Proceedings of the International Conference on the
THE PROSPECTS FOR COOPERATION AND STABILITY IN THE CAUCASUS

March 1st, 2005
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Edited By
NURŞİN ATEŞOĞLU - GÜNEY FUAT AKSU

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THE PROSPECTS FOR COOPERATION AND STABILITY
IN THE CAUCASUS

March 1st, 2005
AUDITORIUM

YTU Auditorium / Yıldız Campus
Yıldız- Beşiktaş

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NURŞİN ATESoğlu GÜNEY - FUAT AKSU

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Programme

Welcome Addresses and Opening Remarks
10.00-10.10

Prof. Dr. Aykut Polatoğlu
(Head of DPSIR / YTU)

10.10-10.20

Ambassador Güner Öztek
(Chairman of OBİV)

I. SESSION

Chairperson
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gencer Özcan
(Yıldız Technical University, Turkey)

10.30-12.30
11.30-11.45 Coffee Break
11.45-12.30 Discussion

II. SESSION

Chairperson
Prof. Dr. Gareth Winrow
(İstanbul Bilgi University, Turkey)

14.00-15.30
15.30-15.45 Coffee Break
15.45-17.00 Discussion
I. SESSION
10.30-12.30

Chairperson
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gencer Özcan
(Yıldız Technical University, Turkey)

Regional Policy And Security Development in the South Caucasus:
Azerbaijani Perspective
Elkhan Mehdiyev
(Director of Peace and Conflict Resolution Center / Azerbaijan)

Dynamics of Turkish Foreign Policy Towards South Caucasus;
Continuities and Changes
Research Assist. Vişne Korkmaz,
(Yıldız Technical University, Turkey)

The Effects of the Caspian Pipeline Issue on the Stability of the
Caucasus
Assist. Prof. Dr. Havva Kök
(Hacettepe University, Turkey)
II. SESSION

14.00-17.00

Chairperson

Prof. Dr. Gareth Winrow
(İstanbul Bilgi University, Turkey)

International Organisations and Regional Politics in the Caucasus

Ali Hikmet Alp
R. Ambassador/ Turkey)

U.S. Policy in the South Caucasus in the Second George W. Bush Administration

Dr. Brenda Shaffer
(Research Director Caspian Studies Program Harvard University)

Russia’s Interests in the Context of Cooperation in the Caucasus

Sergey Mikhailov
(Russia’s Institute for Strategic Studies / Russia)

The Impact of “Rose Revolution” in Georgia on Frozen Conflicts and the Prospects of Euro-Integration for the South Caucasus

Prof. Dr. George Khutsishvili
(Chairman of Board and Founding Director International Centre on Conflict and Negotiation (ICCN)/ Georgia)
Elkhan Mehdiev; (Director of Peace and Conflict Resolution Center / Azerbaijan)

Research Assist. Vişne Korkmaz; (Yıldız Technical University, Turkey)

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PREFACE

Today Caucasus is a crucial geo-strategic area as it used to be in history. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the newly independent states of the Caucasus have begun to operate along with the Russian Federation. Since the beginning of 1990s the map of Caucasus has drastically changed. This new environment, till today with the arising problems (ethnic conflicts, territorial claims, economic disappearances and the competition over the transit routes for Caspian energy etc.) continued to be a real security concern for the international community.

Today, the continuing problems like the future of the energy transit routes, democratization, returns of the displaced, territorial problems such as Nagorno-Karabakh, South-Ossethia, Adjaria, Abkhazian, etc., unless tackled carefully by the countries involved and other actors of the international community has the capacity of creating conditions of potential conflicts.

The problems of the region due to their multi-lateral character involve many states of the region. So far, the previous initiatives that aimed to bring long lasting peace and conditions of cooperation in the region have not been successful.

For this reason, the participants who are experts in their fields have come together at this very important conference, so as to come up with alternative suggestions to the question of "what could be done in the Caucasus to attain the prospects of peace and cooperation". Within this context, the participants of the conference (i) first; tried to sort out the continuing problems among the regional powers that are involved and inevitably examined the results of the already launched initiatives so far
that aimed to stabilize the region. (ii) Secondly, they came to the conclusion that the conditions of peace and stability is in the interest of everyone (both the regional states and the international community) in the Caucasus therefore a consensus been reached for furthering the future peace initiatives.

We certainly consider the contributions of the conference participants highly valuable in terms of providing an insight to the current problems of the region. For this reason, the conference papers are published in the format of proceedings. By this way, we hope to encourage further discussion in the field of international relations. We would like to thank all the individuals involved in the preparations of the conference.
WELCOMING REMARKS

Aykut POLATOĞLU

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you all to the Yıldız Technical University on behalf of the Department of Political Science and International Relations.

As the title of the Conference indicates, today we will be focusing our attentions on one of the sensitive regions of the world, Caucasus. Caucasus is a multi-layered crisis region and there are complex historical causes of the conflict in the region. The territorial integrity of the states in the region is being questioned from within the states and from outside. Socio-economic development is characterized by a mixture of state, market oriented, and traditional structures. The Caucasus also has considerable potential for economic development and integration in the form of its oil and gas reserves. These are also arousing the interests of a number of external actors which play an ambivalent role in conflict management and development in the region.

It may not be proper to make this analogy but I will do it anyhow, Caucasus is a “hot-potato “, difficult to handle. There are so many conflicting interests and ambitions of the actors involved, and it seems difficult to find ways and means which will insure peace and stability in the region. I hope this conference will contribute to the efforts of those who are trying to insure peace and stability in the Caucasus.

* Prof. Dr.; Head of the Department of Political Science and International Relations-YTU.
I would like to take this opportunity and extend our gratitude and thanks to our dear students, to the members of Politics and International Relations Club, for their efforts and contributions in the realization of this conference.
OPENING REMARK

Güner ÖZTEK

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a pleasure for me to welcome you all to the Conference on “The prospects of Cooperation and the Stability in the Caucasus” which is jointly organized by the Foundation for Middle-East and Balkan Studies and the Yıldız Technical University. Today we shall discuss different issues relating to this important region on the basis of first hand information and valuable commentaries which will be provided by our distinguished participants. We have tried to have an Armenian expert to join us in our deliberations but I regret to say that our various attempts to this end just failed to succeed.

As an introduction to our discussions let me stress some preliminary points:

Caucasus, a gateway between East and West, North and South with its vast natural resources, its energy transit corridors transporting energy resources from Central Asian and Caspian Basin to the world markets and its proximity to the Persian Gulf constitutes an important strategic area for the Euro-Atlantic, Middle-East and Eurasia regions.

* Ambassador, Director of Foundation for Middle East and Balkan Studies-OBİV
However, with its complex ethnic, linguistic and religious composition the region has also been a place to many frozen conflicts. All the three Countries of the South Caucasus are facing major challenges in their efforts to emerge from the transitional phase they are in and promote lasting stability and prosperity.

Apart from these difficulties, the region is still marred by territorial conflicts. These constitute serious impediments for the building of peace and stability to this region. Azerbaijan and Georgia are unable to exercise sovereignty over all their territory. They have experienced violent conflicts entailing many casualties and the displacement of populations.

From Turkey’s point of view, apart from its international strategic significance, the Caucasus is a neighboring area where the stability and welfare of the peoples of the region is a matter of high interest for Turkey’s own security and stability. This region also constitutes a natural link to Central Asia. Turkey has close political, economic, social and cultural ties with the peoples of the region. And as a natural outcome, maintenance of peace and stability in the Caucasus is a matter of high importance for Turkey.

Turkey’s approach to the Southern Caucasus is shaped by its desire to establish comprehensive cooperation in the region with the contribution of all three states and other regional and international actors.

We consider that consolidation of the independence of these countries, maintenance of their territorial integrity, strengthening of their democratic structures and market economy and the optimal use of their economic potentials are matters of crucial importance.

With these political objectives, Turkey, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, immediately recognized independence of all three South Caucasian states without discrimination in late 1991. It has helped them overcome challenges of their transformation and
integrate with the rest of the world. It has delivered technical and humanitarian assistance; extended political support in their quest for integration to the Euro-Atlantic structures, such as OSCE, NATO and the Council of Europe. Turkey also promoted regional cooperation mechanisms such as Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization.

Turkey believes that integration of this region with the international community is of utmost importance for all these countries to achieve a sustainable progress towards stability and prosperity.

Turkey’s accession process to the EU will also be another important factor of stability and progress in the region. As the negotiations process with the EU is launced, Turkey will increasingly play a more instrumental role in the effective implementation of the new European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) of the EU concerning the South Caucasus.

Unfortunately, instability continues to prevail in the region. The frozen conflicts in the region have negative implications beyond the region.

Within this context, let me mention Nagorno-Karabakh conflict which stands as the principal obstacle to the political stability, economic development and regional cooperation in the Caucasus. It is also one of the main reasons of the deplorable situation of a million refugees and displaced persons in Azerbaijan Peaceful solution of this conflict will create outstanding progress not only for the countries concerned but for the whole region.

As a member of the Minsk Group, Turkey considers the Minks Process as a useful mechanism to reach a peaceful, lasting and just settlement in the conflict. Ankara also supports direct and indirect bilateral talks between Azerbaijan and Armenia that will be instrumental in finding a peaceful solution to the conflict and it is ready to support any solution to the Nagorno Karabakh problem that will be acceptable to both countries.
With the aim of playing a facilitator role in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict and exchanging views on other regional issues, Turkey has initiated a forum for dialogue among the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Turkey. The first meeting took place in Reykjavik on 15 May 2002 and the second in Istanbul on the margins of the NATO Summit in late June 2004.

The other frozen conflicts are Abkhazia and South Osetia, Turkey has, from the outset, supported the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia. Therefore, we support the peaceful solution of the conflicts within the internationally recognized borders of Georgia through dialogue between the parties.

Before finishing let me say few words about Turkey’s relations with Armenia. Although Turkey recognized Armenia in 1991 following her independence, up to now it was not possible to establish diplomatic relations with this country mainly due to Armenia’s refusal to recognize the territorial integrity of Turkey, article 11 of the Armenian Declaration of Independence refers to Eastern Anatolia region of Turkey as “Western Armenia”, refusal to recognize the existing common border as established by the Kars Agreement of 1921; Armenian’s campaign based on false accusations against Turkey about so-called genocide; Armenian occupation of 20% of Azerbaijan territory despite several UN Security Council Resolutions. However, Turkey is willing to normalize its relations with Armenia in line with the strategic objective of getting peace and stability to the Caucasus keeps open the channels of dialogue with Erivan.

I am certain that this day in Istanbul will bring forth fruitful discussions and will lead to concrete results as to the benefit of the Caucasus region. With these thoughts in mind, I would like to wish you all every success in your deliberations.

Thank you for your attention.
REGIONAL POLICY AND SECURITY DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS:
AZERBAIJANI PERSPECTIVE

Elkhan MEHTIYEV

Growing importance of Caucasus is influenced by its geographical location scattering to both Black sea and Caspian Sea bordering with NATO and European Union as well as Central Asian and the Middle Eastern countries. For Turkey and Western Europe it is doorway to Central Asia and now to Afghanistan and for Russia it has always been as gateway to the Middle East.

The Caucasus is still experiencing complex development in its history struggling for independence and sovereignty. Azerbaijan faced terrible results of Armenian military aggression which led to the occupation of vast amount of Azerbaijani territories the size of which is around half of Armenia. 120 km of international borders with Iran and more than that with Armenia is out of Azerbaijani control.

Georgia lost sovereignty over Abkhazia and South Osetia and has been struggling for restoration of its sovereignty and independence. In addition the dispute over Caspian basin energy resources among the coastal states, the internal situation in all Caucasian nations makes the region more volatile and subject for insecurity.

Foreign and security policy of south Caucasus is influenced by the Euro-Atlantic institutions and the structures set up on the ruin of the Soviet Union. These countries are represented in NATO led PfP activities developing bilateral relations with United

* Director of Peace and Conflict Resolution Center, Baku
Sates and EU and participating at Russian led numerous security forums like CIS defense Ministries Council, CIS Interior Ministries Council, CIS Anti-Terrorist Center discussing military cooperation, cooperation on protection of CIS Member countries borders, combat of crimes and terrorism, drug trafficking, bilateral cooperation on juridical assistance.

Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia and Russia comprised so-called Caucasus Four highly encouraged by Russia but after Georgia’s democratic changes this structure is not practically functioning any more.

Georgia and Azerbaijan is member of GUAAM highly encouraged by United States aimed at discussing issues like combating terrorism, drug trafficking and other crimes, as well as border security and customs control projects intended to facilitate trade and transportation. There have been made some other perspective regional security initiatives such as Caucasian Stability Pact that envisioned withdrawal of foreign bases from South Caucasuses and establishing peace, security in the region, has failed to get support of all Caucasian nations.

Azerbaijani relations with Russia are being pursued by bilateral and above-mentioned multilateral structures. Putin’s arrival to power has restored and strengthened once declining rapidly Russian influence within CIS area strengthening economic relations by not missing a chance for military cooperation. Russian Azerbaijani relations have also taken momentum after President Putin’s visit to Baku in January 2001 which paved way for improvement of relations and resolution of unresolved problems between the two nations.

Azerbaijan signed agreement on division of Caspian with Russia which is still not resolved with other coastal states of Turkmenistan and Iran. H. Aliyev made unexpected big concession on Gabala Radar Station meeting Russia’s demands for long term rent of this strategically important object which has been indication of the regime’s overcautious policy with Russia.
What Russia wants from Azerbaijan is not to go far with NATO and the United States as Russia is concerned by the arrival of foreign military to Caucasus and Caspian basin. Foreign policy of current Azerbaijani leadership is guided by the concerns of Russia on these issues since the regime’s sustainability is heavily dependent on Russia. Russia still has significant leverage of influence in Azerbaijan influenced by numerous factors including close ties of ruling elite with Moscow, trade and economic relations, presence of millions of Azerbaijaniis earning their life in Russia due to intolerable economic conditions in Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijani grievances on Russia are mostly connected with Russia’s military’s support of Armenia. Azerbaijan believes that Armenia keeps Azerbaijani lands due to Russia’s military support and armament of Armenia. Russia does not deny armament of Armenia while being mediator at Armenian –Azerbaijani negotiations grounding its action by its security treaty with Armenia. That explanation is perceived by Azerbaijani side as a pressure to Azerbaijan to agree for similar treaty with Russia which Azerbaijan is not willing to do yet. Russian officials in their turn claim on Russia’s balanced policy towards Azerbaijan and Armenia thus balancing cultural and economic relations with Azerbaijan with their military alliance with Armenia which is incompatible by its nature.

Security cooperation between Azerbaijan and United Sates has taken momentum by the influence of the September 11 and consequently the war on terror in Afghanistan allowing its air space and airports for use of US military and transport planes waging the war on terror in Afghanistan. US in its turn established Defense Cooperation section at US Embassy in Baku to boost military- to military cooperation. Azerbaijan-US military cooperation has opened the way for military cooperation with the EU countries. Iraqi crisis and Azerbaijani support for US military actions in Iraq and readiness to join US led forces in Iraq and
sending its military units to Afghanistan and Iraq has expanded forms of cooperation.

For some period during Heydar Aliyev’s presidency US military officials made some hints for having US military presence in Azerbaijan which has been expressed by US deputy Command in Europe General Charles Wald with the purpose of “to assure long stability of mineral resources”. “We have an initiative called Caspian Guard. ... It will be building surveillance capabilities for both air and sea in the Caspian Sea in conjunction with the Azerbaijanis" have been echoed by Charles Wald last year. He has again recently mentioned Russian opposition for US military presence in Azerbaijan and Georgia.

Pentagon officials have said they might consider asking for increased access to its military bases and even permission to rotate American troops across its soil. The goal would be to guarantee speedy access to bases so that the American military could respond more quickly to a crisis than is possible today. The Troops could be small, rotating groups taking use of upgraded Azerbaijani military bases.

During his December 3, 2003 visit to Baku Mr. Rumsfeld said the United States would work with Azerbaijan to improve its ability to secure its territorial waters. Other defense officials said the possible options for Azerbaijan ranged from use of Azerbaijani territory for occasional training of U.S. troops to the permanent stationing in the country of equipment and small numbers of American troops. US defense department has provided some equipment in preventing and detecting mass destruction weapons at border checkpoints. The US defense department has also delivered two patrol boats to guard waters in the Caspian Sea.

Russia has expressed at different levels its opposition to any US military installation or NATO led objects in Azerbaijan in the Caspian Basin.. Here Iran and the Russian Federation are equally reluctant for maintaining Azerbaijani any military cooperation with the United States opposing any American military
components to the region. Russia considers the Caucasus to be its
traditional sphere of influence and is not ready to accept any
foreign military deployment, not to mention the US on next to its
borders.

