deniz-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline, membership in the GUUAM organization,¹¹ and alleged acquiescence to Chechen fighters operating along its Russian border. The latter allegation has been increasingly used by Russia to justify numerous cases of committing violations of Georgia's air space. As Vladimir Socor notes, "the [November 2001] air raids were of unprecedented scope and range, involving a dozen fighter-bombers and assault helicopters, and penetrating so far from the Chechnya combat theater into Georgian territory as to rule out the excuse of 'navigational error.'"¹² Russian subversion, however, has not only used its traditional tools of brute force. It has also used legalistic arguments and commercial enticements to coerce Georgia's leadership into pursuing a pro-Russian foreign policy.¹³

Lack of Unity of the South Caucasus. The South Caucasus as a region is fragmented largely due to existing ethno-political conflicts, which prevent individually weak and small Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan from combining their efforts to jointly address challenges that the region as a whole faces. Also, as the foreign policy priorities of the South Caucasus's countries often diverge, they tend to build strategic and security ties with different global and regional powers whose policy agendas in the region are based on conflicting objectives. Obviously, however significant the great power rivalries may be as a factor, the future of the region will

¹⁰ At the November 1999 OSCE Summit in Istanbul, Russia, in response to Georgia's demand, signed a Joint Statement on the reduction of treaty limited equipment (TLE) and withdrawal of military bases. Russia has had four military bases remaining in Georgia from the Soviet days. After endless negotiating rounds, Russia has closed its base in the Vaziani military airport but has insisted on retaining partial control of the Gudauta base, which would be run by Russian "peacekeeping" troops in Abkhazia. Russia also wants a 15-year lease on the two largest bases, those at Batumi and Akhalkalaki.

¹¹ Created in 1996, this is an interstate consultative body consisting of Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Moldova.

¹² V. Socor, "Back to Bad Old Soviet Habits," *The Wall Street Journal Europe*, December 7-8, 2001.

¹³ Z. Baran, "Georgia Under Worst Pressure Since Independence," *Georgia Update, CSIS*, January 10, 2001.

ultimately be determined by the developments within the countries and their ability to cooperate. As yet, no substantial regional cooperation outside of the Caspian pipeline projects has been undertaken. More to the point, it has even been argued that trans-regional pipeline projects encourage polarization in the South Caucasus, as the high profile of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan project and the geopolitical importance attributed to it have helped solidify a strategic alliance among its beneficiaries (Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey, and the United States) and have fueled the creation of an opposing bloc consisting of the losers in the pipeline equation (Russia, Iran, and Armenia).¹⁴ Evidently, the South Caucasus needs a comprehensive strategy of major change that would transform the region from an area of confrontation into an open geo-economic system where, instead of conflicting interests, there would be a mutual accommodation, or even coincidence, of those interests. Shared vast natural and human resources based on developed infrastructure would allow the region to fully utilize the competitive advantages that the states in the region individually possess.

Why Georgia Matters

Given both the complexity of the geopolitical environment and the lack of political and financial resources to effectively address both old and new challenges, it is unlikely that Georgia will manage to exploit its advantages and achieve its national goals without strong support from the international community. The U.S. has been a major donor to Georgia. Important bilateral donors also include Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Turkey, France, and Italy. Other major multilateral donors and international lending institutions include the IMF, World Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the European Union. Since 1993, Georgia has received more than US\$1.5 billion from international donors, and U.S. assistance alone has totaled approximately \$800 million. Georgia is among the largest recipients of U.S. foreign aid in the world. Importantly, Georgia also receives strong moral and political support from most of the leading Western countries and within international organizations, as it aspires to restore its territorial integrity as well as to solidify its sovereignty and independence.

Despite this myriad of problems, including those related to the deteriorating performance of state institutions, Georgia still matters. A number of factors make Georgia count.

International Prestige of the Political Leader. President Eduard Shevardnadze has proved himself to be genuinely committed to the idea that Georgia should become a democratic country. To the West, he is the only ruler in the region to have encouraged the development of a new generation of elites¹⁵ and one of the

¹⁴ L. Ruseckas, "U.S. Policy and Caspian Pipeline Politics: The Two Faces of Baku-Ceyhan," in *Succession and Long-term Stability in the Caspian Region* (Cambridge, MA: BCSIA, 2000).

¹⁵ M. Olcott, "Provisions for Succession in the Caspian Region," in *Succession and Long-term Stability in the Caspian Region* (Cambridge, MA: BCSIA, 2000).

principal guarantors of stability in and around the South Caucasus. Shevardnadze has been extremely instrumental in promoting Caspian pipeline projects and in developing Georgia's pro-Western foreign policy. Yet, as his presidential term expires,¹⁶ the role of the "Shevardnadze factor" will go into decline while the international community designs its policy towards Georgia.

Containing Russia. Despite the encouraging rapprochement between Russia and the West that has taken place in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States, the new partnership still has to be regarded as premature. However critical and productive the coordinated fight against international terrorism may be as a factor for building genuine strategic alliance, the full incorporation of Russia into the Western community will not be possible until it unreservedly accepts civilized norms of conduct both domestically and internationally. Russia's conduct in Chechnya and, more importantly, its policy towards the South Caucasus demonstrate to what extent the nostalgia for imperial might is still felt there with overwhelming force. Georgia, as a pivotal country of the region, has long suffered the most pressure from Moscow.¹⁷ This is the primary reason why Georgia seeks close security ties with the West and, vice versa, why the West regards Georgia as a bulwark against Russia's illegitimate ambitions in the South Caucasus. As Russia (hopefully) evolves into a genuine democracy, Georgia will willingly part with this role.

Promoting Peace in the Region. Georgia's pragmatic and friendship-based foreign policy is a significant factor for peace in the region. The normal and, in most cases, actively friendly relations with neighboring countries determine Georgia's unique potential for promoting peace in the region. Not surprisingly, Georgia has launched several peace initiatives aimed at ending conflict in the region and engaging in mutually beneficial cooperation. In the meantime, the very stability of Georgia itself is an essential condition for peace in the entire Caucasus and beyond, including the volatile regions of southern Russia. This has not passed unnoticed. The international community gives high priority to enhancing the peace-promoting potential and stability of Georgia, since it is increasingly contributing to settling conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and to supporting any of Georgia's undertakings on regional cooperation.

A Gateway to East-West Transport Corridor. Georgia has been the first to strongly advocate developing the concept of what is called the Eurasian Transport Corridor and the New Silk Road.¹⁸ These efforts stimulated the subsequent

¹⁶ E. Shevardnadze was elected as President for a second term on April 9, 2000. According to the Georgian Constitution, the President serves a five-year term.

¹⁷ P. Baev, "Russia Refocuses its Politics in the Southern Caucasus," Caspian Studies Program's Working Paper Series, Cambridge, 2001.

¹⁸ A. Gegeshidze, "The New Silk Road: issues and perspectives," *Marco Polo Magazine*, no. 4-5, 1999.

launching of the EU-led TRACECA¹⁹ regional program and the Caspian pipeline projects. Since, in forthcoming decades, the Caspian Basin will play an increasing role in providing an uninterrupted supply of oil and gas to international markets, Georgia as a key transit country will remain a major player in East-West trade relations, including Caspian pipeline politics. Even more so, if and when the conflicts in Abkhazia and Nagorno-Karabakh are settled, Georgia will emerge as a transport hub for North-South trade as well.

Diffusing Democracy into Eurasia. Oil and natural gas development and related pipeline activity in the Caspian region, including the Caucasus and Central Asia, cannot be isolated from politics. Much is at stake, and both Russia and the West recognize that. It is a struggle for influence, for political linkage, and it is taking place in Russia's back yard. Like the Balkans, the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia, the region of the Caucasus and Central Asia is a proving ground where the tools and models of settling conflicts, building democratic institutions, creating market economies, as well as breaking old stereotypes and establishing new values are being tested. The pattern of the new world order that is still taking shape largely depends on the developments in these increasingly important areas. The political debate surrounding the Caspian pipeline is a façade of a much broader and longer-term strategy. Pipeline projects, acting as an icebreaker, bring into the Caspian Basin investment, new business ethics, Western interest and, ultimately, help consolidate liberal values. This will increasingly gain importance as new challenges of globalization, including international terrorism, emerge. Despite some blemishes, Georgia has so far proven to be the nation that is most susceptible to democratic change in the region. An improved record would allow Georgia as a role model country to significantly contribute to diffusing democracy further to the East. As the region of the South Caucasus and Central Asia will need unchallenged peace and stability far beyond the era of fossil fuels, the new "corridor of values" would work for that future.

The significance of most of these factors will vary over time, depending on Georgia's success in exploiting the resources that are available both domestically and internationally. The synergy of these factors will allow Georgia to make use of its unique place, a kind of niche, in the emerging system of security and stability in Europe and Eurasia.

A Need for New Vision

In case Georgia fails to succeed in dealing with democratic reforms, it will lose much of the support it now enjoys from the international community. This will result in, among other things, a considerable reduction of international efforts to solve conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, a decrease in international financial

¹⁹ An acronym for Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia.

and technical assistance and, eventually, loss of the importance of the role that the international community has assigned to it in the region.

Georgia needs a comprehensive strategy, a new agenda, which would allow it to transform itself into a stable democracy with guaranteed sovereignty and a strong economy. Much of the homework is to be done by Georgians themselves²⁰; however, the international community, and the U.S. in particular, should come up with their part of the new agenda as a major contributor to Georgia's future success. The new agenda should be based on the recognition that there is time, although it is very limited, and resources of political will to utilize existing competitive advantages that the country still possesses. In 2005, Georgia will lose via constitutional mandate one of its major assets—the high international profile of its president. An ongoing power struggle for domination beyond the era of the Shevardnadze presidency, coupled with an increasing number of unattained national goals, will confuse both the Georgian people and the world at large while they are trying to understand the direction that Georgia is taking and the roles it intends to play. More importantly, against the backdrop of current political change, it is not yet clear who will be in charge of defining and designing a new vision for Georgia and how relevant that vision will be to the country's long-term national interests.

Georgia already needs a new vision of how it will respond to existing and future challenges in an ever-changing world. The restoration of territorial integrity and the elimination of corruption, as well as the consolidation of the Western orientation of foreign policy, are absolutely necessary to keep that vision strong. The U.S. and European powers should better coordinate their policies to draw very clear “red lines” for those both outside and inside Georgia who do not wish to see a sovereign and territorially integrated Georgia with a free and transparent society. These forces are easily identifiable, as are those who best serve Georgia's national interests. There is every likelihood that Georgia will succeed if constructive forces, both inside and outside the country, work in concert to make difference. Georgia deserves this chance.

²⁰ Until recently, Georgian authorities failed to develop concept papers arguing a vision of Georgia's future development, strategy, and political orientation. In October 2000, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs prepared a document entitled “Georgia and the world: a vision and strategy for the future.” Although this document has been approved by the Georgian National Security Council, it is very general and does not anticipate future changes that might take place both in Georgian and world politics.

Post-September 11 Regional Geopolitics: Azerbaijan and the New Security Environment in the South Caucasus

*Elkhan Nuriyev*¹

Introduction

The September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States have seriously altered the world's geopolitics, including the regional situation in the volatile South Caucasus, where the three former Soviet republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia are acutely embroiled in a complex set of ethnic conflicts. In point of fact, events of recent months have indicated serious changes in the dynamics of the South Caucasus, changes that may have long-lasting implications for Azerbaijan's security and the future of the entire region. The major change is the growing importance of Azerbaijan to the United States, currently accompanied by an activation of American involvement in the region.

The conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, which threatens Azerbaijan's security and stability, has been a crucial obstacle to the successful development of international oil contracts.² The unresolved conflict has taken a heavy toll in terms of human lives. Many refugees still live in squalid conditions, and there is therefore growing pressure to address the problem. This increasingly complicates the peace process and results in a situation of no war, yet no peace, in the conflict-torn area.

Eleven years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan remain unabated, and there is a risk of fresh violence flaring in the region while the United States and other Western democracies have focused their attention on the anti-terrorism campaign. Geopolitical strains create new challenges and options that indicate the seriousness of the upcoming crisis in the South Caucasus. The long-term security of Azerbaijan continues to be threatened by the lack of resolution of the geopolitical stalemate over Nagorno-Karabakh.

The post-Soviet life of Azerbaijan and the other newly independent states of the South Caucasus remains critically complex. Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia are in historic transition, and are no more than weak nations with fragile statehood. And therefore the post-colonial period of struggle of independence is still going on, and is likely to continue for many years.

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² The fourteen-year-old Armenia-Azerbaijani dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh is the first serious ethnic conflict on former Soviet territory. Tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan escalated in 1988, and full-scale war broke out in 1992. The 1994 truce ended the war in which over 30,000 people were killed.

Old Problems and New Opportunities in the Context of the War Against Terrorism

After gaining independence in 1991, Azerbaijan collided with immediate internal and external challenges to its territorial integrity and sovereignty. Although the early years of the post-independence period were very difficult, Azerbaijan, under the one-year rule of the popularly elected pro-Turkish President, Ebulfez Elchibey, succeeded in getting all Russian forces and border troops withdrawn.³ Mr. Elchibey promised democratic reforms within the country and quick victory in Nagorno-Karabakh. However, he could not accomplish the major parts of his presidential program, and the country began to slip rapidly into political and economic chaos. As a result, Mr. Elchibey, who Azerbaijani society perceived as a very naive and inexperienced politician, was overthrown in June 1993 and was replaced by former Communist leader Heydar Aliyev. Mr. Aliyev, in turn, tried to balance the interests of the major powers to secure Azerbaijan's independence. He began to pursue a more even-handed approach in foreign policy relations with neighboring countries. Since the Aliyev presidency, Azerbaijan has come under severe pressure from Moscow to allow Russian military bases on its soil, but thus far has failed to do so. The Kremlin, using the Nagorno-Karabakh war as leverage, has heavily increased its influence in recent years with the purpose of re-establishing Russian control of the Azerbaijani-Iranian frontier by bringing back its border guards. Moscow very much hopes to benefit from the vast oil reserves of Azerbaijan, and has been forcing the Azerbaijani leadership to grant Russian corporations a greater share in Azerbaijani oil rights.

In the meantime, Azerbaijan remains very concerned about the continuing level of Russian-Armenian military cooperation. Arms transfers played a crucial role in Armenia's seizure of large areas of Azerbaijan during the war, resulting in a million refugees and internally displaced persons.⁴ Ethnic Azeris from the part of Azerbaijan under Armenian control are prevented from returning to their homes by a heavily militarized ruling structure. Such a deadlocked situation of no war, yet no peace in the area of conflict and a number of other destabilizing factors have made Azerbaijan seek outside help from both the United States and Turkey to restore a seriously violated balance of power in the region. Azerbaijan

³ In Azerbaijan, it has been agreed that the early-warning "military facility" in Qabala, leased by Russia, will not qualify as an army base. Azerbaijan was, nevertheless, the first former Soviet-ruled republic to free its territory from Soviet military bases. In addition, Azerbaijan was the first to resist the allocation of Russian border troops and Russian peacekeeping forces.

⁴ See *Azerbaijan Human Development Report 1996*, Publication of the United Nations Development Programme/UNDP, 1996, Baku Office of the United Nations. See also Chapter 8, "Displacement in the Former Soviet Region," in Mark Cutts, Sean Loughna, and Frances Nicholson, eds., *The State of the World's Refugees 2000 – Fifty Years of Humanitarian Action*, UNHCR (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 192–193.

in recent years has signed several defense treaties with Turkey, and has started to consider the possibility of inviting NATO bases on its territory.⁵

Accordingly, Russia and Iran have cited potential negative consequences of moving NATO bases to Azerbaijan. Both Moscow and Tehran view increasing American engagement and NATO's rapidly growing interest in the South Caucasus with suspicion. Baku, in turn, is ready to cooperate more fully with NATO and believes that, as the oil exporting infrastructure is developed, security concerns will draw Azerbaijan closer in the pursuit of true regional stability.

Strikingly, despite the strains of the fourteen-year old conflict with Armenia, which have severely disrupted the national economy, Azerbaijan in recent years has made considerable economic progress due to the signing of numerous oil contracts and development of foreign investment processes. Particular attention is due the signing of the "contract of the century" in September 1994, which enhanced Azerbaijan's role in the world and enabled the Azerbaijani leadership to provide the foundation for a Western presence in the Caspian Sea region. Correspondingly, Azerbaijan significantly contributed to the realization of such major regional projects as TRASECA, the Great Silk Road, alternative oil pipelines, and GUUAM.

However, the dynamics of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, domestic tensions, and growing contradictions between the ruling elite and different oppositional political parties, as well as many other geopolitical factors that have profoundly affected the direction of Azerbaijani foreign policy all continue to remain crucial for long-term stability in Azerbaijan. Moreover, the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States dramatically altered geopolitical conditions in the South Caucasus. As a matter of fact, the U.S.-led war against terrorism in recent months has played a significant role in reshaping Azerbaijan's foreign policy.

In the new geopolitical environment in the South Caucasus, Azerbaijan is hoping to take advantage of new opportunities for cooperation with the United States. At the same time, the Azerbaijani ruling elite is very aware that Russia may be intent on reasserting its influence in the region while the United States is preoccupied with its anti-terrorism campaign. Since the tragic events of September 11, Azeri politicians have been very skeptical about the so-called rapprochement between Russia and the United States in the context of the contemporary war on terror. In point of fact, Baku is suspicious of Moscow's ostensible desire to join Washington to contribute towards maintaining stability in Central Asia and the Caucasus. Over the last several months, Moscow has been watching the increased U.S. activity in the region with the greatest anxiety. Moreover, Russia, along with China and Iran, has sought to foster the development of strategic trilateral co-

⁵ Due to vast arms shipments from Russia to Armenia and because of broadening military cooperation between Moscow and Yerevan, Azerbaijan had to work on the possibility of creating a military alliance with Turkey. For more information, see RFE/RL Newline, Volume 1, No. 131, Part I, October 3, 1997; Moskovskii Komsomolets, February 14, 1997.

operation, while trying to keep the United States out of the Caspian Basin or at least to minimize American influence in the region. Baku is therefore engaged in a very delicate political game of balancing between regional and great powers, a game that could have profound ramifications for the development of Caspian Basin natural resources.

Azerbaijan has been an enthusiastic supporter of the U.S.-led anti-terrorism campaign, sharing intelligence and granting fly-over rights. The U.S. Congress has reciprocated by bolstering support for President Heydar Aliyev's government, in particular voting to lift trade sanctions imposed during the height of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in 1992. The lifting of sanctions will facilitate aid and trade, as well as potentially boost Azerbaijani efforts to develop its oil and gas sector.

While Azerbaijani leaders seem anxious to align themselves with the West in the hopes of reaping enormous oil and gas profits, they are taking care to assuage Russian security concerns, seeking to reassure Moscow that Baku's strategic cooperation with Washington is not a zero-sum gambit. Mr. Aliyev and other Azeri officials know that Russia retains powerful economic and political weapons that, if deployed, could hinder—or even upend—Azerbaijan's development plans. Baku's tactics seem dedicated to addressing Moscow's immediate strategic interests. Moscow, in turn, wants to resolve its Chechnya conundrum with the help of Baku, calling on the Azerbaijani government not to accept Chechen refugees and to repatriate those already in Azerbaijan.⁶

At the same time, Russia is keen to retain a controlling influence in the competition to develop Caspian Basin natural resources. Georgia figures prominently in the potential construction of a pipeline, known as Baku-Ceyhan, which would break Russia's stranglehold on Caspian export routes. The pipeline as envisioned would take Caspian resources from Azerbaijan, via Georgia, to Turkey, bypassing Russia altogether. What is more interesting is that all of the recent and current domestic processes, including the contemporary geo-strategic situation in the South Caucasus, have made President Aliyev conclude an agreement about Azerbaijan's leasing the Gabala radar station to Russia for ten years. Russia and Azerbaijan had been haggling over a lease extension for several years. Mr. Aliyev, accommodating a long-standing Russian demand, had signaled his willingness to lease the Gabala early-warning radar station to Russia before his official visit in late January 2002.⁷

⁶ During his October visit to Azerbaijan in 2001, Russian Interior Minister Boris Gryzlov particularly asserted that Chechen terrorists utilized Azerbaijan to engage in drug trafficking, and warned Azerbaijani officials about a risk of terrorist incidents being organized by Chechens residing in Azerbaijan. For more information, see Turan News Agency, October 30, 2001.

⁷ A deal on the leasing of the Gabala radar station to Russia for ten years was signed between President Heydar Aliyev and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin during Mr. Aliyev's official visit to Moscow in January 2002. Also, see RFE/RL Transcaucasia Report, January 28, 2002.

Meantime, the U.S.-led war on terrorism has given Azerbaijan one more chance to find its place within an inchoate geopolitical situation in the contemporary world. Since then, Azerbaijan has been at a very critical juncture of its development. Many Azeri officials are expressing growing concern at the deteriorating situation around the conflict-torn area.⁸ President Heydar Aliyev now faces what may be the greatest challenge of his long professional career. Mr. Aliyev is colliding with a very complicated dilemma. The Azeri President and his team are attempting to make a firm decision concerning whether to renew a war, to free the occupied lands, or to continue a search for a peaceful solution to the conflict. It is indeed a hard decision, not only for the ruling elite but also for the nation, which is still trying to preserve its newly gained independence without geopolitical interference from external forces.

Obviously, only the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which infringes on the strategic interests of Azerbaijan, remains a major threat to the security of the South Caucasus. If it can be resolved, the long-term prospects for oil development and safe oil transportation are promising. Otherwise, the ongoing impasse will hamper regional development and foreign investment for years to come.

The Post-September 11 Era: Geopolitical Tensions and New Troubles Re-emerge

The problem of relations between Azerbaijan and its neighboring countries gains additional importance by virtue of the current geopolitical situation in the South Caucasus. In point of fact, the contemporary situation represents an obvious challenge to the independence of Azerbaijan and, particularly, a prospective threat to the military-political security of Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan is trying to survive in a very unfavorable geopolitical environment. Azerbaijan is surrounded by geopolitical actors on three sides whose interests are far from coincident with the interests of Azerbaijani national security. Two of them—Russia and Iran—hold effective levers of influence on Azerbaijan and can actively use them to impede natural resource development in the Caspian Basin.

Both Russia and Iran have concerns about security on their borders, and about the potential alliance of Turkey with Azerbaijan. Moscow and Tehran are deeply suspicious and resentful of U.S. and NATO “encroachments” that promote democracy and development in the South Caucasus. Paradoxically, from the early period of post-Soviet independence, Armenia enthusiastically joined the Russian–Iranian alliance, essentially to realize its territorial interests.

Nevertheless, the interests of all three geopolitical actors in the South Caucasus coincide in most of the spheres and, proceeding from the similarity of the geopolitical formulas that lay at the root of the foreign policy behavior of Russia

⁸ Azerbaijan News Service (ANS), January 2002.

and Iran, the achievement of the traditional formal compromise regarding division of the region into spheres of influence turns into a more than technical task. In such a geo-strategic situation, Turkey is the sole link for Azerbaijan to the Euro-Atlantic block. At the same time, the close geopolitical alliance between Turkey and Azerbaijan provides a fragile but vital balance of power in the South Caucasus, and prevents geopolitical isolation of the resource-rich region.

In the post-September 11 era, the geopolitical situation in the South Caucasus is, to an ever-greater degree, a reflection of military and political events in the region, which at the moment are characteristic of the instability and unpredictability of the entire post-Soviet Caucasus. As a matter of fact, since the declared anti-terrorism campaign began, Azerbaijan and Georgia have figured more prominently in the foreign policies of outside powers, which rigorously compete to extend their influence in this troubled area of the world. This, in turn, has resulted in the creation of two conflicting military and political alliances in the South Caucasus—Russia and Iran versus the United States and Turkey. The three newly independent states of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia are becoming increasingly involved in the geopolitical intrigues of the key power players.⁹

Today, the major competing powers Russia, Iran, Turkey, and the United States are making every effort to play a more active role in the South Caucasus. They all have great concern regarding what happens in Azerbaijan and especially in the Caspian Sea region. For instance, if Russia considers the problem of an independent Azerbaijan as more an element of a complex of independent states in the entire Caucasus region, for Iran this problem takes on a somewhat different political form. The simple fact of existence of an even purely formally independent state of Azerbaijan is quite definitely (and not groundlessly) perceived as a real threat to national security of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In addition, the presence of the more than 20 million Azeris residing in Iran is the spark that is capable of blowing up the fragile powder keg that is the multinational structure of the Iranian state.

Tensions between Iran and Azerbaijan rose last year in July, with an Iranian warship threatening to fire on an Azeri oil exploration ship in a disputed sector of the Caspian Sea. Iran's air force intervention into the Caspian Basin not only served to escalate the situation but also did so much to deteriorate relations between Baku and Tehran that it nearly triggered a shooting war in the region. Since then, Iran has been very angered by its loss of influence in the Caspian Basin, and therefore Tehran has been trying to attempt to change the political and economic shape of the region. Furthermore, the current developments illustrate that the interests of Iran may be served even by the simple absorption of Azerbaijan on

⁹ For a more detailed analysis of this issue, see Elkhan Nuriyev, "Shadow Pieces of the Caucasus Puzzle: A New Stage of the U.S.-Russian Confrontation in the Context of the War Against Terrorism," *Zerkalo/Ayna*, Baku, Azerbaijan, November 2001.

the part of Russia. In other words, the neutralization of the factor of independent Azerbaijan is in itself favorable to Iran, and in this connection Iran is able to make a gratuitous concession of Azerbaijan to Russia.

In the meantime, American foreign policy has thus far been grappling with some impediments arising from Russian–Iranian geopolitical maneuverings that hinder any serious U.S. activity in Azerbaijan and in the Caspian Basin. While Russia and Iran do not want to see the United States as a major arbitrator in the region, Azerbaijan and Georgia are trying to fully involve the United States in the geopolitical affairs of the South Caucasus. Washington, in turn, relying on Turkey, its NATO ally, has left these infant nations in a very complicated situation that merely results in leaving them face to face with Moscow.

Notwithstanding the increasing American involvement in the region within the context of the declared anti-terrorism campaign, Washington more frequently officially reacts rather cautiously to the growing pressure that Moscow is placing upon Azerbaijan and Georgia, the two Western-oriented states in the South Caucasus. Moreover, prospects of a quick resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh and Abkhazian conflicts look gloomy despite international efforts to bring the warring sides to a peace agreement. Such a delicate situation, which actually freezes the conflicts and keeps geopolitical deadlock ongoing in the region, may force both Baku and Tbilisi to reconsider their foreign policy orientations and seek political support from the Kremlin for conflict resolution in the region.

As can be seen from the foregoing discussion, the stakes in the South Caucasus remain very high. Seemingly, the region's future is being decided right now. In truth, Azerbaijan's political stability, the regional security environment, and the future geopolitics of the South Caucasus, including the independence of three post-Soviet states—Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia—are already at stake while the Western world is fully engaged in its anti-terrorism campaign.

The Outlook for the Future

Azerbaijan, like all other newly independent states, has made a geopolitical breakthrough in the early post-independence period. Nonetheless, time passes very quickly, and so far the conflict remains unsettled.

In the new geopolitical environment in the South Caucasus, the major challenge in the post-September 11 world will be to resolve the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh and to move on to economic integration within the entire region. With the gradual defusing of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Azerbaijan will be able to build a wider security system in the South Caucasus. If this is successful, Western business circles will regard the whole area as more attractive for an influx of capital. The alternative is too gloomy to contemplate: economic decline, poverty, and new ethnic conflicts that may further destabilize and divide the oil-rich country.

The United Nations and OSCE have not focused enough attention on this dynamic part of the world. They should, therefore, play a more assertive role in bringing about peace and stability in the region. Most significantly, the international and European organizations should assist Azerbaijan and other former Soviet republics in the region with choosing conciliation over confrontation.

On the other hand, compromise must replace competition in the oil pipeline interests. Russia and the United States, along with their friends and allies, should make significant contributions to reducing geopolitical tensions and devise a new policy toward alleviating the security situation and decreasing the potential for confrontation. Otherwise, a more provocative South Caucasus will bring bloodshed to everyone in the region, with no clear winner.

The transitional period in post-Soviet Azerbaijan will probably continue for several years, since the process of transition from former Soviet republic to independent statehood, far from reaching the end, has rather hardly commenced. A very long and very difficult struggle seems to await the Azeri nation in its quest to establish itself as truly viable independent state.

In the context of the ongoing U.S.-led war against terrorism, more security challenges lurk on the horizon. Long-term stability in Azerbaijan and in the entire South Caucasus is, hence, crucial not only to nation-building efforts, but also to regional, European, and international security.

Armenia and Security Issues in the South Caucasus

*Garnik S. Asatryan*¹

South Caucasus, or Transcaucasia, is a region noted for its instability, in both strategic and ethno-political as well as cultural aspects. Security issues in the region are cross-sectional, not only for the three primary states in the South Caucasus—Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia—but also involve the interests of adjacent countries: Russia on the north; Iran on the south; Turkey, Ukraine, Bulgaria, and Greece on the west; the Central Asian states Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan on the east. Added to this mix are the interests of the U.S. and the European Union, as well as, of course, China. As a result, the South Caucasus has been rather vulnerable to destabilizing effects from the outside.

A characteristic feature of the entire region is the diversity of ethnicities, cultural traditions, and confessional identities of the population, which can at any time spark conflicts with the potential for developing into larger problems. It is to be noted, however, that the atrophy of the ideal of cultural pluralism in the South Caucasus is mainly traceable to those in political circles who are interested (for various reasons) in destabilizing the regional situation. The putative state of constant conflict in the South Caucasus is actually a rather illusory phenomenon. Despite the many cultural, ethnic, religious, linguistic, and other cleavages in the region, the South Caucasus has become home to a relatively solid community, integrating the whole variety of regional ethnic groups, both with regard to outlook and psyche as well as to many social categories, such as common social preferences, moral and behavioral standards, etc. What we see here is the establishment of the so-called “Caucasian mentality.” Therefore, no underscoring or exaggeration of the things that divide the nations of the South Caucasus—which without doubt do exist—can overshadow their unifying common features. This underlying similarity may result both from a multi-century symbiosis within the same region as well as from a shared bicentenary history within the Russian Empire and later the USSR. Even the languages of the principal nation-states of Transcaucasia, belonging as they do to the different linguistic families—Indo-European, Ibero-Caucasian, and Turkic—today compose a single Linguistic Union or Sprachbund. As of today, an average resident of Baku, for example, may have more in common with a Georgian or Armenian than with a Turkish Anatolian despite sharing a common language with the latter. At any rate, the so-called “civilization factor,” which more often than not is overemphasized by some authors (especially American ones) with regard to the South Caucasus, seems to be quite irrelevant. In the modern world, with all its developments and trends toward globalization,

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the “civilizing features” have to some degree been losing their validity as they become more widespread, while regional commonalities remain constant.