Azerbaijani will for closer cooperation with NATO is being
considered by Iran as a hostile action to them since they consider
the NATO as a US dominated alliance and expansion of NATO is
perceived within that context. Iran is in fear of regime change
policy of US and any US arrival close to their borders is being
considered as a threat to the regime. Iranian side has repeatedly
expressed its opposition to American oil companies’ involvement in
the Caspian basin and development of bilateral Azerbaijani –
Turkish and Azerbaijani-US security cooperation complicating
bilateral relations with Azerbaijan.

Russia’s military capabilities in Caspian sea is being
enhanced by the restructuring of and modernizing the Caspian fleet
with new air, navy and professional personnel. Iran is also
increasing its presence in the Caspian at the expense of its
forces in the Persian Gulf. Analyses indicate that Iranian
military presence in Caspian will exceed Azerbaijani forces to
meet Iranian economic and geopolitical ambitions in the basin.
Turkmenistan is also increasing its navy forces increasing the
personnel of fleet to 3000.

Regarding Azerbaijani –NATO relations current Azerbaijani
leadership has numerous stated that NATO is not in agenda of
Azerbaijani politics and Azerbaijani is not willing to host any
foreign troops in Azerbaijan. That is to be considered as major
policy shift in comparison with Heydar Aliyev who stated in April
2003 that we are willing to be NATO member and we don’t raise
noise about that. The shift is being explained by experts the
enhanced influence of Vladimir Putin over Ilham Aliyev since he
was one of the backbones of the current regime in Azerbaijan.
Azerbaijan is active within PFP activities and signed IPAP but was
not ratified by NATO’s Council.
Elkhan MEHTIYEV

Political spectrum of the society is supportive for NATO membership as these forces consider membership process as a road towards the democratization and transparency in the country as well. But according to information from NATO circles the Azerbaijani leadership is not doing necessary reforms for NATO membership while Georgia has accepted and has done most of it.

NATO is also is not certain for Azerbaijani security concern trying not take any position in occupation of Azerbaijani lands and tries to be neutral which is inconsistent with NATO’ principles. NATO is trying to have equal relations with both Azerbaijan and Armenia which is in fact is perceived as a indifference to Armenian military aggression against which NATO has taken firm stand in Balkans and elsewhere.

Russia is still keeping the powerful army units in the north Caucasus which is the biggest military groups in Europe. Russia bases in Armenia, unwillingness to withdraw its troops from Georgia and retaining military object in Azerbaijan could be characterized as resistance to change of the region to new geopolitical realities.

Though Bush administration has clearly supported Ilham Aliyev’s succession in the wave of war on terror for military-security reasons in the region and by the lobbyist activities of people inside and outside the administration but consequently post-election repression and torture against protesters and the rigged presidential elections caused sharp public opinion in the United States forced the administration in the top level to distance herself from contacting Ilham Alitev.

These had been also influenced by the Bush administrations new policy to bring democracy in the Middle East, influence of Georgia’s democratic revolution which has proved the extent of falsification in Azerbaijan, absence of real political reforms. On the wave of new Bush doctrine “Spread of Democracy” I believe Azerbaijan will have problems with American administration.
Should be noted that Azerbaijan-US security cooperation is to some extent unilateral characterized by ignorance of Azerbaijani security interests regarding the Armenian occupation and continued transfer of Russia’s military hardware to Armenia. Azerbaijan did not get complete understanding on part of the US over a armament of Armenia by Russia. US government still maintains the parity between Azerbaijan and Armenia on military aid to both countries.

From security standpoint Azerbaijan is in disadvantages position among Caucasus nations. Azerbaijani is not a member of CSTO and has no mutual security treaty neither with Russia or Turkey. NATO does not have any commitment before Azerbaijan. So Azerbaijan is in a security vacuum from classical notion of security.

To speak about Azerbaijani security in current circumstances is totally incompatible with the political science theory and practice of international relations. Can Azerbaijan speak about the security if the country can not control its own international borders? Can the country speak about the security when the vast amount of its territory is under foreign military occupation? Can the country speak about the security when the number of weapons in its rebel held territories are beyond its own? This is a unique situation which has no analogy in our planet. There is no control in Armenia-held territories and the weapons stationed there are out of CFE control but are part of single military command in Yerevan.

Azerbaijan-Turkish Relations

Azerbaijan views Turkish presence in the region as a factor for security and peace that has been proved by Turkish cooperation with Georgia and Azerbaijan for the past ten years. Azerbaijan does not have security treaty with Turkey similar that of Armenia has with Russian Federation. This issue has always been in debate.
Elkhan MEHTIYEV

in Azerbaijani society that is inclined towards more Turkish military involvement in Azerbaijani army.

Turkish access and presence in Caspian basin and Central Asia has traditionally viewed by Russia as undesirable and main concerns of Russian foreign policy. Transportation of energy resources via Turkey to international market has doubled that opposition. Turkey’s involvement in the region faces resistance from Iran and Armenia as well.

Discouraging element in relations has been the tendencies that Azerbaijani and Turkish leaders formed the interstate relations based on their own personal relations. Baku-Ceyhan pipeline has been delayed and politicized by both S. Demirel and H. Aliev for the purposes of internal politics. The relations have been maintained by slogans of the leaders rather than with active working relationship of the two countries.

Turkey did not make steps for promoting democracy and free elections in Azerbaijan that Turkey is only admired for that. Turkey preferred not to intervene siding with the ruling system ad in fact being supportive of the corrupted ruling regime for the past ten years. Turkey’s contribution for democratic transformation can only strengthen both Azerbaijan and Turkey in the region.

Turkey was isolated from OSCE Minsk Group on Nagorno-Karabakh settlement. Interestingly, United States and Russia orchestrated similar view on Turkey’s involvement in NK settlement process. US did not want to see Turkey as a third party in the Caucasus in its struggle with Russia for more influence in the region. By pressing Turkey to open Turkish-Armenian border US is trying to isolate Turkey from Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict settlement in that way granting Armenian side upper hand in keeping Azerbaijani lands under occupation. There is strong believe in Azerbaijan that one of the reason for current stalemate is Turkey’s non-participation in OSCE Minsk Group mediation.

Armenia’s Attitude

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Situation is different regarding to Armenia. Armenia clearly declares Russia as a guarantor for its security. Armenia is hosting Russian military bases N102 which is equipped with modern S-300 anti-aircraft systems and MiG-29 fighter jets. Russian Defense Minister S. Ivanov expressed his unhappiness base’s military equipment and pledged” to rearm and re-equip the Russian 102nd military base in Armenia” mentioning that it is only member of the CSTO which shares a border with NATO countries”. Under the pretext of modernization new party of weapons and arms are being deployed in Armenia.

Armenian president stated after the Prague summit Armenia will not seek NATO membership and will continue to be part of CST. Armenia opposes Azerbaijani and Georgia’s bid for membership considering that the NATO membership will change the regional landscape and its eastward expansion to South Caucasus would create new dividing line and add problems for the region.

Other aspect of Armenian security policy is that Armenia-NATO and Armenia-US military relations are developing and as Armenians call it as a four- staged security policy. Military-technological relations with Russia, military- technical relations with CSTO members makes core of that policy with the development the bilateral NATO and US relations. September 11 triggered Armenia-US military relations and Armenia-NATO relations are mostly being pushed forward through Armenia-Greece military relations. Armenia considers its military cooperation with NATO and United states as an integral component of Armenia's security and strengthening its army as Armenian officials say..

From Azerbaijani perspective Armenian cautious approach with NATO is related with the total dependence on Russian military support for pursuing Armenian policy in the Caucasus.

International speculation that they need Russian troops for opposing Turkish threat is not justified but in reality that purely serves for acquisition of Azerbaijani lands as they believe
having Russian troops in Armenia would give them Russia’s political support and in needy moment as a backbone for military activities. It was indirectly admitted recently by Armenian defense minister that a key problem hampering Armenia’s cooperation with NATO is conflict over NK.

**Cooperation Perspectives**

Azerbaijani people consider suggestions for cooperation with Armenia as a sign of indifference to Armenian occupation, disrespect and ignorance of the plight of people subject to ethnic cleansing. Azerbaijanis believe that any direct cooperation with Armenia is groundless at least morally since any cooperation with the aggressor would be considered as a humiliation.

To outside arguments of international organizations and the United States that functional cooperation would promote mutual understanding and encourage settlement of the conflicts, Azerbaijan argues that the cooperation would strengthen Armenia and make her stronger. Suggestions that the cooperation would improve understanding and foster settlement face counter-arguments from the Azerbaijani side that both countries were part of the single state of the Soviet Union and economically and infrastructurally were tied to each other when Armenian claims began. In addition, most state Azerbaijani agencies question any benefit from the cooperation with Armenia proper, except some environmental cooperation.

There is consensus in Azerbaijan that cooperation with Armenia might be resumed only if Armenia would respect Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity and sovereignty and pursue good neighborly relations.

Cooperation could be achieved if there is reconciliation between the two nations and Azerbaijani side believes that establishing International War Crimes Tribunal for Caucasus could be good way for reconciliation. We strongly believe that trial of the war criminals will again open the window for lasting peace and further cooperation in the region and would be lesson to those who
still have in their mind to pursue their cause by violence, killings, ethnic cleansing and destruction of civilian objects. Armenian perpetrators have remained unpunished for atrocities in Khojali massacre and for ethnic cleansing of the entire Azerbaijani population and for total destruction of their properties. On the contrary the heads of those perpetrators were promoted to the top political and military positions of Armenia and NK region preventing any window for peace. The tribunals will eliminate war rhetoric and the era of warlords opening the way for cooperation, democratic, peaceful development in the region.

Democratic transformation in the entire region will be another component for providing durable peace, security and cooperation in the region.

Azerbaijani side is ready for peace but does not accept the acquisition of land by force. Armenian side believes that the only way for peace is legalization of Armenian military gains accompanied by ethnic cleansing and war crimes.

Developments in both countries do not give us positive hope for the nearest future. Armenia has militarist government composed of former warlords with racist visions. The leadership does not have any vision for the future to live in peace and harmony and its president is talking about ethnic incompatibility of Azerbaijanis and Armenians which have been expressed by the worst racists in the history. The former Armenian president L. Ter-Petrosyan called the current leadership of Armenian government as a war party but in fact that is a party of war criminals.

Azerbaijan has corrupted authoritarian dynastic regime without any political will and face and is incapable to undertake serious steps to come out from the current situation. Neither war not peace has also been serving to the current regime’s interests since change of the status-quo requires creative and intensive work which is alien to the system based on bribery and corruption.
Current circumstances predict of possible continuation of status-quo for an uncertain period.
DYNAMICS OF TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS SOUTH CAUCASUS;
CONTINUITIES AND CHANGES

Vişne KORKMAZ *

The South Caucasus: a Field of Multilateral Politics

Under the aegis of the Soviet Union, the Soviet republics of Transcaucasia had very few direct contacts with the outside world for about seventy years.1 However, at the beginning of 1990’s, the south Caucasian Soviet Republics suddenly became independent and found themselves in armed ethnic-civilian conflicts, economic turmoil and political disorder. Thus, the Transcaucasian republics turned into an area of international concern as soon as they became independent. The three issues that initially concerned the international community were the fear of a spill-over effect, the realization of the geopolitical importance of the region due to the rich hydrocarbon resources around the Caspian Basin and the emergence of the newly independent but politically fragile states in the nearby Middle East.

Within the last decade, nevertheless, regional and western actors have perceived various risks and opportunities in regional politics and have become involved in Transcaucasian affairs. In due course Southern Caucasus emerged as an arena for multilateral politics and diplomacy, through which regional/international actors and Transcaucasian states influence each other’s perception

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of economics and security. This fact has been illustrated in recent times by the increasing attention given by outside actors to regional matters under different projects such as the Silk Road, the Eurasian Community, and the Wider or Greater Middle East.

After 9/11, worldwide attention has been increasingly focused on the Middle East, first on Afghanistan, then on Iraq. The three republics of the South Caucasus supported the American campaign in both spheres. This support paved the way for the initiation of Washington’s military cooperation with Baku, Yerevan and Tbilisi. Following the US led operations in the Middle East, and under the shadow of civil revolutions in the former Soviet world, discussions arose with regard to the inconsistency between western military assistance to the Caucasian regimes and western economic assistance to the region’s civil societies in the name of democratization. Meanwhile, Russia renewed her emphasis on employing military force to defend her own economic interests in the CIS region. In connection with this, Putin defined Moscow’s role in the region as dealing with the security problems of the whole Eurasian community. Moreover, despite “the lack of commitment” from the EU bodies with respect to the Caucasus, the vision of a Transcaucasia as an extremity of Europe has been increasingly accepted ever since June 2003.

In summary, many analysts recognize the fact that South Caucasus has already been a field of multilateral diplomacy and politics. But it seems that for the last three years, at least, external actors have described the dynamics of their relations with the region on the issue of security and in terms of their global objectives. To the extent that security takes precedence, the relationship between external actors and Transcaucasian states is asymmetrical in character. However Caucasian states continue to perceive the network of these relations as the path to integration with the international community. Therefore, this kind of western engagement on its own right is seen by the regional policy makers as the only possible way to guarantee the balance between regional/national security and their orientation towards the western world, which is characterized by a liberal market economy, democracy, peaceful resolution of conflicts and good relationships with the neighbours.

**Turkish Foreign Policy: Continuities & Changes**

This perception coincides with Turkey’s changing policy in the region. For the last five years Ankara’s relations with its neighbours, including not only the three Caucasian Republics, but also Russia and Iran, have been improving. It was based essentially on two factors: success in putting down the Kurdish insurgency and the rising prospect for membership in the EU.⁵

At first sight this environment seems to be suitable for Turkey to realize its traditional goal: balancing its own regional role with its international orientation.

In terms of international orientation, even though from time to time challenges to Turkey’s western direction in both domestic and foreign policies have arisen, Ankara took part in the western security arrangements like NATO as early as the 1950’s.

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⁵ Gencer Özcan, "Turkey’s Changing Neighbourhood Policy, Manuscript for Türkiye Yıllığı, p.1.
Explanation of its regional role, however, needs further evaluation. It can be best understood by the concept of a security complex (regional security interactions). It is evident that all of the states in the system are enmeshed in a global web of security interdependence. However, because most political and military threats spread more easily over short distances and in close proximity, security perceptions of the countries in any region are so interlinked that their national security problems can not be resolved independently.\(^6\)

Hence in view of the Transcaucasian security complex, Turkey’s difficulty to accomplish balance between international orientation and regional role through the 1990’s determined the dynamics of Turkish foreign policy.

In 1993 the Turkish President announced that Turkey’s regional role in the South Caucasus was reconciling the status quo with the new order. That means encouraging free market economy and securing territorial integrity of the regional states.\(^7\) At the beginning of 1990’s the positive role Turkey might play in the Caucasus-Central Asia has been extensively discussed not only in Turkey but also in the West.\(^8\) This euphoria led to encouraging the newly independent states to adopt the “Turkish model”. Of course the role that Turkey might aspire to required economic assistance. However, the pipeline projects, which were the primary economic vehicle in the region that Turkey also supported, have increased the dependency of the region’s states on oil revenues. In such a multi-ethnical area as Transcaucasia, as long as ethnic conflicts have been used to attract international attention to the possibilities of

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different energy routes by the regional actors,\textsuperscript{9} Turkey was inclined to promote multilateralism as the main instrument of her foreign policy objectives. All in all Turkey adopted pragmatic policies along with the other regional actors, Russia and Iran, and for a decade Ankara has insisted on seeing regional security in terms of this security complex.

It is natural to observe that Turkey’s foreign policy goals were influenced by both soft and hard security issues and perceptions of threats in the South Caucasus. This also partly reinforced a one-dimensional understanding of Transcaucasia as the source of instability. This perception was the result of regional geography that leads geopolitical competition or of its vulnerability to internal ethnic conflicts or of the multinational implications of asymmetrical threats. However, because Turkey saw regional security in terms of a security complex, she tended to use diplomatic instruments to create “damage control mechanisms” with the states of the region. These mechanisms help to minimize security risks when common security objectives and institutions could not be created on a region-wide basis. Without a doubt, damage-control mechanisms are based on cooperation with the regional states and their neighbours rather than focusing on building sets of competing alliances. By emphasizing cooperation, Turkey succeeded to strengthen her regional role as well as to keep contributing to western engagement in the South Caucasus.

In regards to security priorities, Turkey has pursued two general objectives towards the region: Ankara’s first objective is to strengthen the security mechanisms in order to prevent threats to her national/ideological integrity that arise from the region. Throughout the 1990’s Turkish foreign policy makers kept in mind

the possibility of spreading radical or separatist resentments in the Black Sea region. Thus Turkey unnoticeably but intentionally gave no support to separatist/radical movements in order to ensure good regional relations in the South Caucasus. In addition, Ankara also defended the principle of territorial integrity in her contact with the states in the region. In pursuing this objective the most significant difficulty that Turkey faces is that damage control mechanisms have not been agreed upon with Yerevan.

Although Turkey recognized Armenian independence without any preconditions in 1991, the border between the two countries immediately became a source of controversy. Some members of the Armenian Parliament argued that Armenia should not recognize the border established between Ankara and Moscow at the beginning of 20th century. Apart from the references in the Declaration of Armenian Independence to the “killings of Armenians by Ottoman Turkey in 1915”, the border issue was taken by some Turkish policy makers as the cause of asymmetrical threats to Turkey’s security. More importantly, after the year 2000, Turkey was careful to monitor the attempts to link the resolution of the Karabagh issue with Turkish-Armenian problems. That made the use of diplomacy, the main instrument of Turkish foreign policy, difficult as was evident during the debates at the eve of Turkish, Azeri and Armenian foreign ministers meeting in the Istanbul NATO summit of 2004. However, even Turkish leaders associate the Karabagh issue with Turkish-Armenian relations and made it clear that the continued occupation and the question of displaced Azeris constitute a big obstacle for any change in Turkish foreign policy.

This difficulty is felt more intensively at a time when the relations between Turkey and Armenia are improving. In this case

12 TDN, February 11, 2005.
of inflexibility, multilateral diplomatic tools that are preferred by the states in the region are based on either hard security issues such as territorial integrity or reciprocal economic benefits such as participating in possible pipeline projects. Hard security issues, despite some statements to the contrary, do not target any specific regional state; rather they are related to a perspective of the whole region. After 9/11, speculations related to the separatist groups in the South Caucasus were evaluated by the Turkish media from time to time. Furthermore, the possible support that would be given to Islamic radicals in the region was mentioned by Turkish, American and Russian officials. Rather than blaming one of the regional states, these threats were voiced to encourage regional cooperation on a bilateral basis.

Indeed, avoiding parallel internationalization of Kurdish, Azeri, Chechen and Armenian issues was one of the damage control mechanisms used by Turkey to normalize its relations with Russia, Iran and Armenia through the 1990’s. However, in the decade following the year 2000 Ankara is noting that these issues have been repeatedly taken up on the agenda of western institutions. It insinuates that Turkey’s regional damage control mechanisms seem to have been part of the agenda of the western political and security bodies.

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13 In 1997 for example, Turkish officials declared that thawing of relations depends on Armenian government’s willingness to cease regional tensions and to put an end to the speculations on Armenian help to the Kurdish separatist groups. Bülent Aras, The New Geopolitics of Eurasia and Turkey’s Position, Frank Cass, London, p, 35.

14 For example, in the first half of 2005 the demands for the reopening of the Armenian-Turkish border which was closed in 1993 in protest of the Armenian occupation of Nagorno-Karabagh were voiced by some of the EU representatives in respect to Turkish EU candidacy.
For Turkey or for any other country in the region, this means not only internationalization of regional issues\textsuperscript{15} but also making a connection between Caucasian and Middle Eastern affairs. Although this connection made the conformity between the regional role of Turkey and her international orientation more difficult, as one of the Armenian scholars assumed, in some ways it strengthens Turkey’s role in the region within the traditions of statehood and allows Turkey to function within internationally recognized legal standards rather than through unpredictable, ungovernable actions.\textsuperscript{16}

As a matter of the fact, ever since 1995 Turkey has noticed this Middle East-Caucasus connection because of the impact of American policies on the Silk Road. In light of this connection Turkey has followed a two-fold policy to calm the accelerating security concerns.

First of all, Turkey has tried not to permit any kind of regional regulations that would marginalize Turkey’s role in Transcaucasia. Based on this, Turkey applied economic diplomacy tools\textsuperscript{17} to the area of security. Likewise, Turkey did not hesitate to voice her discontent on the rapprochement between Israel, the USA and Armenia in January 2000 or on the Caucasian stability pact proposals that were made by Armenia in 1999 and Iran in 2003 apart from that of Georgia in 2000. Even though Turkey’s own stability

\textsuperscript{15} For example, speaking to reporters in Yerevan, Foreign Minister Vardan Osakanian said that Barnier's remarks in Brussels on the Turkish membership to the EU “show once again that the question of the genocide has gone beyond the Armenian framework and is now a global issue.” TDN, December 14, 2004.


\textsuperscript{17} For instance, in 1998 Ankara uncharacteristically threatened BP/Amoco, leaders of AIOC, with sanctions in the Turkish market in order to end their opposition to the Baku-Ceyhan. Andreas Andrianopoulos, “The Economics and Politics of Caspian Oil” Strategic Developments in Eurasia After 11 September, Shireen Hunter (ed.) Frank Cass, London, 2004, p, 86.
pact proposal for the region came on the scene in 2001, Turkish officials underlined that pacts can represent common economic and security interests for the regional states only if territorial disagreements in the region are resolved by peaceful means. For that reason, resolution of territorial disagreements in the South Caucasus came to the table eventually as part of bilateral positive relations such as the relations of Turkey and Russia. Turkey has given primary importance to the peaceful resolution of territorial disputes because they may become constraints for Turkish foreign policy objectives in different circumstances. As a recent example, Azerbaijani members abstained during the voting in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and did not support the terms of Turkish Cypriot side to end its isolation by emphasizing that this would be a model for Nagorno-Karabagh.

Secondly, Turkey has striven to assure not only the three nations of the South Caucasus but also Russia and Iran that Turkey will not pose any threat for actors in the region. As was pointed out, this is the result of a “diplomacy first” strategy. The insistence of Turkish foreign policy makers on diplomacy is more easily understood from the first half of the 1990’s. In 1992 Turkey stipulated that she would not proceed to formalize diplomatic relations with Armenia. However, even during the heated time of the Karabagh conflict, Turkey affirmed firmly that Ankara would not intervene in regional affairs unless all countries in the region including Armenia called for Turkey to be a mediator. To grasp the ramifications of this strategy, it is necessary to mention the particular importance of Azerbaijan for Turkish foreign policy objectives: For Ankara, Baku has been a gateway to Central Asia, a potential economic collaborator with rich energy

19 One recent example is Putin proposal regarding the possibility of Moscow mediating for the Karabagh conflict during Prime Minster Erdoğan’s visit in 2005.
resources, and a natural ally in the region stretching from the Caucasus to the Mediterranean. Despite the obvious importance of Azerbaijan and despite some rhetoric used by Turkish politicians mainly for internal reasons, Turkey did not mention the possibility of military intervention in the Transcaucasian conflicts. Turkey usually joined in with the efforts of western actors to emphasize to the South Caucasus the simultaneous impact of peaceful resolution to the crisis and western economic engagement.\textsuperscript{21} As a recent example, during the tense days of Georgian-Abkhaz conflict, the policy Ankara followed prevented local separatists from using Turkey as a base and prevented Russian involvement by emphasizing western views of security.\textsuperscript{22}

This diplomatic stance was fortified by the integration of Turkey into institutions of multilateral diplomacy that are flexible enough to convince countries in the region to take part in western security mechanisms. In this regard, one of the most appropriate institutions is OSCE. Turkey is a member of the OSCE Minsk mission for the solution of Nagorno-Karabagh conflict, the OSCE-linked Geneva process, which is monitoring the Georgian-Abkhaz dispute, and the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia. Like Russia and the USA, Turkey appears to believe that OSCE processes are the extensions of the European normative system in the South Caucasus. Turkey utilizes this framework to avoid getting into armed conflicts.

This decisiveness can be seen as the direct result of the multilateral character of the regional problems. One case in point is the repeating complaints of Azerbaijani officials that the reopening of the Turkish-Armenian border or the dialog between

\textsuperscript{21} TBMM Genel Kurul Tutanağı, 21\textsuperscript{st} Term, 4\textsuperscript{th} Legislative year, 1\textsuperscript{st} Session, October 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2001.

\textsuperscript{22} Kıvanç Galip Över, Georgia-Turkey Relations Set an Example, TDN, January 20, 2005.
 Ankara and Yerevan are not a bilateral matter, but a trilateral matter (with Baku), even a quadrilateral matter.\textsuperscript{23}

Multilateral diplomacy is far from producing any concrete result. It helps mainly in monitoring cease-fire conditions and becomes a useful tool for traumatic situations that emerge after ethnic/civilian conflicts. Nonetheless, for Turkey, multilateral diplomacy appears to be another damage control mechanism. The reason behind this preference is the fact that multilateral instruments in the South Caucasus cultivate Ankara’s second general objective, namely, assisting regional states including Russia, Iran and Armenia to emerge as full members of the international community. This preference of Ankara was in conformity with the US’s policy of the non-alienation of Russia and Armenia, whereas it was in conflict with American policy of isolating Iran, particularly since 1995. On these grounds it is possible to assume that western policies also complicate Turkey’s efforts to balance her regional role with her international orientation. Or put more simply, policies of western actors sometimes create problems for Turkey in her efforts to create damage control mechanisms in the region. In these circumstances Turkey advocates cooperative bilateral relations to underline common interests in the South Caucasus. The improving relation with Russia is one example. Ties with the Kremlin depend on the mutual understanding to not assist separatist/radical groups and on the reciprocal benefits of encouraging a constructive approach in Moscow towards the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline project. Another example is relations with Iran. Cooperation with Tehran is based on the possibility of the transportation of Caspian natural gas through Iran to Europe. Relations with Israel can be also given as an example in this context. Tel Aviv gives importance to

\textsuperscript{23} Fiona Hill, “Seismic Shifts in Eurasia: The Changing Relationship Between Turkey and its Implications for the South Caucasus” Strategic Developments in..., p, 70.
firming up its partnership along the axis of Turkey and Azerbaijan in order to develop her economic link with the Caspian region.

While the connection between Caucasian and Middle Eastern affairs were becoming more and more visible, Turkish foreign policy makers followed very cautious policies (even within international organizations) not to severe her bilateral relations with the regional actors. One of these organizations is NATO. As was known in 1999, NATO’s strategic concept addressed terrorist threats outside of Europe without any direct or indirect reference to the region. After the Prague Summit of 2002 it was decided to enhance the alliance’s capability outside the region. As a result, the debate over whether NATO should be deployed beyond Europe actually ended in 2003. Without any formal strategic statement, the result of this debate was “NATO’s military footprint” in Southwest and Central Asia.  

As a NATO member Turkey has supported the formation of workable relations by the Alliance in the South Caucasus. Under the NATO framework Ankara signed military training, technical and scientific cooperation treaties with Azerbaijan and Georgia. Turkey also assisted military units of countries in the region, helping them to gain operational capacity or to harmonize their efforts with NATO standards. Moreover, Turkey monitors the intensified Greek-Armenian military cooperation from the perspective of workable relations between NATO and PfP states. In the 2000’s PfP (Partnership for Peace) was not only a programme that draws a road map for the regional states to become members of NATO, but also an instrument that facilitates western engagement in the region in accordance with the western agenda for security. Turkey became part of this agenda by joining the Caucasus Working

25 The Marneuli Airport in southern Georgia, which was reconstructed in accordance with NATO standards when the Turkish military spent around 3 million dollars, is just one example.
Group together with the USA and Georgia in order to stipulate military equipment in Tbilisi’s fight with terrorism after the Kremlin threatened Georgia to halt Islamist militants in Pankisi.\(^{26}\)

Some interpreters saw the cooperation between Turkey, Georgia and Azerbaijan as a regional example of military assistance from western security instruments especially after Turkish Stars flew over the Caspian Sea during tension between Azerbaijan and Iran.\(^{27}\) But Turkey persistently denied to be intervening militarily into regional affairs. Ankara has also officially refrained from binding defence commitments both at the multilateral and the bilateral level. For example, Turkey refused to commit itself to a security guarantee for the pipelines in the territory of Azerbaijan in 1997.\(^{28}\) Similarly, in December 2001, the Turkish defence minister rejected Georgia’s plan to replace Russian peace keeping units on Abhkaz-Georgian border with the Turkish units.\(^{29}\) Recently, in April 2004, when the tension escalated in Ajaria where Ankara has special economic and historic ties, Turkey chose to consult with Russia and abstained from any intervention.\(^{30}\) Since Turkey announced in 1994 that dynamics of Turkish foreign policy in the region should be based on the assumption, that regional security is to be integral with western security, Turkey has waited for initial action from western actors when there was tension in the region or when demands from countries in the region arose.


\(^{27}\) “Keynote address by the Honourable Sam Brownback, 5\(^{th}\) Annual Conference of the US-Azerbaijan Chamber of Commerce” March 7, 2002.

\(^{28}\) TDN, May 6, 1997.

\(^{29}\) Hürriyet, December 9, 2001.

\(^{30}\) Cumhuriyet, April 5, 2004.
For Turkey, if NATO is one of the organizations establishing a link between security and politics in the region, the organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) is another initiative that more or less links regional economic cooperation with regional security.\(^{31}\) In 1992 BSEC was born primarily from the desire of Ankara to define her role in the Black Sea region. However, the dynamics behind the BSEC have definitely been considerably more complex than the simple desire to play a new role in a strategic vacuum or to join pan-European integration efforts.\(^{32}\) The BSEC meetings and summits provided first of all a regional forum for states that have ongoing disputes and to discuss matters away from international attention.\(^{33}\) This is probably why Turkey has promoted regional non-armament in various circumstances ever since 1994 under the aegis of the BSEC.\(^{34}\) By emphasizing reciprocal economic and political stability, the inclusion of Greece and Armenia in the BSEC in addition to Russia appeared to be a convenient instrument for a non-alienating Turkish policy toward states in the region.

In the summit of June 2002 number of delegates tried to incorporate stronger language on committing BSEC to purely security issues, but this effort did not challenge the economic orientation of the organization\(^ {35}\). Beyond this economic emphasis, Ankara attempts to use BSEC and BLAKSEAFOR not only to calm Russian worries about the new threats in the Caucasus-Black Sea region such as smuggling, environmental problems or illegal human transportation, but also to prevent arms delivery from Russian


\(^{33}\) Ibid. p,59.


\(^{35}\) Ionnis Stribis, op.cit., p,153.
military bases in Georgia to those in Armenia.\textsuperscript{36} Outside the NATO framework, military equipment in the South Caucasus has always created concern in Turkish decision making bodies. However, in terms of a security complex, and in terms of damage control mechanisms, BSEC, being outside NATO, turned out to be a suitable means for Ankara to balance her relations, first of all, with Russia.

After 9/11, Turkey was forced to largely revise her policies towards the South Caucasus. The first signs of this were perceived in April 2002 during a meeting in Trabzon of Azeri, Georgian and Turkish heads of state. They signed a treaty to combat terrorism, organized crimes and other important offences. Before the meeting, Turkish President Ahmet N. Sezer announced that Ankara’s primary objectives in the South Caucasus are to provide security for energy and to fortify national security against crimes that target democratic societies.\textsuperscript{37} Accordingly the treaty signed by the three leaders called for security cooperation along the projected pipelines in the region.\textsuperscript{38} After the meeting Turkey emphasized that this treaty did not target any specific state in the region, but rather that it would be open to Russia and Armenia. Indeed, in 2002 Turkey and Russia had already signed the Eurasian Action Plan. For Turkey, the underlying logic of all these attempts was clear: specifically, security of the South Caucasus is becoming part of western security based on the issue of security for energy. By emphasizing this point, Turkey is also trying to balance her relations with the USA. Since 2002, Washington has put on the agenda the re-integration of Armenia in the international

\textsuperscript{36} "Newsline", \url{www.rferl.org}, October 26, 2000.

\textsuperscript{37} Cumhuriyet, May 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2002.

community and in regional projects including pipelines.\textsuperscript{39} This requires on the one hand the resolution of territorial questions for which Turkey insisted on the importance of bilateral ties with Russia and Iran. On the other hand, it also depends on the crystallization of an uncomfortable issue; that is “self-determination”, which Turkey insisted on being in conformity with the principle of territorial integrity.

For the last fifteen years in Transcaucasia, Ankara has traditionally wanted to keep bilateral and multilateral ties intact in order to strengthen damage control mechanisms with regional states, especially with Russia, Iran, and Armenia. However, in my personal opinion, because of the continuing connection between Middle Eastern and Caucasian affairs, and because of the regional security complex, creating damage control mechanisms with Transcaucasian states and with Iran and Russia is becoming more and more difficult for Turkey. To overcome this difficulty Ankara may try to develop relations with the regional states on multi-dimensional rather than one-dimensional security basis. Diplomacy both in political and economic sense and military power as a complementary element of diplomacy provide convenient tool for this balanced and cautious policy. However, it is not an easy task as long as Ankara’s relations with the western actors are also based on mainly security concerns, especially in respect to Middle Eastern affairs.