However, it is self-evident that a common Caucasian mentality, being a superstructure, cannot be a stabilizing factor on its own without proper integration processes, regional cooperation, and other basic constituents. A superstructural factor per se loses its significance and thus cannot be regarded as an agent of actual policy. The importance of regional unities and, of course, of a unifying mentality, was properly realized in the Soviet Union. In the mid-1980s, the Ideological Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR initiated a project on compiling the regional histories of South Caucasus, North Caucasus, the Baltic republics, etc., aimed at generalizing the people’s histories and emphasizing their common heritage. However, this idea was doomed to failure by the turmoil of the final years of the Soviet regime.

Thus, the so-called common Caucasian mentality can remain a real factor and can play a conspicuous role in integration processes only given an essentially stable situation. The present-day political situation, characterized by regional and local conflicts, interference of stakeholders, competition for communication projects, etc., forces the ideal of regional unity into the background.

The strategic significance of the South Caucasus is determined first of all by its location. Transcaucasia is oftentimes characterized as a buffer zone between Russia, Turkey, and Iran, while the European Union views it as a bridge between Asia and Europe. No less important, no doubt, are the region’s natural resources and communications networks. Those and other factors can frequently result in fierce competition in various spheres of influence, a competition that is further prompted in the present situation by new geopolitical redistributions. It is therefore the case that the political fate of the South Caucasus region is contingent upon the confluence or juxtaposition of international forces rather than upon the will of any individual state.

This relative lack of agency is quite natural for small, newly independent states like those of the South Caucasus, especially against the backdrop of global stakeholders jockeying for position. Paralyzed economic systems, dependence on international financial structures, foreign debt burdens, efforts to join European organizations and meet their requirements, emergent conflicts and the attendant expectations of various conflict-management policies, refugee problems, corruptible policy-makers—all of these factors are more than sufficient to create a high level of dependence on outside players.

The foremost international power affecting the security of the South Caucasus is definitely Russia and its Transcaucasian policies. It was Russia’s decision to disregard (or attempt to defuse) the historical, political, and ethno-cultural realities in the region by creating mini-empires (Azerbaijan, Georgia) strategically counterbalanced by potential conflict zones (Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Nagorno-Karabakh). Moreover, it was the Leninist national policies that have been respon-

sible for distorting the ethno-historical boundaries of the area. These policies produced the artificial borderline diasporas: in Georgia, the Armenians (in Javakhk, South-West Georgia adjoining Armenia), and the Turkish-speaking population (in Marneuli, South-East Georgia adjoining Armenia and Azerbaijan); in Azerbaijan, the Lezgians (North Azerbaijan adjoining South-East Dagestan), the Avars (Belokany and Zakataly regions), the Talishis (Lenkoran, Zuvand, Astara, and part of Masala regions adjoining Iran).

These borderline diasporas are, no doubt, a constant source of anxiety and potential conflict in any unstable situation. Of course, a phenomenon like the creation of borderline diasporas can also be activated by the great powers. For example, taking into consideration the present-day situation in Georgia, it is in the cards that Russia could try to heighten the separatist tendencies among the Armenian population of Javakhk, which in reality are virtually dormant. Still, the presence of Russian troops in Javakhk is at present a stabilizing factor and a guarantee of security for the Armenian population. It should be taken into account that, unfortunately, the nationalistic circles in Georgia create a basis for similar trends: various provocations in the Armenian inhabited regions, appeals to resettle the Meskhetian Turks in Javakhk in order to disperse the Armenian element, etc. Fortunately, both in Armenia and Javakhk, as well as in the official circles of Georgia, the danger of such inspirations is clearly understood, and the approach to the Javakhk problem, at least at the present stage, can be described as civil and correct.

With regard to Azerbaijan, which was created on the basis of the historical Transcaucasian lands of Arran and Shirvan in 1918 in a politically targeted allusion to the original name of Iran's Northern provinces, it was intended as a shared Armenian-Muslim state as a "joint common union." The existence of such a state provided Russia with the ability to effect single-handed control over the situation in Transcaucasia. The basic elements of today's ethnic confrontation in the region were certainly laid by the Moscow treaty of 1921, which served as a prototype to the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact of 1939.

At any rate, by virtue of certain geopolitical developments, Armenia has today become an important strategic element for Russia in Transcaucasia. This is in no way to imply that this choice has been voluntary, although Armenia, with its Eastern-Christian values and the Russia-tending population (in contrast, for example, to the institutional Rusophobia of Georgia), being a part of the Indo-Iranian civilization, simultaneously bridging the Muslim and Christian worlds, is the most expedient partner for Russia in the South Caucasus, having furthermore the most combat-ready and highly-trained army in Transcaucasia. An ideal situation for Russia would of course be, as has traditionally been the goal of Russian policy, balanced relations with the three republics. However, the emerging situation has clearly shown Russia to be lacking any solid ground for establishing stable relations with Azerbaijan or, even more so, with Georgia. Those countries'

orientations are unambiguously dissimilar, oftentimes having hostile manifestations towards Russia. The significance of the Armenian factor for Russia and the natural coincidence of both countries' strategic interests were highlighted by the Agreement of August 29, 1997 "On Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance between the Russian Federation and the Armenian Republic."

In Armenia, Russia is approached as a primary strategic partner and, to a certain extent, as a guarantor of security. Despite the close military and political relations between the two nations, along with a high level of economic cooperation, due to the years-long blockade of Armenia and its lack of a common border with Russia, the situation there leaves much to be desired. Posing as the second most important international power player for the region is Turkey, which conducts a strictly differentiated strategy with regard to the states of the South Caucasus: a clear-cut policy of facilitating Azerbaijan in all spheres; a tactically-motivated friendship and a drive for partnership with Georgia; and a policy of blackmail, isolation, and blockade with regard to Armenia. Turkey regards Armenia not only as a neighbor country having political problems, but also as a wedge interrupting the Turkic East-West ethno-cultural continuum.

Although there are political circles within Armenia that are aiming at establishing a wide-ranging relationship with Turkey, the existence of stable political and diplomatic relations (Armenia tried more than once to establish the latter) remains determined both by the problem of the Armenian genocide in Ottoman Turkey and the ongoing Karabakh conflict. In the sphere of economics, Turkey's presence in Armenia's commodities market appears to be quite sufficient, and further development of relations seems senseless for the Armenian economy. Turkey is a country possessed of neither high technologies nor a developed scientific infrastructure. And a full-scale Turkish penetration into Armenia, even in the realm of the economy, is fraught with danger to Armenian national security.

The regional policy of Iran, the third crucial player in the region, is quite different. Iran's antagonism with the West, particularly with the U.S., its traditional regional competition with Turkey and the latter's activity in the South Caucasus–Central Asia geopolitical space, the renewed territorial claims by newly-independent Azerbaijan with regard to the northwestern provinces of Iran, as well as the need to overcome international isolation all push Iran into rapprochement with Russia and into a recognition of Armenia as a crucial barrier to the expansionist fantasies of Turkey, as well as to a clear danger emanating from Azerbaijan that is seen to be threatening Iran's territorial integrity. In the meantime, while the anti-Iranian political tendencies of Turkey may oftentimes be precarious within the framework of a remote strategy and are thus easily neutralized, for example, by using the Kurdish factor or other regional instruments, the Azerbaijan Republic, through its mere existence, is a permanent hazard for Iran.

It may be appropriate to note that all territorial claims to portions of Iran on

the part of Azerbaijan, so conspicuously displayed during the presidency of A. Elchibey, have been based upon neither historical, political, cultural, or any other substantiations. The only link of Iran's northern provinces to the population of the Azerbaijan Republic is common language; in all other aspects—outlook, ethnopsychology, national consciousness, etc.—Azerbaijan and the northern provinces of Iran are differing ethnic formations. As regards the similarity in the names of the two areas, as noted above, the name of the Transcaucasian Republic of Azerbaijan was invented artificially with a view towards the future annexation of the northern provinces of Iran by the newly emerging Soviet Republic. Armenia is of primary importance in this regard, since it holds Iran's territorial integrity and stability as a cornerstone of its national security, to say nothing of its role as a link to Russia due to their record of friendship and the current state of strategic partnership. The Iran-Russia relationship at the present moment is friendly on the whole, despite some competition and occasional bilateral mistrust, both with historical roots; however, both countries are interested in the betterment of relations. Armenia may yet play an important role in the virtual Moscow–Yerevan–Tehran axis, which has not yet materialized but seems to be gathering momentum.

The relevance of Armenia for Iran is also substantial within other contexts of regional security. As for Armenia itself, due to the above-mentioned factors, it approaches its relations with Iran as a political constant regardless of any potential political developments in the future. Armenia is absolutely unequivocal in claiming that these two countries are connected by a common ancient culture, civilization, communion, etc. A friendly and impartial attitude to Iran is one of the most significant elements of the Armenian national *weltanschauung*.

The South Caucasus policy of the United States, in contrast to those of Russia, Turkey, and Iran, has no historical tradition, but instead follows definite strategic principles. In this context this primarily means adherence to the model of balances and equilibrium, the desire to establish close relationships with an ever-growing number of parties, and the formation of overlapping alliances in order to create a system facilitating the resolution of regional problems.

It should also be noted that developments in the region—including the Turkish-speaking states of Central Asia—are generating disappointment in the political system of Turkey, the main U.S. ally and its model of economic development in the region. Also basically unclear are the prospects for the strategic development of Russia, Turkey, and Iran: 1) How final is Russia's choice to establish a democratic national state? 2) How stable is the pro-Western orientation of Turkey? 3) What course of liberalization will be taken by Iran, and will it affect that country's system of external political priorities?

Moreover, Turkey may find itself confronted by the issue of inter-ethnic conflicts that threaten the integrity of the state: over 25 percent of its 65 million people are from non-Turkic nations (the Kurds, Zazas, Caucasians, Armenians, Gypsies, Assyrians, etc.). In all, only 40–50 percent of the population is composed of eth-

nic Turks. Despite the recent diminishment in the Kurdish movement, following the detention of its leader A. Ocalan, the Kurdish problem is certainly the principal internal problem in Turkey, having taken on an increasingly hazardous character. The military option can provide only a temporary reprieve from the stark necessity for radical reforms, with no prospects of eventual resolution. Turkey quite definitely has experience in resolving similar problems; however, it is no longer 1900, and the physical extermination and expulsion of a nation (as was the case with the Armenians) has become extremely difficult to accomplish. Incidentally, added to the Kurdish problem are also national aspirations by the Zazas, an Iranian-speaking ethnic group of nearly five million people inhabiting Central Anatolia, mainly the province of Dersim (now Tunceli). The existence of functioning Zaza political parties, having coherent programs, trained leaders, and military organizations, along with a Zaza movement press, supported by a diaspora community of almost half a million in Western Europe advocating the establishment of an independent Zazistan, can be definitely considered a reality.² This movement will no doubt gather momentum, despite the apparent distaste in Kurdish political circles for any independent manifestations of a desire for Zaza national self-determination as well as the attempts of the Turkish authorities to manipulate the whole process, with the purpose of fragmenting the Kurdish movement. There is also a complex situation involving the heterodox Islamic sects (such as the Alevi movement), which have always been the origins of political tension despite the current Turkish policy of naturalizing those trends and using them for disseminating the national ideology.

Still, the disintegration of the Turkish state would seem to be contrary to the interests of Armenia. The establishment of a Kurdish political formation adjoining Armenia, despite detaching the latter from the Turkic concentration on the West, would represent no small threat to Armenia's national security. The putative Kurdish state would most probably be characterized by permanent internal intertribal and factional conflict, armed rebellion, extreme instability and, finally, by an unpredictable foreign policy. This formation would be far from friendly towards Armenia for many reasons, including the fact that the land claims of the presumed Kurdistan are distributed equally across historical Western Armenia (Eastern Anatolia) and Eastern Armenia (the present-day Republic of Armenia and part of the Republic of Azerbaijan). In addition, the ideology of the Kurdish movement is in general extremely expansionistic and belligerent, including in its different versions claims to huge territories from the Persian Gulf to the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, identifying as Kurdish a great number of small Iranian-speaking ethnic formations like the Lurs, Bakhtiars, Laks, Gurans, and Zazas, as well as branding many cultures that have existed in the region since the time immemorial as Kurdish. The creation of an independent Kurdish state (even outside Turkey)

² See *Iran & the Caucasus*, vol. IV, 397–408.

would become a factor of destabilization for the whole region. It would be a threat to Iran's integrity as well, causing a chain reaction of similar claims among other ethnic formations abundantly present in all the countries of the region.

For the Armenian national interest, it is at all events preferable to be neighbored by a country, like the present-day Turkey, that is hostile but that has the traditions of statehood and functions, at least formally, within internationally recognized legal standards, rather than a virtually ungovernable (and hence unpredictable) Kurdish political formation. A Kurdish state on the doorstep of Armenia would pose a constant threat and hazard, lacking any traditions of regional statehood or commonality and still hostile towards Armenia, even possibly with criminal bias (the examples of Chechnya, the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, and, the so-called Kurdish Sector in Northern Iraq that emerged after the Persian Gulf War).

Turkey, despite its military might, is rather a vulnerable construct, with quite a lot of hard times ahead. Whether it is able to resolve the Kurdish conflict and other no less important issues (like recognizing the genocide of the Armenians and undoing its effects) will largely determine its relevance as a major regional factor.

In this connection it should be noted that a similar approach to analyzing the ethnic situation in Iran and its prospective development would be both incorrect in principle and methodologically unsubstantiated. Iran is an ancient nation, having a nearly three-millennia-long tradition of uninterrupted statehood. It is a country that integrates the nations that have always been part of the historical Iran and have clearly recognized their Iranian affiliation, which applies to all nations populating Iran, including those of non-Iranian origin. Within its currently existing borders, Iran is a completely natural formation—not a single part of it has ever been annexed to its territory artificially (by force). Not a single nation or ethnic group currently inhabiting Iran has ever been annexed to Iran along with its ethnic territory; all of them had either originally resided on Iran's territory, or had moved to Iran from other locations. That has resulted, despite ethnic diversity and the persistence of unique traditions of different groups, in a shared mentality or concept of the common Iranian idea. Therefore, the separatist ideas presented in their various forms in Iran have no historical basis, often being imported from outside the country by foreign stakeholders or political movements. In this respect, it is also highly symptomatic that the pan-Iranian idea itself as a cultural movement has originated in the Turkic-speaking areas of Iran, namely Aturpatakan (Azerbaijan), most of its leaders being natives of the North Iranian provinces, mainly Tabriz (Ahmad Kasravi-ye Tabrizi, Yahya Zoka, etc.).

Nothing of the kind can be said about the peoples comprising the Ottoman Empire or Turkey. For the ethnic groups resident in Turkey, the concept of Turkish statehood has often been associated with invasion of their historical territories, despotic rule, a repressive state machinery targeted primarily against the non-

Turkic ethnic groups which had never identified themselves with the Turkish state and were often alienated from the very idea of statehood itself.

No analysis of the regional situation or its prospective development is possible today without considering China, the Giant of the East. The Chinese stakes in the South Caucasus are not so explicit as those of Russia, the U.S., Iran, or Turkey. This does not mean that the Chinese stakes are absent, but that they will have to emerge yet more distinctly hereafter. Moreover, within the given context Armenia is posing as a factor effectively countering the Turkic element and the pan-Turkic political objectives, a fact that is quite relevant for China with regard to the Uighur problem in the Xinjiang region.

That is also corroborated by the current Sino-Russian rapprochement in Central Asia, which is driven by the Russian intention to retain its strategic control over Central Asia and by the Chinese concern for the potential menace of Uighur secessionist tendencies as well as by the increasing prevalence of Islamic fundamentalism in Central Asia. A stable Central Asia will in turn enable China, given reliable support, to expand along East Asian and South Asian strategic lines, a development which has met with some success to date. It may be assumed that the growth of anti-Chinese nationalism in Xinjiang will prod China to more vigorous action in the region aimed at boosting the Armenian factor and counterbalancing the political forces in Transcaucasia.

The European Union, in its turn, being concerned with issues of East European security closely linked to possible developments in Russia, as yet has refrained from action within its zone of military and political influence and will most likely remain for the time being in its role as protector of the shared Western and European economic interests.

Thus, being a complicated ongoing process, the establishment of the new world order will hardly proceed with no major disturbances, since what we see in this example is an unprecedented displacement of world forces. Much depends in particular upon the current deployment of relationships between the U.S. and Russia, and on their prospective development. The South Caucasus is distinguished by intense ethnic friction; an important element of these frictions lies in deeply rooted historical problems, which means that the region remains a high security risk.

Let us now address Armenia itself, which has achieved several extremely important landmarks within the last decade of the century, particularly its newly acquired independence. In the meantime, a highly dynamic external environment (the Karabakh problem in particular) was accompanied by the stagnation of internal development—sort of a political timelessness—the sole indicator of dynamism being unfortunately the data on migration of the population. The primary cause of this displacement was the seizure of power after independence by political forces that not only disregarded Armenia's best situation *vis-à-vis* its region in history, but rather pursued policies whereby the needs of the Armenian nation as

a stakeholder were replaced by the personal ambitions of a small group in power. The unambiguous priority of personal interests, a predatory attitude toward the national assets, the all-round looting of national wealth, including the legacy of the Empire, continually inept staff selection, and opaque power structures, along with a number of other negative factors fostered by the new politicians, resulted in a high degree of social frustration that was the prime cause of migration. These conditions were exacerbated by the fact that they took place against the background of a decade-long blockade, the energy crisis of the mid-90s, a continuous economic slump, political tension around Armenia related to the Karabakh war, and the failure of any positive tendencies to appear. The only viable structure of post-Soviet Armenia was probably the Armenian Army, which had already proved its combat readiness in the Karabakh war. It can be definitely asserted that, as of today, the Armenian Army is the best trained army in the Transcaucasian region, highly committed to and targeted at the fulfillment of the many Armenian national aspirations that have, as it were, piled up throughout the centuries. It is, however, to be admitted that success in this sphere has been possible in contravention of rather than due to the existing political order in the country. That success exacted an enormous cost from the entire population of Armenia, which stoically suffered the hardships of the general social crisis, which was often explained away by the existence of the Karabakh conflict.

One thing is sure: given the complexity of the problems confronting Armenia at the dawn of independence, there were also a number of unambiguously positive factors which could have been leveraged efficiently to upgrade the country to a new level of development. We are looking here not only at the economic or scientific potential, which are quite substantial for a small regional country, but at the objective and positive reality.

Armenia is one of the important geopolitical factors in the region, one that is quite invulnerable to possible targeted impacts from the outside. In contrast to the multinational formations of Georgia or Azerbaijan, Armenia is essentially a mono-ethnic state having no internal problems with ethnic minorities. In fact, it is the only country in the wider region having its primary ethnic population in a concentration in excess of 95 percent. The most significant national minority in Armenia are the Yezidis (an ethno-confessional Kurdish-speaking group), numbering slightly over 52,000 according to the 1989 census. It is true that, at the start of independence in the 1990s, certain external parties attempted to convince the Yezidis of their identity with the Kurds, in order to involve this community in the Kurdish political movement. Those attempts, however, can in no way be termed successful, for they were coincidental with the peak of the Yezidis' emerging national consciousness that had been denied throughout the decades of Soviet power. The Yezidis retained their unity and unambiguously dissociated themselves from the Kurds. These attempts were doomed to failure, given the history of the Yezidis as a separate ethno-religious group having inherent features

qualitatively differentiating them from the Kurds. The purpose of the artificial initiation of the so-called “Kurdish” minority in Armenia, finding a more convenient handle for political manipulation, was, of course, to draw Armenia into the orbit of states having a “Kurdish factor,” with all the relevant implications. (Clearly, even a complete Kurdization of the 50,000 Yezidis could hardly constitute a contribution to the multi-million-strong Kurdish movement; however, a minority of 50,000 in a country of three million could easily be transferred into a basis for creating the abovementioned instability.)

Armenia is unitary not only ethnically and confessionally, but also in many social and clanship features that could otherwise initiate undesirable political developments in the country. In contrast, the title ethnic group of Azerbaijan (the basic Turkic-speaking population of the country) is a rather heterogeneous mass with different components having divergent aspirations, to say nothing of the minorities: the Talishis, the Lesgians, the Kurds, and the Tats. Georgia, too, shows heterogeneity in the title ethnic formation itself, though of a type differing from that of Azerbaijan; the concept of “the Georgians” is inclusive of actually diverse ethnic formations, including the Georgians proper, the Svans, the Mingreles, and the Adjarians, with many local variations and specific life styles. All those things generate local interests threading through the entire system of power, thus weakening and compromising the country’s national security. Armenia, too, has clans, but these are very dynamic (often changing and short-lived); in addition, the people who join these clans exclusively have common economic and political interests, regardless of their origin, family, social grouping, etc.

Moreover, among the countries of Transcaucasia, Armenia is distinguished by the all-embracing ideas of national belonging, Armenian statehood, and common spiritual heritage, all of which facilitate interior stability under any conditions, as was clearly shown in the recent years of deep economic and political crisis. This unifying quality is certainly rooted in the historical past of the Armenians: the loss of their ethnic territories, suffering genocide and exile, having a large diaspora community. The idea of a “common house” for the Armenian nation has become a part of the national mentality, an element of both national mind and world outlook.

At the same time, it should be noted that the weak point of Armenia compared to its neighboring countries is its low demographic indications, with a high rate of emigration and low population density in the bordering areas. Despite the previous ten years of Armenia’s independent existence, one of the principal issues that still remains to be resolved is developing a carefully calculated and scientifically developed geo-strategic line of conduct and elaboration of its national security conception.

Russian Policy in the South Caucasus

*Vitaly V. Naumkin*¹

The South Caucasus is of interest to Russia both in terms of ensuring Russia's security and in terms of its economy. Among the many factors determining the importance of this region one may single out the following:

- It borders on the North Caucasus, which generates grave internal threats to Russia's security.
- It separates Russia from its major southern partners, Turkey and Iran.
- It has a high level of instability, with some serious unsettled internal conflicts. There is also potential for conflict in relations between South Caucasian states and with their southern neighbors.
- The states of the region play an important role in the development of the mineral resources of the Caspian Basin.
- Global and regional powers, and other states as well, are paying increasing attention to the region.

Russia's policy towards the South Caucasus has undergone significant changes in the 1990s, and can hardly be characterized as consistent. Nevertheless, Moscow has through all these years been deeply involved in emerging processes in the South Caucasus, and has been afraid of being crowded out of them and of its interests being infringed upon due to the increased presence of third-party actors in the region. This motivation has exerted a constant force on Russia's behavior. Today, facing huge difficulties in search of a way out of the Chechen conflict, Russia is especially interested in this region that is both stable and friendly to it, a reason which overrides the temptation to deploy risk factors menacing the South Caucasian states (Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia) in the interests of Russia.

Russia's Changing Position

The existence of long-standing interethnic conflicts (Georgian-Abkhazian, Armenian-Azeri, or Karabakh, Georgian-South Ossetian, Lezgin, and others) feeds into strong Russian security concerns. Russia made a significant contribution to the settlement of these conflicts, though the final resolutions have not been yet achieved. Russian diplomacy brokered the ceasefire agreement between Baku and Karabakh, its peacekeepers together with Georgian and Ossetian ones guard

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the cease-fire regime in the South Ossetia, and its peacekeepers are playing the same role in Abkhazia.

The triad by means of which Russia was safeguarding the interests of its security in the 1990s in both the South Caucasus and Central Asia—military bases, defense of the CIS external borders, peacekeepers—had by the end of that decade started to crack. The concentration of Russian forces in Transcaucasia was cut down, while the general cutback in the armed forces affected the wider military presence in the area. In March 1999, the Defense Committee of the Georgian parliament demanded the pullback from Georgia of two of the four remaining Russian bases—in Bombora (Abkhazia) and Vaziani (near Tbilisi).² During the OSCE summit in Istanbul in October 1999, such an agreement was reached between Georgia and the Russian Federation. In the same year, Georgia, along with Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan, did not renew their membership in the Collective Security Treaty (signed on May 15, 1992). The Russian peacekeepers stationed in Abkhazia have come under attack from certain Georgian circles. These circles have tried to impose on the peacekeepers the fulfillment of functions not stipulated by their mandate, namely, to ensure the security of returning refugees.

Russia's military presence evoked flaccid complaints in Washington and other NATO capitals. The U.S. and NATO, for their part, while relying on Turkey, were actively drawing the countries of the region into their orbit. Azerbaijan and Georgia have been increasingly viewed by many as the Western strongholds in the region, whereas Armenia, pursuing active military–technological cooperation with Russia on a treaty basis, has been regarded as Russia's strategic ally.

As far as the Caspian oil resources are concerned, Russia expressed interest in having its share of them, and to procure the transit of this oil via its territory. In the first half of the 1990s, Russia's and Azerbaijan's views on the issue of the exploitation of the Caspian Sea and its legal status were at odds, but after President's Putin's visit to Baku in the beginning of 2001, Azerbaijan came around to the position of Russia and Kazakhstan. In July 1998, Presidents Yeltsin and Nazarbaev agreed to divide the Caspian seabed into sectors, leaving the waters and the air space in the joint possession of the littoral states.

Russia understands the common interest of the South Caucasian states and the oil consumers in the safe delivery of the Caspian oil to the world market. But Moscow has legitimate concerns about the environmental consequences of the exploitation of oil reserves, especially given the vulnerability of the Caspian biological resources, especially the sturgeon, seal, and rare bird species. In the view of Geoffrey Kemp, "The Caspian is particularly vulnerable from the ecological standpoint to oil spills and other related sources of pollution."³ Moscow

² *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, March 19, 1999, 5.

³ Geoffrey Kemp, *Energy Superbowl: Strategic Politics in the Persian Gulf and Caspian Basin* (Washington, D.C.: Nixon Center for Peace and Freedom, 1997), 33

also viewed as a risk factor the opposition to the advancement of its interests on the part of the U.S., who undertook to support the new republics in the region in strengthening their sovereignty, but who understood this primarily as protecting them from Russia. According to one of the leading American analysts, the “leaders and peoples of Central Asia and the Caucasus see in Russia the main threat to their independence.”⁴

Russia is aware of the inevitability of the diversification of transit routes for the Caspian oil to the world markets. But Moscow is not in favor of supporting the construction of pipelines for merely political purposes. The U.S. support for the construction of Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline, one that was not considered by many oil companies as economically feasible, was interpreted in Moscow as being directed against Russia’s interests that lay in directing the transit of oil via its territory. Despite its skepticism towards the commercial value of the project, Russia demonstrated its desire to cooperate with those who favor this route. One of the leading Russian oil companies, LUKoil, may agree to participate in the construction of this pipeline.

Given the multiplicity of risks and challenges in the South Caucasus, the question arises of the role of military force in protecting stability and securing the economic interests of all local, regional, and global players. The calls for the demilitarization of the Caspian from some of the littoral capitals (Baku and Tehran) were viewed by Russia as an attempt to weaken its already vulnerable southern flank from deterring the potential threats that abound there.

The economic interest was exerting its influence on the political and military interests. The fact that about two million Azeris work in Russia, their remittances forming a substantial part of the country’s income, makes the Azeri leadership interested in better relations with Moscow. This partially explains why President Heydar Aliyev cooperated with Russia in preventing the use of Azerbaijan’s territory by the Chechen rebels.

That was not the case in Georgia. Moscow strongly criticized the Georgian government for allowing the transit of mercenaries, weapons, and money through Georgian territory to Chechnya and for harboring terrorists, who penetrated into Georgia with the Chechen refugees. But Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze demonstrated no willingness to undertake measures against these elements.

The United States’ Growing Involvement

The events that followed the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington changed the whole climate in the relationship between Russia and the West. Russia strongly supported the U.S.-led anti-terrorist campaign and showed its understanding of the increased American military presence in Central Asia.

⁴ Laurent Ruseckas, *Caspian Studies Program Experts Conference Report. Succession and Long-Term Stability in the Caspian Region* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, October 1999), 109.

The abrupt changes in the security environment in the South Caucasus caused by the arrival in Georgia of U.S. military advisors at the end of February 2002 have led to a stormy debate in Russia. The appearance of military instructors from the U.S. in Tbilisi was not expected by the Russian leadership although, according to American officials, it was as early as the end of the last year, within the framework of the joint working group on Afghanistan, that the American side informed the Russians of the existence of the preparations and supply program for Georgia. Nevertheless, the fact that President Shevardnadze did not find it necessary to inform Moscow about the planned arrival of American military advisors in Tbilisi came as a shock to the Russian leadership. This was attested to, in particular, by the public pronouncement by Vladimir Putin made during the informal CIS summit that took place in Almaty on March 1–2, 2002. Even given this response, Russia's president also emphasized that Georgia has the right to apply for assistance to whatever countries it deems necessary to do so. Russian Federation Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov spoke of Russia's "concerns that the direct involvement of the U.S. military in actions to combat terrorists in Georgia may further aggravate the situation in the region."⁵

Significantly, President Shevardnadze, explaining his position, stressed that the U.S. had helped Georgia to create border guard troops, and would now help in creating and training "antiterrorist groups," "that not any other country can do."⁶ Both Georgian and American representatives pointed out that the question was not about sending a military force to Georgia that would directly participate in an antiterrorist operation, but only about sending instructors to train Georgian special forces.

In the process, the Pankisi Gorge at the Georgian border with Chechnya, where there are many armed rebels among the Chechen refugees, was mentioned as an object of a possible operation of the Georgian special forces. In this connection, the Russian authorities have expressed satisfaction with Tbilisi's recognition of the fact that there are Chechen rebels in Pankisi (this had earlier been denied)⁷ Therefore, the eventual prospect of the liquidation of the rebel base in Georgia and of blocking the supply channels of Chechen separatists through the South Caucasus even corresponds to Russian interests.

However, analysts in Russia express doubt that it is the Pankisi Gorge that will become the target of a future operation for the Georgian troops. There are fears that, with the support of the U.S. military, the Georgian army may try to reestablish Tbilisi's control over Abkhazia, with whose population the entire North Caucasian region, along with a section of the Russian political elite, traditionally sympathize. To start an armed operation, it is enough to provoke terrorist acts against Geor-

⁵ *Izvestia*, March 1, 2002.

⁶ The Russian TV's ORT program, March 1, 2002.

⁷ *Ibid.*

gians on Abkhazian territory after having previously redeployed or forced out a part of the Chechen rebels there. Dmitri Rogozin, head of the State Duma Committee on International Affairs, has said that he has information on the intention of the Georgian leaders to “make an arrangement with the Chechen rebels,” and, “possibly together with the Americans, . . . [to] squeeze the mercenaries out of the Pankisi Gorge.”