\textbf{In Lieu of Conclusion}

Since the beginning of the 1990’s one of the consistent features of Turkish foreign policy towards the South Caucasus has been the continuous effort to balance Ankara’s regional role with her international position. Within multinational bodies where Turkey stipulates her international orientation she has emphasized

\textsuperscript{39} “The Caucasus and Caspian Region: Understanding US Interests and Policy...”, s.6.
the principle of good international relationships in Transcaucasia, and characterized the region as being part of western economic, political and security systems. However, in the period following the year 2000, Turkey may face difficulties in achieving this goal due to the challenging and competing interests.

These interests can be analyzed at three levels:

At the intra-regional level Turkey as a regional actor has to confront the distinct and diverse demands of Baku, Tbilisi and Yerevan. Ankara must cope with territorial, ethnic and economic crises arising among and in these states through the tools of multilateral diplomacy.

At the regional level, however, the current impact of outside actors’ global interests may overcome Ankara’s efforts to support stability in the South Caucasus.

Accordingly, on the third level the crucial question will be whether the countries in the region are ready to adopt the current initiatives that have been forged for the Caucasus in their national interests. The answer to this question is not easy. However, without a doubt, the answer will also determine Turkey’s role and the limits of her flexibility in the region.
THE EFFECTS OF THE CASPIAN PIPELINE ISSUE ON THE STABILITY OF THE CAUCASUS

Havva KÖK *

The primary object of this presentation is to illustrate that there is a strong link between pipeline development and security issues in the Caucasus. For this purpose, it will look at the pipeline development in the Caucasus and its link with broad security issues: The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict; the Chechen conflict; the Abkhazian conflict; the Kurdish conflict.

Azerbaijan’s oil and the pipeline question

The transportation of Azerbaijan’s energy resources to international markets is one of the most controversial issues in the post-Cold War era. Azerbaijan’s oil reserves are estimated to be worth tens of billions of dollars. As a result these energy resources have become the issue of discord in the region for the control of oil routes from Azerbaijan. While Azerbaijan’s oil reserves are vast, there is the major problem is that there is no outlet to Western markets. The challenge confronting Azerbaijan and involved energy companies is how they will transport the oil they produce to Western markets.

Azerbaijan’s vast oil reserves have become a source of competition in the Caucasus. between Russia, Turkey, the United States, and many other powerful countries. Therefore the control of oil routes will determine the political and economic future of Russia, Turkey and the Caucasus as a whole.

Although the need to transfer this oil wealth to world markets under world market conditions opens opportunities for

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cooperation, there is also strong potential for crises because of the significant number of alternative routes: to the west via the Caucasus, to the south in the Persian Gulf, and to the east via Tajikistan and Afghanistan. This uncertainty makes balancing energy transporting routes even more delicate.

The importance of the Transcaucasus in this picture stems from two reasons. First, there is the expectation that the Transcaucasus itself will be a major oil producer – the Azeri oil.

**The global energy industry and Azerbaijan’s oil reserves**

The continuous supply of energy in adequate amounts and at affordable prices is essential for the economic and social well-being of the human community. Over the next several years world demand for energy will reach unprecedented levels. Oil enjoys tremendous advantage in terms of cost production, shipment and convenience as a fuel for transportation. Thus oil is expected to remain, as it has been for the last several decades, the dominant energy source. At present, the total world oil demand is more than 77.1 million barrels per day (mb/d). An increase in oil demand is projected as 77.1 mb/d in 2000, 95.2 in 2010 and 140 mb/d in 2020. In other words, global oil demand is expected to double between now and the year 2020.
Table 1. World Oil Demand in the Next Twenty Years

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Oil Demand (million barrels daily)</th>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>77.1</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>95.2</td>
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<td>2020</td>
<td>140</td>
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This high demand means that, at least for the near future, oil will maintain its share of world energy consumption at around 40% and consequently will contain its strategic significance as the single most important primary source of energy.

Second importance of the Caucasus is that the region is expected to become an important transit area for the transport of oil to world markets outside the former Soviet Union.

Azerbaijan’s oil industry has been viewed by many great powers, throughout the years, as a strategic asset. However, the location of the oil reserves has historically made foreign investors dependent on international pipelines to carry the oil to markets. The pipeline question is more than just economic problem; rather it has a security and geopolitical nature. Pipelines in the Caucasus do not simply carry oil, but also define new corridors of trade and power. The country or group of countries that control pipeline routes could hold sway over the Caucasus region for decades to come. Geopolitics and oil transportation are closely inter-linked in the Caucasus security complex. States which carry oil produced by other states across their territory obtain –apart revenues from transport royalties– prestige, political influence, and possibly even political control over oil exploration.
The Main Pipeline Routes

The most frequently discussed long-term pipeline options for the Caspian (Kazakh and Azeri) oil are:

- The Black Sea outlet (the northern route) that would transport oil via a pipeline from Kazakhstan (Tengiz) through Tikhoretsk to the Russian Black Sea port of Novorossisk.
- The Mediterranean outlet (the southern route) that would transport oil to the Turkish port of Ceyhan in the Mediterranean.
- A combination of the above two projects with options available to all states via Turkey and Russia.
- Another route under discussion is through Iran to the Persian Gulf.

The security implications of pipeline development in the Caucasus region

There is a link between pipeline development and security in the Caucasus that, in turn, affects the degree of stability in the region as a whole:

The Caucasus includes Azerbaijan, which aspires to join the ranks of the world’s major oil producers; Georgia, where hopes of becoming a major transit state for the transport of Azerbaijan’s oil to Western markets looks increasingly likely to materialize; and Armenia, the key Russian ally in the region that has been in conflict with Azerbaijan over the disputed enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh. It also includes the North Caucasus region, particularly Dagestan and the breakaway republic of Chechnya. Moreover, both the Transcaucasia and the North Caucasus regions may be thought of as parts of a larger security complex, comprising Turkey and Russia.

There was quite a variety of conflicts with multiple connections in the Caucasus. In this context, the civil war in
Georgia, the Armenian separatists war against Azerbaijan, the Chechen rebellion against the Russian Federation, and Turkey’s military struggle with Kurdish rebels have a direct bearing on the oil export issues. Long-standing ethno-political tensions ignited these conflicts but the ongoing dispute over oil further fuelled regional tensions. The political kettle begins to boil when billions of dollars are involved. The competition to determine who gets what, when, where, and how motivates old and new political actors to take extreme risks for huge anticipated gains. See the below map.

Map: Conflicts which Disturb Caspian Oil Pipelines


**Pipeline politics and ethnic conflicts in the North Caucasus:**

*The Chechen conflict*

Pipeline developments appear to be a decisive factor in the Chechen conflict, too. Pipeline interests make it difficult for Russia to abandon Chechnya, through which runs a pipeline taking Azerbaijan’s oil to the Russian port of Novorossisk. The use of the Russian armed forces in Chechnya for the purpose of overthrowing the refractory regime of General Dudayev, aimed mainly at the restoration of control over the Chechen section of the Baku-Novorossisk pipeline.

**Pipeline politics and ethnic conflict in Georgia:**

*The Abkhazian conflict*
Unlike the Chechen conflict, pipeline development had no apparent role in the out-break of the Abkhazian war. However, Abkhazian leadership has been keen on promoting a pipeline route for oil from Kazakhstan that would cross the region, but there are evidences that some Abkhazian officials consider Tbilisi’s pipeline plans a security threat for Abkhazia’s de facto independence. Tbilisi, in turn, could exploit pipeline development as an instrument of pressure to force the breakaway republic of Abkhazia into abandoning its pro-independence stance, or could use it as a means of promoting domestic stability.

**Pipeline politics and ethnic conflict in Turkey: The Kurdish conflict**

The Kurdish conflict has also become involved with the question of oil transportation since ethnic unrest in south-east areas has hindered Turkey’s status as a transit state. The PKK/KONTRAGEL has posed a serious security challenge to Ankara’s control over the pipeline route that rises to promote for the long-term transportation of Azerbaijan’s oil. The Turkish government has waged a counter-insurgency campaign against Kurdish rebels who threatened to blow up a pipeline that would be built without their consent.
**Russia, Turkey and pipeline politics in the Caucasus**

Russia’s pipeline interests have certainly played an important role in the Caucasus, though not always a primary instigator of the conflicts. Many in Moscow clearly believe that Russia’s pipeline interests are best served by conflict in the region. Moscow views support for separatist groups as a leverage against its competitors’ pipeline plans. Russia, for example, used the Karabakh conflict to put pressure on Baku to obtain a greater share of the oil exploitation and to get support for Russian oil route. Provided with Russian weapons, Armenians were successful in attacks in Karabakh. In addition, Russia was engaged in a covert operation in support of the Abkhazian secessionists; provided the Kurdish rebels in Turkey with moral support; and supported the Chechen opposition prior to the Russian invasion in an effort to bring down Chechen President Gavhher Dudayev by covert means.

On the other hand, Turkey attempted to manipulate the Chechen conflict in order to promote its pipeline plans in the Caucasus. Ankara offered moral support the Chechen rebels. Given that instability in the North Caucasus and particularly in Chechnya was detrimental to Moscow’s plans to use the Baku-Novorossisk oil route as the main outlet for Azerbaijan’s oil, the Turkish policy clearly aimed at upholding the Chechen war effort and undermine the Russian pipeline policy in the region.

Concerning primary interests of Russia in Azerbaijan and Georgia in the sphere of oil transportation: When leading Western oil companies started paying more attention to Azerbaijan’s oil industry, Moscow understood that if Baku succeeded to export its oil via a non-Russian oil route, Western influence on the region would increase and Russia’s influence would decrease. Russia helped to oust pro-Turkish Elchibey and to install Aliyev government, in order to regain its influence in the country.

**CONCLUSION**
As a conclusion we can say that there is a strong linkage between security issues in the Caucasus and regional pipeline projects. Therefore pipeline development in the Caucasus will greatly influence the region’s future geopolitical orientation.
**INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND REGIONAL POLITICS IN THE CAUCASUS**

Ali Hikmet ALP

Introduction

Historically speaking, establishment of independent states has often been difficult, even a violent process, as we have witnessed during the disintegration of the grand empires or the liquidation of the European colonialism. It may be worth remembering that in the Algerian struggle for independence alone more than two million people died. Resistance to colonial power prepared the ground for the emergence of the future leadership. Compared to historical precedents, the former Central Asian and Caucasian Republics of the Soviet Union gained their independence much more easily, without sufficient mental and ideological preparation. Although without much experience in independent statehood in modern times, most of them started this new journey with an already well-anchored, even too well-anchored leadership, institutions and bureaucracy.

Once the sovereignty obtained, the main question is its consolidation, which depends on several internal and external factors. Former sovereign powers have sometimes been helpful, like in the case of the liquidation of the British colonialism in India. However, peaceful transition is not frequent and help is not provided for benevolence and altruistic motivations alone. National interest in the continuation of the links with previous

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vassals in one way or another is common. What makes the difference are ultimate intentions and methods to attain the objective.

Some analysts exaggerate in their evaluation as far as characterizing the newly established states as “failed states”. I consider such views as faulty and deprived of historical depth. Such views do not take into account sufficiently the strategic environments and individual characteristics of the states and nations in question, including their social history and ethnic composition. Some of them, in particular Caucasian Republics and Kazakhstan made considerable progress in democratization despite internal and external difficulties. The “rose revolution” of Georgia is a recent example of the aspirations of the people for democracy and good governance. Moderation is necessary even when judging them by the criteria of the advanced state models and to understand to what extent their foreign policies are complex balancing acts.

The purpose of this paper¹ is not to deal with this vast subject in detail, but to make a brief analysis of the role of the international organizations in the process of the consolidation of the sovereignty of the newly independent states with emphasis on Southern Caucasus and the effects of the regional politics which played for or against.

The role of international organizations

International recognition is an important distinctive mark of the state sovereignty. In the present case, once the Russian Federation accepted peaceful secession of the former Republics, recognition came rather fast. As political entities they already had most of the attributes of statehood according to international law. Turkey acted very quickly to declare its recognition for its own, specific reasons. It also strongly supported their membership

¹ This paper is a shortened version of a larger one prepared for the National Defence Academy. It cannot therefore to be a detailed study of a rather large and complex subject.
in the United Nations and in particular in the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (the present day OSCE), as well as for the development of their ties with NATO. The main argument in favour of their admission (in addition to strategic considerations which I would not venture to enter here) was the anomaly of the exclusion of the same territories which were within the area of application during the times of the Soviet Union\(^2\). To encourage them to achieve their transformation into democratic entities along the lines of the OSCE principles found a natural, wide-ranging support. From the perspective of the regional states, to open to outside world after decades of the hegemony of a closed system and to have an equal right of representation in a “European” organization together with the former sovereign state implied substantial political support for their sovereignty. Despite the “European” denomination of its title, OSCE had to be flexible organization also in terms of geography. After all the territory of one the two major actors was partially in Europe and that of the other completely outside of Europe. CSCE, which was established as a forum for the management of the relations between states with different ideologies, concepts of democracy and human rights was in a period of adaptation. After the end of the Cold-War it assumed a new role, with new opportunities to transform into reality the application of its famous ten principles, hopefully on the basis of common understandings and interpretations. Membership of the newly independent states in need of assistance for their progress towards Western standards fitted well into this picture. While the OSCE has not been successful in finding final solutions to regional disputes and conflicts, nor the authority to coordinate economic assistance as leverage, the fault is not of the Organization, which can be effective to the extent its major members want it to be. On the other hand, in several places, including the Caucasus, it plays an

\(^2\) It should also be noted that territories of the three Caucasian states and parts of Kazakhstan are in the area of application of the Treaty on Conventional forces in Europe.
important role in conflict prevention, democratization and stabilization.

These countries’ membership in the UN also was achieved in a relatively short time, opening the door for their participation in institutions and programs of the UN family. Other important developments in the same context are the membership of the three Caucasian states in the Council of Europe and their quest to strengthen their ties with NATO (with the exception of symbolic gestures of Armenia), which they consider as the ultimate guarantor of the overall security and stability.

Strategic environments of the Caucasian states and of the Central Asian states are quite different, although the reconstruction of relations with Russia on new bases is a common concern for all of them. These regions were already known as having rich natural resources. Discovery of new oil and deposits increased their optimism towards the future and also increased the stakes, therefore international attention, even competition. With various degree of limitations, mainly due to geography and old structural dependences, all of them opened towards the West, not only for political and security, but also for economic reasons, since these resources could only be exploited with the injection of Western capital and marketed at their best value. The Caucasian Republics, with the notable exception of Armenia, went even further in their rapprochement with Europe.

**Main issues:**

As it could be expected, besides the management of their relations with RF and reconstruction of the governance under new circumstances, the most serious issues the Caucasian states had to deal were (and continue to be) internal conflicts and conflicts or disputes with their neighbours, big or small. They obviously

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3 This second aspect is no less important. In Soviet times, Turkmenistan for example, received around $4.60 for 1.000 cubic meters of gas was able to raise its price ten times.
expected a lot from international organizations viewed as
guardians of peace and stability. In order to better understand
these expectations and the degree of fulfillment of their quest,
it will be useful to mention the issues of primary importance:

Azerbaijan: For Azerbaijan (the only Caucasian country with
rich natural resources) the Upper Karabagh issue and the
occupation of the 20% of its territory are main questions.
Occupation is further aggravated by the precarious condition and
burden of refugees close to one million according to UN estimates.
A second problem is the still continuing demarcation of the oil
rich Caspian Sea, although that matter has not been brought as yet
to international organisations.

Georgia: Abkhaz and South Ossetian questions, Soviet
pressures in the North (in particular Pankisi gorge), economic
pressures of Russia, for example by restraining energy supply or
tightening the visa regime, and no less important. Azerbaijan and
Georgia do not want the stationing of the Russian forces in their
territories, even for peacekeeping operations in their present
form (legitimized by UN). The refusal of Russia to vacate its
military bases in Georgia, despite the 1999 Istanbul decisions of
the OSCE (with Russian acceptance), control and monitoring of its
borders by foreign borders are other important issues.

Armenia: In the foreign and security policies of Armenia the
main concern is to preserve the territorial gains achieved at the
expense of Azerbaijan. The threat of the renewal of hostilities
and artificially cultivated anti-Turkish sentiments are exploited
to promote the acceptability of the pro-Russian policies and
presented as the rationale of its “strategic partnership” with
Russia. That approach prepares political and psychological ground
for maintaining the Russian military bases in the country.
Armenian political groups in power depend to a great extent on the
Diaspora, in particular the American Diaspora, which in majority
is anti-Turkish and anti-Azerbaijan. The consequent isolation of
Armenia and conflicts with Azerbaijan resulted in the diversion of
the oil and gas pipelines, to Russia and to Georgia (Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan project) depriving Armenia from important economic benefits. We can therefore say that all three countries have vulnerabilities which can rather be easily exploited by Russia.