The Russian press even published articles about a possible “U.S. offensive” against all four unrecognized republics (Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and Transdniestria), three of which are situated in the South Caucasus.⁸ Having assisted the Transcaucasian states in regaining control over their mutinous republics, the U.S., in the opinion of the authors of such forecasts, will ensure the stability of the regimes that would henceforth be under U.S. control.

In any case, Russia expects that Azerbaijan will become the next recipient of U.S. military assistance. There, the threat of destabilization is growing with the relentless approach of change in the country’s top leadership. This may induce the Americans to take action, especially in view of their substantial petroleum interests. Just as in the case of Georgia, Russia can do little to oppose this, and will hardly think it necessary to enter into a confrontation with the U.S. However, as distinct from Georgia, in Azerbaijan the Russian leadership has recently managed to achieve a certain consolidation of its positions, having considerably improved relations with that state.

In connection with the active U.S. “breakthrough” in the South Caucasus, Moscow’s traditional strategic alliance with Yerevan can also be rendered somewhat vulnerable. Armenia, to a no lesser degree than other Transcaucasian republics, which is interested in receiving economic, political, and other kinds of aid from the West, has already been given to understand that it will not be excluded from Washington’s sphere of attention. Already in early March 2002, there were media reports on the (so far) modest American military aid of \$4.5 million promised to Yerevan for combating terrorism, as well as on the first steps in building cooperation in that field.

If Russia’s executive authority showed restraint in reacting to the events in Georgia, in parliamentary circles the reaction was sharper. A number of deputies of the State Duma proposed to adopt a statement on Abkhazia and South Ossetia in the event that the American military contingents start arriving in Georgia after all. According to Rogozin, “In the event of Georgia’s break-up, Russia has the right to recognize the sovereignty and independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and start building interstate relations with them.” However, such a statement had no chance of receiving the support of the Duma majority loyal to the president,

⁸ Armen Khanbabian, “Nepriznannoi ‘chetverke’ ugrozhaet smertel’ naya opasnost’” (Fatal danger threatens the unrecognized “Four”), *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, March 2, 2002.

as this would enmesh Russia in a conflict with the West, and could also entail a reciprocal recognition of the independence of Chechnya.

Nevertheless, the president of unrecognized Abkhazia Vladislav Ardzinba addressed a request to the Russian leadership for the establishment of “associated relations” with Abkhazia, a status allowed by the Abkhazian constitution. Information has appeared on a referendum to be held in Abkhazia in the near future on the question of amending the constitution to include a clause allowing the republic’s incorporation into Russia.

The ‘Strategic Uncertainty’

On the whole, the increased American presence in the South Caucasus has created a situation of “strategic uncertainty” concerning Russia’s relations with the countries of this region. It is not clear, as yet, how the Americans, and possibly other Western players, will be received on the local scene. If the news which has appeared in the press on the alleged U.S. intention to build an electronic surveillance station in Georgia—similar to the one Russia had in Lurdes in Cuba—proves to be true, it will give the Americans an opportunity to maintain surveillance over communications not only in Iran (and this is undoubtedly one of their main objectives), but also in Russia’s southern regions.

This situation of “strategic uncertainty” will probably last for some time. Russia will closely watch the events, and will probably wish to revitalize bilateral relations with the Transcaucasian states of Armenia, which is still in need of Moscow’s support, and Azerbaijan, with whom relations have received a positive impetus during the recent successful visit to Russia by President Heydar Aliyev.

So far, it is not clear what influence the U.S. incursion into the security domain of the southern zone of the CIS as a whole and the Southern Caucasus in particular will have on the fate of collective mechanisms and, first of all, on the Collective Security Treaty, along with the CIS itself. It is hard to imagine what fate awaits the Russian peacekeepers in the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict zone. If until recently they served as the only force able to maintain the ceasefire in that zone, it is not inconceivable that under new conditions Georgia might try to secure the replacement of the Russians by peacekeepers from other states. In this case, Tbilisi will certainly try to impose on them the performance of police functions—to ensure the return of the Georgian refugees to the Gali district. This, in turn, may cause an outbreak of violence that, in the end, could be used as an occasion for the restoration of Tbilisi’s sovereignty over Abkhazia by means of military force.

In the near future, Russia has to establish a system of priorities and develop a precise strategy concerning the South Caucasian region and each of the three South Caucasian states. In view of the new circumstances, it will also be necessary for Moscow to analyze its peacekeeping role in the ethnopolitical conflicts in the region. Russia’s position in the South Caucasus has generally become aggravated, as the security system it has been building at the perimeter of its southern borders

has seriously cracked. However, the prospect of building close relations between Moscow and the South Caucasian states is still viable.

Turkish Policy Toward the Caucasus

Mustafa Aydin¹

Since the onset of the changes experienced in the worldwide geopolitical climate from the late 1980s onwards, Turkey has found itself at the center of the Eurasian region, a region that has become the focal point of global geopolitics. In this context, Turkey has been cited as an important actor because of its strong historical, cultural, ethnic, and linguistic bonds with the newly independent states of Eurasia. The emergence of eight independent states to Turkey's northeast at the end of the Cold War arguably enlarged Turkey's role in the world, and presented Turkey with both opportunities and potential risks in the region.

Adapting to the New Environment

Having based its post-World War II foreign and security policies on the strategic importance for the West of its location *vis-à-vis* the Soviet Union, Turkey, at least initially, hardly welcomed the end of the Cold War. As the subject of the continued relevance of NATO in the post-Cold War world order was opened up for discussion, Turkey suddenly found itself in a "security limbo." While the emergence of liberal democracies in Eastern Europe created a buffer zone between Western Europe and Russia, Turkey still felt threatened by the lingering uncertainties regarding its immediate neighborhood.

It also became clear that Turkey could no longer follow its traditional foreign policy posture of non-involvement in regional problems. At this juncture, the emergence of newly independent states beyond its Caucasian border was a challenge that needed to be faced. Nevertheless, Turkey's response to the Soviet collapse during the late 1980s was, perhaps not surprisingly, somewhat cautious, especially at the outset when the status of the new republics was far from clear.

Since then, however, Turkish policy toward the Caucasus has changed dramatically, and after the USSR formally broke up in December 1991, the implementation of a new policy orientation in Turkey soon followed. Thus Turkey became the first country to recognize the independence of the new republics, recognizing Azerbaijan on December 9, and the rest on December 16. After recognition, Turkey also signed protocols with each of them, except Armenia, initiating diplomatic relations at the ambassadorial level. As a result, by the end of 1991 Turkey had completely abandoned its Moscow-centered stance and had embarked on a program of active relations with the various Soviet successor states. Within the first year of independence alone, over 1170 Turkish delegations visited both the Caucasus and Central Asia, and in October 1992 Turkey hosted the presidents of

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the Turkic states in Istanbul for an inaugural Turkic Summit. Direct air connections and a satellite broadcast link have been established and, to facilitate these activities, the Turkish International Cooperation Agency was established in Ankara in January 1992.

While Turkey was aiming to take a more prominent role in the region, the fear that the vacuum left by the collapse of the Soviet Union could lead to the rise of Islamic fundamentalism among the Muslims of Eurasia led to the West's promotion of Turkey as secular and democratic model of a Muslim state. Hence, as a result of growing self-confidence about its own potential and its political support in the West, Turkey felt ready to take advantage of the economic and political opportunities offered by the newly independent states of Eurasia.

Regional Rivalries

Despite all the promising signs, it quickly became clear that Turkey was neither capable of capitalizing on them nor alone in its bid to fill the power vacuum. On the contrary, the competition between the rival countries seeking influence in the rapidly changing Eurasian environment became a 21st-century replica of the "Great Game," with the Russian Federation, Turkey, Iran, and the U.S. (among others) envisioning themselves as key players. The competition among them took on economic, political, ideological, and religious dimensions, and thus produced various possibilities for widespread conflict.

From the Turkish perspective, the possibility of a military confrontation with either Iran or Russia provided ample concern. Turkey was concerned that Iran would attempt to influence the identification of Muslim people throughout the Caucasus, an apprehension shared at the time by the Russian Federation and the West generally. Iran, on the other hand, worried that Turkey's active role in the region might create a pan-Turkic hegemony on its borders. Thus, a competition ensued briefly between the two opposing models of political development for the Turco-Muslim peoples of Eurasia: the secular model of Turkey with its political pluralism, and the Islamist model supported by Iran. It soon became clear, however, that neither country had enough political clout and economic power to back up its ambitions.

While Turkey became the first country to extend recognition to Azerbaijan, Iran did not conceal its concern over the Turkish action, accusing Turkey of pan-Turkism and the West of instigating such sentiments. Fears were expressed that the Turkish recognition would encourage an independent Azerbaijan to lay claim to a "greater Azerbaijan." The existence of about 20 million Azeris in Iran, out of a population of roughly 60 million, makes Iran edgy and raises fears that Iranian Azerbaijan might get restless after the independence of the Soviet Azerbaijan. The concern was exacerbated earlier by the nationalist rhetoric of President Elchibey in Azerbaijan. Though Turkey never played to such sentiments, and Azerbaijan after Aliyev's rise to power has stayed clear of the issue, Iran still dreads the

possibility that another nationalist leadership might come to power in Azerbaijan. In such a case, Iran would inevitably see Turkey as the beneficiary in an evolving set of relationships that directly affect Iran's territorial integrity, and might put itself on a path of high-stakes conflict with Turkey.

Although Turkey and Iran share similar concerns about the continuation of the Karabakh conflict, there are differences between them about how to solve the problem. While Turkey prefers to have the conflict dealt with within the OSCE, Iran, which also has a large Armenian minority, has taken a more direct approach by negotiating with, and mediating between, the two Caucasian republics. While Iran's bilateral attempts to solve the problem created concerns in Turkey about a possible increase in Iranian influence in the region, Iran in turn has been concerned about Turkey's cooperation with the U.S. to solve the problem, which was seen as paving the way for "growing American influence in the region."²

While Turkey was locked in an influence competition with Iran, at the same time it did not wish to alarm Moscow by exerting too much influence in the region. While Russia initially welcomed Turkish influence in the region as a counterweight against Iranian dominated pan-Islamism, those views have long since been modified, and Russia, becoming increasingly concerned about Turkish intentions, has become more aggressive in its assertion of its own rights in its "near abroad." Hence, after a brief period of self-isolation, Russia has moved to re-establish its place in the region as a dominant actor. As part of this move, political, economic, and military pressures have been used extensively. Moscow even argued that stability in the Caucasus would be threatened without a Russian presence in Azerbaijan, implicitly threatening that if the latter did not accept Russian troops and grant oil concessions, Russia could support Armenia in its conflict with Azerbaijan.³ These developments put Russia and Turkey on opposite sides, as the latter unequivocally supported Azerbaijan in its conflict with Armenia.

Turkey, however, realizing Russian sensitivities regarding ethnic strife in the Caucasus, has repeatedly reassured Moscow of its opposition to any further fragmentation of Russia, and of its support for the CIS's stability and integrity.⁴ On the other hand, Turkey stood firm in its opposition to Russia's wish to review the Conventional Forces Europe Treaty arrangements in the Caucasus. In the end, Russia was able to convince the West to modify the treaty and, despite Turkish protests, returned many of its military forces it had previously withdrawn from the Caucasus. As a result, since 1995 Turkey has become more conscious of the

² Velayeti's speech in a conference cited in Korkmaz Haktanır, "Developments in Central Asia and Turkish-Iranian Relations", *Middle East Business and Banking*, June 1992, 11.

³ Statement was made by the Russian Frontier Forces Commander in August 1994; see Carol Migdalowitz, "Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict," *CRS Issue Brief* (Washington, DC: The Library of Congress, Foreign Affairs and National Defense Division, updated April 12, 1995), 13.

⁴ For example, see "Turkish PM Demirel Visits Moscow: Useful, Constructive Talks Expected", *FBIS-SOV*, May 27, 1992, 15-16.

dangers of confrontation, and has adopted a policy stressing that the benefits of cooperation with Russia are still greater than those of cooperation with the rest of the former Soviet republics.

Although Turkey has chosen to avoid involvement in any way in the conflicts within Russian territory, the quest of the Chechens for independence has rapidly become a sore point in Turkish-Russian relations. The crisis has been especially critical for Turkey, not only because Turkish public opinion has shown great sympathy for the Chechen cause, but also because the crisis has displayed similarities to Turkey's Kurdish problem. While criticizing Russia for its excessive use of force in Chechnya, Turkey has been quite careful to state that the matter is an internal affair of the Russian Federation.⁵ Nonetheless, Turkey's relations with Russia worsened earlier with the Russian claim that the Chechens were obtaining assistance and volunteers from Turkey.⁶ Moreover, it was reported that the Russians were showing signs of supporting the secessionist Kurdish groups in Turkey in response to the alleged Turkish involvement in Chechnya.⁷ However, Turkey avoided direct involvement and the issue subsided after the 1996 cease-fire between Russia and the Chechens. Turkey has carefully avoided any involvement since the second round of fighting started in October 1999.

Relations with Armenia

Turkey's relations with Armenia have been an especially delicate issue because of the legacy of distrust between the two nations and the historical baggage that they brought into the relationship. Although Turkey recognized Armenian independence on December 16, 1991, without any preconditions, the border between the two countries immediately became a source of controversy. It was originally drawn by a peace treaty signed between Turkey and the short-lived independent Armenian Republic in 1921, and confirmed later by the Soviet-Turkish treaty of 1921. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, however, as Turkey no longer shared a border with Russia, some members of the Armenian Parliament argued that Armenia should not recognize the borders established between Moscow and Ankara. Thus, in the spring of 1992, Turkey stipulated that it would not proceed to formalize diplomatic relations with Armenia.

Apart from the border issue, references in the Armenian Independence Declaration to "killings of Armenians by Ottoman Turkey in 1915," and Armenian efforts to obtain international recognition for these killings, created tension between the two countries. Although former Armenian President Ter-Petrosyan, recognizing the need to enhance his country's relations with Turkey on a realistic basis,

⁵ *Briefing*, No. 1023, January 9, 1995, 7-8; and No. 1024, January 16, 1995, 10.

⁶ For public accusation from the Head of Russian Federal Counterintelligence Service on December 20, 1995, that volunteer fighters from Turkey were discovered in the Northern Caucasus, mainly in Chechnya, see *FBIS-SOV*, February 3, 1995, 71.

⁷ *Briefing*, No. 1039, May 1, 1995, 13; No. 1045, June 19, 1995, 13.

refrained from placing the issue on the agenda and thus offered an opening for improved relations, developments in the Caucasus (i.e. the Karabakh problem) have prevented further reconciliation between the two countries. With the advent of the nationalist Kocharian into power in Armenia in March 1997, the possibility of rapprochement between the two countries has been shelved for the time being.

In the meantime, Armenia's signing of a friendship and cooperation agreement with Russia in 1997, and allowing Russian forces to be stationed in the country, has put Armenia and Turkey on the opposite sides of the emerging loosely defined political alliances in the Caucasus—the Russian Federation, Armenia, and Iran on the one side, and the U.S., Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey on the other.

The Karabakh problem has been an important constraint on Turkish policy towards the Caucasus in general. It has presented unacceptable options for Turkey, with dangerous ramifications. There exists a longstanding public sympathy for the Azeris in Turkish public opinion, which has strongly encouraged the government to side with Azerbaijan, supporting even military intervention.⁸ The government, however, conscious that intervention might result in a deterioration of relations with both Russia and the U.S., has refrained from acting on these pressures and has chosen instead to mobilize an international response to Armenian attacks in Karabakh. Turkey has also displayed its awareness of the importance of the “Russian factor” to solving the conflict by seeking Russian cooperation, especially in the OSCE. However, when the matter of peace-keeping was discussed following the cease-fire between the warring parties on May 12, 1994, Turkey advocated for the deployment of a multinational force under OSCE supervision, and against Russian peacekeepers as suggested by Moscow. Turkey saw in this suggestion another attempt by Russia to exclude the rest of the world from the Caucasus.⁹

Although Turkey has thus far been able to remain clear of any direct military involvement in the conflict, the Karabakh issue firmly underscores the dilemmas that may face Turkey in its future efforts to maintain neutrality regarding ethnic conflicts in the former Soviet republics. Turkish policy during the conflict has aimed mainly at ensuring through political measures that this regional conflict does not escalate to a level that seriously threatens Turkish security, and thus compels it to intervene militarily. However, the conflict has also stopped the tentative moves from both sides of the Turkish-Armenian border to put an end to historic animosities. Although both sides seemed to agree on the need to overcome psychological barriers between themselves, developments in Karabakh have caused Turkish public opinion to press Ankara to speak out firmly against Armenian actions, and have thus put a halt to any process of reconciliation.

⁸ Among others, former president Turgut Özal argued that Turkey “had the right to intervene.” See *Financial Times Report on Turkey*, May 7, 1993, 5.

⁹ See *Milliyet*, February 25, 1995, 17; and May 8, 1995, 13.

Moreover, one of the by-products of the ethnic conflicts in the Caucasus (i.e., Abkhazia, Chechnya, and Karabakh) has been a sense of resurgent ethnic identity among the more than six million Caucasian-origin Turkish citizens, the full significance of which is yet to emerge. Although they have so far focused more on the cultural sphere, in the future these citizens may yet radicalize and wish to play a more determining role in the future of the Caucasian people, thus bringing Turkey into conflict with the interests of the regional countries.

Relations with Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan was at the top of the list of nations with whom every expert on the Caucasus predicted Turkey would make most progress in its post-Cold War relations. The expectation proved correct, and Turkish-Azeri relations started off with a leap forward based on cultural, linguistic, and historic linkages as well as shared economic, political, and strategic interests. In time, Turkey has become the only country that consistently supported Azerbaijan in its struggle over Karabakh, risking its relations with Armenia and Russia along the way.

Although the harmonious relationship between the two countries established during the reign of President Elchibey was somewhat cooled down with Aliyev's rise to power in Azerbaijan, the cooperation continued and even expanded into various other domains. Apart from strategic cooperation against Russian attempts to re-establish its hegemony over the Caucasus, the two countries have been cooperating on Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) project, the possibility of transferring Azeri natural gas to Turkey, various cultural programs, and thriving trade, as well as on the establishing and training of the national army of Azerbaijan. Moreover, Aliyev's policy of avoiding alienation of Russia and Iran in the region while firmly cooperating with the West has helped Turkey move away from its earlier confrontational line with Russia, Iran, and Armenia.

Relations with Georgia

After the collapse of the USSR, Georgia has rapidly become one of Turkey's more important foreign policy partners in the post-Cold War era. Their relations have thrived on Georgian opposition to Russian dominance in the Caucasus, its support for the realization of the BTC project, and its willingness to cooperate with Turkey on wide variety of issues, from tourism to security. Turkey, in return, has been more than willing to extend its friendship and economic, political, and military support to Georgia, which offered Turkey a foothold in the Caucasus and a gateway to Central Asia.

In contrast to Russian meddling with ethnic issues in Georgia, Turkey's bipartisan approach to Abkhazian and Ossetian problems and its continuing reaffirmation of Georgian territorial integrity greatly helped to enhance the relationship, so much so that Turkey became the biggest trade partner of Georgia shortly after independence and, in the words of Georgian President Shevardnadze, a strategic

partner in the long run. In addition, starting with cooperation in military education, Turkey, under the PfP program, offered its advice and help in establishing the Georgian national army. Then the two countries moved on to cooperate in the restoration of the Marnauli airfield and the Vaziyani military base in Georgia after the withdrawal of Russian forces.

Recently, when Georgia was again put under pressure by Russia in the aftermath of the events of September 11, with accusations that it was harboring Chechen gunmen, Turkey, with American backing, was again forthcoming in its support. Finally, the arrival of American military advisers in Georgia in the wake of September 11 cemented Georgia's western orientation. This, together with the planned Turkish-Georgian-Azerbaijani trilateral security cooperation agreement, is poised to bring new dimensions to both bilateral relations and in a wider scale to Caucasian geopolitics.

Turkey's Interest in the Caspian and the Struggle for Pipelines

One of the peculiar features of the Caspian Basin is that the regional countries most interested in the early exploration and transportation of oil and natural gas are landlocked and have to rely on the goodwill of their neighbors to be able to export their petroleum. As each country has a preference about how the oil and natural gas should be transported to market, the issue assumes an international dimension. Today, Russia is still keenly interested in retaining its political influence in the Caspian Basin. In order to acquire this advantage, it has insisted that the northern pipeline from Baku, Azerbaijan, to the Russian Black Sea port of Novorossiysk should be the main transit route for oil from the Caspian region. If Russia is successful, this will ensure Moscow's exclusive and strategic control over the region's resources.

Opposing Russian insistence on the northern route, the U.S. and Turkey as well as Georgia and Azerbaijan prefer a western route through Georgia to the Turkish Mediterranean port of Ceyhan. Although there have been various projects developed to move Caspian energy resources to market, the main competition has been between these two routes. What is at stake is not only oil and gas transit revenues that both countries can extract from pipelines passing through their respective territories; more importantly, the pipeline network is one of the key factors in securing and maintaining influence throughout Eurasia.¹⁰

Although the shortest route for a pipeline from Azerbaijan to the Mediterranean is through Armenia and Turkey, the unresolved Karabakh conflict makes this route difficult to realize. This, coupled with U.S. opposition to have pipelines run through Iran, leaves the Georgian option the only possible one for the western line. However, Georgia, too, is struggling with a number of internal con-

¹⁰ On this subject, see Mustafa Aydın, *New Geopolitics of Central Asia and the Caucasus: Causes of Instability and Predicament* (Ankara: Center for Strategic Research, 2000), 56-71.

flicts, which assumed new urgency with the developments in the region since the September 11 attacks on the U.S. As the U.S. has now firmly arrived on the Caucasus scene with its advisers in Georgia, we might expect a new turn of events within Georgia and a boost to the BTC project, which the U.S. has supported politically from the beginning.

If the BTC pipeline is built and put into operation, its main effect would be to weaken the Caspian states' economic and transportation dependence on Russia. Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan would appear as new competitors to Russia in the export of oil and gas and, together with Georgia, would use the money thus obtained to enhance their political independence from Russia. The role of the Western states, whose oil and gas companies would provide the necessary investment, would increase, as would the role of Turkey.

Conclusions

The collapse of the USSR has been a mixed blessing for Turkey. While the century-old Soviet/Russian threat to Turkey's security has disappeared, the vacuum created by this departure in the Eurasian region has become a breeding ground on Turkey's borders for potential risks and threats to regional security.

While Turkey has traditionally avoided involvement in regional politics, it has been unavoidably drawn into the volatile new political environment of the Caucasus, where Armenia and Azerbaijan are locked in a potentially expandable conflict, where Georgian politics are highly unstable, and where Chechens fight to break away from the Russian Federation. For its part, Turkey, mindful of the disruptive impacts of sub-nationalism and ultra-nationalism, has been eager to promote the positive aspects of national formation in the region, making clear that transnational concepts based on Islam or pan-Turkism are not part of its policy *vis-à-vis* the states in the region.

We can now clearly see that Turkey is currently undergoing a dramatic shift in its traditional foreign policy, increasingly focusing on the Caucasus, along with the Balkans and the Middle East. Although Turkey has disavowed any intention of intervening militarily in inter-republican clashes in former Soviet territory, it is still conceivable that Turkish forces might be invited by these states to play the role of peacekeepers between or within them. In this context, the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict has already presented Turkey with a sense of the difficulties that it might encounter if it decides to engage in ethnic conflicts in the region.

The emergence of independent republics in the Caucasus represented a turning point in Turkey's regional role and policies. Turkey has become one of the important players in a region where it previously had only a marginal influence and no active involvement. Although economic and political conditions in the region are unlikely to stabilize for some years, it is without doubt that Turkish policymakers will continue with their efforts to create new networks of interdependency

between Ankara and the regional capitals. It is also without doubt that other regional players, especially Russia and Iran, will continue to view these policies with suspicion and challenge them.

Even if Turkey's initial stance towards Eurasia proved somewhat unrealistic, the effects it generated did set the tone for Turkish policy for the rest of the 1990s and early 2000s. While Turkey has not necessarily become the model to which the new states of Eurasia aspire, its thriving private sector, its secular, pluralist approach toward Islam, and its usually functioning democracy continue to have their appeal in the region. Meanwhile, Turkey has learned two important lessons *vis-à-vis* its relationship with Russia: that Russia is an important economic partner for Turkey, and that an overly aggressive foreign policy in Eurasia is not advisable, given the risk of escalation into direct confrontation with Russia, the regional superpower.

Iran and the Caucasus: Maintaining Some Pragmatism

Mohammad-Reza Djalili¹

From Iran's viewpoint, the Caucasus is not totally foreign territory. This perception is even more particularly true with regard to Transcaucasia, situated in the south of the Caucasus and closer to Iran's current borders. Since ancient times and up to the nineteenth century, this region was on numerous occasions a part of the Iranian "realm," at times for very long periods. The Iranian presence in the Caucasus was for centuries challenged in turn by the Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Turks, and Russians. The latter put an end to the Persian monarchic presence through a policy of gradual penetration. It was during the reign of the Qadjar Dynasty (1785-1925) that Iran definitively lost its Caucasian dependencies to Russia.²

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, along with the achievement of independence by the states of the South Caucasus and Central Asia, has considerably modified the geopolitical environment of Iran that is the only state, other than Russia, that shares common borders with countries situated both to the west and east of the Caspian Sea. Surprised by the sudden demise of the USSR, Tehran has been forced to hastily set up a policy in regard to this new situation. This policy has gradually taken shape around several key concerns: maintaining the country's security and territorial integrity, developing bilateral and multilateral economic relations, and emphasizing the advantages that Iran's geographical position offers for transit to landlocked countries. In order to reach its objectives and at the same time to restore its image in the international arena, Tehran has opted from the beginning for a cautious and rather pragmatic approach, setting aside some of the ideological preoccupations inherent in a revolutionary and religious regime. Moreover, the authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran decided to conduct their policy in these two directions in close collaboration with Russia. This choice simultaneously reflected Tehran's desire to pursue a policy in close collaboration with Moscow, as it had done since the beginning of the Islamic revolution, as well as its concern to not cut itself off from its main supplier of arms and military equipment. In fact, Iran had no interest in hurting Russia's feelings and in thereby thwarting one of its main objectives: the diminishment of its international isolation.

In Transcaucasia, the country with which Iran has the longest borders is Azer-

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² M.H. Ganji, "The historical development of the boundaries of Azerbaijan," in *The Boundaries of Modern Iran*, edited by Keith McLachlan (London: UCL Press, 1994), 37-46.

baijan.³ Moreover, as the only Transcaucasian state located along the Caspian Sea, Azerbaijan also shares maritime borders with Iran. Furthermore, both countries share many historical, cultural, and religious affinities. A significant portion of the population of Iran also speaks Azeri Turkish. There are more Azeris in Iran than in the Republic of Azerbaijan, and Azeris in Iran do not constitute a marginal minority; rather, they represent a major constituency of the country and, as such, they are well represented in all the state, military, economic, and, of course, clerical spheres.⁴ From a religious point of view, the two countries both have Shiite majorities. In addition, their common history, rooted in pre-Islamic times and the Zoroastrian religion, the existence in Azerbaijan of Farsi-speaking minorities, and other linkages should all tend toward the establishment of close ties between the two states. Yet this has not been the case. For ten years, their relations have been marked above all by a mutual distrust, to say the very least. The effects of this situation are serious and extend far beyond the framework of bilateral relations. They determine to a great extent Iran's relations with other Transcaucasian states, and their influence even goes beyond relations between Tehran and Ankara. Given this perspective, an examination of Iranian–Azerbaijani relations is an effective way to understand Iranian policy with respect to the entire Transcaucasian Region.

Iran-Azerbaijan, or Cordial Disagreement

On July 23, 2001, a military confrontation between Iran and Azerbaijan took place for the first time in the Caspian Sea. 150 kilometers southeast of Baku, an Iranian warship intercepted and forcibly expelled a boat that was conducting prospecting operations for the British Petroleum company, working under a mandate from the government of Azerbaijan. Before any military intervention occurred, Tehran sent out warnings to the British Petroleum boat and dispatched an Iranian military airplane to fly overhead. Baku adamantly denounced these actions as violations of its airspace and territorial waters.⁵ Some time afterwards, a squadron of the Turkish Air Force undertook training exercises in Azerbaijan while, on August 25, General Hussein Kivrikoglu, commander of the Turkish Army's headquarters, came to Baku for an official visit. These actions were described in the Turkish press as demonstrations of Turkey's support for Azerbaijan's cause, and they prompted Tehran to complain of Ankara's interference in bilateral Iranian-Azerbaijani relations.⁶

³ In all, 611 km, of which 432 are with the main territory and 179 are with the enclave of Nakhitchevan.

⁴ The number of Iranians speaking Azeri Turkish is estimated to be 15% to 20% of the total population of the country. With the progress in alphabetization and urbanization, a significant part of this population is bilingual today. See Brenda Shaffer, "The Formation of Azerbaijani collective identity in Iran," *Nationalities Papers* 28:3 (2000), 449–477.

⁵ "Gunboat Diplomacy in the Caspian," *The Estimate*, August 2001.

⁶ Michael Lelyveld, "Azerbaijan: Turkey Pursues Ambiguous Ties," *Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty*, August 28, 2001, <http://www.rferl.org/nca/features/2001/08/28082001113441.asp>

This incident is an indication of the unrest and the climate of distrust that has prevailed for years in relations between Tehran and Baku. Even if events of this type have not had serious consequences (until now, at least), they clearly reflect the difficulties present in attempts at the normalization of relations between the two countries. What are the roots of this unrest?

Before considering any other issues, and without exaggerating their significance, it is important to acknowledge that ideological discrepancies exist between Tehran and Baku. Like Iran, Azerbaijan is a country with a majority Shiite population. But the Azeri state is a secular one, whereas Iran has been, since February 1979, an Islamic Republic. In the international arena, Baku has sought closer ties with the West and a rapprochement with NATO. It has just entered the Council of Europe, is developing its relations with the United States, maintains a good relationship with Israel, and considers itself very close to Turkey. Iran, as far as Azerbaijan is concerned, is hindered in its vision of the world by the stumbling block of its anti-American stance. It criticizes “the Great Satan’s arrogance,” conducts an anti-Israel policy in the Middle East, supports Palestinian demands, collaborates closely with Russia in Transcaucasia, and has had, since the middle of the 90s, “difficult” relations with Turkey.