**Russian factor:** While talking about the Caucasian politics and security, Russia has to be frequently mentioned, often from a negative angle. Our intention is not at all to treat this issue with subjectivity and bias against RF. It is rather common for former dominant power to recover its influence, political and economic interests in the territories which once were under its sovereignty. Both U.K. and France in substituting the old ties with new ones resorted to some arrangements compatible with their political cultures and international situation. However, as I said in the beginning, here an important aspect is the method used to achieve the objective and the way mutual interests are accommodated. As Mr. Talbott once said, the character of the relations of the RF will be shaped also by the way it treats its neighbours, hopefully⁴. We have to admit that in the case of RF method and practice have neither been stable, nor conformed to international law at all times. Despite previous ties in the cultural and economic fields, Russian “near abroad” policy, its initiatives to group these countries under its leadership encompassing areas of foreign, security and economic cooperation simply did not fit into the strategic vision of the several of its partners. Disputes are frozen but not solved. The way it handled the Chechen question inevitably affected its image and relations with both regional and Western powers. No less important is the fact that disputes and conflicts were often among the members of the group and Russian policies have been perceived as self-serving and unsatisfactory, exposing it to accusations of impartiality and resorting to time-tested policies of “divide and rule”. The logic behind the late President Haydar Aliyev’s statement was obvious

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⁴ This is not an exact quotation from his article published in Foreign Affairs.
when he said that there was no use for Azerbaijan to expect a benefit from the Collective Security Organisation since the threat comes from within, from another member, not from outside. If the leading member gives the impression of favouring one member at the expense of the other, or if it is unable to play effectively the expected leading role in the resolution of the internal disputes impartially, the cooperation arrangement cannot be successful and political arrangement security cannot be collective. In the opinion of many, the strategic interests of the RF do not in general coincide with the interests of the former members of the Union, creating the impression that its policies are designed for the continuation of the unacceptable status quo, rather than finding final solutions to disputes. To impose its policies Russia has quite a number of leverages. Because of the previous centrally commanded economic system and the geography, for the newly independent states to severe linkages is difficult, costly or do not make sense. If the only outlet for Kazakhstan to export its oil, the main income source, is the Russian pipeline system, one cannot expect this country to behave completely independent from Russia. In some of them minorities of Russian origin, while diminished, are substantial and substantial minority population from these countries are already established in the RF, or emigrate as workers\(^5\). In view of the economic prospects of their countries of origin, they have no incentive to return (and due to demographic stagnation of Russia they will be needed by the fast developing Russian economy). Using such leverages, constraining the resident permits of the ex-nationals or cutting their heating obviously carry political cost or cost in popularity.

However, as one Russian scholar once said, the "overall picture is not so bad, considering the traumas of the recent past"\(^6\). If one imagines the worst and compares to what happened in

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5 Caspian Republics earn about a fourth of their income from remittances
6 A. Trenin in 1998 in a seminar in Jordan.
the former Yugoslavia that may be true. Limitations of the RF should also to be taken into account. Russia itself is a country difficult to govern and it is not the only country immune to imperial impulses and its own ethnic influences. But all these cannot mean that its neighbours are unjustified in their complaints. As it has been seen on the occasion of RF interference in the recent Ukrainean elections, such policies will leave long-term scars and cause backlash, harmful also to overall stability.

Conflict resolution in the Caucasus and international organisations

Involvement of international organisations in the Caucasus, (Chechnia in the RF territory included) has been substantial. They helped to diffuse tensions and the renewal of clashes and hostilities. However, in terms of final solutions the record is at best mixed or relative. Since I have been for quite a long time in the CSCE/OSCE and followed the Organisation’s involvement in the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia, I propose to deal mainly with this issue, with shorter references to Georgia.

When the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia had been at last perceived as a serious matter after the occupation of the Upper Karabagh and 20% of the territory of Azerbaijan (clashes continued until the end of 1994), CSCE was considered as the natural forum to search for solutions to the conflict between these two new “participating countries”7. In the Ministerial meeting of November, the Tcheck MOFA launched the idea of an OSCE conference to solve the matter and a committee had been established to prepare the conference supposed to take place in Minsk, and hopefully conclude its work in two weeks. The group, composed of the representatives of nine member countries, (usually called as the “Minsk Group”) had been first chaired by top Swedish, than Finnish diplomats who made an excellent work in particular for various models in consultation with the parties in

7 OSCE became an regional organisation in November 1994
conflict. Peacekeeping had to be an important but eventually a provisional part of the future solution. In view of the objections of the RF sending to “near abroad” military forces other than Russian, throughout of the year 1994 a working group under the Italian chairmanship worked on a “pragmatic” concept, the so-called “Third Party Peacekeeping”. Doubts and objections had been raised from several countries (not Western), since such formalized concepts would mean practically a legitimisation of the exclusive Russian peacekeeping in the “near abroad”, although under OSCE and UN monitoring. That strange idea has been killed by Azerbaijan, Turkey and Georgia in particular and in the 1994 Summit Meeting, but it has been put in practice in Abkhazia and South Ossetia with UN benediction. Upon the recommendation of the 1994 Summit, a High Level Planning Group was established to prepare a concept for a multinational peacekeeping force for the area, without dealing with the difficult question of force composition. The HLG has achieved a valuable technical work, without much hope about its implementation, since the RF insisted on a Russian “interposition force”, meaning a Russian military presence in Azerbaijan under a different guise. The Minsk Group, established in 1992 at a time when the conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms of the CSCE were not yet sufficiently developed, was working as a semi-autonomous appendage of the OSCE. In 1998, it has been subjected to a fundamental change alien to CSCE; France, Russian Federation and USA assumed the “co-chairmanship” of the Group. OSCE has certainly made a valuable groundwork which could not be conclusive without strong political push. Proceeding from this basis, injection of fresh political will and increased attention and visibility were necessary. To give the chairmanship to an influential country or political personality enjoying full confidence and support would have been a better idea. However, the experience of the past six or seven years showed that Co-chairmanship of three countries with substantial and influential minorities of Armenian origin was not such a good idea. Besides the possible ethnic bias of the two of its members, to give
Russia, which has its own strategic interests and designs\textsuperscript{8} a prominent position has met with suspicion, reminding a well-known observation that there is no precedent of solutions achieved with a Russian leading role, but only several frozen conflicts. Secretary C. Powell, Presidents G.Bush and Chirac made laudable personal efforts, all of them without any concrete result. European Union and several of its members have no Caucasian policies anyhow, except economic assistance or projects like TRACECA, good but not sufficient.

Historical experience shows that to refer such serious and complex matters to regional organisations (the OSCE, "politically binding", is not even a treaty based organisation) may be considered as natural, but it also decreases visibility and the sense of urgency. OSCE works as a voluntary institution and a formal linkage between OSCE and the Security Council is missing. Although UN adopted four or five resolutions reaffirming the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and supporting the efforts of the OSCE, it has not done much to restore the territorial integrity of one of its members. EU collectively did not take initiatives in this issue. Most of the time they were absorbed with the Balkan problems or with issues such as Timores. Anyhow, the recent European experience shows that none of the conflicts which erupted during the disintegration process of Yugoslavia has been solved by with the leadership of the EU or by any EU member, although their for stabilization has been very helpful.

Oil, and the need for diversification of supply sources and of its transportation, increasing democratization of Azerbaijan and Georgia injected a new look towards the problems of the region. Russia, under the leadership of Putin feels more self confident and disciplined, compared to Yeltsin period where even

\textsuperscript{8} After Mr.Kazimirov, who was a living example of the Soviet diplomatic doctrine, successive Russian Ambassadors in the Group usually took positions not very far from those of their Western colleagues. However practice manifested very different from what they said in the group.
the district military commanders had their own policies, more or less independent from Moscow. Solution can well be within reach if the RF feels that this problem will be an important element of its relations with the West and if EU and USA feel that a serious political effort is worth doing. However, the present international conjuncture and regional situation are not encouraging (Iraq, Middle East and Iran in particular) and despite the real risk of the resumption of the armed conflict we are far from such probabilities as yet. How long Azerbaijan can endure the occupation of its territories by its neighbour and what would be the consequences of the renewal of the clashes remain as serious question marks.

**Effects of regional politics:**

I had briefly mentioned the effects of Russia’s policies to recover its dominant position in the “near abroad”. Regional polarisation, disputes between regional powers and their internal questions certainly help these policies, in particular for the retention of military bases in Armenia, and also in Georgia despite the objections of the latter. From the US perspective, although the events of September eleven introduced new elements, they are not enough for a push towards the settlement.

Regional alignments are clear: Russia supports Armenia politically and militarily, Turkey supports Azerbaijan not only because of it’s ethnic bonds but also because of aggressive Armenian policies dependent on Diaspora. Turkey has a higher moral ground in defending such positions (European bias and ignorance notwithstanding) Azerbaijan being a victim. Iran, which in foreign policy acts quite pragmatically also to ease its political isolation, talks about assistance to peaceful resolution. It certainly has concerns about its population of Azerbaijani ethnic origin. All three (RF, Armenia and Iran) talk at the same time about “strategic partnership”, which certainly has implications on the regional balances and alignment.
Although Turkey supports Azerbaijan and Georgia and in a sense one can talk about a group alignment with competition. That is evident in some areas like the future routing of the oil exports. However it is also true that this alignment is rather valid with regard to specific conflict situations. They have all a vital interest in the regional stability and Turkey has expanding relations with the Russian Federation and even with Iran despite differences in their regimes and in their outlooks towards the Middle East and proliferation issues.

Why the problem remained for such a long time, without hope in the near future, is a complex subject which we can only analyze here succinctly. It is not neither right to attribute all the fault to Russian policies. The history of the negotiating process shows that the key to solution is the withdrawal of Armenia from occupied territories. Implementation of a solution can only be “step by step” eliminating first the aspects in blatant violation of the norms of international law. Security guarantees which Armenia considers to have found in the occupation can be provided by legitimate ways, as international guarantees. That necessitates strong political will and action which I earlier mentioned. That is not manifest as yet on the part of those most capable to influence. It is not however impossible or something which should wait for the starting of armed hostilities. Azerbaijan has long ago accepted in principle the “largest possible autonomy recognized in the international law” and models developed by the Minsk Group may well serve a basis leading to mutual acceptance. Azerbaijan knows that the new status will be different; Armenia should know that the status quo can no more continue. This acceptance is important not only for the case of Upper Karabagh, but also for Abkhazian and South Ossetian issues. President Saakashvili’s recent statements to that effect and the failure of Russian interference in presidential elections in Ukraine and Abkhazia are indicative in this context. Armenia and I believe several others should reassess the political and economic benefits
of the peaceful resolution of these issues for their countries and for the region as a whole.
U.S. POLICY IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS IN THE SECOND GEORGE W. BUSH ADMINISTRATION

Brenda SHAFFER *

The second George W. Bush Administration was inaugurated in January 2005 with a rather full foreign policy agenda: the Iraq situation being far from resolved, North Korea and Iran emerging as nuclear weapons states, the challenge of terrorism far from abated, and Washington’s problematic relations with some of its key long-established allies, leaving little room on the Oval Office schedule to devote to the Caucasus and greater Caspian region. In both the first and second George W. Bush Administrations, the Caspian region has not been a top tier U.S. foreign policy priority. At the same time, cooperation with allies in the Caspian region and stability in this area is viewed by the United States as a contributing factor to promoting U.S. policies in its highest priority spheres: Iran, Afghanistan, energy security, ties with Muslim-majority states, and also, to a certain degree, its policies in Iraq. The Caspian region is thus endowed with added importance.

In the second Bush Administration, U.S. policy goals in the South Caucasus and the greater Caspian region focused on: maintaining the stable functioning of the transport corridor through the Caspian region, especially the fly-over route to main arenas of U.S. military activity (Afghanistan, Middle East); ensuring the security of the major east-west energy transport

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projects due to become operational in fall 2005 and expanding them as well; maintaining U.S. military bases and presence in the region; continuing development of security cooperation with states in the region, especially regarding nonproliferation and border controls; attempting to maintain positive attitudes toward the United States and its policies in the greater region, especially among the Muslim-majority states in the greater region; democratizing of the region’s regimes, and continuing expansion of market economies.

A number of observations can be made about U.S. policy and activity in the South Caucasus and the greater Caspian region during the second Bush Administration. First, U.S.-Russian relations there should not be viewed as a zero-sum game. In some domains, such as preventing terrorist elements from transiting the South Caucasus into the North Caucasus, their goals overlap and opportunity exists for cooperation. At the same time, Moscow views the South Caucasus as an area vital to its security and other interests and pursues assertive policies in the region and will work to preserve its strong influence there. Second, Turkey no longer serves as the interlocutor of U.S. policy in the region, including in the security sphere. In the 1990s, Ankara served as a conduit of many of the U.S.-sponsored programs in the region and benefited greatly from this role. In recent years, the United States has developed extensive direct cooperation with the region’s states, including security cooperation, and no longer needs to funnel its activities through Ankara. Third, the United States has two major regional policy priorities and their concurrent implementation often entails contradiction: ensuring stability and the continued, uninterrupted functioning of transport corridors and security cooperation while promoting extensive democratization in the region. Fourth, Washington does not devote significant policy resources to the resolution of conflicts afflicting the region, especially that of Nagorno-Karabagh. Well clearly welcomed and encouraged, Washington does not view resolution of these conflicts as a precondition to
promotion of its policy goals in the region. Fifth, U.S. policy toward the region is not as uncoordinated and contradictory as it had been during the 1990s and the first years of the 21st century, but it still remains rather unharmonized. Sixth, Washington views the regional energy transport projects as a means to promote its greater interests of strategic, political, and commercial cooperation on the same route – more than as a means to guarantee additional oil and gas supplies to the United States and its allies. Finally, Washington’s Caucasus and Central Asia policies are at times intertwined, especially on energy and other infrastructure schemes.

Background

The current period of U.S. activity in the South Caucasus was proceeded by two distinct periods of policy toward the region following the Soviet Union’s collapse: the first was characterized by Washington’s deference to Russian hegemony while attempting to promote both the role of Turkey in the region and the independence of the new states there (1991–1994); the second period saw more pronounced activity aimed at promoting U.S. economic, security, and political interests in the region (1994–1999).

In these periods, U.S. policy toward the South Caucasus has been uncoordinated and often contradictory. Domestic interest groups, especially the Armenian-American lobby, successfully lobbied key congressional representatives and have had a large impact on the formation of the actual U.S. policy toward the region, often in contradiction to policies articulated by agencies of the U.S. executive branch, especially the Department of Defense.

Up until mid-to-late 2004, the United States actively promoted the policy goal of regional cooperation among the states of the South Caucasus, including security cooperation. Azerbaijan and Armenia—as warring states—have viewed this policy as ludicrous, and its promotion has often damaged Washington’s
credibility there in the security sphere. It has been difficult for these two states to fathom how they can be expected to cooperate in the security realm—each views the other as its main security threat. At some point in 2004, it seems that Washington began to give deference to each state’s individual integration into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the strengthening of bilateral military cooperation with Washington at the expense of the regional cooperation model.

**U.S. policy goals**

Washington’s policy toward the South Caucasus and greater Caspian region is intertwined with its larger top priority goals toward Iran, Afghanistan, fostering ties with Muslim-majority countries, and generating greater world energy security. As part of Washington’s reorganization of its military forces in the world to address its security and political priorities after September 11, 2001, the political map of Central Asia and the Caucasus has been redrawn. The United States established military bases in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and the Kyrgyz Republic, and U.S. special forces have been deployed in Georgia to train the state’s military. The South Caucasus has become an important arena of U.S. overflights into arenas of its major military concern (Afghanistan, Middle East). Baku serves as a hub of transport flights, especially into Afghanistan, and it seems that Washington is preparing cooperation frameworks with the region’s states that will give it the option of deploying mobile forces in the region. The United States has been expanding its formal ties between the three South Caucasus states and NATO within the framework of the Partnership for Peace program. In November 2004, Georgia signed an Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) with the alliance and has openly articulated interest in joining NATO as a full member. Azerbaijan is in an advanced stage of concluding its IPAP with NATO, and Yerevan has an declared interest to develop a plan and negotiate a framework (although in light of its intensive security cooperation with Russia, it is not expected that the actual concluding of this agreement is forthcoming). NATO has assigned a
special representative to the South Caucasus to further progress on the IPAPs and the alliance. The United States conducts extensive bilateral security cooperation with both Azerbaijan and Georgia in the anti-terrorism and nonproliferation spheres. As part of this policy, the United States emphasizes training and supplies equipment that can help the states improve their border controls.

The extent of the deployment of its forces in Central Asia indicates that the United States hopes to preserve a long-term presence in the region (although recent events in the Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan call into question the feasibility of these plans) and thus will be interested in preserving fly-over rights and basing options in the South Caucasus. This ensures continued U.S. interest in security and military cooperation with Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia.

As part of its agenda vis-à-vis Iran, Washington emphasizes in its South Caucasus security cooperation the countering of proliferation attempts emanating from or transiting the region. Washington also seems to study and follow the multi-ethnic character of Iranian society and its potential political implications. The United States has, however, refrained from encouraging ethnic minority group-based political activity there, especially the Azerbaijani minority\(^1\), for use as a lever to destabilize the regime.

Since September 11, 2001, and the war in Iraq, the importance of Azerbaijan has grown in the eyes of U.S. policymakers due to the perceived need to strengthen ties with Muslim-majority states, especially those like Azerbaijan which border on the Middle East. Washington also perceives that it needs the troops of Muslim-majority countries to participate in its peacekeeping and

\(^1\) Close to half of the population of Iran is comprised of non-Persians. The largest ethnic minority is the Azerbaijani which are close to a third of the population of Iran.
reconstruction efforts in both Afghanistan and Iraq in order to add legitimacy to these missions and, thus, especially seeks deployment of forces from Muslim-majority countries to both of those arenas.

In the post-September 11, 2001, era, the United States began to attach even more importance to Azerbaijan and the greater Caspian region due to their potential contribution to global oil supply diversification, to the lowering of oil prices due to increased supply, and to enhance energy security by expanding the production of oil outside of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) cartel.

In contrast to the pessimistic estimates of large numbers of journalists, energy experts, and policymakers outside of the United States, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline will begin transporting oil in fall 2005. In parallel, the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzerum natural gas pipeline is being built and is scheduled to become operational in 2006. These pipelines will transport the bulk of Azerbaijan’s energy exports on an east-west route, ending at a Turkish Mediterranean port. The geostrategic value of the Caspian Basin made the energy resource development there an object of special interest to a number of global powers, especially the United States and Russia. The modest volumes of Caspian oil and gas — when contrasted with the colossal political efforts that competitors had invested in promoting and thwarting various pipeline options — indicate that the pipeline route was to be used as a means of influence and to cement a new geopolitical order in the greater Caspian region. The goal of winning the pipeline battle was not for the oil and gas, but to maintain (in the case of Russia) or attain (in the case of the United States and Iran) significant influence and presence in the region. At the crossroads of two continents, the Caspian region is a worthy geostrategic prize. Today, some of the states of the region simultaneously host both U.S. and Russian military forces, underscoring the Caspian’s value in this regard. Washington invested so much political capital in pursuit of an east-west
pipeline in order for the new states to have the opportunity to adopt a U.S.-leaning political and security alignment.

Motivated by the momentum of the popular movements that led to regime change in Georgia, Ukraine, and the Kyrgyz Republic, the United States has been trumpeting its support for democratic movements in the South Caucasus and the greater region and is more firmly raising the demand that elections in the region will be better conducted than in the past. At the same time, the United States has not developed a coherent policy that would facilitate democratization without the potential for great destabilization of the region. Specifically, in its insistence that the states of the South Caucasus and the greater Caspian region permit greater political pluralism, Washington has also been critical of the states’ use of force (including trained riot police) when counteracting threats from elements that have are using violence to promote regime change and do not possess a democratic agenda. Maintaining stability, continuing security cooperation, and ensuring the uninterrupted functioning of transport corridors while concurrently promoting greater democratization in the region, often without any regard for resulting destabilization, create an immense policy challenge.

U.S. policy and activity in the region

During the second George W. Bush Administration, U.S. policy toward the South Caucasus and the greater Caspian region was characterized by several major lines of activity. While each is interested in promoting its own influence in the South Caucasus and greater Caspian region, Moscow and Washington share some areas of mutual interest in the region and do not view exclusion of the other as a major goal. For instance, both states are interested in the region’s stability. Moscow and Washington also share an interest preventing terrorist elements from transiting the region on their way to the North Caucasus and beyond, and they cooperate on some policies aimed at diminishing this threat. In addition, U.S. and Russian policies toward Iran have become much more
congruent (the turning point being spring 2003) leading to an interest in nonproliferation cooperation in the Caucasus and greater Caspian region.

Expansion of direct military and security cooperation between the three states of the South Caucasus in the post-September 11, 2001, era has eroded Ankara’s role as the interlocutor of U.S. security cooperation there. Earlier, Turkey had served as a conduit of many of the U.S.-sponsored programs with Azerbaijan and Georgia, which endowed Ankara with great leverage in the region and benefits vis-à-vis Washington.

While Washington’s interests in the region demand stability, such as democratization and preservation of air and transport corridors, Washington does not devote significant policy resources to resolving conflicts that afflict the region, especially the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict. In fact, some of its policies actually unintentionally undermine the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict. For instance, the United States (and the European Union) regularly and intensively pressures Turkey to open the border and allow regular trade and transport with the neighboring Republic of Armenia. Eventually, the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border could enhance prosperity and economic opportunities in the region, but in the short term – if not conducted in coordination with concrete and significant advances in the peace process – delivering this benefit to Yerevan without any concession in the Nagorno-Karabagh peace process will remove an incentive to cooperate from Yerevan, thus leading to a set-back in the peace process. This development could greatly destabilize the South Caucasus, increasing the chances of the cease fire agreement breaking down and hostilities resuming, a development that would clearly undermine U.S. policy goals in the region.

The Future

In the first George W. Bush Administration, the United States made tremendous progress in fostering cooperation with the states of the South Caucasus and greater Caspian region. Infrastructure
projects were nurtured which would allow the states, which had been totally dependent on Moscow, to achieve a measure of independence, at least in the case of Azerbaijan and to a certain extent Georgia; extensive security cooperation with these new, post-Soviet states was established; and strides were made in economic improvement and governance in the region. During the first administration, relations between Moscow and Washington were relatively good and this fact deflected onto the greater Caucasus region and created cooperation opportunities. Despite these accomplishments, government transition is still uninstitutionalized in the region. The United States still does not offer a reasonable policy option for these states to counter undemocratic, destabilizing elements that have been encouraged by Washington’s expanding cooperation with the new states and threaten to undermine Washington’s accomplishments in the region. If power is not recentralized in Bishkek soon, the instability in the Kyrgyz Republic can spillover onto the whole Caspian region. The ruling regimes in the Caspian region, while hearing Bush’s call for democratization, have also noticed that Washington has failed to come to the assistance of its friends in the region when they were facing a populist revolt, including a nondemocratic one, and will probably look to continue to build their cooperation with the United States. At the same time, these regimes will not be putting all their eggs in Washington’s basket and will be diversifying their ties with Moscow, Ankara, and Tehran. This development will create opportunities for Turkey to develop more cooperation with the states of the region, but not to a level that will recreate the role Ankara filled in the region in the late 1990s. In addition, in the Second George W. Bush Administration relations between the United States and Russia, especially on issues relating to the states bordering Russia, demand improvement in order to recreate political opportunities that will allow the development of prosperity and stability in the region.
RUSSIA’S INTERESTS IN THE CONTEXT OF COOPERATION IN THE CAUCASUS

Sergey MIKHAILOV *

In my view, the issue raised as the subject of this conference is very pressing and this discussion is very much in time. It is “sad but true” that in the last fifteen years the Caucasus has acquired an image of constantly unstable area, where the very geographical conditions seem to be a fertile ground for different types of conflicts. In the same time it has turned out that all these conflict situations are as hard to be resolved as they were easy to emerge.

However historical experience clearly shows that this negative posture doesn’t originate from the national moral of Caucasian ethnic communities. Let me remind that not so long ago this region was in the condition of relative prosperity, and some of the local republics, especially Georgia, were considered to be among the wealthiest entities of the former Soviet Union.

Nowadays it seems clear that purely political approach towards the issue of resolving of the local tangles proved to be quite inefficient. In this regard, different forms of economic cooperation, which could at least level the accumulated conflict potential, are worthy of thorough consideration.

The development of economic cooperation in the Caucasus seems particularly positive from the Russian point of view. As once the transcaucasian economies together with the Russian one were parts of the united economic mechanism, nowadays closer economic cooperation in the region could not only help to bring political

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stability, but the restoration of some of these economic links could become one of the substantial sources of growth both for Russia and South Caucasus countries. The main necessary premise for that is the possibility for mutual access from the Caucasus markets to Russian and vice versa.

The Russian leadership fully realizes the consideration. The initiative put forward last fall by transport minister of Russia, Igor Levitin, could become a historic start for the revival of the Caucasus after one and the half decade of wars and crises. He proposed to restore the railway transit on the whole territory of the Caucasus. This idea primarily regards the railways, which go across the conflict zones in the region. Certainly, this opportunity was not possible about ten years ago, when those conflicts had just gone out of the phase of full-scale war. But nowadays there are no military obstacles for resumption of the traffic. The proposal, expressed among others to Georgian government, included also a number of measures aimed for reconstruction of Georgian infrastructure and associated industries. Unfortunately this initiative was rejected out of political reasons.

The Caucasus is well-known as one of the most important transit regions in the world. There are some projects, addressing the need for establishing of reliable transportation system through the region in the East-West direction. Among these the most renowned are the construction of Baku-Ceyhan pipeline and TRACECA. However let's not forget about the potential of another - South-North - transport direction.

In my understanding the latter is more preferable from Russia's position, as my country possesses more than enough East-West transport capabilities. At the same time the Caucasus constitutes the unique natural bridge from Russia to Turkey and to "wider Middle East".

In this regard, recent agreement between Turkey and Georgia on construction of Kars - Akhalkalaki railroad in my view can
become an important contribution to the development of the Caucasus as the transit link between North and South. It seems that successful implementation of this agreement would open the possibility for widening of Russian-Turkish cooperation in transport sphere. After all, if Russia and Turkey have managed to build the gas pipeline over the Black Sea seabed, I think the recovering of transportation system in the South Caucasus with the purpose of establishing a short and straight railway connection between the two countries is also a quite feasible task. To achieve the success in this regard our countries should act in cooperative way both with Caucasian republics and with each other. Another crucial premise in my understanding is, so to say, not conditioning of any economic cooperation by the progress in political sphere but, on the contrary, facilitating the resolution of political issues with the help of cooperative economic development.

As for the EU- and U.S.-sponsored projects, I guess Russian and Western efforts in the region could be mutually complementary: Russia in possible and desirable cooperation with Turkey would be engaged in the development of South-North transit direction, and Western partners – accordingly of East-West direction. In my opinion this would be the right way for cooperation, but not the striving in order to keep each other out of the area. Let me note that admission of Central European countries into EU caused considerable damage to Russian economic contacts with these states. Certainly, the repeating of such a scenario in some form in the Caucasus cannot be welcomed from Russia's point of view.

In other words it is in Russia's interests to support different forms of cooperation in the Caucasus, which are not controversial but mutually agreeable.
THE IMPACT OF “ROSE REVOLUTION” IN GEORGIA ON FROZEN CONFLICTS AND
THE PROSPECTS OF EURO-INTEGRATION FOR THE SOUTH CAUCASUS

George KHUTSISHVILI*

After the so called “Rose revolution” in November 2003 that resulted from the organized popular protest against the corrupt regime, but is still regarded by some critics as an anti-constitutional coup sponsored by George Soros, Georgia faces new challenges. The democratic opposition leaders who came to power inherited loads of problems that could ensure the status of a failed state for Georgia. Enthusiasm of youth helps them believe that the process of reforms that despite a substantial Western support is extremely hard to implement, will be successfully fulfilled. New Georgian leadership declared about its strive to restore territorial integrity, join NATO and integrate into European structures, including the far-reaching goal – EU membership.

All these tasks are interdependent: (a) NATO membership is directly dependent on the ability of a country to effectively resolve internal political conflicts and (b) integration into Euro-Atlantic security system serves as a springboard to be admitted in united Europe, as in case of some Eastern European countries.

In Russia this program is perceived as ultimate detachment of Georgia from the Russian sphere of influence and is assessed in a negative way. In Spring 2004 both parties took serious steps that

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aimed at improving the relations and creating favorable investment environment for Russian business in Georgia.

In the aftermath of a new wave of revolution in May 2004 the semi-seceded autonomous region of Ajara was liberated from the corrupt regime of Aslan Abashidze (Comments made in Russia that Abashidze and Shevardnadze could maintain their posts if not the interference by the Kremlin emissary Igor Ivanov, are wrong). However, the Ajara events did not negatively effect Georgian-Russian relations that were at the peak, and at the same time convinced the Georgian society in the ability of a new leadership.

Developments that took place in Summer 2004 became a serious test for the country: a miscalculated attempt to defreeze the conflict in South Ossetia brought to unpredicted results, radically worsened the situation in and around the conflict zone, caused casualties and an overall militarization of the subregion. Russian authorities have preferred to side with the officially unrecognized authorities in Tskhinvali (administrative centre of South Ossetia) rather than with Georgian government. Warmed up relations with Russia were deteriorated again. Mistakes were made by all parties; however, Georgian society was sincerely surprised to be “overthrown” by the Russian partner at a hard moment; and the tense situation of the past years was reverted in the conflict zone.

In the meanwhile, the EU has made a decision about unprecededent financial assistance to Georgia while the US have continued the development of the program of assistance for the Georgian Army. Due to personnel cut within corrupted law-enforcement structures and a pressure on corrupted officials the state budget earnings have increased threefold. However in January 2005, anniversary of the revolution, the Council of Europe released a quite critical assessment of the situation in Georgia. Everyone can understand that main “battles” are facing Georgia ahead. President Saakashvili underlines the strive of Georgia to resolve conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia by peaceful means.
and presents in Strasbourg the plan of incorporation of South-Ossetian Republic within Georgian federal state on the basis of worthy and efficient terms. It is worth to mention that the image of the Ossetians in Georgian society is much more positive than the image of the Abkhaz, as the Abkhaz are identified with the ethnic cleansing and expulsion of the entire Georgian population from Abkhazia in 1993.

Any perspective for federalism and decentralization of power meets with resistance from some radical groups in Georgian society, however, sociological surveys prove that the Georgian society is capable to consider those key reforms that make possible reconciliation with the Abkhaz and Ossetians.

Alienation of the Abkhaz from Georgia and their dependency on Russia hinder quick progress in negotiations with the Abkhaz. Georgian officials are now trying to accumulate efforts to achieve progress in talks with South Ossetian officials. However, all that meets with their uncompromised position: ‘we already represent an independent state and our goal is to be incorporated within Russian Federation’. Such position itself brings the situation in the conflict zone to an impasse. Since the July 2004 crisis these sentiments in Tskhinvali have only been strengthened. Officially declared position of Russia - recognition of the territorial integrity of Georgia and internationally sponsored assistance and mediation of Russia in conflict resolution - contradicts with real actions: encouragement of the de facto authorities to the incorporation of conflict zones into the legal structures of Russian Federation (a ‘hidden annexation’, in assessment of some Georgian analysts).

People have talked much about the unwillingness of Shevardnadze government to propose to the Ossetians the restoration of autonomy that could contribute to the solution of the problem. Now there is an impression that the will of a new Georgian leadership to constructively resolve the South Ossetian conflict just stimulates those forces in Russia who try to hinder
the peace/reconciliation process and to inhibit strengthening of
the Georgian statehood.

Johan Galtung has defined ‘conflict’ as a situation where the
parties pursue incompatible goals. Conflict resolution cannot
usually imply a solution within the existing conflict structure,
so, it needs to be transformed. What we can get if the conflict
does not develop in the way when common interest and goal become
visible? In this case we have two ways: either to stay with frozen
conflict for an uncertainly long period of time, which brings
impossibility of constructive transformation, or to apply the
measures of pressure on the conflicting parties that are envisaged
by international law in order to stimulate them to assume more
constructive positions. First scenario is not reasonable for the
Georgian party not only because of the risk of legitimizing the
status quo but also because of the danger of criminalization and
militarization of uncontrolled territory. The latter is endangered
with activation of forces that hinder the change of status quo and
organize provocations from outside, as well as escalation of
military actions and traumatizing of the civil population. In
these conditions it is vitally important to build cooperation
between the parties in order to avoid destructive developments and
promote fair and mutually accepted resolution of the dispute.

The Georgian revolution has influenced the developments in
most of the post-Soviet space: the outcome of the elections in
Moldova, the ‘orange revolution’ in Ukraine, and the ‘tulip
revolution’ in Kyrgyzstan. GUAM (political alliance of Georgia,
Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova) is becoming more vital than the
outdated CIS (post-Soviet alliance of all former Union republics
except the Baltics). Of course, the integration process in the
South Caucasus is dependent on progress in resolution of the
Nagorno Karabakh dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan, yet the
regional security system is an urgent need, which also is a
precondition for Euro- and Euro-Atlantic integration. The prospect
of Euro-integration has acquired material forms after inclusion of
the three South-Caucasus republics in the European Neighbourhood
Policy programme in 2004. However, it will be a long process before the EU membership may become a realistic objective for any of the South Caucasus states. One possible way to speed up this process might be strengthening of the broader regional ties and cooperation – such as Black Sea basin countries – including, first of all, Turkey, whose EU membership could serve as a trigger to accept the transformation that could finally lead to the incorporation in the EU of the countries like Georgia.
DISCUSSIONS
1st Session: Questions and Answers

Chair (Associate Professor Dr Gencer Özcan, Yıldız Technical University, Turkey)

Prof. Dr. Gareth Winrow: I’m just wondering though you mentioned that the United States is not keen on seeing Turkey as a third party in the Caucasus region; that the United States doesn’t want to Turkey to be a key player in Nagorno Karabakh. I did not quite get that. I wonder if you could elaborate on that point.