These ideological discrepancies, in spite of Iran’s general preference for a pragmatic approach, are at times the source of difficulties in relations between the two neighbors and a cause of their disagreements. Because of these divergent views, the two countries have chosen opposing strategies that sometimes undermine even their own interests. It would be a mistake for Azerbaijan to conduct a policy that ignores its geographic situation and, for Iran, it is neither necessary nor always beneficial to seek the support of Russia in its Caucasian policies. Moscow has taken advantage of Iran’s isolation to reinforce first of all its own position in the region, and of course favors its own interests at the expense of Iran’s.

Besides ideology, Iranians and Azeris have different points of view concerning the exploitation of hydrocarbon resources in the Caspian Sea. These differences are firstly of a juridical character. Azerbaijan is in favor of sharing offshore resources while transposing the modalities of international maritime law, applicable only in open seas, to an enclosed sea—the Caspian. This method gives a significant advantage to a country like Azerbaijan that, given the length of its coast, could then utilize an area of 80,000 sq. km. Iran is against this solution that leaves at its disposal an area of only 44,000 sq. km, and advocates instead the idea of moving the drilling for petroleum resources beyond the littoral zones, under the control of an international institution representing all the neighboring countries. In case this option is not chosen, Tehran proposes that a regime of equal sharing between the five littoral states be implemented.⁷ But another problem has appeared on the

⁷ On the Caspian and hydrocarbons see Mohammad-Reza Djalili and Thierry Kellner, *Géopolitique de la nouvelle Asie centrale* (Paris: PUF, 2001), 179–225.

horizon. In 1994, when Azerbaijan concluded a petroleum exploration agreement considered to be the “contract of the century” with an international consortium, it was initially expected that Iran would have a five-percent participation in this petroleum consortium. In April 1995, under the pressure of the United States, Azerbaijan expelled Iran from this market, provoking the anger of the Iranians. They openly criticized the policy of the Azerbaijani President Heydar Aliyev, although he was preferable to the Iranians than his more nationalist predecessor Ebulfaz Elchibey. Since then, in spite of Iran’s involvement in other Azerbaijani oil drilling projects, a new bone of contention has been added to the Iranian-Azeri issue. The incident of July 2001, noted above, confirms the persistence of unrest with respect to the Caspian Sea that has poisoned relations between the two neighbor states.

More fundamental is the climate of suspicion and mutual distrust that has affected the whole of Iranian–Azeri relations, which can be explained above all by the opposing visions the two neighbors have of their history and identity. The Iranian perception of Azerbaijan differs somewhat from that of the former Soviet Union (which remains more or less the self-perception held by the current leaders of the Azerbaijani Republic). For the Iranians, the northwest portion of their territory, squeezed between Turkey on the west, the former USSR on the north, and the Caspian Sea on the east, is administratively divided today into three provinces of Western, Central, and Eastern Azerbaijan. The application of the name “Azerbaijan” to the Turkish-speaking part of the Caucasus is recent. It dates back to 1918, when Turkish troops, under Nuri Pasha’s command, occupied Baku on September 15 and reorganized the former provinces under the name of Azerbaijan in order to achieve the Ottoman objective of the time, which was the annexation of Iranian Azerbaijan and the territories situated to the north of Arax and populated by Muslims, generally Turkish-speaking, who were considered “Caucasian Tatars” by the Russians under the Tsarist empire.⁸ This territory was in fact named after the generic term “Arran,” or according to the particular denomination of each of its districts or khanats: Shirvan, Bakou, Gandja, Nakhitchevan, Talesh, etc. The Iranians, however, stress the strong affinities that exist between the populations living on both sides of the Arax. To them, in spite of the use of the Turkish language north of the Arax, from a cultural, historical, and social standpoint these populations belong to the Iranian world.

If Iranians perceive Iran as one of the most ancient states of Asia, the Azeri elite, most probably influenced by the Soviet approach to ethnic issues, has another vision of its history, and has developed a discourse around the myth of a “Greater Azerbaijan.”⁹ From this perspective, there are two Azerbaijan, one in

⁸ V. Minorsky, “Adharbaydjan,” *Encyclopédie de l’Islam* (1960), vol.1, 197.

⁹ Shireen Hunter, “Greater Azerbaijan: Myth or Reality?” in Mohammad-Reza Djalili, ed., *Le Caucase Postsoviétique: la transition dans le conflit* (Brussels: Bruylant, 1995), 115–142.

the north—the former Soviet Republic—and another one in the south—Iranian Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan is seen as having been unfairly divided between the Iranians and the Russians, the latter having been challenged only after the collapse of the USSR. This vision is unacceptable to the Iranians, who see in this discourse a challenge to their territorial integrity, if not officially from the Azeri government, then at least from some Azerbaijani political circles.¹⁰ Iran's concern is even more justified, since this Pan-Azeri irredentism is sometimes combined with an anti-Iranian pan-Turkish philosophy that is not at all well received in Tehran.¹¹

These opposing points of view constitute the background against which Iranian–Azerbaijani relations have developed, and do not serve to facilitate positive relations between the two countries. At times Tehran will accuse Baku of supporting separatist agitators in Iran. Baku, in turn, points up the existence of small Islamist groups manipulated by Iran. From time to time, protests are heard in Iran, saying that if Azerbaijan's populations want to join their “brothers from the south,” Iran is ready to welcome them and to absorb their territory into the “Iranian motherland.” These polite exchanges, even if they are not based on clearly-identified facts—for the Republic of Azerbaijan does not have the means to actually threaten Iran's security, nor is it in Iran's interest to destabilize its neighbor—have a harmful effect on bilateral relations and undermine the peace that should prevail in the normal development of interstate relations.

Iran–Armenia, or Relations Between Very Good Neighbors

Relations between Iran and the Armenian world as a whole go back to pre-Islamic times, and are indicated by the centuries-long presence of an Armenian community living in Iran. The number of Armenians in Iran has certainly decreased since the Islamic revolution, but they still constitute the most significant Christian community in the country today.¹² In the middle of the 1970s, the number of Armenians in Iran was estimated at around 250,000. Today, their number is around 150,000. Most of them live in cities such as Tehran, Ispahan, and Tabriz.¹³ Iran's relations with the Republic of Armenia, which shares a common border with Iran, must take these realities into account, but they are also influenced by other considerations. For Tehran, relations with Yerevan assume a particular importance given the existing difficulties in its relations with Baku. Moreover, the conflict between

¹⁰ These are essentially small groups supporting the Popular Front of farmer–president Elchibey, individuals close to the Foundation for Azerbaijani Studies of Baku or affiliated with the World Congress of Azerbaijanis, a few activists of the Front of National Liberation of South Azerbaijan, etc.

¹¹ Touraj Atabaki, *Azerbaijan: ethnicity and the struggle for power in Iran* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000).

¹² Eliz Sanasarian, *Religious Minorities in Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 34–40. See also Cosroe Chaqueri, ed., *The Armenians of Iran* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Middle Eastern Monographs, 1998).

¹³ Eliz Sanasarian, *op cit.*, 36–37.

Armenia and Azerbaijan concerning Nagorno-Karabakh that lasted several years along its borders (and may one day start up again), worries Iran, even though this conflict has allowed Iran to attempt mediation and thus to play a stronger political role in Transcaucasian affairs.¹⁴ Armenia, for its part, trapped between Turkey and Azerbaijan—both of whom it considers hostile—and an unstable Georgia, seeks to reinforce its ties to its large southern neighbor in order to ameliorate both its geographical and political constraints as an enclave. The objective conditions are therefore favorable for Christian Armenia and the Islamic Republic of Iran to get along and closely collaborate, despite their religious and ideological differences.

If the Armenians see in Iran a power capable of counterbalancing the activities of Turkey in Transcaucasia, and with whom they have neither historical nor territorial differences, the Iranians for their part also consider Armenia a buffer to Turkish influence on the northwest borders of their country and even, on some level, in Central Asia, where many Armenians live.¹⁵ Moreover, through establishing close ties with Yerevan, Tehran is without doubt seeking to win support among the Armenian diaspora in Europe, Russia, and the United States. Having said that, Iran's rapprochement with Armenia allows the consolidation of an informal alliance between Russia and Iran, a country with which Tehran shares common views concerning its Caucasian policy.

Iran's relationship with Armenia has also had as a consequence the development of bilateral economic relations between the two states. Iran has become the most significant trading partner of Armenia, and ground and air communication routes between the two countries have clearly improved during recent years. Along with the exportation of Iranian consumer goods comes the supply of oil, gas, and electricity. In fact, in November 2001, the two governments signed a draft agreement for the importation of Iranian and Turkmen gas through Iranian territory. The implementation of this project could lead to a significant mutual dependence between the two neighboring countries.

Iran–Georgia: A More Difficult Cooperation

In contrast to Azerbaijan and Armenia, Georgia does not share any common borders with Iran, but several considerations motivate the two countries to get along and to cooperate. In its policy regarding Transcaucasia, Iran cannot ignore Georgia. In return, Georgia cannot ignore Iran, since it needs to diversify its regional and international relations, most notably to counterbalance Russian influence. Moreover Georgia, being the only Transcaucasian State with a maritime coast on the open sea, must conduct a policy that will maximize the value of this asset, while turning its territory into a nerve center for communications and transportation. Such a perspective does not leave Iran indifferent, as they can envision the

¹⁴ Abdollah Ramezanzadeh, "Iran's Role as a Mediator in the Nagorno-Karabakh Crisis," in *Contested Borders in the Caucasus*, edited by Bruno Coppiters (Brussels: VUB Press, 1996).

¹⁵ Gayane Novikova, "Armenia and the Middle East," *Meria* 4:4 (December 2000), 60–66.

possibility of laying out a transit route via Armenia or Azerbaijan in order to access the port of Poti on the Black Sea. Nonetheless, economic and commercial relations between the two countries have developed rather well in recent years.

The Iranian-Georgian relationship rests on political, economic, and geopolitical considerations. This last aspect cannot be mentioned without including the Chechen conflict that has been taking place along the northern border of Georgia and has had strong repercussions in this country.¹⁶ The Iranian policy towards this conflict is in contradiction with the constitutional principles of the Islamic Republic, which hold that the Iranian regime must extend help to all Muslim brothers fighting for their freedom. In the case of the Chechen conflict, Iran has shown its penchant for *realpolitik*, its selective approach to the Islamic “causes” that do or do not deserve its involvement. Even if, during a part of this conflict, from 1997 to 2000, the Iranian government, as president of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), did show some interest in the Chechen conflict, Iran preferred to sacrifice the interests of *believers* and chose to maintain its good relations with Russia, its main provider of military equipment and nuclear technology.¹⁷ From this approach, it becomes evident that Tehran cannot politically support the position of Tbilisi in the face of pressures from Moscow that exhort Georgia toward more cooperation in the Russian fight against the Chechen rebellion.

The arrival, at the end of February 2002, of a number of American military advisers in Georgia in order to help the Tbilisi government in its fight against terrorism in the gorges of Pankisi, where the presence of members of the Al-Qaeda network has been reported, may disturb the climate of bilateral Iranian–Georgian relations. In effect, after the “installation” of Americans in Afghanistan and in several bases in Central Asia, the Iranians are worried about the “encirclement” of their territory by the American military forces already present in the Persian Gulf zone, and through NATO in Turkey. The prolonged presence of Americans in Georgia can only displease Tehran further.

Perspectives

The principles of Iranian policy in the Caucasus, despite some particularities, do not differ from those of the rest of its foreign policy. Since Khomeini’s death, the orientations and guiding principles of this policy have gradually shifted. Once revolutionary and strongly affected by its ideology, Iran’s foreign policy has become more pragmatic and conciliatory. Since Mohammad Khatami’s ascent to the presidency in 1997, Tehran has abandoned a policy of confrontation for an approach based on dialogue and the pursuit of *détente*. However, these reforms of Iranian

¹⁶ *Le Monde*, February 25, 2002.

¹⁷ See A. William Samii, “Iran and Chechnya: Realpolitik at Work,” *Middle East Policy* 8:1 (March 2001), as well as Svante E. Cornell, “Iran and the Caucasus: The Triumph of Pragmatism over Ideology,” *Global Dialogue*, (Spring/Summer 2001), 80–92.

diplomacy have some limits.¹⁸ The regime is still an Islamic Republic that remains reticent toward more secular Muslim regimes, distrustful toward Western democracies, and violently opposed to Israel and the United States. Anti-Americanism remains a leitmotif of Iranian policy. One can explain the resort to this discourse by the necessity for an Islamic regime like Iran's to keep a recurring theme presented as revolutionary and popular, the need to use the "Great Satan" as an outlet in the face of the failures and difficulties encountered by the Republic of the Mullahs, as well as by the stake that relations with Washington represent in internal quarrels between different Islamist factions intent on monopolizing power.

Concerning the new Transcaucasian states, Iranian policy naturally is adapting to the particular contexts affecting bilateral relations with each of them. But this policy fits more broadly, on one hand, into the specific framework of relations of Iran with Russia and Turkey, two other significant external actors in the regional dynamic, and on the other hand, into the global context of international policy.

A quick look at Turkish and Iranian strategies in Transcaucasia and in Eurasia more generally allows us to highlight their differences and above all to stress the way they influence each other. Thus, if the United States, Azerbaijan, and Israel are significant partners in Turkey's Eurasian policy, Iran bases its strategy on maintaining favored links with Russia, Greece, and Armenia. In order to conduct such a policy, Islamic Iran does not hesitate to encourage the Muslims of the former Soviet Union to get along with the Christian Orthodox. It condemns Chechen separatism, collaborates with Moscow to implement a peace process between Islamists and neo-communists in Tajikistan, and tends toward Armenian positions concerning the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Meanwhile, Turkey has established favored links to Azerbaijan (where some pan-Turkish factions do not hesitate to call for the concept of "one Nation, two States" regarding relations between the two), has established an alliance with Israel, and contributes to the emergence of an Ankara-Baku-Tel Aviv axis. Iran, for its part, is engaged in the formation of a counter-axis of Tehran-Athens-Yerevan. Thereby, each country seeks to prevent the other from reaching a hegemonic position in regional affairs.¹⁹

From an international point of view, the attacks of September 11, 2001 have had as a consequence a reinforcement of links between the United States, the Transcaucasian states, and Russia. Concerning the exploitation of Caspian oil and its transportation, a more peaceful climate prevails between America and Russia in this particular domain, a state of affairs that does not serve Iran's interests. Regarding Chechnya, from now on the Russians will present the war against the Chechens as a fight against terrorism. In December 2001, U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld made a visit to Baku during which he declared that the

¹⁸ Mohammad-Reza Djalili, *Iran: l'illusion réformiste* (Paris: Presses de sciences Po, 2001), 59–76.

¹⁹ About the Eurasian policy of Iran, see Nicolas K. Gvosdev, "Iran's Eurasian Strategy," *Analysis of Current Events ACE* 13:2 (May 2001), 1–5.

United States wants to reinforce its military cooperation with Azerbaijan. A few days later, on January 11, 2002, President George Bush signed a decree canceling the legal provisions that prevented economic assistance to Azerbaijan that were made during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict under the pressure of the Armenian lobby in the United States. At the end of February, the American military presence in Georgia was confirmed. If one adds to that the inclusion of Iran to the “Axis of Evil” in the State of the Union address by the American president, given on January 29, 2002, one can see that conditions for the implementation of Iranian policy in the Caucasus did not improve after September 11.

U.S. Policy in the South Caucasus

*Martha Brill Olcott*¹

The three tiny countries of the South Caucasus have each gotten far more attention from U.S. policy-makers than one would have initially expected, given their size and their geographic isolation. The explanation for this lies in Azerbaijan's oil, Armenia's powerful international diaspora, and Georgian president Eduard Shevardnadze's popularity in the West.

Azerbaijan

Since the mid-1990s, the Azerbaijanis have been working hard to get more direct U.S. engagement in their country, hoping that Washington would serve as a buffer between them and Moscow. But despite Azerbaijan's considerable oil reserves,² Washington's initial tilt in the dispute between Azerbaijan and Armenia over the status of the contested Karabakh region was toward Armenia. Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, passed in October 1992, was probably the greatest manifestation of this. It sharply restricted U.S. assistance to Azerbaijan until that state took "demonstrable steps to cease all blockades and other offensive uses of force against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh." Moreover, it proved very difficult for the Azerbaijanis to demonstrate that they were desisting from the use of offensive force against the Armenians (and that the Armenians were behaving aggressively to Azerbaijan as well).

Azerbaijan's oil, though, became an increasingly attractive magnet for the Americans. Several U.S. firms are involved in the oil consortia active in Azerbaijan; Chevron, ExxonMobil, Unocal, and Amerada Hess all have stakes in one or more projects. Since the merger of BP and Amoco, the U.S. has also become a greater stakeholder in Azerbaijan's largest oil project—the development of Azeri, Chirag and the deepwater portions of Gunashli, which BP agreed to develop in a 30-year contract signed in September 1994, which created the Azerbaijan International Oil Operating Company (AIOC). BP holds 34.1 percent of the shares in AIOC and is the project operator. Unocal holds 10.2 percent of the shares, and ExxonMobil another 8 percent.

Heydar Aliyev seems to have fully understood the value of the "oil card" as, under his leadership, the Azerbaijani government has proven quite savvy in the assembly of these projects in order to ensure that the major global powers were

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² Estimates of Azerbaijan's proven oil reserves vary from 3.6 to 12.5 billion barrels, according to the U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration, <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/caspian.html>.

all represented. The AIOC project also includes LUKoil (Russia) with a 10.0 percent share, Statoil (Norway) with an 8.6 percent share, Itochu (Japan) with a 3.9 percent share, and Delta (Saudi Arabia) with a 1.7 percent share. Shah Deniz, Azerbaijan's second largest project, is also operated by BP (with a 25.5 percent share), and has Russian, Italian, French, Norwegian, and Iranian participation as well.

But the development of Azerbaijan's oil has been far from problem-free. The problem of the main export route is still not fully resolved, although after years of U.S. pressure, the AIOC is expected to irrevocably lock in the decision to use the Baku-Ceyhan route as the main export route for its oil by summer 2002. However, the legal status of the Caspian Sea is still unresolved, with each nation effectively carving out their own national zones for development. This has left Azerbaijan with three major contested deposits—two with Iran and a third with Turkmenistan—and in July 2001, Iranian military gunboats confronted a BP-owned research vessel that was exploring the Araz-Alov-Sharq structure, ordering it out of what it claimed to be Iranian territorial waters.³ The Iranians claimed that if BP continued work on this project, they would be barred from bidding on new projects in Iran, and the incident led to a serious deterioration in the already strained Azerbaijani-Iranian relationship.

However, without U.S. engagement, the Azerbaijanis would likely have found it far more difficult to develop their oil wealth and could, like Turkmenistan, have found themselves fully dependent upon Russia for transport. This is precisely what the U.S. feared, since oil, unlike gas, is driven by the price structure of a global market, transit states have a lot of discretionary power. It was to keep the Russians from having a similar stranglehold on Azerbaijan that the Clinton administration pushed hard for Azerbaijani oil to be shipped via Turkey, along the Baku-Ceyhan route, instead of north to Novorossisk and then out along the main Russian export pipeline.

This policy had the additional advantage of rewarding Turkey, which had been a close ally to the U.S. throughout the Cold War but had not really reaped the kind of benefits for this support with the collapse of Communism that many in Ankara and Istanbul had hoped for. The Baku-Ceyhan route would provide the Turks with substantial transit fees, and had the additional advantage of not adding tanker traffic to the Turkish straits.

For all the U.S. administration's prodding, though, the AIOC was unwilling to commit to this route if it did not prove to be economically feasible, for Washington was unwilling to provide subsidies for its construction. As the Clinton Administration began lobbying the oil companies doing business in Azerbaijan, the Azerbaijanis began lobbying the Clinton Administration. As U.S. oil firms became more active in Azerbaijan, pressure to remove or seriously modify these

³ Caspian Sea Regional Country Analysis Brief, <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/caspian.html>.

sanctions mounted considerably, and in October 1998 modifying legislation was passed that provided some important exceptions, allowing the U.S. Export-Import Bank, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), and the Trade and Development Agency to engage in projects in the country. All of this was designed to spur further U.S. investment in Azerbaijan's oil industry. Azerbaijani non-government organizations also became eligible to receive U.S. funding, and in 2000 the U.S. government spent \$32.18 million in Freedom Support Act activities. US AID-funded programs have also been developed for working with independent political groups and the Azerbaijani media.

Until the late 1990s, just about all U.S. foreign aid to Azerbaijan was restricted to humanitarian assistance, mostly earmarked for the country's refugee population.

Azerbaijan has about eight hundred thousand refugees, if one counts the more than half a million internally displaced people in that category (people forced from the parts of Azerbaijan that were occupied by the Armenians during the fighting of the early 1990s). The rest of the refugees come from Armenia proper.⁴

The Azerbaijani government was determined to have the Freedom Support Act sanctions lifted largely as a matter of prestige. While corruption has been a constant and growing problem in Azerbaijan, the rising price of oil globally has made the Azerbaijani government the least dependent upon international assistance of any of the states in the region, although the IMF and World Bank are both engaged in the country, trying to speed up the process of macroeconomic reform.

President Aliyev and his key advisors have hoped that the tragic events of September 11 would mark a new beginning for U.S.–Azerbaijani relations, and that this would take the form of increased security cooperation. The hated Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act of 1992 was lifted by Congressional resolution in October 2001, and affirmed by Presidential decree in January 2002.

Some Azerbaijani politicians had long been pressing for Azerbaijan to grant NATO a base, a request that seemed highly implausible prior to September 11, but since then there have been reports that U.S. planes have used the Baku airport for stopovers en route to Afghanistan.⁵ Many in the Azerbaijani elite hope for even greater U.S. military engagement, and the decision by the U.S. administration to introduce military trainers and U.S. combat helicopters into Georgia has sparked hopes in Azerbaijan that the U.S. military presence in their country might be increased as well, especially if the U.S. winds up engaging in combat in the Persian Gulf. The repeal of Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act is likely to lead to

⁴ At the end of 1999, Azerbaijan had 791,550 "persons of concern to UNHCR, including 221,600 refugees and 569,600 internally displaced persons." See <http://www.unhcr.ch/statist/main.htm>.

⁵ Tim Wall, "Bush Administration Uses Economic Levers to Encourage Anti-terrorism Cooperation", *Eurasia Insight*, October 22, 2001, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav102201c.shtml>.

the creation of wide-ranging new contacts between the U.S. and Azerbaijani militaries.

The first bilateral U.S.–Azerbaijani military consultations took place in Baku in late March 2002, and focused on naval defense in the Caspian Sea, on standardization of air controls, and on questions of military training. There has also been a lifting of the ban on U.S. arms exports to both Azerbaijan and to Armenia, which creates further opportunities for solidifying ties between the U.S. and Azerbaijan.⁶

The repeal of Section 907 is a real milestone in U.S.–Azerbaijani relations, and opens the possibility of much greater U.S. engagement with Azerbaijan, and with 78-year-old President Heydar Aliyev. It also in turn increases the potential U.S. role in a succession crisis, which could occur at any time, given the Azerbaijani president's fragile health.

Georgia

Ever since Eduard Shevardnadze came to power in Georgia in late 1992, the U.S. has tried to strengthen the cause of Georgian independence, which has been seriously compromised by the fighting over the status of the autonomous republic of Abkhazia, and the area of South Ossetia around Tskhinvali, neither of which are under the control of the Georgian government. In fact, Russia's key role in helping sustain these conflicts, at least until they became frozen through Russian negotiated cease-fires in 1994, was a major reason for a hardening of U.S. attitudes toward Russia. In the first year or so of its existence, the Clinton Administration was willing to grant Russia a relatively free hand in the newly independent states on its borders. But Moscow's behavior in Georgia (and, to a lesser extent, in Azerbaijan and Moldova) convinced even the most pro-Russian of Clinton's advisors that the Russians had to be closely monitored.

The U.S. was less concerned with Russia's early tilt toward Armenia in the war over Karabakh, and Washington even came to believe that Moscow could be an honest broker in this dispute. But first the Clinton and now the Bush Administration remains fearful of Russia's capacity to undermine Georgian statehood. The U.S. has tried to be a close friend to the Shevardnadze government, even as the latter's democratic credentials have begun to tarnish.

For the Americans, Shevardnadze still remains someone of important symbolic value. He is well remembered in Washington for his role in ending the Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe while serving as foreign minister, for breaking with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev because of the latter's turn toward Moscow's hard-liners, and for his visible support of Yeltsin at the time of the failed Communist Party putsch in August 1991.

⁶ Stephen Blank, "U.S. Military in Azerbaijan, to Counter Iranian Threat", *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*, April 10, 2002, 5–6.

Washington's support for Georgia has taken many forms, and not least among them is Washington's willingness to give Tbilisi a disproportionate share of foreign assistance targeted for the Soviet successor states. In FY 2000 the U.S. government provided an estimated \$149.6 million in assistance to Georgia, including \$108.64 in Freedom Support Act Funds. The U.S. has also been instrumental in helping Georgia obtain substantial funding from the IMF and World Bank.

Georgia has really needed this assistance, although it has not always put it to good use. Lacking Azerbaijan's oil and gas wealth, Georgia was even more vulnerable to pressure from Russia, and Russia has always been ready to use a heavy hand in Georgia, even before the war in Chechnya, when Georgia could not be considered to pose any sort of direct security threat to the Russian state. Shevardnadze came to power during the war in the breakaway region of Abkhazia, which remains a frozen conflict. The unresolved nature of this conflict is one of the defining features of Georgian statehood, as well as being an economic burden to the Georgian government, which has assumed responsibility for the nearly three hundred thousand internally displaced people it produced.⁷

The international community's helping hand has been a mixed blessing. Georgia's external debts are high—\$1.6 billion, or 53 percent of the country's GDP at the end of 2000, much of which was owed to bilateral creditors. The Paris Club nations have been willing to reschedule Georgia's debt, in part to reward Georgia for its commitment to macroeconomic reform and the liberalizing of trade, which led to Georgia's invitation to join the WTO in June 2000.⁸ But the country's creditors closer to home (China, Russia, Ukraine, and Turkmenistan) have generally been much less accommodating which, among other consequences, has fueled Georgia's energy shortages, which have in turn complicated the process of economic recovery. This situation has also made the Georgians relatively beholden to whoever is willing to invest in the reorganization of their energy industries, with the strong preference of Tbilisi being to bring in U.S. firms wherever possible, so that they might serve as a buffer to the Russians.

This is why the transport of energy has taken on such enormous importance to the Georgians, for it represents a source of income that seems to ensure its existence as well as a means of economic livelihood (although many industry insiders say that the Georgians have been willing to take too low a price for the transit of oil and gas across their territory). For, although the Georgian government has repeatedly vowed to assume the responsibility for safeguarding current and future oil and gas pipelines across their territory, at the same time there is the expectation that the West will not allow the alternative pipeline routes to come under Russian control.

⁷ According to the UNHCR, there were 279,200 internally displaced persons in Georgia in late 1999; see <http://www.unhcr.ch/statist/main/htm>.

⁸ "Georgia: Recent Economic Developments and Selected Issues", *IMF Country Report*, November 2001, no. 211, 12–13.

A portion of both “early” oil from the AIOC in Azerbaijan and Tengiz-Chevroil oil (from Kazakhstan) currently go through Georgia. The former goes through the Black Sea port of Supsa, and the latter was shipped across the Caspian Sea and then across Azerbaijan and Georgia to the port at Batumi until the opening of the CPC pipeline in 2001–2002.

The creation of Georgia as an energy corridor for the Caspian Basin is one important element of U.S. policy in the region, but it is coupled with a U.S. concern for Georgia’s security. U.S. military assistance to Georgia predates the decision of the Bush Administration to declare Georgia an outpost in the war against terrorism in February 2002, when Washington announced the decision to send 150 military instructors to the country, and 10 military transport helicopters which the Georgians had asked for as early as 1997, but which the Clinton Administration had been reluctant to deliver. This should enable the Georgian government to dispatch troops to the Pankisi Gorge, near the border with the breakaway republic of Chechnya, where the government has been unable to maintain order.

The decision of the Bush Administration builds on a history of growing U.S.–Georgian military cooperation. Of all three South Caucasian states, Georgia has played the most active role in the NATO Partnership for Peace program. U.S. bilateral military assistance to Georgia has also been steadily increasing, in part responding to the lobbying pressure of anti-Russian groups in Washington. In FY 2000, the U.S. government provided Georgia with \$20 million in funding for Border Security and Law Enforcement Training, and committed an additional \$10 million to help meet the cost of the relocation of the Russian army from their military bases within Georgia. Georgia also received \$3 million for military education as well.

U.S. military assistance to Georgia is likely to increase in the coming year, in part because the war on terrorism provides a convenient cover for Washington to respond favorably to requests for military assistance that might have previously been seen as inconvenient. But it is also coming at a time of increasing cooperation between Moscow and Washington, and is unlikely to lead to a dramatic redefinition of Georgia’s relationship with Russia.

Armenia

The Armenians are a very effective lobbying group in the U.S., and successfully use donations and the threat of bloc voting to keep the pressure on a number of key members in the U.S. Congress. Every April, the Armenian Genocide of 1915 is commemorated by a congressional resolution.

Armenia was also one of five Soviet successor states that the U.S. Department of State decided merited a U.S. embassy to be opened in the first days after independence was granted. Three of the other four states (Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan) had nuclear weapons that U.S. policy-makers wanted removed,

while Kyrgyzstan was rewarded for the seemingly more democratic behavior of their president.

The Armenian lobby had pressed for U.S. engagement in Armenia even before independence, and the U.S. mounted a major relief effort in Armenia in the aftermath of the December 1988 earthquake that killed about 25,000 people. This was the first major U.S. relief effort in the USSR since World War II.⁹

Armenian lobbyists also closely monitor the work of oil lobbyists, as well as the much more recently-developed Azerbaijani lobby, redoubling their efforts every time that it seemed that Congress would vote to lift the restrictions of Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act.

These same lobbying groups were also very effective at getting U.S. foreign assistance money allocated to Armenia, which received \$124.18 million in U.S. assistance in FY 2000, including \$102.46 million in Freedom Support Act funds.

Armenia has been able to balance its close ties with the U.S. with a very close relationship with Russia, and a close Iranian–Armenian relationship as well. The Armenians are also very active diplomatically in Europe, and have particularly close ties with France, which also has a large Armenian diaspora community. One result of this is that Armenia has been a major beneficiary of international assistance. There has also been a downside to the country’s diplomatic success, which is that the country has a very large external debt burden;¹⁰ this, coupled with the country’s slow increase in GDP, has made poverty reduction the focus of current World Bank assistance.

But there is reason for pessimism that World Bank, U.S., and other forms of international engagement can redress the demographic trends that are sapping Armenia’s economic potential. Armenia also has a considerable refugee population, estimated by UNHCR at just fewer than three hundred thousand people in July 2000¹¹.

Russia is an important source of employment for Armenians (as it is for Georgians and Azerbaijanis). Armenia is going through a slow depopulation. According to the preliminary results from Armenia’s census, done in October 2001, some 950,000 people have left the country since the USSR collapsed in 1991. In fact, according to the UN’s International Organization for Migration, Armenia has had the highest rate of outflow of any former Soviet republic.¹²

⁹ Richard D. Kauzlarich, *Time for Change? A Century Foundation Report* (New York, 2002), 15.

¹⁰ At the end of 2000, Armenia’s external debt was 45 percent of the national GDP. “Republic of Armenia: Recent Economic Developments and Selected Issues,” *IMF Country Report*, May 2001, No. 01/78, 19.

¹¹ According to the UNHCR, Armenia had 296,220 refugees at the end of 1999; see <http://www.unhcr.ch/statist/main/htm>.

¹² Jeffrey Swedberg, “Armenian Census Numbers Spark Debate But are Good News for President,” *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*, March 27, 2002, 9.

Few believe that Armenia will be able to end this trend and seriously address its economic problems as long as the country continues to have to meet the disproportionate military obligations that are created by the unresolved conflict with Azerbaijan. In recent years, the U.S. has been playing a very active role in trying to help mediate this conflict, as part of the effort of the OSCE.

The OSCE has been engaged in trying to mediate a settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis since March 1992 (when the organization was still known as the CSCE), just months after Azerbaijan and Armenia became independent. The initial intent of the OSCE was to sponsor a peace conference at Minsk, which was never held, but an eleven-nation committee (plus Armenia and Azerbaijan) known as the Minsk group serves as an on-going forum for negotiations in this conflict, which has had a cease-fire in place since May 1994 (although there have been many violations of it). The group is co-chaired by the Russian Federation, France, and the U.S.

Initially, there was great optimism after President George W. Bush took office that there might be a resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, especially after he took a personal interest in it, inviting the leaders of both Azerbaijan and Armenia to Key West in April 2001. The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan had been in regular direct dialogue since 1999, and the Key West meeting was designed to capitalize on gains that were said to have been made in a March 2001 session that had been hosted by French President Jacques Chirac. But that meeting seemed to expose the limitations of the Minsk group-sponsored peace process as much as its successes, when the two leaders came away from the meeting convinced that the terms on offer for a negotiated peace would be unacceptable to their respective populations.

The Future of U.S. Engagement

The war on terrorism is likely to involve increased U.S. engagement in the South Caucasus, and more acquiescence on the part of Russia than would have otherwise been forthcoming. The Bush Administration strongly believes in the need for the U.S. to seek out new friends and strengthen existing friendships with states that give the U.S. greater flexibility in dealing with potential security threats.

When one's geopolitical focus is one of containing threats from the Middle East, the Persian Gulf, and Afghanistan, the states of the South Caucasus seem less remote than would otherwise be the case. Similarly, access to assets that are relatively small, such as Azerbaijan's oil supply, becomes all the more critical when larger sources of oil seem ever less dependable.

All this said, the U.S. is unlikely to view the South Caucasus as a region of primary security concern. So, while bilateral assistance to these states is likely to increase, the U.S. is also unlikely to invest vastly increased sums of money in foreign assistance in this part of the world, or to make changing the nature of these systems a priority.

The Role of the EU in the Security of the South Caucasus: A Compromised Specificity?

Damien Helly¹

According to its treaties, the EU has among its aims those of “peacekeeping” and “strengthening international security.” It has also set as goals the promotion of international cooperation, the development and strengthening of democracy and the rule of law, and the enhancement of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.² In practice, the EU tries to further promote stability and security, within the partner members as well as in interstate relationships in crisis or peacetime, through emergency or preventive actions, whether they rely on civil or military solutions.³

In the case of the South Caucasus, as in other parts of the world, the EU promotes two types of security: on one hand, an internal security that is threatened by separatism and social and political tensions and, on the other hand, an external security that is influenced by conflicts and tensions around key issues between states in this region. Any action taken by the EU depends on a set of seven necessary variables.

Diplomatic regionalism. In the Caucasus, the EU interacts with the OSCE, the European Council, the United Nations, and NATO, as well as with the CIS and the GUUAM, all of which are involved in European and Eurasian security.

Coordination between the EU and regional powers. EU action depends on the level of coordination it achieves with Russia, the U.S., Turkey, and Iran regarding the Caucasus.

Internal reforms of the EU. The EU’s capacity to act is in constant transformation. The establishment of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in the early 90s and the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), along with prospects for EU enlargement, constantly modify the structures of the EU as it attempts to reconcile the two simultaneous processes of enlargement and deepening of engagement.

European system of external action. The formulation of an external strategy for the EU vis-à-vis the South Caucasus depends on the coherence of new or revised positions of European institutions.

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² Treaty on the EU modified by the Treaty of Amsterdam, Article 11.

³ The civil dimension of crisis management triggers a debate: Is the argument which stresses the civil realm and prevention an alibi to mask the absence of the EU’s capacities as international actor and its true nature as a “political dwarf”?

National foreign policies. Member states of the EU pursue their own national foreign policies with unequal levels of Europeanization, thus affecting the coherence of the EU's external actions.

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution. Security in the South Caucasus depends first of all on progress achieved through negotiations on the resolution of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, which has been generally considered the main obstacle to the course of regional stabilization pursued by the EU.

Stability of local contexts. The EU, in order for its actions to have a lasting effect, remains reliant on the stability of local political and social environments, a condition that has not yet been established.

Depending on the situation, the EU can therefore act as a promoter of peace, or can assist in carrying out Russian and American policies, in more or less stabilized contexts.

European Perceptions of Security in the South Caucasus

The approach of a model of regional cooperation assistance that encompasses the three states of the South Caucasus goes back to the very model of European construction, but also to Tsarist regional management and its many transformations, especially the Transcaucasian Federation of 1918 and the Transcaucasian Federative Socialist Republic. Seven different European interpretations of the South Caucasus can be gleaned from speeches given and policies conducted by Europeans.

Pro-European interpretation. This view considers that the three Southern Caucasian States are bound to eventually integrate into the European Union. The potential Caucasian candidates are the target of European policies that aim to assure stability on the periphery of the future enlarged European Union. The EU is working on the connection and extension of trans-European transportation networks and corridors to the Caucasus and Central Asia (TRACECA⁴). By the same token, the European Council has agreed to integrate the three states in order to assist them in building democratic state structures. Europeans talk about "South-Caucasus," "Southern Caucasus," the "Caucasian Home," or the "Caucasian Common Market."

Caspian interpretation. For Europeans preoccupied with the access of Caspian hydrocarbons to European and global markets, the transportation of energy resources requires stability in the region, most notably through the protection of infrastructures. Thus the South Caucasus is seen as a transportation corridor, a linkage to the Silk Road to the south of Russia, and a strategic crossroads.

⁴ This European Commission program has aimed, since 1993, at establishing a competitive corridor of transportation from Europe to China while developing regional cooperation in this sector between the countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia. See Damien Helly, "Un corridor de transport Asie-Europe, l'Union européenne et sa Route de la Soie," *Courrier des pays de l'Est*, no. 1019 (October 2001), 52-64. See also www.traceca.org.

Emphasis on transitions. Inspired by the experience of Central and Eastern European countries, this interpretation of a “post-Soviet Caucasus” insists as much on legitimate basic reforms at all levels of society (democratization, privatization) as on inertia of mentalities in the face of change. In the long run, the absence of reforms produces threats to security—to nuclear security in the case of the Medzanor nuclear power station in Armenia, or to legal and economic security through the chaos produced by rampant corruption and organized crime.

Russia-focused interpretation. This view emphasizes the importance of the Russian factor and the interdependencies between the Northern and Southern Caucasus. European interests consist, then, in defending the independence of the three states vis-à-vis Russia and in limiting the contagion of Chechen conflicts. This explains European support for monitoring the northern borders of Georgia by the OSCE. Including the Caucasus on the agenda of the Russian/EU relationship framework illustrates these European concerns. This approach tends to retain the term Transcaucasia or “Zakavkazie” (beyond Caucasus).

Ethno-linguistic interpretation. This view stresses the diversity and complexity of the region and the legacy of conflict between groups, whether ethnic, religious, or regional. The comparison to the Balkans is operative here. Stability in the region is seen as necessary for the enlarged EU. Ethnic cleansing and regional conflicts legitimate a permanent EU engagement for the sake of peace in the framework of conflict prevention.

Developmentalist interpretation. This relies on European experience in development in cooperation with ACP countries (Africa–Caribbean–Pacific). The diagnosis of some European experts amounts to comparing the three Caucasian states to developing countries and consequently advocating the same recipes in economic policy as the Bretton Woods institutions (Poverty Reduction Strategy). It is, in effect, in the interests of the EU to deal with developed partners who are integrated in an international community and whose good governance does not threaten their stability.

Orientalist interpretation. This vision of the Caucasus directly links the region to the issue of the Orient and to its border disputes and juridical and historiographic affairs. It emphasizes threats to security stemming from a conflict of influence between Middle Eastern powers, namely Turkey and Iran (and Russia). The legitimacy of this European approach relies on proposing lasting solutions to historical disputes that constitute sources of instability (e.g., by fostering a renewal of Armenian-Turkish relations).

All European actors in the Caucasus resort to these seven interpretations simultaneously. However, some of them favor one approach over another, according to their interests and the circumstances. The Caspian interpretation, for example, outweighs other interpretations among British actors, while Swedish actors seem to opt for an ethno-linguistic logic and, consequently, favor the approach of con-

flict prevention. One should remember, however, that such schemas are always an oversimplification.

The Result of Ten Years of EU Action

Europeans in the Face of the Conflicts of 1992–1994

European institutions are neither set up for crisis management nor do they possess tools that are adequate to the task. Europeans indirectly participate in attempts aiming to avoid mounting tensions, to stop the escalation of violence, and to organize cease-fires and maintain them. The CSCE (to which the Caucasian states were admitted on January 31, 1992) and then the OSCE are in charge of the mediation of conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh and South Ossetia, while the Abkhazian crisis is dealt with by the United Nations and NATO, who prefer not to intervene, in spite of Georgian expectations.

This division of labor between multilateral organizations takes into account the prominent role of Moscow, whose hindering influence limits the OSCE's and UN's abilities to resolve conflicts quickly. It is especially thanks to Russia that lasting cease-fires were signed in 1992 (South Ossetia) and in 1994 (Nagorno-Karabakh). Up to the summer of 1992, when President Shevardnadze appealed to the United Nations, the Abkhazian crisis was discussed in a Russian-Abkhazian-Georgian framework. With regard to the regional powers, the European community played only a secondary role; enlargement to the east and the Balkan crises modified the external priorities of the Union. The Maastricht Treaty introduced elements of external and common security policy. Within Europe, the monetary union is in the works.

Starting in 1992, the European Commission launched programs for technical assistance in the Caucasus financed by TACIS, yet these actions did not follow any particular strategy, and conflict in the region impeded any hope for a long-term project. Political crises and violence marked the beginning of independence for the new states, causing local political instability.

During the years 1992–1994, Europe coordinated its national foreign policies on a case-by-case basis, without collective coherence and within a framework of diverse structures (CSCE, NATO, UN, EEC). France originated several initiatives concerning Nagorno-Karabakh, notably in coordination with Turkey (the French-Turkish appeal for assistance to Nagorno-Karabakh on March 9, 1992) and under a CSCE mandate (Kouchner's humanitarian missions of February-March, 1992). Great Britain was regularly consulted. This short period of unilateral policy led to the multilateralization of diplomatic action. The CSCE launched the Minsk group to work on the settlement of the armed conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh on March 24, 1992, but its plans fell through.

Relative Stabilization and the EU Initiatives of 1994–1999

The end of the military conflicts in the region (except for the notable case of Abkhazia, which did not see peace until May 1998) heralded a new period for European intervention. The signing of the “contract of the century” (September 1994) in Azerbaijan and the further development of projects on the transportation of hydrocarbons through Georgia to Turkey and Europe enjoyed a period of relative stability in the region.

The cease-fire obtained in Nagorno-Karabakh led the OSCE members to plan a peacekeeping intervention in which Europeans would play a not insignificant military role, in accordance with the Oslo decisions of June 4, 1992, allowing for NATO intervention under the OSCE mandate (at this time CSCE) in order to manage a crisis.⁵ The separation of the WEU from NATO and the creation of the ESDP called into question a possible EU intervention in the name of the same Oslo decisions. At the same time, the EU expected and considered itself ready to finance a campaign to rebuild conflict zones. The internal political climates of the Caucasian states were characterized by their instability at this time: presidents escaped several assassination attempts, corruption weakened state structures, and the rule of law remained to be put into place.⁶ In the face of these threats, Europeans supported reforms initiated from the perspective of the eventual membership of the three states in the Council of Europe. Georgia entered the Council on April 27, 1999, with Armenia and Azerbaijan following on January 25, 2001. The EU gave its total support to the peacemaking action of the Council of Europe, generating a climate of trust between and within the Caucasian states.⁷

The freezing of regional conflicts was connected with the progress of Western interests regarding Russia and Iran. NATO developed its Partnership for Peace, and even organized training exercises in the region. The European Commission tried to create measures based on trust by proposing an energy interconnection between Armenia and Georgia on one hand and Turkey on the other hand, or by proposing the reopening of the Baku–Yerevan railroad line. The EU began to express its interest in energy projects in the region, depending on the security and diversification of sources. The European position aimed, moreover, to defuse de-

⁵ Final press release of the North Atlantic Council in ministerial session, Oslo, June 4 1992. <http://www.nato.int/docu/fonda/b920604a.htm>

⁶ The attack on the Armenian Parliament in October 1999, the waves of kidnapping in Georgia, and the debate on dealing with the authors of coups in Azerbaijan show that the three states are not immune to political violence.

⁷ Avis 222 (2000), Membership request of Azerbaijan to the European Council <http://stars.coe.fr/ta/TA00/FOPI222.htm#1>, and membership request of Armenia to the European Council, <http://stars.coe.fr/doc/doc00/Fdoc8747.htm>. The two countries committed to “pursue efforts to solve this conflict [of Nagorno-Karabakh] exclusively through peaceful means,” and “to settle international and domestic disputes through peaceful means and according to principles of international law. (Obligation that is incumbent on all the Member States of the European Council), while resolutely rejecting any threat to use force against its neighbors.”

bates on the layout of the hydrocarbons pipelines while promoting, within the framework of the INOGATE program, a diversity of routes.⁸ In 1995 and 1999, the European Commission submitted two communications to the EU Council that aimed to formulate a common strategy toward the region and reaffirmed the engagement of the Union for regional security.⁹ But the Council offered no formal response.

Russia, in contrast, promised to withdraw its military bases under the framework of the OSCE, which it postponed doing in Georgia. It pursued its peacekeeping role in Abkhazia concurrently with the monitoring of an observation mission of the United Nations, the MONUG (UNOMIG). Iran, after unsuccessful mediations in 1992, stayed in the background, and maintained only tepid relations with Azerbaijan, who reproached Iran for welcoming dissidents and for its position on the status of the Caspian Sea. Discussions on the project, partly financed by the EU for the Armenian portion and envisaged from 1993 on as a gas pipeline that could open up Armenia by way of Iran, continued. By the end of 2001, Russian and French investors had been found but no building date had been set.¹⁰

Following the treaties of Amsterdam and the Helsinki Summit (December 1999), the second mainstay of the EU policy took shape; increasingly precise modalities were anticipated for a common foreign and security policy, especially the ESDP, which is scheduled to have ready by 2003 an interposition force of 100,000 men that can be mobilized within 60 days. Thus the eventuality of an EU intervention in the Caucasus became possible. However, the potential for external action of the EU was focused on the Balkans and particularly Kosovo, pushing the Caucasus toward the bottom of the European agenda. Moreover, the various peace plan proposals from the Minsk group for Nagorno-Karabakh (through various stages including a package settlement and the concept of a common state) came to nothing.

EU Assisting a Stabilization Policy: 1999–2002

The years 1999–2002 were characterized by the politicization of EU operations and, at the same time, by the emergence of cleavaes between the United States and Europe on certain topics. The signature of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCA) with the three Caucasian states in June 1999 in Luxembourg officially represented a qualitative breakthrough in EU–Caucasus¹¹ relations, in

⁸ The European Commission program has aimed since 1996 to improve the security of the provision of energy to Europe while participating in integrating networks of hydrocarbon transport and assisting in the access of these goods to global and European markets. See <http://www.inogate.org>.

⁹ COM (1995), 205 and COM (1999), 272.

¹⁰ “European Commission Ready to Assist Armenia in Laying Gas Pipeline from Iran,” *RosBusinessConsulting Database*, March 1, 2002.

¹¹ Cees Witterbrood, “Towards a partnership with the countries of the Eurasian corridor,” *Insight Turkey* 2:3 (July-September 2000), 11–21.

the sense that the EU and Caucasian countries became partners, linked on a juridical basis and engaged in a regular political dialogue. The Caucasus was put on the Euro-Russian agenda from the fall of 2000 on.

A political dialogue was set to be established, and in February 2001 the first visit of three took place in the region. In September, a French-German team pleaded in favor of a clearer wording of the EU strategy in the region, but the events of September 11 shifted the priorities of the Council, as Central Asia and fighting terrorism became the main concern. The French-German project intended primarily to define more precise lines of action and to improve coherence of European tools, together with other multilateral organizations and regional powers, but without building any common strategy, an inadequacy of the project that is readily admitted. Despite calls from the European Parliament for a firmer engagement of the EU in the region, the member states did not succeed in formulating a strategy regarding the South Caucasus.¹²

The EU declared its support for European regional organizations charged with security, and sometimes even became directly involved. The OSCE has been in charge of monitoring the Georgian-Chechen border since December 1999, and this mission was extended in December 2001 to include the Georgian-Ingushetian border. Georgian forces in charge of assuring the security of the monitors received material support from the EU, financed by the CFSP. The European Commission participated, under the framework of mixed structures for Georgian-Ossetian conciliation, in an OSCE campaign for the destruction of light weapons in South Ossetia; it assisted in the rehabilitation of Azeri regions liberated from Armenian occupation (EXXAP program); it developed measures based on trust (rehabilitation of the Ingury power station between Abkhazia and Georgia); and it insisted on the closing of the Medzamor nuclear station initially scheduled for 2004. The summit of Yalta in June 2001 recalled the attachment of the GUUAM to the TRACECA strategy while pointing out that this transportation cooperation program could serve as a point of contact with the EU.¹³ During the summer of 1999, and then at the time of the Key West negotiations on the principle of a territorial exchange in March–April 2001, the EU prepared to react to a possible peace agreement for Nagorno-Karabakh, in coordination with the entire international community.

Could the Caucasus become a theater for European military operations, as some Caucasian leaders would wish? What legitimacy would a European inter-

¹² Moreover, the member states do not all have the same positions. As an example, Greece continues to take advantage of its triple membership: Orthodox (soft military cooperation with Armenia, infrastructure projects with Iran, and pro-Russian sympathy), European and, NATO. The United Kingdom supports diplomatic mediations while pursuing commercial interests in the footsteps of the United States. Some states have been regularly opposed to sending a delegation of the Commission to Azerbaijan, which has been promised since 1997.

¹³ <http://www.guam.org>.

vention have vis-à-vis NATO? These questions have emerged with the hope for regional stabilization. The emergence of a European defense system has caused frictions with the Atlantic Alliance, and especially with Turkey, which is a member of the Alliance but only a candidate to the EU, whose role in the Caucasus in the case of intervention would become fundamental, notably at a logistical level. Europeans have not yet responded to these questions that have not yet appeared on the agenda: the European intervention force is not yet absolutely ready, the geographical boundaries of the intervention zone of the EU, the OSCE, and NATO remain blurred, and the maneuvering margin with respect to Russia is still uncertain. In accordance with its energy strategy of openness, the EU has begun a rapprochement with Tehran; financing of gas pipelines to the Caucasus could become a source of additional American discontent.

Impact of September 11: The EU Keeps its Distance from the United States

Based on European action over the last decade, did the events of September 11, 2001 cause a radical change in European policies or did they confirm already existing tendencies? European attention shifted to Central Asia after some unrest at the Key West conference in 2001, but the tensions of February–March 2002 in Georgia show that the Caucasus may suddenly return to the European agenda.

From the point of view of the United States, one can see some logic to its actions: by gaining a foothold in Central Asia, Washington finds itself at the hub of energy networks. The Caucasus, used as an air corridor for strikes on Afghanistan,¹⁴ is more than ever a corridor for the transport of resources from the Caspian Sea. The Caspian–Turkish pipeline projects (gas and oil) have benefited from the freeze of the conflicts and the stability that has ensued since 1994. Russian objections seem to have disappeared since the announcement by LUKoil of its intention to join the Baku–Ceyhan line. But the expected Western investments must now be secured; economic cooperation has engendered the necessity of cooperation in establishing security. This will take shape through the new processes of strategic cooperation between the countries where future energy infrastructures will be installed and, during the course of the Afghan campaign, through the announcement of the presence of American forces in Georgia.¹⁵ The renewed insistence of Washington on resolving the Karabakh conflict and the resumption of the Turkish-Armenian commission are tending in this direction, in spite of tensions following a recent spy incident. Russia, who one might have thought would use its menacing power in the face of these Western advances, seems to accept what can be interpreted as Russian-American cooperation; in January, Moscow confirmed its strategic presence in Azerbaijan by concluding an agreement on the rent of the radar station of Qabala. If one can talk about shared security co-operation in

¹⁴ Azerbaijan and Armenia accepted use of their air space by American planes.

¹⁵ Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey signed a new agreement on military cooperation at the beginning of 2002.

the region, Europe as a collective has been indeed excluded from it. In effect, the EU could not offer the region genuine guarantees for its security; its intervention force is not ready, and the Caucasian states have never received any assurance that they would one day become members of the Union. Only some European powers maintain a specific influence, like France and the United Kingdom, in diplomatic groups with the variable geometry of the OSCE or the United Nations.

Conclusion

Six months after the events of September 11, 2001, Europe has witnessed a spectacular advance of American interests in the region without any apparent Russian response. If this situation persists, the fruit of European efforts in regional cooperation will be harvested by the United States in the framework of a global Western strategy. The EU has been distancing itself from Washington for a few years: the renewal of relations with Iran that will soon make it a neighbor of a greater Europe, the commercial offensives of European companies in this country, and projects for regional cooperation and confidence-building have reinforced the thesis of a European specificity. Without expressing a common EU strategy, one can then observe the confirmation of a strategic “Western engagement”¹⁶ in which European political nuances risk being erased or taken over by some member states.

As for Turkey, it always seems to be closer to the United States than to the EU. The renewed ambitions of Ankara in the region since September 11 correspond to a logic of American penetration and are triggering new tensions. The more guarantees the EU has for the Turks for their membership prospects, the more the hopes and efforts of the Caucasian states to pursue a rapprochement with Europe will increase. But Brussels has, up to now, given no significant signal in this direction, since Turkey, albeit a candidate for membership, has not yet begun its membership negotiations.

The vision of a Caucasus as an extremity of Europe is beginning to be accepted, but certainly not to an extent that would allow one to speak of a “Southern Dimension” or a southeast flank in symmetry with the Baltic region. The proposal for a stability pact for the Caucasus has been put forth.¹⁷ It did not receive much attention at the Council, but garnered more enthusiasm at the Commission, at the Parliament,¹⁸ and among the South Caucasian partner states.¹⁹ September 11 confirms the hegemony of a Caspian interpretation of the Caucasus, essentially

¹⁶ See Neil MacFarlane, *Western Engagement in Central Asia and the South Caucasus*, Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House paper, 1999, 72.

¹⁷ <http://www.ceps.be/Research/Caucasus/index.htm>.

¹⁸ <http://www.europarl.eu.int/meetdocs/committees/afet/20010326/AFET20010326.htm>.

¹⁹ “MEP Calls on EU to Step up Peace Efforts,” *European Report*, February 27, 2002.

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devoted to the layout of pipelines, whose construction will bring, in the end, not a single penny to the people.²⁰

²⁰ Habarlar, October 29, 2001. SOCAR, Botas, BP Set up Gas Export Company. "According to the agreement [on the Baku-Ceyhan gas pipeline], all work on the construction of a gas pipeline, and also the transit of gas, has been freed from taxes."

Conclusion

*Alain Faupin*¹

Caucasus is a whole. We nevertheless have decided to deal with only one part of it. What used to be called Transcaucasus, and is now referred to as “South Caucasus,” has been taken as the primary topic of this third issue of the *Quarterly Journal*.

We had several good reasons (and a few bad incentives) to make that decision, and we do not intend to discuss it here. We take responsibility for the latter and accept any further reproach accordingly.

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The strategic importance of this key region, sitting astride Europe and Asia—between the North and the South, Islam and Christianity, development and poverty—deserved to be dealt with, and we have attempted to do so through eight articles written from very different points of view. Central as it is, the Caucasus can be viewed from three different perspectives: inner, regional, and global. Each article clearly shows in its own way that everything is still “under construction” in the three states of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, which are all characterized by high levels of instability and permanent tensions.

Since their accession to independence over ten years ago, all three countries have been faced with three major challenges: restoring internal and regional security, enforcing the rule of law, and coping with regional geopolitics.

In that respect, the challenges faced by Russia in the region, even when limited to South Caucasus, seem to be more and more pressing. Major changes are on the horizon in many fields, ranging from the Russian military presence and the crisis in Chechnya to the gas and oil business. Debates are about to intensify, though it remains difficult to assess precisely what their magnitude, their nature, and their outcome will be.

The American influence in the region has increased substantially since September 2001. The United States is altering the regional equation by focusing on energy flows, enlarging its sphere of influence through the Partnership for Peace or other such engagement efforts, on insuring freedom of access to the oil fields, and on fighting, on its own terms, the global war on terrorism.

Iran has found herself isolated after the ordeal of September 11, in spite of some remarkable improvements in her regional posture regarding most of the issues pertaining to geopolitics. Teheran’s relationships with Baku, Ankara, and

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Moscow have reflected Iran's unwillingness to situate itself firmly in the camp of the United States, which remains some sort of "Great Satan," in accordance with the old saying that "the friend of my enemy is my enemy." Iran, given her theocratic approach, somehow wants to remain in the vanguard of the fight against American imperialism.

Turkey, faced by different issues that reflect her ambiguous geopolitical situation, and by difficult internal debates on democracy, religion, nationalism, and membership in Europe, has had some difficulty finding the right stance regarding Caucasus; the Armenian thorn is still in her side, and the Kurdish question casts a shadow on her reputation. Turkey has endeavored to remain quiet in the last couple of years, and certainly does not want to hamper the effectiveness of her major ally in its fight against terrorism.

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There is nothing really new in this short assessment: we are at the gates of Asia, in a culture where the notion of *time* in policy-making does not match that held in the West. The short term is never given preference or, were this to happen, the time units used to measure the short term would not be the same as are used in the West. Everything should therefore be put in a longer-term perspective. Time will be needed to build up oil and gas pipe-lines, but also to make them safe and secure; time will be needed for both *physical security* and *economic security*—closely related to the notion of development—to take shape and, it is hoped, to achieve some sort of stability. Only reconciliation can bring that about in minds shocked and troubled by so many past, present, and potential changes in day-to-day life as well as in the national and regional environments.

This conclusion constitutes an attempt to link together the perceptions and the expectations expressed by these eight texts, so different and at the same time so close due to their common preoccupation: stability, peace, and development. *Balance, equilibrium, stability*: these words are meaningful for this ancient, rugged, and mountainous region, so often subjected to both natural and human disasters. One actor's initiative, whatever it might be, immediately produces waves in the regional pond that cause each individual national boat to rock. In addition, alliances in the Caucasus do not have the long-lasting character they have in the West. They are too often the result of circumstances, short-term interests, and political ambitions. As a result, balance, equilibrium, and stability are rendered even more difficult to achieve.

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I thank the various authors, and especially their very able coordinator, Ms. Annie Jafalian, Research Fellow at the French Foundation for Strategic Research in

Paris, for, on everyone's part, expressing with conviction and objectivity a dynamic and well-substantiated outlook on this very difficult region, so often at the heart of crises, always subject to the winds of history, to the tide of competing passions and interests.

Beyond any doubt, their most valuable contribution will foster a better reciprocal understanding and enrichment, both in our community and, hopefully, in the region itself. Such is the goal of the Consortium of the Willing!

The Fading of the Nation State

Wilfried Gerhard¹

The end of the bipolar world compels us to look to the future, but it is a future that remains uncertain. Not only is it unclear in what direction the existing system of states is going to develop, but there is also uncertainty as to how the basic unit within that system—the nation state—is going to develop. To answer these questions, we need to examine the underlying principles of the modern nation state and the challenges with which these principles are at present confronted.

The modern nation state is based essentially on three principles: the principle of state territoriality, the principle of state sovereignty, and the principle of state secularity. All three principles are at present facing challenges that point to the existence of fundamental problems.

Territoriality

Ever since the Augsburg religious peace of 1555 and the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio*, which it formulated for the first time, territoriality has been a fundamental principle underpinning the modern nation state. “Territoriality” means a complete overlap between the area in which problems exist and the area in which those problems can effectively be solved. Until recently, the modern nation-state was able to fulfill these requirements; its political/legal range was greater than the social range of persons and groups acting within it. But since the advent of international terrorism and international organized crime, the development of new information and communications technologies and cross-border environmental pollution, the globalization of financial markets, and the rise of transnational economic players, the ability of nation-states—defined in territorial terms—to respond to these problems has been overtaken by the propensity of these problems to multiply.

Sovereignty

The second state principle—sovereignty—is also at present becoming increasingly problematic. State sovereignty in its classic form is being relativized by three innovative political structures. On the one hand, in Europe at least, *supranational* regimes are coming into being (governance over national governments); in the global context, on the other hand, we are to some extent experiencing the rise in influence of *international* regimes that operate with the support of states (governance with national governments), and to some extent, *transnational* regimes that function entirely without state support and cooperation (governance without

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national governments). Behind these innovative structures, all of which to some extent are making national sovereignty an outdated concept, a more fundamental process of political dissociation is taking place. At present, the linkage we have taken for granted in recent times between politics and the state is being loosened or even severed.

Why is this the case? In historical terms, a massive process of concentration of political power has been taking place ever since the start of the modern era. Initially this resulted in the creation of the nation-state; later, through a further process of concentration, in the imperialist state, and finally, in the bipolar bloc system we experienced during the Cold War.