Elkhan Mehdiyev’s response: It was clear from the United States’ position on Turkish mediation regards the Nagorno Karabakh issue because the US has always opposed Turkey’s involvement in being a co-chairman because the Azerbaijani public opposed French mediation efforts after their approval of the so-called genocide resolution in the French parliament and... and in all our contacts with US officials, they have always made it clear that it makes no sense... no sense to, let’s say, invite Turkey to be co-chairman, active mediator and so on... Granted that we have very good relations with the Russian co-chairman and we have almost the same position on all issues within OSCE Minsk Group. And it was clear that Russia also was vehemently opposed to Turkey’s involvement in the Nagorno Karabakh settlement process. And from the other side, the United States pressured Turkey to open Armenian-Turkish borders with the purpose to separate Turkey from Azerbaijan and with the effort to separate Turkey from the Armenian-Azerbaijan problem. Just to make sure that Azerbaijani-Armenian problem is not a Turkish problem and Turkey should take... should be..., let’s say, aside and not to be involved in that issue. And from all these observations, let’s say, I made clear that the US was against Turkish involvement in Caucasus because from other side, as I mentioned, it is obvious that Turkey and the United States and Russia are struggling for influence in the Caucasus and the United States does not want to have another party for... in the Caucasus to, let’s say, have another problem but that was not a problem in the early stages of the 90s when the United States was
DISCUSSIONS
acting through Turkey in the area. But now it is not the case and they even put obstacles for Turkey’s active involvement. That’s just my observation and from my conversations with US officials I made it clear.

Chair: Thank you very much. I forgot something. Those who would like to ask questions, please introduce yourselves to the audience. The first question came from Prof. Dr Gareth Winrow, Istanbul Bilgi University.

Aras Doğan: My name is Aras Doğan, International Relations and Political Science MA programme of Yıldız Technical University. I would like to ask a question of Mr. Mehdiyev about Armenia. By the way, thank you for your presentation. I should ask it... maybe I should ask it of our Armenian participant but I cannot see them. You said that Russia is the guarantor of Armenian security. Russia deploys her military existence, which they move from Georgia and Azerbaijan, to Armenia. I do believe that it creates a dilemma for Armenia because Armenia wants to get herself out of Russian’s sphere of influence. Maybe it is because of the diaspora Armenians. On the other hand, with the Russian military existence Armenia can still be considered part of the so-called Russian satellite. Do you have comments on that? What do you think about it? Thank you.

Mehdiyev’s response: Armenian officials, those at the level of defence minister and president, [have] numerously stated that Russia is the main guarantor of Armenia’s security, and Armenian national security doctrine stipulates that Russia is Armenia’s guarantor for security and... for this audience it would be interesting that they ground that with Turkish threat; that there is Turkey’s border in Armenia and there is always Turkish threat and... But Armenia... Why Armenians are more inclined to Russia at this stage of their history? That’s an unquestionable belief in Azerbaijan and in the area that it is because of Azerbaijani occupation of Azerbaijani territories. Because of having Russian bases, having Russian military support in Armenia they are in a
politically advantageous situation in the area for Russia, and Russia has been supporting them politically and militarily and they have the upper hand and they speak with Azerbaijan with the voice... with the of position of force and that is why they do not withdraw because they have big back in the area.

The question is not for them now, at this stage of their history, not total independence. The question is them for now is land; to, let’s say, extract Nagorno Karabakh from Azerbaijan by all means. That is the main cornerstone of their policy now.

Chair: Thank you.

Samet Özgündüz: Fourth class student of international relations and political science [YTU]. My question is to Mr. Mehdiyev. In your speech you said that Turkey was isolated in the negotiations process and my question is: according to you what should be the Turkey’s role in the solution process of Nagorno Karabakh conflict? And the other ones: do you think that Turkey gives enough support to Azerbaijan in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, especially in the first half of the 1990s, and what were the expectations and disappointments about Turkey’s policy on the Azerbaijani side, Azerbaijani perspective? Thank you.

Mehdiyev’s response: [Turkey]... has always supported Azerbaijan politically in all political international forums. Turkey is the only country which is siding with Azerbaijan in all, I would say, international organisations and international conferences. But Turkey’s support was also limited in terms of military because in Turkish lead they were some, let’s say, feelings that could bring to confrontation between Turkey and Russia and from this argument Armenian side used very successfully. For example, until 1993 the Armenian side has always been in fear of a Turkish threat that in case of invasion into deeper areas of Azerbaijan, Turkey would not tolerate it and invade Armenia, but that was not the case and after that this, let’s say, fears in Armenia also disappeared and that is why, I would say, until now the past twelve years has proved that Turkey is the only involved in peaceful resolution,
peaceful settlement. In 1994, then Prime Minister Demirel publicly stated that Turkey would never intervene militarily in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict and that is why Turkey’s involvement is now even more limited than before because... it is isolated artificially from the Minsk process as well.

Chair: Dear Ambassador

[Unannounced speaker]: Thank you. I would like to thank Mr. Elkhan Mehdiyev for the extensive exposé, which gives us the situation or the view from the Azerbaijani perspective. I would like to make two comments. First of all, regarding the position of the United States with regard to the involvement of Turkey in the resolution of the Upper Karabakh or Nagorno Karabakh issue. I don’t really think that the United States wanted to isolate or push out Turkey from the process. And I give you one example: after the summit meeting of the OEC in 1994, a high level working group started to work on the modalities of preparation of the OEC concept, peacekeeping concept, particularly in Nagorno Karabakh, and the American administration of that time, personally Mr. Clinton, had accepted the participation of Turkey in this force with providing thirty per cent of the total force. Of course, as you know, the arrangement did not work and... but still a concept of peacekeeping in the area is on the books and it is already prepared. And, a second comment: I understand that you are somehow critical about Turkish policies of not being so much in contact with opposition in Azerbaijan. Maybe I got it wrong, but if your comment is... your observation is this, then I would like to say the following: Turkey has to cooperate, first of all, with governments in power. Otherwise we experienced some troubles. We do not want to experience the same troubles which we passed through with another country, Uzbekistan, for example. As you know we have some cooling of relations with Uzbekistan exactly because the Uzbek government thought that we were too much in contact with the Uzbek opposition and even giving safe-haven or asylum to elements of the opposition. In order to overcome such difficulties what Turkey has done was in fact to facilitate the integration of these countries,
I mean both Central European and Central Asian and Caucasian countries in international organisations, and in particular in the Council of Europe and the OEC. By that way, the questions of relations between the oppositions and power and the internal politics of states can be discussed in a more neutral environment. But for Turkey to enter directly into such discussions or controversy with the governing power, which is supposed to be elected democratically, is not, in my opinion, politically wise. You know, Turkey is a free country and the Azerbaijani opposition may well establish its own contacts with various sectors of the Turkish body politic. Thank you very much.

Mehdiyev’s response: If I may just have one word, when we talked to Americans and Europeans, they say, “Talk to Turkey, they can help you more on democracy. They have big... great experience, you have the same language, the same culture. Why they do not help you?” We want Turkey to hold the same level of relations with Azerbaijani opposition enjoys independent experts like France, German embassies, US and British are doing in Baku. But we don’t observe that. That’s why we have these, let’s say, concerns. When we go, let’s say, when we have receptions in American Embassy, in British ninety percent of invitees are civil society organisations. But in Turkish Embassy, on the contrary, ninety percent are governmental people, just some opposition party chairman and so are present.

Chair: Next speaker.

Ali Gara: My name is Ali Gara. I am a senior political science student at Boğaziçi University. One thing that struck me in this conference is that - and my question is for any of those speakers who would like to answer it - one thing that struck me in this conference is that no one mentioned, I mean no one put even emphasis on the participation of all countries that have interest in the region. I think there was not even emphasis on Iran and Armenia. But my question is about the possible constructive role that the European Union can play in the region as none of the
speakers mentioned the European Union as a potential actor in the future politics of the region. As we know the European Union, it was very successful in terms of exporting peace and security to neighbouring countries and from the Mr. Solana’s security paper, we know that the European Union defines its main objective of bringing peace to its neighbouring areas because these regions are the source of trafficking, possible source of immigrants and asylum problems. And in that condition we saw in the region that the interests of these states in the European Union is also increasing. Georgia, for example, expressed its willingness to join the European Union and all the countries in the region are mentioning that they are willing to integrate with Europe in the future. I would like to ask to what extent you believe that the European Union as an international actor can play a role in terms of bringing peace, security and development to the region. Thank you very much.

Chair: I did not get to whom you have directed your question.

Ali Gara: Any of those speakers who would like to answer the question.

Chair: Sorry but did you attend the conference from the very beginning?

Ali Gara: If you mean today, yes I did.

Chair: I mean from the very beginning. Did you... are you... were you here?

Ali Gara: Yes, I am here.

Vişne Korkmaz: Of course, as part of the Western security mechanisms, the region’s states have been aspired to become members of or part of [the European Union]. As I mentioned before, since June 2003, the European Union declared its new neighbourhood policy towards the South Caucasus. But the European Union tended to use instruments of soft power rather than hard power, or rather than means of hard power, as we see in the initiation of military cooperation of United States of America with the South Caucasus
region. The main impact of the European Union as a normative regime not only in the Caucasian states but also Turkey, Russia, and Iran accepted this role of the European Union. But, in terms of hard security issues, the United States of America, if we take into consideration Middle Eastern affairs, the USA was the major part of the mechanism. So, there is a difference between the tendencies and dynamics of these two Western actors. They share similar perspectives – they share similar security agenda – but the dynamics are different. The European Union, as a representative of a normative system, as a representative of soft power, as a mechanism to have these instruments, became part of the cooperation and the stability processes related to this region. But we can not ignore the role of the United States also or the role of other countries; Russia, Iran and Turkey’s security perspectives. Also, we should take these considerations into mind when we make an analysis of the European Union prospects.

Alaattin Yalçinkaya: Alaattin Yalçinkaya from Sakarya University. This is a contribution to Ms Havva Kök. It is generally said that the Baku-Ceyhan Pipeline is not only an economic but also a strategic and ecological project. Also, our prime minister said this just before the visit of Putin: Baku-Ceyhan is not economic but strategic. If you say this, against whom is this strategic project? Between Turkey, Georgia, and Azerbaijan against Russia or Armenia? It is not a right view. Baku-Ceyhan is also an economic project and ecologic. If you account from Caspian to Hamburg, Genoa, Rotterdam, the cheapest line is the Baku-Ceyhan. But if you account from Baku to Novorossiysk may be it is cheap but the oil has got to Amsterdam, Genoa or Rotterdam. It is a contribution, if you accept. I don’t know. Thank you.

[Name and beginning inaudible]: ...student of third class, international relations and political science. First of all, I thank for the all representations but I have to mention that while we are talking in English although most of us know Turkish. And I want to ask Mr. Mehdiyev: you mentioned before there is a very strong relationship between Russia and Armenia but in December
2004 the Armenian national movement 14th Congress proclaimed that they don’t want Russian troops in Armenia any more. And two days later, they proclaimed that the Armenian government give a proposal to the Assembly, the Armenian Assembly to send soldiers to Iraq. And two days later, the Armenian Assembly accepted to send soldiers to Iraq for the fight with the US. Is something changing in the foreign policies of Armenian or they don’t want to depend only on Russia any more. Thank you.

Chair: I have to mention something I think. Thank you for your sensitivity for the organisational aspects of this conference, but we respect minority rights because there are some people who can’t speak Turkish... You are right, the overwhelming majority is Turkish speakers but there is a minority as well. Thank you.

Mehdiyev’s response: Regarding the Armenian national movement’s statement: they are now very weak in Armenia and I must say that they have signed the bilateral security treaty with Russia for twenty-five years to station Russian troops in Armenia. And then, later sending dispatch of Armenian military, that is not even military.

Mehdiyev continues [some sentences are missing]: ...that was not related with that statement because that was a, let’s say, commitment of Armenian side since spring of last year to send some medical battalions to Iraq. But obviously there are some changes and I would say it started in April last year when there was some kind of mini-revolt against Kocharian after Georgia’s revolution and after that Armenia started to, let’s say, ...and Armenian government was very suspicious that United States was behind that mini-revolt, and they started to cooperate more actively with NATO and the United States, hosting conferences in Yerevan and attending NATO-led exercises and, as I mentioned in my presentation, they are calling it now a four-stage security policy. Third and forth are with NATO and the United States and they are enhancing and claiming that any relations with NATO and the United States is serving only for strengthening the Armenian
army and serving for the national security of Armenia. And does not contradict their military alliance with the Russian Federation.

Chair: I have to end here this session

2nd Session Question and Answers

Chair (Prof. Dr. Gareth Winrow, Istanbul Bilgi University, Turkey)

Unannounced person: One of the main targets of the Bush administration is to bring democracy, especially to the Middle-East countries and ex-Soviet countries. When we look from that perspective elections are important to test democracy, but in the Georgian and Ukrainian case, first of all pro-Western sides lost the election then, after demonstrations, pro-Western sides came to power. It shows that pro-Western sides can come to power somehow when they gain support of Western countries. To what extent can you say that those elections are open and fair? And, for example, the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, the Rose Revolution in Georgia. Maybe, what is the next, Apricot Revolution in Armenia? Or whatever. Also, how does it affect the relations between Moscow and Washington? Thank you.

Dr. Brenda Shaffer: OK, the first thing I just read in the Economist: yes, Apricot Revolution in Armenia and, for some reason, Eggplant Revolution in Azerbaijan. I don’t know why, but this is what they are using.

I think your question is very good because I think that we put too much emphasis on the elections versus democratization. Because elections are something that are, you know, its kind of like your grade in the university. You could be excellent in the classroom the whole semester, right, but at the end of the day you are graded by that little test what you got on those boxes you should write and there is something that isn’t really fair about that. But why does it take place? Because, that test is measurable. You know it is either A, B or C or D, where your participation in the classroom is quite subjective. I mean, I think that elections, we
tend put a lot of, let’s say, international organizations, Council of Europe, OSCE, USAID, we put a lot of money into them because it is something measurable. You could say OK, this amount of people participated, these were the results. There is something concrete that can come out of this investment. But, you are right if you look at like technically to the elections in Georgia. I have talked with many people who were election observers at the elections which were cancelled were not good elections technically and the chance that six weeks later Georgia got its act together and that those elections were technically better is probably incorrect. ...George, feel free to correct me here, but probably all the technical problems you had with the elections, with the first round probably existed in the second round. And, on the other hand, sometimes there is some public will that’s hard to measure, but it seemed to existent in Ukraine and in Tbilisi - that you can say that the public will was to have this government changes. But public will, I can understand to tell the truth – I am going to maybe get in trouble here with a lot of my colleagues from the South Caucasus and maybe if there is still someone left from the US embassy or something - but I can understand why Russia has concerns about change of government that takes place on the basis of public will. And I think this is part of Putin’s claim about Ukraine was not the question of whether there is a change of government, but whether the street should change the government. I think in the long run I can understand that concern, that even though I would say that probably what happened in Ukraine and in Georgia represents what most people wanted, but still I think there is something a little dangerous at the end of the day we change government in the streets or in the philharmonic. And feel free to jump on me if you disagree on this one. Because this time it happened peacefully in Georgia, it happened peacefully in Ukraine. I don’t know if it will happen peacefully, let’s say, in Kyrgyzstan or Moldova and I don’t think that would be good for anyone. So yes there is, if I understand your question correctly, I think there is something problematic here.
On the other hand, you know, I mean, I think we have to be promoter, at the same time, we have to be promoting democratization, and yes our guys, pro-Western guys, are not necessarily more democratic than guys that are less pro-Western. Using those terms again ‘Western’, ‘Eastern’, I mean, I think again we have to, specially in Turkey, we have to stop thinking in zero-sum relations in terms of the US and Russia in general and specifically in the former Soviet Union. And zero-sum meaning, you know, ‘my gain is your loss’. I don’t think anymore it is either Russia or the US. And certainly in the South Caucasus it is not ‘if the US is in, Russia is out’. Look at the case like Kyrgyzstan. You have US and Russian forces there and you’ll probably have Chinese forces there in the future and it is maybe good to all of them. I think Russia agreed or did not object to Georgia having US military advisors in Georgia because basically it is good to have US forces there working on anti-terrorist operations that bring more stability to the North Caucasus. So I think the only future for the region is to find a way to build a set of interests that are good for the countries of the region, good for Russia and good for the US. I mean it is not to push one or the other out because Russia, no matter what, will find a way for having influence in the South Caucasus. It is his neighborhood, just like the US is interested in what happens in Mexico, or Turkey, I heard, is interested in what happens in Iraq. They are always going to promote their interests, so let’s built a way that these interests are mutually beneficial to Russia and to other countries in the region.