Now, with the disappearance of the confrontation between these two blocs, an entirely new process of decentralization seems to be under way. Large political units are crumbling, as can be seen in the collapse of the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, and new national independence movements are leading to an unexpected increase in the number of state players. At the same time, the newly emerging political/state players are less and less able to find permanent solutions to problems that are increasingly global in nature. And so there is a need to establish international regimes and to recognize politically active private players, such as the many NGOs now in existence. The ultimate outcome of this development could be, on the one hand, the replacement of the sovereign nation-state with various forms of nation-states embedded in supranational structures and, on the other hand, a rise in public-private partnerships.

Secularity

In the context of state secularity and in an increasingly colorful, less homogenous (i.e., increasingly multi-cultural) society, nationalism in particular appears problematic at present. Waves of migration triggered by various different factors are bringing people across borders into other states, people who—if they remain permanently rather than just temporarily—need to be integrated into their new state's society. So the fundamental question is: what mechanisms does the secular state have to respond appropriately to that which is foreign and different, given that a nationalistic approach to integration is no longer acceptable?

ON THE PRINCIPLE OF TERRITORIALITY

1. History of ideas: Jean Jacques Rousseau

This first section on the principle of territoriality in the modern nation state, like subsequent ones, will open with an idea from a distinguished political thinker. Jean Jacques Rousseau explicitly articulated the problem of territoriality in its political dimension. His attempt to establish the requirements and preconditions for operating a form of direct democracy identified two political principles that are closely associated with the problem of territoriality:

The principle of the small-scale economy. With this principle, Rousseau wanted to prevent a situation whereby the economic activities of citizens would transcend the political/territorial frontiers of the community, thereby potentially escaping political control. An economy based only on small-scale economic activity would ensure that the principle of political control of the economy was safeguarded.

The principle of the small-scale territoriality of the political units themselves. This principle, which he saw realized in the city-state of Geneva, was intended to make direct democracy—i.e., democracy as a way of life—possible.

In analytical, abstract terms, the principle of territoriality thus consists of two elements:

- The *general* political question of the territorial range to be covered by politics in order to ensure effective control of society.
- The *specific* theoretical question of the maximum geographical area over which democracy can continue to function properly.

The following remarks apply to both these elements.

2. Political control as a “territorial problem”

The traditional view

Historically, political control of the economy has not conformed to Rousseau’s ideas. Even in the heyday of the nation-state, the economic activities of individual citizens in particular extended far beyond the political boundaries of the nation-state community in which they lived. However, the state traditionally had both the right and the means to secure the cross-border economic activities of its own citizens by adopting protectionist measures (e.g., currency and export controls) in the interests of the state as a whole and also, conversely, to regulate incoming economic activities on the part of foreign players by introducing quotas and customs tariffs. As a result, national control of the economy was retained.

Political control based on the principle of territoriality goes much further, however. As a political principle, the principle of territoriality is intended to enable the state not just to control the economic activities of citizens but also to guarantee control of internal and external security. Thus it is possible:

- To guarantee in a downward direction its precarious general control over its citizens (*conditio humana*).
- To regulate in an upwards direction its precarious control over international relations (*conditio nationis*).

Control over one's own citizens. The first case largely concerns the problem of criminal behavior. The nation-state could assume, as a matter of course, that criminal behavior would be easily dealt with by a national police force. For this form of control to be possible, however, crime would have to consist largely of private, small-scale criminal activity.

Control over international relations. The second case mainly relates to wars between states. Again, the nation state could assume in the past that external threats would manifest themselves mainly in the form of violations of national borders. And it developed the armed forces as an instrument to combat such threats.

Territorial challenges

What changes have now been made to this traditional perspective? If we look at the present international scene, we see that we are confronted with challenges that systematically undermine the territorial principle of the nation-state in political/legal, economic, and ecological terms.

The political threat has largely shifted from the question of wars between states. But, rather than being replaced by an international global peace order, it has been succeeded by various forms of privatization of political violence, ranging from civil war to international terrorism. The measures traditionally taken by nation-states to prevent violations of their borders, typically through the deployment of military force, are no longer effective. When armed forces are nevertheless deployed—for example, in Kosovo or Afghanistan—they are forced to radically change the way they see themselves in political and professional terms as well as their possible rules of engagement.

The same applies to the next problem: the internationalization of private criminal activity (trafficking in drugs, women, and weapons). Nowadays, the territorial borders of nation-states tend to act more as an obstacle than as an aid to efforts to combat organized crime.

One entirely new challenge that is almost completely beyond the capacity of the territorial states to address is the growing number of ecological risks. The fact that pollutants can spread freely across borders, affecting wide areas, confronts the territorial state with hitherto unknown problems. Thus, for example, Australia is an almost grotesque example of the yawning gap between ecological cause and political/ecological effect, and is helpless in the face of a complete lack of ecologically effective national frontier controls.

The progress made in information technology and science has had a similarly huge impact on the territorial nation-state. The Internet and the “information superhighway” have essentially undermined all forms of territorial frontier. The virtual world of bits and bytes does not inhabit a physical space in which such boundaries would be either feasible or helpful. The new virtual space created by the Internet exerts an influence on the global economy and enables it to avoid the

controls traditionally exercised by national economic policies. The exchange of data and information taking place in real time makes speculation on the international money market a political issue of the first order. The sums of money being shifted to and fro on this market with the aim of making profits for private players have reached proportions that render the attempts of national governments to support their economies by buying and selling currencies relatively ineffectual. Thus, totally private money transactions can, in extreme cases, cause the collapse of entire national financial structures, as was the case to some extent during the crisis in East Asia. Compared with this, the few border controls that still exist for the traditional exchange of goods appear positively archaic.

3. *Democracy as a “territorial problem”*

So far, these problems do not affect the theoretical question raised by Rousseau regarding democracy. This only happens when the question arises of how *political* control can also be *democratic* control. One has to start from the realization that here, too, history has moved beyond Rousseau’s principle of direct democracy based on small-scale territories. Nowadays, many of us live in a representative democracy, and such a democracy has to cope with much more generously-described frontiers. But, in principle, the question remains: How large can a state be for democracy to remain possible?

If democracy:

- At the cognitive level has anything to do with transparency of political processes and,
- At the emotional level has anything to do with a willingness to stand up for each other, to accept a shared political destiny and,
- At the pragmatic level has anything to do with the possibility of realizing one’s interest in participation,

then it is perfectly clear that the territorial borders of a democracy can be larger than those defined by the nation-state, but in principle must be smaller than those defined by globalization. One can even formulate this as a principle: A political territory must not be so small that attempted political control of social problems is in vain, but neither must it be so large that democracy does not have a chance. The European project could be regarded as a test case here.

The question is, Is Europe, namely the EU, a political project that meets the quasi-conflicting requirements of political control that is cast as widely as possible and democracy that is as close as possible to the people?

The first related question is, Is the EU capable of realizing political control? The answer is, at least in principle, Yes, because the ability to exercise political control is initially a matter of being able to regulate bureaucratically. The so-called

acquis communautaire, which contains 90,000 pages of regulations, has (at least so far) not come up against any bureaucratic limitations.

The second related question is, Is the EU capable of fulfilling democratic principles? That is to say: Is its capable of achieving transparency in decision-making processes, not just for bureaucratic insiders but also for the public at large?

Is it capable of creating a feeling of shared political destiny? This would be essential for the development of a European security and defense policy. Is it capable, for example, of motivating people in Northern Norway and Southern Italy to take joint action and stand up for each other?

Finally, is the EU capable of offering opportunities for participation that, for example, would enable a German to take part as a matter of course in the process of the formation of political opinion in France—in other words, to make use of his rights on the basis of feeling himself to be part of a *European* public?

If all these questions can be answered “Yes” only half-heartedly, then the territory covered by Europe is clearly too large.

ON THE PRINCIPLE OF SOVEREIGNTY

1. History of ideas: Thomas Hobbes

At the end of the medieval period, as the modern state began to emerge, the concept of sovereignty started to gain importance. Sovereignty is the formal right to make final decisions. With the gradual disappearance of a uniform Christian culture such as still existed in the Middle Ages, the question of this final right to decision-making authority naturally became increasingly important. The reason is that the validity of regulations and laws could no longer be justified by appealing to a concept of divine Truth. Binding truth was now replaced by binding decisions made by a secular authority, with the question of Truth being confined to the spheres of religion and science. Politics was liberated from Truth. Where politics still claimed to be based on Truth, it became ideology.

During the transition to the modern period, Thomas Hobbes formulated this notion in his famous dictum: *auctoritas, non veritas facit legem*. *Auctoritas*, however, became *auctoritas* precisely because it was able to make decisions without any competition. There could not, therefore, be any competition between regulatory authorities. This means that modern state power needed to be paramount over all other social, political, or economic agencies. Above all, only it was allowed to possess, in Max Weber’s terms, “a monopoly of legitimate violence.” Internally, this took the form of the police force and externally, the armed forces.

During the course of the bourgeois revolutions and the establishment of a bourgeois order, the idea of sovereignty had to be redefined. The establishment of the bourgeois order meant that the sovereignty of princes had to be replaced by sovereignty of the people. The change of definition, in other words, was a change

in the *subject* of sovereignty, but not in the *basic substance* of sovereignty—the idea that the nation-state had the final and absolute right to make decisions.

2. *Challenges to sovereignty*

The state's claim to sovereignty, however—i.e., to the final right of decision—is now being relativized in many ways. For centuries it was the privilege of the state to make decisions regarding waging wars on and forging peace with other states on the basis of its national sovereignty. Within this privilege it may have become a matter of common practice to institutionalize more or less binding relationships between sovereign states, either within a system of balance of powers or a system of collective security. But the relativization of the principle of national sovereignty only occurred after 1945. This took three forms:

Internationality. The first genuine limitation on national sovereignty came with the Charter of the United Nations. At the normative level, this eliminated states' sovereign powers with regard to war and the use of force. Renunciation of these powers technically only occurs on a voluntary basis—i.e., without infringing the principle of state sovereignty. But, especially in connection with Chapter VII of the UN Charter on possible collective enforcement measures, the ban on the use of force takes on a significance that effectively curtails the sovereign powers of states. The second Gulf War made this very clear.

Transnationality. The two further ways in which the principle of state sovereignty has been relativized are not associated with any particular date in history, but are rather the result of a slow evolution in modern society.

- Firstly, there has been the development of transnational economic players as a result of the globalization of markets. Global economic players are becoming increasingly independent of national economic policy; the state is increasingly unable to define the political framework for their economic activities. Indeed, the opposite is the case—the global players are themselves creating the ground rules for the state. They can force a state to offer them favorable terms to set up on its territory because the nation-states have allowed themselves to be sucked into the global scramble to attract industry.
- Secondly, in structural terms, the transnational organizations usually referred to as NGOs are in the same position. NGOs illustrate very clearly how far the focus of political action has moved away from national territories and frontiers. Well-known NGOs such as Greenpeace or Amnesty International are no longer concerned about national sovereignty, carrying out their protests where they are required (in the past, even in the Soviet Union). Of course, as the world grows together, there is an increasing *consciousness* that mankind is growing together as well; in other words, a sense of human solidarity is developing. Some 200 years ago, Immanuel Kant said that, “The community amongst the peoples of the earth has developed to such

an extent that an infringement of rights in one part of the earth is felt by everybody.” This statement, from 200 years ago, has never been more true than today. Infringements of rights in one part of the earth are felt by everybody, and stimulate a feeling of direct political responsibility. And it is this that defines the character of these NGOs: they take political action and thus put into question the state’s claim to sovereignty; that is, the state’s claim to be able to act without competition. Wherever human rights problems or humanitarian problems occur—as well as environmental problems, starvation and drought, genocide, and mass migration—there are always NGOs operating locally and effectively realizing the right to political participation. And they do so independently of any state claims to sovereignty and any bans on intervention under international law. The nation-states have to come to terms with these social players and reach agreement on how to cooperate with them. In the military sphere, “CIMIC” (Civil-Military Cooperation) has become a model for state military elites.

Supranationality. The third way the principle of nation-state sovereignty has been relativized is the result of the supranational structures that have developed, above all in Europe. Just as the nation-state has passed on some of its decision-making powers downwards, to individual members of society, so (at least in Western Europe) it has also ceded a considerable amount of sovereignty upwards, to the European Union. On the other hand, the EU is a highly traditional intergovernmental project based on international law, at least as far as the Council of Ministers and the European Council are concerned. Furthermore, the EU, in the form of the European Commission, is a highly-developed supranational organization whose *acquis communautaire* has priority over national decisions, as can be seen from the ban on exports of British beef that was imposed against the wishes of the British government.

This supranational removal of state sovereignty is of crucial significance, but the nation-states have in some cases failed to recognize the extent to which they have lost sovereignty.

ON THE PRINCIPLE OF SECULARITY

Nobody would now disagree that the modern state is a secular one. The religious wars of the seventeenth century effectively demonstrated the shortcomings of religion as a basis for creating political communities. In their aftermath, the private sphere of religion was increasingly separated from the public sphere of politics. The state became secular and no longer derived its legitimacy from a religious or transcendental source. What is more, it only became possible to talk of the “state” in the true sense of the word once the medieval idea of a *corpus christianum*—a dual, secular and ecclesiastical, leadership of the political community—had dis-

appeared. But the newly won secularity of the political community now called the “state” created its own problems.

State secularity initially affects the question of how the state functions. It is basically a question of “raison d’etat.” The second aspect of the secular state is the question of legitimization: What is a state good for? What prompts people to obey the norms of the state and its “raison d’etat”?

1. History of ideas: Machiavelli

At first, following the loss of any religious aspect to political life, the innate logic of politics was discovered. Machiavelli was the inventor of the theory of “raison d’etat,” and Frederick II of Prussia was its best-known proponent. The so-called Age of Enlightenment operated basically according to the principle of “raison d’etat.” Significantly enough, historian Sebastian Haffner has referred to Prussia as a “rational state” rather than a “nation-state.” And, indeed, rationality ruled supreme in Prussia. Everyone was allowed to think, say, and write what one wanted, provided this did not affect the “raison d’etat.” The tolerance introduced by the Prussian state was based on indifference towards matters regarded as private, such as language, customs, and religion. The state, however, was not so tolerant when it came to the requirements for its own survival. Machiavelli had provided a devastating list of these required elements. His book *Il Principe* became a symbol of the new view of political reality. According to Machiavelli, the state operates according to laws—*raisons d’etat*—that he describes as part of his secularized view of history and the political system.

Secularized view of history. The traditional view of history was determined by the idea of divine providence. The concept of *providentia Dei* offered a solution to individuals’ experience of the confusing discrepancy between political intention and political result, political planning and political outcome, political will and political impact. Responsibility for the difference between what Man wants—his plans and actions—and what emerges as the end result, lies in hands of God rather than Man. With the advent of the modern period, Man becomes responsible for everything, even for the less desirable results of his actions. Machiavelli was a typical example. For him, divine providence had already become secularized, transformed into the operation of so-called blind destiny. However, he regarded it as Man’s duty to master this destiny. In other words, *fortuna* is blind destiny, *virtú* the strength to oppose it. Only those who are capable of taking their destiny into their own hands possess *virtú* (Principe XXV: “Fortune is a woman and if she is to be submissive it is necessary to beat and coerce her.... Always, being a woman, she favors young men, because they are less circumspect and more ardent, and because they command her with great audacity”). As this metaphor proves, political *virtú* has, by its very nature, a propensity for violence. And violence is the medium that guarantees control over the results of actions.

Secularized political system. A propensity for violence also emerges from Machiavelli's concept of a political system. The medieval world only knew political problems in the form of the need to preserve a religious/political legal order. Since the days of Constantine, Christianity had taken over the position and function of the old *Polis Religion* and had become a public religion that determined all aspects of life. Systematic political problems were thus predefined as problems of preserving such a religiously determined order. A political system that has been freed from divine providence, however, has nothing to preserve except itself. Thus Machiavelli's idea of "raison d'état" was born, to be understood as the imperative for a state to preserve itself at all costs. Any moral or legal norms realized within the political system are effectively dependent on the state's ability to preserve itself both internally and externally. In this way, the state necessarily came to be based on might. The primary problem of the state is therefore the problem of coping with potential threats to its existence, i.e. the possibility of disappearing from the political map. It should be clear from this that the state therefore has to be judged by its ability to wage war. Military power thus becomes the *ultima ratio regis*.

However, Machiavelli made a typical additional assumption. According to him, history does not move in a straight line but is cyclical. By claiming this, he supplied a strong motive for state expansionism. For as long as states are on the ascendant, Machiavelli argues, they have to operate in a bellicose manner. But when their military power is on the decline, and art and science begin to dominate, states are, according to him, already on the way out in historical terms. This bellicose concept of the state of course destroys any idea of a just war. All that is important in the modern period is that the state secures its own survival in the general conflict between expanding states. This can also be seen from the reinterpretation of the traditional political idea of the unity of peace, justice, and harmony (*pax, justitia, and concordia*). For Machiavelli, peace has become a question of power, that is, a question of access to sufficient military resources to deter one's opponent. *Justitia* and *concordia* are ruthlessly functionalized in a similar way. They are not the justification for the state; indeed the opposite is the case—the state justifies them, and only a powerful state lends them validity.

Integration of the community: Christianity–civil religion–nationalism. Of course, the citizens have to go along with this new structure of the state by demonstrating the necessary obedience. Machiavelli was aware of this problem. Thus, in his *Discorsi* (I, 11) he stated with regard to the Roman republic in the days of classical antiquity: "Numa Pompilius, finding a very ferocious people and wanting to reduce them to civil obedience by the acts of peace, turned to religion as something completely necessary in wanting to maintain a civilization.... Whoever considers well Roman history will see how much Religion served in commanding the armies, in reuniting the plebeians, both in keeping men good, and in making the wicked ashamed." Assuming that the existence of such a civil religion is rec-

ognized as necessary, he was, however, also capable of expressing criticism of Christianity: “If our religion claims of us fortitude of soul, it is more to enable us to suffer than to achieve great deeds. These principles seem to me to have made men feeble, and caused them to become an easy prey to evil-minded men” (*Discorsi* II, 2). Thus, according to Machiavelli, Christianity is not suited to political functionalization.

Inasmuch, however, as the secular “raison d’etat” cannot survive without a degree of normative legitimization, it would appear that nationalism, as a civil religion, has increasingly filled the gap left behind by religion once it lost its political function. Nationalism, however, only appeared towards the end of the Age of Enlightenment. But its discovery was a logical step. “Raison d’etat” might have found an appropriate response to the question of the immanent functional imperative of the state, but it did not find an answer to the question of its legitimacy. With the rise of the nineteenth-century idea of the nation state, this question could now be answered. Its legitimacy consisted above all in its role of offering security to the nation but also in increasing the nation’s prosperity and promoting its culture. National armed forces were created, national economies established themselves, and national cultures began to flourish. The effects of such nationalism differed according to whether one looked forwards or backwards, inwards or outwards.

Looking backwards, nationalism tended to “fundamentalize” nations. They increasingly felt they had national roots, that their feelings wishes and actions were rooted in common history, provenance, and language.

Looking forwards, nationalism provided people with a vision and sense of mission. The “place in the sun” sought by Germany is just as revealing in this context as Wilson’s intention “to make the world safe for democracy.”

Looking inwards, nationalism “homogenized” nations and legitimized political action in the so-called national interest: “my country, right or wrong.”

Looking outwards, nationalism polarized relations between nations; they became alienated from one another and from now on failed to understand one another. This mutual alienation encouraged war as a way of providing relief.

Thus a large degree of correspondence between the imperatives of “raison d’etat” and nationalism developed, which was of extreme significance for the wars waged in the twentieth century. The idea of a powerful state and the idea of nationalism are not identical, but there is a fruitful affinity between them.

2. *Multicultural challenges*

At the end of the 20th century, however, this congruence between secular “raison d’etat” and secular nationalism has been put into question. The crucial concept here is multiculturalism. In empirical and social terms, multiculturalism means that there is no homogeneous cultural “model” on which the state is based. In all countries of Europe, established national cultures are increasingly being enriched

and augmented. Refugee and migration movements on the one hand, and internationalization of the labor market on the other, are producing a degree of cultural differentiation in Europe that has never existed in the past. This is also partly the result of the fact that many Europeans have found meaning in various spiritual and medical doctrines of the Far East. All this ensures the presence of such a wide range of cultural alternatives that it is increasingly difficult to gain a proper overview.

In political terms, multiculturalism means that various groups are articulating claims with regard to their collective identities. They claim the right to make public their particular group identity, either through wearing special clothes, observing special holidays, practicing special definitions of gender roles, adopting a particular religious architecture, or observing particular religious rituals, etc. The question now becomes how the traditional nation state has to be modified so as to fulfill its integrative function under multicultural conditions. At present a trend can be observed whereby national cultures are being replaced by “milieu” cultures, e.g., a fundamentalist milieu culture, a traditionalist one, and the modernist one. As Thomas Meyer noted, “There is an increasing mismatch between the external boundaries of socio-cultural milieus—which are in any case extremely permeable—and geographical territories.” This being the case, then, it becomes impossible to speak of European culture but rather only of globalized milieu cultures. Furthermore, these milieu cultures also have a tendency to create mutually exclusive boundaries in both the national and global contexts. The question of how the state can offer a degree of normative integration may thus be moot. Post-national conditions, when it comes down to it, are also post-state conditions. The development has started. There is no end in sight.

The Modern Model of the Battlefield Tour and Staff Ride: Post-1815 Prussian and German Traditions¹

David Ian Hall²

At the end of the Second World War, the Historical Division of the Foreign Military Studies Branch, U.S. Army, Europe, commissioned a number of Military Review studies on pre-war enemy preparations and wartime operations. One study examined the function and conduct of “War Games” (*Kriegsspiele*) within the German Army.³ The principal author of the study was General der Infanterie Rudolf Michael Hofmann. Several first-class experts on German training also contributed to the study, including General Hans von Greiffenberg, General Fangher, Feldmarschall List, General Praun, and Generaloberst Franz Halder. The U.S. Army wanted to know what types of war games had been conducted by the German Army before and during the Second World War, and whether or not these exercises had fulfilled their purposes as training devices. It was an ambitious project; in the German Army of the 1914–1945 period, the term “war game” was applied rather liberally to cover a wide range of training exercises that included war games proper, map exercises, staff exercises, training trips, tactical walks, command post exercises, sand-table exercises, battlefield tours, and staff rides. Some *Kriegsspiele* were based on hypothetical scenarios while others made extensive use of historical records and included long visits to the actual sites of past battles and campaigns. Given their diversity and their large variety of objectives, were war games—and in particular battlefield tours and staff rides—an effective means for testing new ideas of command, and good preparation for future operations? The Germans clearly believed that they were.

Kriegsspiele, in their various guises, had been a core component of officer training in the Prussian army since before the Napoleonic Wars. They were equally important throughout the nineteenth century and, as such, they featured prominently in the education and professional development of the officer corps in the Imperial Army of von Moltke, and subsequently von Schlieffen. After 1918, the German Army reconfirmed its faith in war games; first the Reichswehr and after 1935 the Wehrmacht were firmly convinced of the great importance of these theoretical exercises to the training of their officers and to the operational effectiveness of the army as a whole. Even after ignominious defeat in 1945, General

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² A shorter version of this paper was presented at the 68th annual meeting of the Society for Military History held at the University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, May 23–26, 2001.

³ General Rudolf M. Hofmann, *War Games* MS # P-094. Trans. P. Luetzkendorf, Historical Division, Headquarters, United States Army, Europe, 1952.

Halder, never one to shy away from an opportunity to engage in a little self-congratulatory hubris, concluded his foreword to *War Games* by writing: “The acknowledged high standards of German officer training and the frequent successes of carefully prepared German operations are proofs of the high value of the war game.”⁴ In fact, merely by commissioning a study on German war games, the American army had conferred on both the games and their creators the high degree of status that many senior German army officers fully believed was deserved.

The modern concept of war games—historical studies and practical exercises aimed at improving the professional standards of officers and army alike—is believed to have had its origins in the seventeenth century with the development of the “military chess game,” an adaptation of regular chess that incorporated contemporary interest in mathematical principles and emphasized their relationship to strategy and tactics. Innovative though it was, the game was also severely limited by the rigid characteristics of the chessboard. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, the military writer and tactician Georg Venturini transferred the game to a chart or map and thus began the development of the modern chartex and mapex, both regular features of staff college courses today.⁵

Battlefield tours, staff rides, tactical walks, and the serious study of military history all became features of officer training in the Prussian Army of Frederick the Great. Even at age 22, then an inexperienced and un-blooded Colonel, Frederick appreciated how essential professional education was to an effective and efficient army. He was, after all, not only the Crown Prince of Prussia but also a willing child of the Enlightenment. Frederick read the history of his predecessors, of the rulers and the armies of Prussia. He analyzed their successes and failures and identified the reasons for them. He also conducted personal battlefield tours and tactical walks, often searching out old veterans who could describe to him the battles that they had fought. Further encouragement for these activities came from his father, King Frederick William, and the Commander-in-Chief of the Imperial Armies, Prince Eugen of Savoy. On a number of occasions, Eugen advised the young Frederick to “read military history . . . to meditate unceasingly on your profession and on the operations of great generals . . . and always to keep the great objectives of a campaign in view.” The pupil heeded the instructions of his tutor and, later, when the student became King and Commander he in turn implored his own officers to dedicate themselves to the profession of arms through personal study of the art of war.⁶

Frederick took immense interest in training the army. In 1743, after the First Silesian War (War of the Austrian Succession, 1740–1748), he inaugurated and

⁴ Generaloberst Franz Halder, “Foreword,” in Hofmann, *War Games* MS # P-094.

⁵ G. Venturini, *Beschreibung und Regeln eines neuen Kriegs-Spiels* (Schleswig, 1798) and *War Games* MS # P-094, xiv.

⁶ David Fraser, *Frederick the Great* (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 2000), 44, 48-50; Nicholas Henderson, *Prince Eugen of Savoy* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964).

personally directed large-scale autumn maneuvers of all arms. Eighteenth-century battles were won by precision maneuver and firepower. Frederick knew this and, through rigorous and regular formation drill and field training, he ensured that his army achieved tactical mobility, steadfastness under fire, and complete responsiveness to command.⁷ Equally important to the army's success was the training of commanders. Hard-earned battle experience moved Frederick to formalize the education and training of his officer corps. A cadet school was established in Berlin along with two smaller feeder schools in East Prussia (Culm and Stolp). Regular officers received lectures on geography and fortifications during the winter months, followed by tactical rides and war games in spring and summer. This increase in intellectual activity was not to the liking of many of Frederick's senior officers, who viewed it to be frightfully bourgeois and demeaning. "If experience were all a great general needs," Frederick remonstrated, "the greatest would be Prince Eugene's mules."⁸ Ignoring their displeasure, Frederick persisted with his efforts to improve the professional skills of his key officers. Gifted commanders were often assembled for study days and staff rides. Frederick encouraged them to study "the ground." During staff rides he questioned them on how they would attack or defend the position just reconnoitered; then their solutions were discussed. Finally, he urged them to teach themselves at all times. "When walking or riding, estimate distance, judge it. Then measure it."⁹

With the advent of the French Revolution, and the expanding demands of mass armies and warfare that was increasingly technical (heavy artillery, engineers), the personal philosophy and traditions of the Great Soldier-King were no longer sufficient for the Prussian army to meet future challenges successfully. Colonel Christian von Massenbach was one of the first Prussian officers to call for major reforms. Between 1802 and 1803, he wrote four memoirs for Frederick William III, outlining improved training courses for officers and his desire to see staff training formalized in an advanced school for commanding officers.¹⁰ These were radical ideas at the time, perhaps too radical, because the combination of a cult of reverence for all things Frederician and the dead hand of tradition (as a means

⁷ R. R. Palmer, "Frederick the Great, Guibert, Bülow: From Dynastic to National War," in Peter Paret, ed., *Makers of Modern Strategy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 95–99; Fraser, 126–129. Frederick's operational doctrine is summarized clearly and concisely in W. von Bremen, *Friedrich der Grosse* (Berlin: B. Behr's Verlag, 1905). See also Dennis Showalter, *The Wars of Frederick the Great* (London: Longman, 1995).

⁸ Karl Demeter, *The German Officer-Corps in Society and State, 1650–1945*, trans. Angus Malcolm (New York: F. A. Praeger, 1965), 67.

⁹ Steven E. Clemente, *For King and Kaiser! The Making of the Prussian Army Officer, 1860-1914* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1992), 3–4; Fraser, 129–130. See also *Military Instruction from the late King of Prussia to his Generals* trans. (from the French) Major T. W. Forster (Shelborne and London: printed by William Cruttwell, 1797).

¹⁰ William O. Shanahan, *Prussian Military Reforms 1786-1813* (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1966) 72–73.

to future glory and success) proved too inert to overcome. All this changed in the autumn of 1806 with the Prussian army's comprehensive defeats in the twin battles of Jena and Auerstadt. Proud, perhaps arrogant, and definitely ignorant of the changing nature of warfare since 1792, the well-drilled but dated Prussian Army marched to its destruction blithely unaware that its tactical system was cumbersome and rigid, and that in its present form it had no place on the lively and violent battlefields now owned by Napoleon.¹¹

Reforms followed quickly. In July 1807, Frederick William III created a Military Reorganization Commission headed by Graf Karl von Lottum and Major General Gerhard von Scharnhorst. Under their direction, places on the Commission were filled with a mixture of reactionaries and visionaries, including Generals Hermann von Boyen and Count August Neithardt von Gneisenau, Major Karl von Grolman, and a young captain of artillery, Karl von Clausewitz. The commissioners set about adapting the Prussian army to the new style of warfare. They re-organized the army, eventually adopting an independent brigade system. New measures were introduced, such as the "Krümper" system, for handling reserves and quickly increasing the army's size. Military justice was re-organized, as was the whole system of logistics. On Christmas Day, 1808, the Prussian War Ministry was founded, and roughly four years later new official training regulations were issued.¹² The exigencies of war had also convinced the reformers that a better educated and more technically proficient officer corps was required. As a result, a number of new cadet and military schools (Artillery and Engineering, Inspection Schools, Cadet Schools, and the Potsdam School for military orphans) were established. In addition to these schools, the Universal War School, the only army-wide educational institution, was founded in 1810.¹³

It was Scharnhorst and Clausewitz who first advocated the founding of a war academy (*Kriegsakademie*). They wanted a technical school, modeled on the German polytechnic academy (*technische Hochschule*), to teach officers subjects directly relevant to their profession. Another group of influential senior officers argued against this narrow model, advocating instead a school established on the Humboldtian tradition of the German university. General Rühle von Lilienstern, the first director of the War Academy, embraced the humanist traditions of a broad-based university education. Accordingly, during its early years, the War Academy emphasized the study of history, mathematics, philosophy, and physics

¹¹ David Nash, *The Prussian Army 1801-1815* (London: Almark Publishing Co. Ltd., 1972), 5; and Shanahan, 232.

¹² Hajo Holborn, "The Prusso-German School: Moltke and the Rise of the General Staff" in Paret, ed., 281-284; and Nash, 5-14.

¹³ Daniel Hughes, *The King's Finest. A Social and Bureaucratic Profile of Prussia's General Officers, 1871-1914* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1987), 83; and Louis A. von Scharfenort, *Die königlich preussische Kriegsakademie* (Berlin: E.S. Mittler and Son, 1910), 2-4. The General or Universal War School (*Allgemeine Kriegsschule*) opened in Berlin on October 15, 1810. In 1859, the army renamed the school the War Academy (*Kriegsakademie*).

over the purely military parts of the curriculum.¹⁴ The military arts of topographical studies, tactics, and strategy were not, however, forgotten. Scharnhorst was the Minister of War, and he was responsible for the peacetime education and training of the army. Moreover, he discharged his duty by training the officer corps in war games and staff maneuvers.¹⁵ While the army and its education and training, were modernized through the post-1806 reforms, the old Frederician tradition of officers reading history and then taking their theoretical studies outdoors in the form of staff rides and war games continued, albeit in an institutionalized format.

The seemingly inherent tensions between narrow professionalism and a liberal education were a constant source of concern for the Prussian and subsequently the German army throughout the nineteenth century and the first 45 years of the twentieth. The struggle was one between the practical and the theoretical, with the former slowly gaining the ascendancy as armies became larger and war became more technical. Not surprisingly, within the army there was a tendency to emphasize training that promoted the outlook of the specialist rather than the broad view of the generalist. Indicative of this trend was the increasing emphasis placed on military subjects at the War Academy. Between 1866 and 1870, the head of the War Academy, General Eduard von Peucker, rationalized the curriculum, adding more obligatory military courses at the expense of a more general education. In 1872, the War Academy came under the direct supervision of the Chief of the General Staff.¹⁶

Military history became another direct responsibility of the General Staff, not only in terms of using it to teach strategy and tactics, but also the writing of it. Historical study provided officers, particularly those who lacked actual battle experience, with a realistic if vicarious picture of the complexities of war. Taught and written properly (the stated intention of the General Staff), military history was also thought to offer an objective description of past problems that could be analyzed in order to draw from them valid practical conclusions. The rationale for studying military history was obvious: it provided “lessons for the future.” Accordingly, history became an applied art, and at the War Academy instruction followed the new applicatory method, emphasizing practical exercises and allowing more active student participation.¹⁷

¹⁴ von Scharfenort, Chapter 1; and Hughes, 83–85.

¹⁵ Holborn, 283.

¹⁶ Hughes, 85; and Bernard Schwertfeger, *Die grossen Erzieher des Heeres* (Potsdam: Rütten und Loening, 1936), 32, 47.

¹⁷ *The Role of Military History in Officer Education in Great Britain, the United States of America and Germany in the Twentieth Century*. Report commissioned by the Ministry of Defence, UK, and produced by the Department of War Studies, King’s College London (October 1983–1984), 247–249, 252; Friedrich A. J. von Bernhardt, *Denkwürdigkeiten aus meinem Leben nach gleichzeitigen Aufzeichnungen und im Lichte der Erinnerung* (Berlin, 1927); Herbert Rosinski, *The German Army* (London: Hogarth Press, 1939), 165; Holborn, 290; and Hughes, 85.

Both Helmuth von Moltke the Elder and Alfred von Schlieffen were keen students of history.¹⁸ Both also favored the practical application of historical knowledge to the many challenges of war over a more philosophical approach, such as that practiced by Clausewitz not that many years earlier. Rejecting theoretical speculation, Moltke embraced military history “as a tool to forearm staff officers against the many possible contingencies.” Schlieffen, on the other hand, had an even narrower outlook. He took the “technician’s view,” and used history to formulate and test his strategic conceptions. History clearly had developed a symbiotic relationship with practice. Each year, the General Staff’s plans for operations were tested in military maneuvers, staff rides, and war games. Officer education as well increasingly became a mixture of applied theoretical instruction and the adaptation of this knowledge to practical experience. During the quarter century before the outbreak of the First World War, instruction at the War Academy focused on professional military subjects, namely leadership, field tactics, general staff work, and map reading. General education, such as it was, included instruction in geography, history, and philosophy. War or battle history (*Wehr-Geschichte*) was ranked just below tactics in the order of priority, and all students read military history, spending six hours a week on the subject during their first year and four per week in the subsequent two. Lessons learned in the classroom in the winter were expanded upon and even tested during staff rides and tactical walks in spring and summer.¹⁹ Again, the emphasis was on learning tactics and refining the skills deemed necessary to carry out specific operational tasks.²⁰

Defeat in 1918 and the strictures of the Versailles Treaty imposed a number of changes on the German army (the General Staff and all former military educational institutions were abolished). What officer education and training that still was allowed was decentralized within existing civilian establishments and military units and directed under the auspices of the Army Office (*Heeresleitung*). These changes in outward form, however, were not accompanied by radical alterations to the three-year staff officers’ course of the old War Academy. Under the expert guidance of General Hans von Seeckt and, after 1926, his close advisor General Wilhelm Heye,²¹ officer education in the Reichswehr took on renewed

¹⁸ Moltke was chief of the general staff from 1857 to 1887; Schlieffen, Moltke’s eventual successor, occupied the post from 1891 to 1906. Together, their views dominated Prusso-German military thought from the mid-nineteenth century to the First World War and beyond. See Gunther E. Rothenberg, “Moltke, Schlieffen, and the Doctrine of Strategic Envelopment,” in Paret, ed., 296–325. See also Arden Bucholz, *Moltke, Schlieffen and Prussian War Planning* (Providence, R.I.: Berg Publishers, 1991), and Robert T. Foley, “Schlieffen’s Last Kriegsspiel,” *War Studies Journal* 3:2 (Summer 1998), 117–133, and 4:1 (Summer 1999), 97–115.

¹⁹ Hansgeorg Model, *Der deutsche Generalstabsoffizier. Seine Auswahl und Ausbildung in Reichswehr, Wehrmacht und Bundeswehr* (Frankfurt am Main: Bernard & Graefve Verlag für Wehrwesen, 1968).

²⁰ *The Role of Military History in Officer Education*, 247–255.

²¹ General Hans von Seeckt was commander-in-chief of the Reichswehr from 1920 to 1926. His

vigor yet also retained its Prussian continuity. Seeckt re-emphasized the role of military history in the teaching of tactical awareness and acumen. But he added to this the need for character training (*Charakterbildung*) and improved self-reliance amongst his officers. Physical and spiritual strength was seen as being as, if not more, important than intellectual knowledge or skill. Inculcating spirit, *Furor Teutonicus*, was an idea that enjoyed considerable currency in German military education during the interwar years, particularly in the Wehrmacht throughout the Nazi period.²² Decisive training took place in the open spaces of the outdoor classroom, in the form of maneuvers, tactical walks, staff rides, and even sport. Theoretical knowledge obtained through formal lecturers, personal reading, and seminars substituted for a lack of personal experience of command in battle. Military history was also viewed favorably as a way to promote the old values of the victorious nineteenth-century army.²³

During the first year of the three-year Reichswehr course, student officers dealt with several tactical situations, first at the level of the infantry regiment and later at the divisional level. The assignments stressed tactics and the combined arms concept, and staff solutions were provided. Both hypothetical and historical scenarios were used, the latter being drawn from anywhere from the campaigns of Frederick the Great to the First World War. Much was made of the boldness and imagination demonstrated by the great commanders. Tactical rides were central to all staff training, and they were used to illustrate theoretical lessons and to test an officer's ability to solve problems independently. Rides, normally done on horseback, consisted of ten to twenty students along with their instructors. Towards the end of the Weimar period, some rides were conducted from motor vehicles.²⁴ The first-year course ended in the spring with two instructional staff rides of some considerable importance. Each student was evaluated on his character and his effort, with only the best being invited back to attend the second-year course.²⁵

Year two continued the process of tactical instruction (with an emphasis on division-sized forces). Problems focusing on logistics and special branches of the

successor, General Wilhelm Heye, held the post from October 1926 to October 1930. See James S. Corum, *The Roots of Blitzkrieg. Hans von Seeckt and German military reforms* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1992) and Martin Kitchen, "The Army and the Weimar Republic," *idem. A Military History of Germany* (Secaucus, NJ: The Citadel Press, 1975), 235-280.

²² Prof. Dr. Hans W. Ziegler, "*Wehrerziehung im neuen Geiste*" (n.d.) Special Collections, McMaster University Archives, 8-10; for a scholarly account of the development of the warrior spirit in the Prusso-German army, see Antulio J. Echevarria II, "On the Brink of the Abyss: The Warrior Identity and German Military Thought before the Great War" *War & Society* 13:2 (October 1995), 23-40.

²³ *The Role of Military History in Officer Education*, 257-266.

²⁴ Karl Wilhelm Thilo, "Generalstabsreisen" *Wehrkunde* 13 (1964), 516-520.

²⁵ David Spires, *Image and Reality. The Making of the German Officer, 1921-1933* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984), 41-42. For a description of the Reichswehr training program, see Wiegand Schmidt-Richberg, *Die Generalstäbe in Deutschland 1871-1945* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1962), 55-72.

army were also introduced, as were tactical rides, or visits, to naval establishments and industrial sites. More emphasis was placed on leadership skills and personal responsibility and, once again, military subjects dominated the curriculum. Three theoretical combat exercises—a map planning exercise (*Planübung*), a war game, and a terrain evaluation (*Geländesprechung*)—were introduced to test the students with more challenging tactical problems. The year ended in late spring with two staff rides. The first, conducted in May, examined an officer's character, personality, and performance (in this order of importance). The second took place in June, but only included those officers selected by the Reichswehr Training Section. Those deemed to have excelled were invited back for the third-year course.²⁶

The third-year course (*Lehrgang R*), like years one and two, was a mix of instructional staff rides supplemented by theoretical instruction. It began with a five-day "welcome ride," which set the tone for the rest of the course. Autumn, winter, and major staff rides in the spring built on the year's theoretical lessons as well as on a critical re-assessment of the mistakes made in the previous year's instructional rides. The rides were a primary means for disseminating new tactical/technical information in a practical setting. They also served to promote uniformity and reduce parochialism. Each officer also prepared four major theoretical assignments: a terrain evaluation, a war game, a maneuver plan (*Manöveranlage*), and a military history seminar (*Kriegsgeschichtlicher Vortrag*). Again, tactical operations were emphasized, with operational history substituting for operational training. In Jodl's (General Alfred Jodl) course, in 1929–1930, for his military history question he was asked, "How could the strategy of annihilation have been achieved in the battle of Gumbinnen in 1914?"²⁷

Students taking staff college course were not the only officers to benefit from the staff ride experience. Regimental officers organized their own rides on a regular basis. Divisional staff and the Defense Ministry also ran annual staff rides in the spring, as did the commander-in-chief, whose ride (*Führerreise*) was reminiscent of those conducted by Frederick the Great many years ago. These rides contributed to the strategic and tactical conceptions of the army, provided vicarious battle experience for those without actual experience, and screened officers for promotion. They also emphasized the glories of the Prussian past. None of these activities, however, were new innovations unique to the Reichswehr system of officer development, although von Seeckt is correctly recognized for having developed them into a fine art.²⁸

Tactical and instructional staff rides were designed to familiarize officers with larger tactical situations in different types of terrain and to promote tactical uniformity in the army. If there was one inherent danger in these rides, particularly as

²⁶ Spires, 43.

²⁷ Spires, 43–44.

²⁸ Spires, 103–104; *The Role of Military History in Officer Education*, 292.

teaching aids, it was their susceptibility to conformity in thought and action, ultimately leading to dogma instead of doctrine, and resulting in rigidity of method. General Werner von Blomberg, chief of the *Truppenamt*, was alive to this danger, and he initiated steps to counter its worst effects. He encouraged more individual initiative and freedom in decision-making (within the common framework of the army's methods and practice). Blomberg also recognized other tangible benefits to be had from his recommendations. Increased individual responsibility for officers would help to develop a higher degree of motivation (*Dienstfrendigkeit*) within the officer corps, which in turn would complement and enhance both individual and collective technical competence.²⁹

From the late nineteenth century onwards, other nations, particularly Britain and the United States, used battlefield tours and staff rides to train military officers.³⁰ A decade or so before the First World War, the Staff College at Camberley added an annual battlefield tour to its program. Most of the 1870 battlefields were visited, as was Waterloo. In the U.S., Army staff rides became popular teaching aids immediately after the Civil War, although they were not added to the Fort Leavenworth curriculum until 1905. And at West Point, in 1902, Professor Gustave G. Fieberger introduced battlefield tours to his basic course in military history, noting their illustrative value and how they convinced his students of the practical benefits to be had from reading military history. Battlefield tours and staff rides contributed to the formulation of strategic and tactical concepts at King's College London and the Joint Services Command and Staff College, UK; lessons could be identified, learned, and possibly even applied in future conflicts. They also had deeper cultural and emotional benefits. Battlefield tours were used to instill a sense of duty and reverence and as such were a valuable aid in developing *esprit de corps*. These many attributes, however, have not always been appreciated. The term "battlefield tour" quickly comes to mind, and point to frequent criticisms of "foreign jollies" had at the sovereign's, or the government's, expense. While battlefield tours and staff rides are not panaceas for effective officer development and training, to write them off as frivolous extras seems equally incongruous. Their practical application to military education aside, battlefield tours and staff rides have offered other tangible benefits of extraordinary value, in terms of national consciousness, continuity, and pride for both civilians and the military alike. The origins of battlefield tours and staff rides are German, but the modern model seen in practice today is distinctly more multinational.

²⁹ Spires, 34–35.

³⁰ *The Role of Military History in Officer Education*, 284–288.

The World After September 11th: Change and Continuity¹

*Tomas Jermalavicius*²

September 11th, 2001 has become the date used most frequently by the media, diplomats, politicians, the military, academics, and ordinary citizens across the world both when discussing current affairs and trying to anticipate what the future holds. The horrendous terrorist attacks against the United States perpetrated on that day have profoundly shocked the world community. The destruction of the World Trade Center in New York and a part of the Pentagon building in Washington D.C., with the loss of more than 3,000 lives, were the first attacks against the United States on U.S. soil since the Japanese surprise attack against Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941, and were even more outrageous given that the absolute majority of the casualties were civilians. Just as in the wake of Pearl Harbor, the September atrocities set the United States on the path of war, this time against both the global Al-Qaeda terrorist network led by the pariah Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden, who allegedly masterminded these atrocities and offered support for their execution, and against the regimes which harbored or sponsored the terrorist groups.

Soon after the attacks, the United States, having secured the backing of a broad international coalition and assisted by its allies, launched a multidimensional campaign with the aim of disrupting Al-Qaeda, capturing Osama bin Laden, and dissuading the so-called “rogue states” from further pursuit of policies in support of international terrorism. The Taliban regime in Afghanistan, which has been hosting bin Laden and his training camps for the past several years, became the first target of the war on terrorism, as the U.S. deployed its formidable air power against the Taliban military assets and infrastructure and, in conjunction with the offensive of the Afghan opposition on the ground, succeeded in evicting the Taliban from power. The war goes on and probably will continue on different fronts and in different theaters for a long time to come. Its outcome and effects remain to be seen. However, while bearing in mind the uncertainty that war brings into world affairs, the implications of the events of September 11 can already be assessed and generalized with a measure of confidence.

This article will explore the ways that September 11 has already influenced and still can affect world politics in the future. It will attempt to provide some perspectives on the factors these events have brought or can possibly bring into the realm of international relations and what are the implications to the international system as a whole and to the processes within it. The major aim of such an

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effort is to clarify whether September 11th should be considered as a new departure point in world politics, where one can start talking of different characteristics of the international system, new dynamics of processes in this system, and a new quality of international relations compared to the state of affairs prior to September 11. The reason for addressing this issue is that developments in the aftermath of the terror attacks in the United States have led many to believe that September 11 heralds the dawn of a new era in international relations and that a completely new world order is likely to take shape as a result.³ Significant shifts in the policies of the major actors such as the U.S. or Russia, as well as ensuing revisions of security policies, may indeed justify this interpretation. By some accounts, the more worrisome isolationist manifestations of U.S. foreign policy, especially with regard to regional conflicts across the globe, and the more unilateral instincts of the U.S. administration arguably have been replaced with the policies of deep engagement and multilateralism. At the same time, Russia has made an impressive U-turn from being more or less antagonistic vis-à-vis the West to seeking rapprochement with the West, if not lasting integration into it. These are just a few aspects of the developments that have taken place since the terrorist attacks that provoke thoughts about fundamental change on the global scene. The psychological shock also adds to the tendency to adopt a stand where the world is looked at through different eyes than before the attacks.

Legitimate as it may seem, however, interpreting September 11 as a new point of departure for the functioning of the entire international system and the conduct of international relations can prove a too radical and, at the same time, a somewhat simplistic way of conceptualizing the importance of the events of September 11. While acknowledging the new facets of world politics brought to light by the terrorist attacks, the paper will argue that their impact should rather be assessed in the light of developments preceding them, dating back to the end of the Cold War, when the bipolar international system collapsed and the new world order started taking shape. This perspective would thus interpret September 11 as being the most instructive and the sharpest symptom reflecting the characteristics of the post-Cold War international environment that we have experienced so far, rather than a trigger of entirely new processes leading to disintegration of the current architecture of world politics. To a certain extent, September 11 has removed some of the ambiguities about the world we are facing, while at the same time introducing other uncertainties that are reinforced by the war on terrorism and the results it may produce. In addition, this paper will supplement this conceptual approach with an interpretation of the September 11 attacks as the event that accelerated and catalyzed processes that had been in motion for some time already. In accomplishing this task, the inquiry will compare post-September 11

³ See Dominique Moisi, "Welcome to the New, New World Order," *Financial Times*, September 13, 2001.

developments, frequently cited as an indication of the upcoming dramatic changes in the world system, with the environment that had emerged since the end of the Cold War. It will address the major underlying questions, such as: To what extent have the characteristics of the post-Cold War international system been altered (or not affected) by September 11? Was the post-September 11 pattern of interaction between the actors in this system indiscernible prior to the attacks, and therefore completely new? Have any significant modifications been made in a way that the nature of conflict within the system is understood? It is these three inter-related areas—the international system, international relations, and international conflict—which will constitute an organizing analytical framework for addressing these questions.

By looking for the connections between the post-September 11 events and the processes in place before the attacks, the paper will largely ignore the strategic issues of the ongoing war on terrorism, although the already visible effects of the war will come into play in the discussion. The military realm as such remains beyond the scope of this inquiry, as do the more or less conspicuous shifts in domestic politics and social attitudes in the U.S. or its allies since the commencement of this war. Omitting the latter from the analysis certainly makes this effort less comprehensive. However, it rests on the assumption that, as profound as their effects might be, domestic developments do not translate directly into changes in the international environment, although they can facilitate them and serve as one of the sustaining factors for a specific mode of international relations. Finally, the effects of the terrorist attacks upon the prevailing security paradigm will not be examined, on the premise that the events of September 11 have not induced any significant changes in this area, since terrorism and related threats, such as proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, have already been incorporated into the general notion of comprehensive security, which obviously will not be revisited.

The first part of the paper will provide an overview of the post-Cold War international setting prior to September 11th. The argument that the international system became unipolar after the collapse of the Soviet Union and that the U.S. has been acting as a hegemon in the international system ever since will be central, and will lay the groundwork for placing September 11 into a broader context. The major lines of international conflict in the post-Cold War environment will be elaborated here, including some discussion of a model suggested by Samuel Huntington known as the theory of the “clash of civilizations.” This account will build a basis for the second part of the essay, where the effects of the terrorist attacks on the unipolar structure of the international system will be appraised, taking the reactions of the U.S. and the rest of the world to support the argument that unipolarity has been strongly but not unequivocally bolstered. For obvious reasons, the focus will be on the U.S. and its foreign policy. Shifts in the ways that the U.S. perceives and is likely to shape its hegemonic posture in international relations will be analyzed, and it will be argued that, although the United States is becom-

ing a mature hegemon, the expectations of multilateralism in U.S. foreign policy are not likely to be fulfilled. The post-September 11 rapprochement between the U.S. and Russia will be dwelt upon to emphasize continuity in international relations and the accelerating impact of the terrorist attacks on the processes already on track before September 11. Finally, the effects on the major strands of international conflict will be assessed in this part, arguing that only one of them has been at least temporarily inactivated and that the Huntingtonian vision of the “clash of civilizations” remains inapplicable but potentially plausible.

The Post-Cold War Context

The post-Cold War international system, which has been evolving throughout the 1990s, has several key features built into it that are quite easily discernible in the fluid international environment. Understanding these features is necessary in the effort to detect changes of significance to the whole system after September 11. The first feature is unipolarity, which replaced the bipolar world of confrontation between the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. They were at the center of the two conflicting blocs of states during the Cold War, and acted as their consolidating forces as well as drivers of the international conflict generated by their ideological differences. The United States, by virtue of its economic, military, and political power, has been the only superpower in world affairs for the last decade, since the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Thus, almost by default, the U.S. emerged as the hegemonic state in the international system, capable of promoting its values and interests across the globe with unprecedented efficacy and virtually without any serious resistance from the system. The ideological dimension, built into the U.S.’s post-Cold War foreign policy and centered on the issues of human rights and freedoms as well as free markets, has been both appealing and intrusive. A number of countries previously not renowned for democratic practices have chosen the democratic path of development, associating themselves with the worldview promoted by the hegemonic power. Those remaining outside this trend have been subjected to strong external pressure, orchestrated by the U.S. and ranging from diplomatic and economic sanctions to military intervention. The last element of the American hegemonic position was a ring of credible and loyal allies, associating their security with U.S. guarantees and American ability to project military power globally, and directing their foreign policies in such a way as to ensure continuous U.S. presence and commitment. Thus, America has firmly established itself at the core of the international system, exercising significant influence on the system’s processes and serving as its *de facto* arbitrator, seeking to preserve the stability of the system. The phenomenon was given the

name of a new *Pax Americana* in the early 1990s by a number of authors (e.g., William Odom, Charles Krauthammer, etc.).⁴

Being in a position to pursue unilateral solutions as well as wielding enormous influence, the U.S. nevertheless remained reluctant to explicitly adopt and exercise its hegemonic posture in international relations, especially with respect to regional conflicts that required a prolonged military commitment and involvement in post-conflict reconstruction. Although having been conspicuous in the Middle East and Northern Ireland conflict resolution efforts, as well as restoring democracy in Haiti in 1994, the U.S. was hesitant to become fully involved in the Balkans in the early 1990s. This avoidance of the role of the “global policeman,” which can be seen as being tailored to the hegemonic posture, was further reinforced by the failure of U.S. intervention in Somalia in 1993, and led the U.S. to ignore the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. At the same time, even such a selective or even half-hearted U.S. engagement sustained its hegemonic status and the unipolar structure of the international system, and evoked unfriendly and sometimes hostile reactions from some of the system’s actors. To a greater or lesser degree, anti-American policies have become a determining characteristic of a number of states. An interesting aspect of this reaction is that some states, such as Russia or China, showed displeasure not about U.S. power *per se*, but about the unipolarity that this power created. Entertaining the concept of multipolarity, where the international system was envisaged as organized around several power centers that balanced each other and possessed their own spheres of influence, they moved to challenge the U.S. not on the basis of ideology, but for the global scope of its hegemonic outreach. At the same time, another group of states, mostly characterized as undemocratic, felt a far bigger threat from being exposed to the values and ideology that accompanied the U.S. hegemony than to the hegemony itself, and saw resistance as a prerequisite for the survival of their regimes and ideologies.

These two types of anti-American motivation can be found in mixture, as the case of China suggests. However, the latter motivation produced one of the most sustainable lines of international conflict during the last decade—the United States and its allies versus so-called “rogue states,” such as Iran, Iraq, Syria, Cuba, North Korea, Sudan, or Libya. Containment of the rogue states, which have embarked on policies of acquiring weapons of mass destruction and sponsoring terrorism, has occupied a large proportion of the U.S. foreign and military policy agenda since the Gulf War in 1991, although the policy itself dates back to the years of the Cold War. Then overshadowed by and subordinated to the confrontation with the Soviet Union, this conflict has become one of the major priorities in the post-Cold War era. In addition, it falls into a more general trend of conflict between the democracies and undemocratic regimes, a trend which has re-asserted itself

⁴ See J. Ann Tickner, “Re-visioning Security,” in *International Relations Theory Today*, edited by Ken Booth & Steve Smith (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 183–184.

during the last decade. Deriving legitimacy for its hegemony from the cause of spreading human rights and freedoms, and also by virtue of representing those values most robustly, the United States has appeared at the forefront of this stand-off, reserving the right to intervene, on behalf of the international community and with its support, in internal conflicts where human rights violations were leading to the spread of violence and humanitarian disasters. The air campaign of NATO against Yugoslavia to stop the ethnic cleansing in its separatist province of Kosovo in 1999 heralded the full maturity that this doctrine had reached.

Moreover, once the destabilizing effects of internal conflicts to the international system have been acknowledged, the humanitarian justification of intervention to a great extent overlapped with the compelling need to prevent the internationalization of these domestic conflicts. In this respect, interventions into so-called "failed states," where the central government was barely functioning or not functioning at all and the hostilities between various factions or warlords led to massive human rights violations as well as regional instability, became yet another element woven into the broader framework of post-Cold War international conflict. Bosnia, Somalia, and Sierra Leone stand out as the most prominent examples of this form of intervention during the last decade. Failure in Somalia has made the United States lukewarm to this kind of intervention, especially if any potential resultant regional instability did not directly threaten the U.S. interests and humanitarian considerations prevailed. The Clinton Doctrine, articulated in 1994 by then-U.S. President Bill Clinton, specifically argued for the presence of national interests as a prerequisite to bring the U.S. into such conflicts.⁵ As a result, other nations had to take the lead in such missions (the U.K. in Sierra Leone, Australia in East Timor), which testifies to both the selective use of hegemonic power by the U.S. and their ability to set a standard for addressing challenges to the international system to be followed by others.

These three interweaving and overlapping facets of international conflict, with the United States more or less at their center because of the unipolar nature of the international system, are supplemented with the friction generated by the globalization process and its consequences. It manifests itself as social protest against the globalizing world, where disaffected groups challenge the social groups and commercial structures that are considered to be the winners of rapid technological, economic, and socio-political transformation, as well as the state governments and international institutions that are viewed as tools facilitating globalization. Globalization, perceived as a threat to the identities, welfare, and values of certain groups, provokes a backlash that sometimes turns into violence (e.g. the anti-globalization movement protests during the World Trade Organization summit in Seattle in 1999, or during the Genoa summit of G8 in 2001). It can

⁵ See Hugo Slim, *Military Humanitarianism and the New Peacekeeping: an Agenda for Peace?* at www.jha.sps.cam.ac.uk/a/a015.htm (written 1995; accessed on May 17th, 2000).

hardly be called an international conflict in the classical sense, since the challenge that brought about the conflict emanated not from state actors, but from social formations within the states themselves. However, born within the states, these movements became transnational in nature, transcended their own state's borders by targeting foreign governments, international organizations, and even other societies. Furthermore, this conflict had a propensity for translating itself into the inter-state rivalry between the rich, developed states and the poor, less developed countries that are vulnerable to the pressures of globalization and are confronted with having large segments of their societies unable to adjust to and capitalize on this process. In geographical terms, it has become common to draw the line of conflict between the North and the South (the rich North versus the poor South), which has replaced the East-West axis of the Cold War confrontation. The United States has emerged as the biggest beneficiary of globalization and, to a certain extent, its strongest driving force through the promotion of free trade and through its competitive advantage stemming from its technological leadership. According to Peter Van Ham, "... the swell of economic and cultural globalization is often seen as the USA's ultimate soft-power resource."⁶ Hence the U.S. has been one of the most prominent targets of the social discontent over globalization and a scapegoat for the plight of the underdeveloped states of the South.

The post-Cold War picture of international conflict presented above is neither exhaustive nor does it attempt to incorporate a vast array of theoretical approaches formulated in the last decade or so. Since the end of the Cold War, a number of conceptual visions on what future international conflicts will look like have been competing for recognition. In the current context, the one espoused by Samuel Huntington is worth mentioning. In the early 1990s, he argued that the ideological confrontation between the two superpowers was for a number of reasons being gradually replaced by a "clash of civilizations." He argued that, "the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations."⁷ Huntington defined civilizations primarily as cultural entities and argued that there was an inherent friction between them, leading to violent conflicts in the regions where civilizations overlapped or came into direct geographical contact with each other. Armed conflicts in the Balkans, Trans-Caucasus, the Middle East, Kashmir, and other places were explained in these terms.

The Huntingtonian model has been criticized and contested on various grounds, especially for the less than reliable criteria used for defining "civilization" as well as for its tendency to see the clash of civilizations in some particular cases where it was absent in the origins of the conflict. However, Huntington's observations retain validity in what is perceived as a conflict between the West and the rest of the world. He argues that, "the West in effect is using international

⁶ Peter Van Ham, "Security and Culture, or, Why NATO Won't Last" *Security Dialogue* 32:4 (2001), 398.

⁷ Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993.

institutions, military power, and economic resources to run the world in ways that will maintain Western predominance, protect Western interests, and promote Western political and economic values.⁸ This behavior provokes responses from those non-Western states and societies unwilling to accept and internalize Western values and beliefs such as liberal democracy or human rights. The four lines of conflict, outlined previously, can easily fit into this notion as its different strands. For instance, Huntington essentially explains the existence of “rogue states” as one of the forms of response to Western civilizational hegemony and expansion. Once again putting the dominant trend under the title “the West versus the Rest” can pose difficulties for the analysis of specific cases. But, flawed as it may be, Huntington’s theory provides some valuable insights into the dynamics of international conflict and brings to the attention of academic discourse cultural differences as one of the ingredients feeding into the dynamics of international conflict. “The West versus the Rest” aspect encapsulates quite well what has been taking place in the unipolar international system under the hegemonic sway of the United States, although it does not necessarily carry sufficient explanatory power to help us understand all the frictions and conflicts in international relations. Cultural differences should not be viewed as the primary cause of conflicts, despite the fact that they do play their part in exacerbating the tensions over which conflicts erupt.

International relations have been evolving within the parameters of the unipolar international system and under the influence of the aforementioned tensions in it for the last decade. This rough outline of how the world looked prior to September 11 does not suggest, however, the presence of as much of the clarity and simplicity conducive to rational and effective decision-making that is necessary to address challenges and threats as it may seem to. The multidimensional character of international conflicts inevitably produced fluidity and ambiguity, making it difficult to prioritize policies and to come to grips with the whole complexity of the post-Cold War world and the direction it has been heading. For the U.S. in particular, this ambiguity raised a number of questions on what the nature of its hegemonic policy should be, whether the unipolarity could be sustained in a long term, where the U.S.’s national interests and priorities lie, and what the major sources of threats to them are. As a result, U.S. policy seemed to lack coherence and, in many instances, was reactive rather than proactive. Its remarkable feature was that the United States’ reluctance and selective engagement in world affairs had continuously aroused fears among its allies over the possibility that the tremendous power of the U.S. would allow it to retreat into self-isolation from the world affairs in order to reduce the costs of being the world hegemon and, at the same time, to seek and impose unilateral solutions in cases where vital U.S. interests were threatened or challenged.

The policies of the new administration of President George W. Bush, who took

⁸ Ibid.

office in the beginning of 2001, aggravated these concerns, as the administration was clearly inclined to pursue unilateralist policy schemes. The plans to deploy the National Missile Defense (NMD) system, designed to protect the continental U.S. from missile attacks by hostile regimes, emerged as the ultimate manifestation of the “go-it-alone” approach. A string of decisions not to cooperate in, or even to actively undermine multilateral efforts in various fields perceived as inconsistent with U.S. national interests (such as the Kyoto Protocol on greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the verification regime of the Biological and Chemical Weapons Convention, ratification of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, etc.) seemed to confirm these worrisome trends and stirred further controversies over the gap between actual U.S. behavior and the responsibilities inherent in the role of the global hegemon as perceived by the rest of the world. In this respect, the events of September 11 have indeed introduced more clarity to a vision of how the hegemon should behave and what kind of challenges should be given a higher priority. However, it can be easily noticed that the post-Cold War international system has not been shocked to such an extent so as to start shifting away from unipolarity, although it is less certain whether this pattern will endure in a long term, as will be suggested later. These observations, as well as the accompanying trends in international relations and characteristics of international conflict, will be elucidated in the second part of the article.

The Attacks of September 11 and their Impact

The attacks perpetrated against the hegemonic power of the unipolar world are inevitably bound to reverberate through the whole international system. September 11 was the first time in the post-Cold War era (or in the twentieth century, for that matter) that the United States was challenged with such destruction and hit at the heart of its financial and military power. Dramatic as they were, the attacks should not be assessed as the turning point at which the previous international system, together with the dynamics of international relations and international conflict built into it, ceased to exist and have been replaced by something entirely new. A strong case can be made to suggest that September 11 should be analyzed more in terms of continuity rather than drastic change.

Unipolarity highlighted but not unequivocal

First of all, the international system remains fundamentally unipolar. The attacks have done nothing to fundamentally undermine U.S. power (economic, financial, political, and military), its ability to project this power globally, or the dependence of the rest of the world on the United States, even if this was the original motive behind the attacks. On the contrary, these characteristics have become more significant, as a strong incentive for the United States to exploit more vigorously its unique position in the international system has appeared. A strong assertion of unipolarity was noticeable in the words of President Bush, aired during his

address to the Congress in the aftermath of the attacks, where he framed the imperative for the world community by saying that “every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists.”⁹ Thus, little choice has been left for the rest of world but to rally behind the U.S. or bear the consequences of either indecision or opposition. The world reaction to the terrorist attacks followed this imperative word for word. The U.S. allies, driven by moral repulsion of the atrocities and a strong commitment to support the U.S. as well as by a shared threat perception, offered all possible assistance, as the activation of Article 5 of the NATO founding treaty on collective defense demonstrates.

Some states, such as Russia or China, responded along similar lines, but more out of expedience and pragmatic considerations, hoping to reap benefits such as legitimization of their domestic policies (Russia’s war in the breakaway republic of Chechnya, for instance), more favorable treatment by the U.S. in the areas of trade and finance (especially for China) and, in the case of Russia, U.S. assistance in dealing with threats to its national security. Even some countries featured on the list of rogue states, such as Sudan, Libya, and Iran, felt compelled to condemn the attacks against their ideological enemy and, if not to cooperate, then at least to avoid obstructing in any way the U.S. response. All this reveals the extent to which U.S. policy has become central to world affairs and to which the world has become dependent on the United States. It can be concluded, therefore, that the events of September 11 have become yet another landmark, accentuating the unipolar nature of the international system.

On the other hand, certain echoes and manifestations appeared after September 11 that are reminiscent of the bipolar structure of the international system, as the history of the Cold War shows, and which may upset the above account. First is the sense of the overwhelming threat to the security and value system of American society, echoing the perception of the Soviet threat of the Cold War years. The terror of September 11 has created the same sense of profound insecurity, vulnerability, and uncertainty as the fear of nuclear attack by the Soviet Union, and the effort to redress this threat equally dominates the U.S. security and foreign policy agenda. Furthermore, a strong and powerful sense of the U.S. mission ensues both from the need to respond and from the freshly acute realization of the U.S. position in the international system as the only nation capable of delivering that response to protect the status quo. At the Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Shanghai, President Bush succinctly defined this new sense of mission claiming that “this conflict is a fight to save the civilized world.”¹⁰

⁹ *Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People*, September 20, 2001, at www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html, accessed on December 14, 2001.

¹⁰ See “Defining the Challenge: Who Asked Mr. Bush to ‘Save Civilisation’?” *The Guardian*, October 24, 2001.

One can easily draw parallels with the Cold War, when the United States acted on behalf of the free world to fend off the communist ideological expansion.

Yet another aspect that echoes the bipolar confrontation is the renewed usage of the word “containment” to shape and define U.S. strategy, only this time it is aimed at containing the terrorist threat in general rather than any particular state actor.¹¹ The impression of a non-coincidental parallel with the Cold War containment strategy is being strengthened by the warnings of the U.S. leadership that the U.S. as well as its allies should be preparing for a long haul in this struggle to contain terrorism.¹² To push the parallel even further, it is obvious that the war on terrorism, just as the Cold War, will not see any continuous and sustained military action. Intelligence operations, covert action, and financial and law enforcement measures will probably be more important tools employed to cope with the threat than the standing military.

Finally, it is obvious that September 11 will be followed by a period of deep U.S. engagement and global activism, as the realization hits home that any unresolved regional conflicts or the continued existence of “failed states” will be a breeding ground for extremism and terrorist activities, and that eventually the United States will become their ultimate target yet again. Having dismissed the U.S. role in state and nation building prior to September 11, the current Bush Administration seems to be revising this approach as the military campaign in Afghanistan draws to a close. The emerging U.S. determination not to leave any vacuum for extremism to thrive thoroughly resembles the effort to be actively present in all regions as a part of the anti-Soviet strategy. The only element missing in this picture to complete the bipolar structure is the second pole of the international system. However, the pole could be conceptually constructed if one defines it not as an equally powerful hostile state with its own sphere of influence, but as an amorphous structure, comprised of the terrorist networks, the rogue states, and even large segments of some societies exercising strong anti-American sentiments, all united by ideology. President Bush has already shown his determination to add state actors along with the terrorist networks to the adversary’s profile by declaring that “any nation that continues to support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime,”¹³ while carefully avoiding any allusions to the social dimensions of the conflict. In such a case, the notion of an asymmetric confrontation would apply, where one side is easily identifiable, well structured, organized, and has an obvious leader (the U.S.), while the other side remains more or less elusive, complex, and without the center of gravity inherent to the oppo-

¹¹ See Jim Hoagland, “America Can’t Wage the Anti-Terror War Alone,” *The International Herald Tribune*, January 14, 2002.

¹² See Tracy Grant, “Bush Braces Country for War,” *Washington Post*, September 15, 2001.

¹³ *Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People*, September 20, 2001, at www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html, accessed on December 14, 2001.

ment, but nevertheless is capable of inflicting significant damage to the interests of the adversary as well as keeping him mobilized and insecure while dictating the level of individual and social loyalties that are to be reckoned with.

This account would certainly be a huge departure from the conventional and modest assessment of the consequences of the events of September 11 for the international system. However, the transition from a unipolar to a bipolar world is only a possibility, rather than the current reality, and can materialize only if this new definition of what constitutes the other pole in the international system is universally accepted, if U.S. resources become so overextended as to lead the world to be less dependent on the U.S. as an arbiter and the source of security, and if a situation arises where loyalty to hegemonic U.S. leadership is easily traded and shed. The latter possibility has already been noted by the U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, who observed that, "One of the difficult things in the next few months is going to be establishing which of our allies of convenience . . . can become real allies over the longer term . . . and which ones are going to just switch sides."¹⁴ It is also important to note that the application of the strategies of the bipolar system can be carried out in the unipolar world all the same, as the containment of the rogue states through the mechanisms of international sanctions during the 1990s shows. This may especially be the case given that the key policymakers of the Bush administration are much more familiar with the strategies of the Cold War and are more eager to employ them rather than innovate. Being mindful of the reactions to September 11 within the international system discussed earlier, it would be premature to announce the demise of unipolarity, although the aspects of post-September 11 developments highlighted here should lead the analyst to be more flexible and open-minded in future categorizations. Enthusiastic use of techniques and rhetoric intrinsic to the bipolar structure of the international system by the Bush administration can become a self-fulfilling prophecy in the end.

The maturing hegemon and international relations

In the area of international relations, one can discover a mix of change in and continuity of the pre-September 11 patterns of interaction. The most significant change perhaps should be associated with the way that the hegemonic power (the U.S.) has been acting since the terrorist attacks. Having been averse to the role of global policeman and hesitant to commit itself wholeheartedly to building security and prosperity wherever such a need arose during the last decade, the United States seems to have started interpreting its position in world politics more robustly, appreciating that selective engagement, let alone self-isolation, cannot prevent hostile acts and challenges. As the U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald H.

¹⁴ Dao, James, and Schmitt, "U.S. Hawk Hints Iraq Won't Be Next Target," *The International Herald Tribune*, January 9, 2002.

Rumsfeld wrote: “Forget about ‘exit strategies’; we’re looking at a sustained engagement that carries no deadlines.”¹⁵ It is now more likely that U.S. engagement will be far deeper and wider than previously would have been the case, even in places where U.S. interests seem to be largely absent. The conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir, the Muslim insurgency in the Philippines, the failure of states in places such as the Democratic Republic of Congo or Somalia, the Palestinian *intifada*, and many other developments and events are set to receive or are already receiving a far greater amount of U.S. attention than they did prior to September 11. Essentially, the United States is undergoing a transformation from being a reluctant into being a mature hegemon, ready to throw its power and resources into troublesome spots where opportunities for opponents of the U.S. to undermine American interests present themselves. The declared readiness on the part of the U.S. to stay in Afghanistan and assist its newly formed government as long as it takes to build a viable state can serve as a precursor of the revised U.S. approach to its international responsibilities.¹⁶

The willingness to sustain global engagement, though, can still wither away as a sense of crisis and pressure for action subside. Some analysts have expressed their doubts over whether such a transformation will be sustained. As Professor Niall Ferguson of Oxford University rather bluntly puts it: “The U.S. has the resources; but does it have the guts to act as a global hegemon and make the world a more stable place?”¹⁷ Meanwhile, the expected reversal from unilateral to multilateral methods of formulating and implementing U.S. policies,¹⁸ which implies more consensus building and appreciation of the interests of other states, has failed to materialize. The broad anti-terrorist coalition that the U.S. sought to assemble before taking any military action represents the pursuit of a theoretical imperative of isolating the enemy diplomatically and strategically rather than introducing multilateral modes of policymaking and implementation. To be fair, multilateral elements have indeed emerged in U.S. policy. Reinvigorated interest in the opportunities offered by the United Nations, largely absent until recently, can be presented as an example,¹⁹ and concern over not alienating valuable allies in the war against terrorism is another.

¹⁵ Donald H. Rumsfeld, “A New Kind of War,” *The New York Times*, September 27, 2001.

¹⁶ See The White House Report *The Global War on Terrorism: The First 100 Days*, at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/12/100dayreport.html>, accessed on January 15, 2002.

¹⁷ See the contribution by Prof Niall Ferguson to the joint Guardian-RUSI conference on New Policies for the New World, published in *The Guardian*, October 31, 2001.

¹⁸ See Moises Naim, “Even A Hegemon Needs Friends and Allies,” *Financial Times*, September 14, 2001.

¹⁹ See *Remarks by the President to United Nations General Assembly*, November 10, 2001, at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/11/20011110-3.html>, accessed on January 15, 2002.

But the overall trend of the United States being ready to consult partner nations while seeking to avoid any of the constraints that multilateral action usually entails, especially in the military realm, continues unabated, just as it stood prior to September 11. Furthermore, the policy of eluding or even undermining some multilateral binding arms control agreements, seen as an undesirable constraint on U.S. freedom of maneuver and set on track during 2001 or even earlier, remain firmly in place. The United States further refuses to ratify the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty and has ruined any chances of making the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention more credible through strengthening its verification regime,²⁰ despite the risk of upsetting its allies and creating the atmosphere of double standards so readily pointed out by its foes. The same holds true for the U.S. determination to dispense with the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, viewed by former adversaries and current allies alike as a cornerstone of world strategic stability, in order to pave the way for the deployment of the NMD system. President Bush has already announced that U.S. withdrawal from the treaty is imminent. In this instance, the U.S. has not grown any more sensitive to the concerns of the international community after September 11. Instead, it is exploiting the moment to make the cause for a new strategic framework stronger and more acceptable. Relations with Russia perhaps best exemplify the continuity of the same pattern of interaction as existed prior to September 11.

U.S. relations with Russia have been developing as an uneasy mixture of cooperation and disagreement for the last decade. A number of issues, such as NATO enlargement and the Alliance's "out-of-area" operations as in the Balkans, the NMD system and the fate of the ABM Treaty, non-proliferation, Russia's two wars in Chechnya, and its meddling in the so-called "Near Abroad," have been poisoning the new agenda of bilateral relations almost constantly. With the second President Bush taking office, it was widely expected that U.S. policy towards Russia would be far more assertive and less conciliatory than under his predecessor. As Russia's President Vladimir Putin was also seen as a person preferring a tough stand in foreign policy to regain Russia's lost status in international affairs, it was tempting to conclude that the two states would slide back into permanent confrontation, although less dangerous than during the Cold War, but nevertheless sufficiently bruising and damaging to prompt concerns.

Post-September 11 developments seemed to render those concerns irrelevant. Both states have found a common uniting issue, since the terrorist threat has been long regarded by Russia to be the most dangerous threat to its national security. Given that shared threat perception is always a starting point for building an alliance, Russia's determination to join the anti-terrorist effort can be interpreted as drawing it closer to the West. Some Russian officials went so far as to ponder once again the possibility of Russia acceding to NATO and to tone down objec-

²⁰ See "Bush's Hang-ups," *The Economist*, December 15–21, 2001.

tions to the accession of the Baltic States into the Alliance.²¹ NATO also moved to reshape and upgrade its relations with Russia, and to make them better reflect the post-September 11 realities.²² More importantly, Russia has become an indispensable ally of the United States during the campaign in Afghanistan, sharing intelligence and expertise on the region and waiving objections to the U.S. military presence in Central Asia, perceived as Russia's backyard in terms of influence and strategic interests. Washington, in turn, was quick to suspend criticism of Russia's military campaign in Chechnya, acknowledging that at least some parts of Russia's argument for military action were valid and legitimate.²³ This was followed by the announcement of bilateral cuts in nuclear arsenals during the summit in Texas in November 2001, applauded as heralding a new era in the strategic relations of the former Cold War adversaries and laying ground for a new strategic framework while addressing Russia's anxieties over U.S. intentions to abolish the ABM Treaty.²⁴ Although not abandoning their opposition to the NMD, Russia's officials sound more realistic and more assured on this issue than previously.²⁵

Positive as they are, these developments, however, are neither entirely new nor are they rooted solely in the events of September 11. The dawn of a new era in strategic relations between Russia and the United States was declared during the June summit between Bush and Putin last year in Ljubljana, Slovenia. On the same occasion, both sides pledged to work on putting substance into the envisioned framework of their strategic relations.²⁶ In a similar vein, Putin has been softening Russia's vehement opposition to further NATO enlargement for some time, replacing threats of a commensurate response with arguments questioning the rationale of the enlargement.²⁷ Russia even failed to come up with its usual counter-statement after President Bush had outlined his vision of Europe "free and united" in his endorsement of the NATO enlargement project in Warsaw, Poland, last year.²⁸ Furthermore, it must be mentioned that Russia has been

²¹ See "Why Not Accept Russia Into NATO? Interview with Sergei V. Stepashin," *Business Week Online*, September 21, 2001, on Johnson's Russia List (JRL), Issue 5454, at <http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/5454-7.cfm>, accessed on January 15, 2002.

²² See Peter Finn and Peter Baker, "NATO and Russia Reinventing Relationship," *Washington Post*, November 15, 2001.

²³ See Ana Politkovskaya, "Remember Chechnya," *Washington Post*, November 14, 2001.

²⁴ See David E. Sanger, "Bush and Putin Agree to Reduce Stockpile of Nuclear Warheads," *The New York Times*, November 14, 2001.

²⁵ See Michael Wines, "Facing Pact's End, Putin Decides to Grimace and Bear It," *The New York Times*, December 14, 2001.

²⁶ See Angela Charlton, "Bush, Putin Face Diplomatic Hurdles," *Associated Press* report on Johnson's Russia List (JRL), Issue 5037, June 18, 2001, at <http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/5307.html>, accessed on July 10, 2001.

²⁷ See "Putin Softens Tone on Baltic Quest For NATO," *Jamestown Foundation Monitor*, September 6, 2001 on *CDI Russia Weekly* at <http://www.cdi.org/russia/170.html>, accessed on September 9, 2001.

²⁸ See *Remarks by the President in Address to Faculty and Students of Warsaw University*, Warsaw,

already talking of not ruling out the possibility of joining the Alliance at some time in the future, although tailoring this idea to a set of conditions deemed unacceptable by the West. Russia's drift towards the West, therefore, could be noticed already before the events of September 11. A more co-operative agenda had been unfolding, without the effects of the terrorist attacks. Many observers and policy analysts, taking note of the pragmatic nature of Putin's policies, seem to have somewhat underestimated his pro-Western credentials. Meanwhile, after September 11, Putin has been taking stock of the pro-American sentiment in the Russian society and has sought to overcome the hard-line conservative elements in Russia's establishment by redefining Russia's interests in order to strike a chord with the West.²⁹

The U.S. has also utilized the moment to give fresh momentum to the dynamics set into motion during 2001. Both sides have reached an understanding of where the commonality of their interests lies, which was blurred by mutual disagreements and suspicions before the terrorist attacks. The events of September 11 have only accentuated the ongoing change in bilateral relations and helped to remove the obstacles to the process of rapprochement on both sides. The assessment by the U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell that September 11 "did not start something, it accelerated"³⁰ is very much valid in the post-September 11 state of U.S.-Russian relations, and perhaps is applicable in international relations in general. The way that September 11's events are influencing the post-Cold War patterns of international conflict is somewhat more complex, but nevertheless their lines are not being redefined as dramatically as may have been expected. The next part of the essay will dwell upon the impact of September 11 on major cleavages in the international system.

Change and continuity in international conflict

On September 11, three lines of international conflict out of four seem to have blended together into one shocking blow to the U.S., the state situated at the very core of the international system that emerged as a node where those lines of conflict intersect. Firstly, the Al-Qaeda terrorist network, spreading over 60 states and born out of a pathological hatred of the United States as a power that allegedly is seeking to destroy Islam as a cultural and religious phenomenon and to subjugate the Muslims, exemplifies very well the by-products of the globalization process and its accompanying frictions. Osama bin Laden personifies those unable to accept the post-modern way of life and the social values brought about by globaliza-

Poland, June 15, 2001, at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/06/20010615-1.html>, accessed on January 15, 2002.

²⁹ See Michael McFaul, "Putin's Risky Turn Westwards," *The Christian Science Monitor*, November 9, 2001.

³⁰ See "U.S. and Russia to Complete Talks on Arms Control Pact," *The New York Times*, December 11, 2001.

tion, who react with anger and destruction at being pushed into marginality and irrelevance in the contemporary world.³¹ In a way, anti-globalization protesters causing havoc in the streets during the WTO or G8 summits and al-Qaeda terrorists represent two sides of the same coin in terms of the origins of their discontent. Also, just like the protesters on the streets, the terrorists skillfully capitalize on open communication, free movement of finances, and the new technologies that are sustaining globalization in their attack on the state that embodies globalization itself, and accomplished this by selecting targets symbolizing the financial and commercial as well as military might of the U.S.-dominated world. Furthermore, they managed to strike a chord with the anxieties and sensitivities of many societies in the Muslim world, unveiling the tensions created in those societies by modernization and exposure to the effects of globalization.³² Without going into detail and leaving the roots of terrorism for other inquiries to explore, it is enough to mention that the social and ideological cleavages in the international system brought into being by globalization are strongly present behind the September 11 attacks.

Secondly, the “rogue states versus the United States” line also manifests itself here, as the former are long suspected by the latter of sponsoring and supporting international terrorism. The presence of this conflict behind the terrorist attacks is obvious despite the fact that some of the rogue states were quick to issue condemnations of the atrocities. At the very early stage of the war on terrorism, the U.S. administration made it clear that this connection would be central to the U.S. anti-terrorist strategy. During his address to Congress, President Bush stated that, “any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime.” Arguments within the Bush Administration over whether Iraq—one of the most prominent pariah states—should be the next target after Afghanistan in the anti-terrorist campaign, have further reinforced the perception that the terrorist attacks are closely associated with the existence of the rogue states.³³ The failed states also inevitably come into play in the analysis, as Afghanistan constituted the ground for recruiting and training terrorists and the physical base of the al-Qaeda leadership. Mostly neglected since the failure to restore order and governing structures in Somalia, these failed states turned out to be the safe haven for the training and operational activities of the terrorist network. Afghanistan has immediately become a target of the U.S. war on terrorism, and Somalia as well as another state balancing on the edge of failure, Yemen, have been named to become likely targets of the anti-terrorist action of the U.S.³⁴ A

³¹ See Aryeh Neier, “Warring Against Modernity,” *Washington Post*, October 9, 2001.

³² See Thomas L. Friedman, “One War, Two Fronts,” *The New York Times*, November 2, 2001.

³³ See Martin Woollacott, “Saddam Will be the Next U.S. Target, One Way or Another,” *The Guardian*, November 16, 2001.

³⁴ See David B. Ottaway and Thomas E. Ricks, “Somalia Draws Anti-Terrorist Focus,” *Washington Post*, November 4, 2001.

sober realization by the U.S. that the existence of failed or weak states is not favorable to U.S. interests simply because it can further stimulate the terrorist threat and, therefore, cannot be ignored, will shape the American strategy for the foreseeable future.

Thus three lines of international conflict, recognizable well before September 11 and clearly having had some role leading to the terrorist attacks, are likely to remain in place. The only cleavage that has been obscured by September 11 is the one between the democracies and undemocratic regimes that for various reasons do not qualify for "rogue state" status. Pakistan and the states of Central Asia serve as the best examples of how undemocratic regimes have ceased to be a trigger for conflict and have turned into co-operative partners. Pakistan, widely regarded as having been gradually slipping into becoming a rogue state or even a failed state, or both, under the rule of General Pervez Musharraf, is now one of the most valuable U.S. allies.³⁵ The United States seems to be ready to tolerate undemocratic regimes as long as they remain loyal to the U.S. in its war on terrorism and provided that these regimes retain a degree of control over their territories and populations necessary to prevent the rise of extremism and the development of new terrorist cells. Meanwhile, as a result of the changed U.S. attitude, the authoritarian rulers can enjoy the newfound legitimacy of their repressive policies, which, before September 11, they described as "fighting terrorism" only to be met with mockery from the West.³⁶ It remains to be seen whether turning a blind eye to the undemocratic practices in other states for the sake of strategic co-operation will be a short-term U.S. strategy or a long-term trend, as the calls to prepare for a long haul may suggest. One note of caution is that such an approach during the Cold War produced all sorts of trouble for policymakers in the post-Cold War era, including a legacy of anti-Western sentiment in many societies.

One of the biggest fears of the international community, though, was that the U.S. response to the terrorist acts would indeed validate the Huntingtonian model of international conflict by turning the whole struggle into a clash of civilizations, between the U.S.-led Western world and the Islamic world. At the outset of the bombing campaign in Afghanistan, the argument that the United States was punishing an entire Muslim society for the atrocities perpetrated by a group of criminals and that it would antagonize the whole Muslim world were at the core of criticism of the U.S. strategy.³⁷ Signs of outrage, spreading through the Muslim world, over the bombing and the civilian casualties were apparent as was indicated by the demonstrations in Pakistan or the lack of endorsement by the Gulf States, who came under pressure from their societies not to support the campaign.³⁸ An

³⁵ See Bill Keller, Bill, "The World According to Colin Powell," *New York Magazine*, November 26, 2001.

³⁶ See "The New New World Order?" *The Economist*, October 5–12, 2001.

³⁷ See Malise Ruthven, "This Man May Become Our Nemesis," *The Guardian*, October 10, 2001.

³⁸ David Hirst, "The West Ignores Arab Resentment at Its Peril," *The Guardian*, October 9, 2001.

unfortunate parallel evoked by President Bush between the Crusades and the current war on terrorism was not at all helpful in presenting the campaign as an effort directed against “rogue” elements and not as a manifestation of a long-harbored Western hostility to the Muslims.³⁹ Talk of the West, and the United States in particular, exploiting the opportunity provided by September 11 to unleash its power against the Muslim world has become common among Muslims.⁴⁰ Given that any war tends to harden attitudes and push them to the extremes, the terrorist attacks may well induce proliferation and consolidation of anti-Muslim and anti-Western sentiments in Western and Muslim societies respectively, thus pitting them against each other and bringing about something resembling the clash of civilizations.

However, this remains a very remote possibility, since the U.S. and its allies have made every effort to isolate and discourage any domestic anti-Muslim hysteria as well as to win the hearts of the Muslims by disassociating Osama bin Laden’s cause from their grievances. As a result of a relatively measured and self-restrained U.S. response and a carefully mastered public relations campaign to convince Muslim societies of the absence of any broader anti-Muslim motivation behind this campaign, the view that this is a war between Western and Islamic civilizations is confined to the margins of those societies.⁴¹ The commitment to stay in Afghanistan and help to rebuild the country destroyed by decades of civil war served very well to strengthen this message of assurance. Nonetheless, September 11 underlines the fact that perceptions can be pushed by terrible events into such directions as to turn theories currently lacking any credibility into a dominant explanation of why the conflict is taking place. The terrorist attacks and Osama bin Laden’s following propaganda to unite the Muslims behind his religious cause to destroy America and other “infidels” may have given Huntington’s model more relevance than it has had before in the eyes of many, even though the terrorist attacks can be better explained in terms other than the clash of civilizations. It requires and will continue to require a sustained and carefully crafted policy and course of action to steer both sides away from the overwhelming perceptions of confrontation between Western and Islamic civilizations outlined by Huntington. Huntington was not entirely right prior to September 11, and he remains such afterwards, but he still can become right as the war on terrorism continues.

Conclusions

Provoked by numerous claims that the terrorist attacks against the United States on September 11 have dramatically changed the world, this article explored a moderate course of interpreting the importance of these events to world affairs. Taking

³⁹ See Peter Ford, “Europe Cringes at Bush ‘Crusade’ Against Terrorists,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, September 19, 2001.

⁴⁰ Jonathan Freedland, “The War Bin Laden Has Already Won,” *The Guardian*, October 10, 2001.

⁴¹ See Stephen Fidler, “Washington Wages a War of Diplomacy,” *Financial Times*, November 8, 2001.

three interrelated dimensions—the international system, international relations, and international conflict—as the analytical framework, it endeavored to place September 11 into the general post-Cold war context that emerged during the preceding decade. Preoccupied with the question whether September 11 should be conceptualized as a trigger of change or a symptom of what has been evolving for some time, the analysis leads to accepting the latter interpretation. Certainly, this does not imply that nothing at all has changed. Our perceptions and understanding of the terrorist threat, of the destructiveness it can bring about and of the means which terrorists can use to exploit our vulnerabilities, have acquired completely new dimensions and, more importantly, are now rooted in a terrible experience rather than theoretical models and hypothetical contingencies. But the course of world politics, with some minor adjustments and some new probabilities, remains a continuation of the pattern set prior to the attacks. The unipolar international system is not showing any signs of collapsing, even though some strategies and characteristics of the bipolar world have appeared, causing one to ponder the theoretical possibility of neo-bipolarity and the need to revise our notion of the system's pole.

The world-wide rallying behind the United States underscores the extent to which the U.S. has positioned itself as the central power in the international system, ensuring its functioning, stability, and security. The U.S. remains a hegemon in international relations, dictating the rules of the game as well as the nature of responses to challenges from within the system. Its influence, interests, and policies continue to formulate imperatives for the other actors. Only this time, reluctance to exercise this hegemonic influence is giving way to a wider and deeper global engagement to prevent further challenges like the one on September 11, bringing the U.S. closer to the role of “global policeman” that it has sought to avoid but has come to realize it has no choice but to assume. The hopes of multilateralists have been dashed, however, and the expected shift towards multilateral decision-making in international relations has failed to take place, as the U.S. remains unwilling to accept any external constraints, although it does display more readiness to consult before making decisions.

Finally, most of the strands of international conflict remain in place after September 11. Pressure upon the “rogue states” will persist and will even intensify. Interventions in failed states will be as instrumental to ensuring security of the international system as never before. And globalization will continue generating social and economic tensions with implications for international relations. Only those who believe that further expansion of democratic values and practices can guarantee peace and stability will be temporarily upset as the United States seeks allies in its war on terrorism, whether they are democratic or not. And the Huntingtonian clash of civilizations, which was not driving international conflict before September 11, is not becoming a reality, although its coming into being is another probability exposed by the terrorist attacks. The events of September

11 are symptomatic of the trends and developments that preceded them. They accentuate the characteristics of the post-Cold War setting and have also accelerated some processes, such as rapprochement between Russia and the U.S., by making their rationale more obvious. Thus, these atrocities are not a new departure point from which we should start counting the days of a post-post-Cold War era. Certainly, the continuing war on terrorism may work some changes, but it is rather a war that will consolidate the current world order instead of installing a new one. Most probably President George W. Bush will not enter history along with Woodrow Wilson or Franklin D. Roosevelt as an architect of a new world order, despite his merits for fighting terrorism.