Yes, I think, because of Ukraine, we are in a period of growing tensions between Russia and the US. I think this is a very bad development for the international system because, I think, in the past two years a lot of areas benefited from the fact that there has been excellent cooperation between Russia and the United States. And I think this is a very poor development.

**Chair:** Let me repeat to my panelists that when a question is directed to them, when they are answering that question, do also
feel free to come back on any comments made by other panelists, that they previously made. So any other... OK short comment then...

**Unannounced speaker:** Thank you very much, very short one. Well, as a great deal was told today about Russia. I just want to remind that, for example, as we take the so-called Rose Revolution in Georgia, Russia was not in opposition to that revolution. ... People tend to forget that the Russian Foreign Minister was present at that time. He was at that time in Tbilisi and he promoted the change of power, and in some kind of cooperation with the US representatives. And I just wonder why are you so often asking about the struggle between Russia and the US in the Caucasus? Of course there are some contradictions, it is quite natural, but I don’t think that the US sees the main foe of Russia in the Caucasus, and I think that for Russia there are much more important task than fighting the US in the Caucasus. Thank you.

**Chair:** OK. Are there any other questions? Yes.

**Nurşin Güney:** OK, Nurşin Güney, from the Department of International Relations, Home. My question is to Professor Shaffer. You mentioned that NATO is not the same organization as it used to be in the past. That is certainly correct. We knew that, the organization has changed a lot. The organization is practicing different missions since the end of the Cold War as along with its traditional mission of collective defense. Within this new context, I’m wondering about how you are evaluating, from the US perspective of course, the PFP project and operations in the Caucasus. Thank you.

**Dr. Shaffer:** First thing there is a question about whether collective defense is still in actuality a part of NATO’s mission and, again as we notice with Iraq, and in defense of Turkey, it was in a sense tested and we see that there could be a change of mission. NATO is exploring if it could play a good role in conflict resolution there in pipeline security issues in the South Caucasus. I am not sure NATO is the organization that could actually bring the end of the conflicts in the South Caucasus
because again I see that Russia’s opinion is, or stance is a key to resolution whether it is Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno Karabakh, I think Russian position is key and I would probably assume that NATO is probably not the best group to partner with Russia on this issue. That being said, I think this relates to some of our discussions this morning about the conflicts, I don’t think it really matters so much – Minsk Group, UN, NATO – if the countries of the region, especially in the case of Armenia-Azerbaijan, if there will be something that they view as in their interests, some kind of compromise solution, it won’t really matter if it comes from the Minsk Group, it comes from the UN. I think we place too much emphasis on these international organizations. In a way, actually, they might have actually been prolonging the absence of a solution because, as long as you are sort of waiting for the next, you know, the next initiative and the next visit of the Minsk Group, the leaders of these countries can say, “Well, it is not really my fault that I haven’t solve this conflict. I am waiting for next resolution, or they have new co-chair and they are coming”. You know even some people were discussing maybe actually we should end the Minsk Group, and say, OK guys, you know, it is Kocharian and Aliyev’s responsibility, at least vis-à-vis their own public, so it will be clear that they are the ones that have to initiate this process. So, again I don’t think it really matters so much which international organization if you build the proper set of interests. Then again, basically it is a question of US, Russia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, for instance, there is really very other stances that are really going to make a big difference. Doesn’t really matter which UN resolutions have been passed or not passed.

Alaattin Yalçinkaya: I am Alaattin Yalcinkaya. My question is to Mr. Khutsishvili. You said that after Rose Revolution some conflicts, some problems have been solved in Georgia. But to complete these conflicts in Georgia, do we have to wait for the next revolution, not in Armenia, in Georgia; we have to wait the Pink Revolution or the Brown – not Red – in Moscow? Or do we have
to wait the Gorbachovization of Putin? Not Yeltsinization! Maybe a provocative question. Thank you.

**Prof. Khutsishvili’s response:** Thank you very much for this question. No we actually don’t need to wait and actually we don’t want to see our development so that we need to wait till next revolution elsewhere in order to be able to complete resolution of our problems. The resolution of our problems should go on and should probably take momentum. In spite of how the chain of revolution develops, you know, because of course there are some active talks about the next revolution happening in this or that country of the former Soviet space, but, well, actually Georgia is not very much concerned about this. Georgia is concerned about the resolving its national problems. And, from this viewpoint, I think that one thing is very clear that revolution in Ukraine was very important for the developments in Georgia because Ukraine is a traditional partner and supporter of Georgia and now this partnership will be even more strengthened with the new leadership of Ukraine. So together probably there will be some synergy which will probably make more processes more active and more efficient, hopefully. I don’t know exactly how it will be, but that’s how it looks now. Does it mean that, you know, the Ukrainian-Georgian partnership can, for instance, solve the Abkhazia problem? No, it cannot, because here the position of Moscow is crucial. The position of Moscow, which I have already mentioned, which is, you know, dubious. On the one hand, it is the official support of the territorial integrity of Georgia. On the other hand, is very actual support, very strong actual support of the de facto authorities in Sokhumi and the situation of status quo in the conflict zone. If this changes, this can of course help a lot to resolve the Abkhazia conflict finally, but there is also apart from the Moscow position, there is a strong opposition to reuniﬁcation with Georgia in Abkhazia, because, you know, as I have already said in my presentation, the problem dates back...

**Prof. Khutsishvili’s response continues:** ...and to solve this deep rooted problem with Abkhazians we need a very, very careful and
long way to go. For South Ossetia, it is much more realistic to expect a result sooner because ethnic cleansing did not happen in South Ossetia. South Ossets in Georgian society’s eyes are not associated with deportation of the Georgian population from the conflict zone like it happened in Abkhazia. So, the reconciliation will be done easier. From the viewpoint of Russian rule, I think that it would be very constructive, if the Russian position changed towards official plus actual support of the Georgian efforts for reconciliation within the limits accepted and agreed on by the international community, which is the integrity of Georgia. Thank you very much.

Chair: Sergei, I believe you want to make a few comments. So feel free... And also I use my prerogative as the Chair to ask you a question. I am interested in your views on Russia-OSCE relations at the moment, bearing in mind that OSCE has been mentioned quite a lot. I am interested to hear your viewpoints on that.

Sergey Mikhailov: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Well, I would like just to make a brief comment on Russia’s position about all these matters in Georgia. Well, as my colleague Mr. Khutsishvili mentioned in his report, after the coming to power of Mr. Saakashvili, Russia supported him and his policy, and even supported his efforts directed to reunification of Georgia with Adjaria, but then suddenly and mysteriously Russia changed its position and blocked all Georgian efforts in order to join South Ossetia. But don’t you think it is quite strange? Why so big a change took place? The answer is that Adjaria, by the spring of 2004, constituted a strongly expressed and very wide public will, public desire for the reunification with Georgia. A lot of people in Adjaria supported that idea. That’s why Russia ... was not willing to do something here to somehow block ... the process of reunification with Georgia. But in the case of South Ossetia, I personally never heard about any Ossetian group or person publicly expressing the desire to rejoin Georgia. And the mentioned de-freezing of the situation: well, just think about it. What does it mean? It just means another armed conflict. That’s all. We would
just receive another war on our southern frontier. Do you think that it is unnatural on Russia’s side to prevent that scenario? I don’t think so. I think that it is a very natural desire of every country to prevent wars and conflicts taking place on their frontiers, especially in the Caucasus region, which is, as you well know, is a very dangerous point from this perspective. Well, thank you.

Dr. Shaffer: Just to comment and a point of the Ossetian will: I have never heard of say a Chechen who wants to be under Moscow’s rule. But I don’t think that that would be the element, if we say territorial integrity and that there is a process where we don’t say that every village decides its self-determination but there is a certain process. And there is probably the people who can make the case that maybe, let’s say, the state of Georgia, why don’t you protect the people of Chechnya from the Russian military. I don’t think that you would find that’s a fair principle, meaning that, if you want your territorial integrity respected, you have to respect that of your neighbors. The principle works both ways or it doesn’t.

Chair: OK, any other question...from the floor! Then we can that as a medium for the panelists to interchange as well. Yeah you’ll have a chance; you’ll have a chance. Well, any body or any other questions first? I don’t want just to be exclusively the people here. If not, I give the... OK, George.

Prof. Khutsishvili: Well, there has been a lot of sympathy expressed in Georgia towards Chechens during the two Russian-Chechen wars and lots of casualties. But Georgia has never supported the idea of the secession of Chechnya from Russia. If Georgia declares that it respects the territorial integrity of Russia, it means that we don’t support the Chechen idea of secession. We just sympathize with the people who are dying and suffering in Chechnya. Russia, to the contrary, supports officially the idea of territorial integrity of Georgia. But, now let’s see why are the forces that prevent any reconciliation are
so strong in both South Ossetia and in Abkhazia? For more than ten years, the Russian military forces, which are called peace-keeping forces in the conflict zone, have preserved the cease-fire, that’s for sure, and that was part of their mandate, but they have also been very biased and actually keeping the Georgian inhabitants of the conflict zone as kind of hostages, without any rights. And the people who were representing the ethnic group that seceded from Georgia and declared themselves an independent state, they were treated quite differently by the same Russian peace-keeping forces. That was the situation that grew and developed the situation of inequality and the situation in which many people in Georgia and abroad advised Russia to internationalize the peace-keeping force, to accept other groups, other international groups so that as not to aggravate the situation. But official Moscow has always rejected this. And to the present point, the so-called CIS peace-keeping forces in two conflict zones in Georgia are entirely Russian peace-keeping forces. And the leaders of these peace-keeping forces are people who don’t hide their biased attitude. That’s one of the very strong factors. And, if we say that there is no one in South Ossetia who supports reunification with Georgia, I know such a people [who do support reunification]. Of course, I will not name them, in order not to endanger them. There are lots of such people. And there will be more of them if the politicians create a more constructive atmosphere and as soon as Tbilisi and Moscow manage to agree on how to deal with this problem. And people can freely speak in South Ossetia, you will see that there lots of people who are for the reunification.

Chair: Any other questions you want to ask?

Sergey Mikhailov: Thank you. Well, concerning Chechnya: I would just say that I can name a great deal of people, politicians and so on, in Chechnya who are willing to live in Russia, I mean as a part of the Russian Federation. Of course, you couldn’t say, ‘Oh, they’re members of a puppet regime,’ and so on and so forth, but I think that the main argument here is that a great deal of Chechens, even between the wars, the first and second Chechen war,
when Chechnya gained its, well, de facto independence, many Chechens moved to Russia, lived in Russia, I mean in Russian towns and cities, and that means that they identified themselves as Russian citizens. A great deal of Chechens, live among those Russians who were expelled from Chechnya. And as for Ossetia, South Ossetia I mean, and Abkhazia: perhaps I am mistaken, but I never heard about Ossetians and Abkhazians moving Tbilisi to live there because they don’t like to live in that secessionist, separatist regions. I think that’s the real indicator of the public will. Thank you.

Chair: Any questions?

Dr. Shaffer: I think here - taking these two ends here - I think conflicts are solved when there is a common interest that can be articulated. Its not so much a matter of values and history. I think actually one reason I am optimistic for resolution of conflicts in the South Caucasus, I think there is some convergent interests between Russia and states of the region. Why, because today we see the security in the North Caucasus and the security in South Caucasus is interlinked. You cannot guarantee stability in Dagestan and Chechnya if a war re-erupts in the South Caucasus. You cannot guarantee the security in the North Caucasus if Georgia is cooperative with these areas. It is not enough to sit in South Ossetia or in Karabakh or in Abkhazia. And precisely because there is a Russian security interest in stability in the South Caucasus, maybe there is an ability to solve these conflicts, meaning that the structure has to be built where territorial integrity is respected on both sides. And where [there is] a realization that the security of Russian and the security of South Caucasus will only be strengthen, will only take place, if actually the conflicts on both sides are resolved.

Chair: I believe the Ambassador wants to have a few words.

Rtd. Ambassador Hikmet Alp: Frankly, it is difficult to make specific comment about an area which is not very well known to me. But from the perspective of international law, this principle of
the territorial integrity, national sovereignty and secession, in these areas it is not impossible to find mathematical formulas. But, as Dr. Shaffer has mentioned, if one defends and practices a policy of encouraging separatism in another country, than it has to take into consideration the risks for its own country. On the other hand, if the regimes of the countries where separatism exist do not respect the democratic rules and if [they] are unable to provide a reasonable standard of living, then separatism, which is fed already by historical reasons, certainly cannot be easily subdued and, in fact, that is what is happening at present not only in the Caucasus but also in several places. Of course, we mentioned frequently Russia in these contexts, because Russia is an important country, and we always say that without the cooperation of Russia these problems cannot be solved. And in answer to Mr. Mikailov, I would say that by cooperation we also understand cooperation in political matters and in conflict resolutions, not only in economic matters. You can have eventually good economic cooperation in some areas, but the simmering political and other problems at the end would erupt and prevent the economic cooperation which one imagines. Now, I personally see and I believe many also see a change in the quality of the Russian Federation’s regime. I remember, for example, the days, in 1995, General Grachev, by his own initiative, transferred armaments worth of one billion dollars to Armenia without the authorization of the central government, and the Moscow Prosecutor happened an investigation, I don’t know what the result has been. But now we left behind these happenings, these situations. Under Mr. Putin’s governance, we have now a more self-confident and more disciplined Russia. However, still there are contradictions, for example, we have difficulty in explaining the Russian policies in Ukraine. It was to some people, Dr. Shaffer should know better, they have been interpreted as interferences. And again in Abkhazia, the Russian Federation has its own candidate, the other people there, etcetera. You know this is a matter of cooperation and I believe that if Russia comes forward for more cooperation in these areas,
it is in the interest of Russia at the same time. However, it is not an issue of rationalization always, because we know that in Russia there are circles which eventually still think in terms of the old ideas or old doctrines. I see, for example, in the military newspapers or newspapers of some Russian think-tanks considering Turkey as the strategic adversary of Russia. Why it should be? You know, times have changed, we never any Turkish government, they never acted in a manner that would jeopardized the territorial integrity of Russia. We are expanding relations, increasing relations certainly, but the day we transfer this cooperation also into political matters, once again, I repeat, it will be in the interests of both countries. For example, the situation in Iran: our press also displays a deep, a great ignorance in that matter. If Iran produces nuclear weapons, if Iran starts to produce missiles with the range of more than one thousand, one thousand two kilometers, is it in the interest of Turkey or is it in the interest of the stability of the region? Without going at least so deep, I wouldn’t say even deep, that the elementary analysis of the questions, now we say America is threatening Iran, etc. Yes, it threatens, but there are also reasons to threaten. Now I see articles condemning the non-proliferation treaty, but if there is a better arrangement than the present non-proliferation treaty, we are ready to listen to the advocates of new arrangements. But this is the best of the arrangements under the circumstances. In normal terms, it cannot be very just, but how you can convince the Russian Federation, France, United States, India and Pakistan to give up their nuclear status, nuclear armaments. This can be only within the international system and the non-proliferation treaty is the beginning of an international system. Thank you.

Chair: OK, we have gone past 5 o’clock now, so are there any final questions people want to ask? Oh yes. OK.

Çağatay Işık: Political science and international relations, third class student. I want to ask especially Mr. Sergei Mikailov and all the panelists who are interested in [it]: what is the proposed
function of the Russian military army in the Armenia? The second question is: what is the function and the effect of the Russian army in the relations of Turkey, Armenia and Russian triangle?

Sergey Mikhailov: As far as I get it, you are asking about the role Russia’s military in Armenia. Well, actually I am not military and, of course, there are some military grounds after all. You all fully understand that, and as it was very frequently stated during this conference, that the Caucasus is a strategically important area. So, out of that long term strategic interests, there is a need of military presence. As far as I understand, there is a question for Turkey: why Armenia, why not Azerbaijan? I don’t know. Well, there are also some historical reasons for that, because when these military bases were established, well actually when they were not withdrawn from Armenia because they were established long, long time ago, Azerbaijan was under the regime of a strongly anti-Russian government – if I am not mistaken it was Elçibey – and there was a danger of pushing Russia out of Caucasus, well, at all. In that time Russia was a very weak country from the economic point of view. So, the military was the only way to stay present in the area and, since that time, the bases are there. But, well, of course the military have their own reasons for that. I don’t know them exactly. I think that it is the same like to ask my colleague from the US why US troops are present at Incirlik. Well, for some reasons, I think! Thank you.

Rtd. Ambassador Hikmet Alp: This matter of military basis certainly is one of the issues in the Caucasus and around Turkey. And I understand Mr. Mikholov’s remarks that they had been established long time ago, meaning that from the times of the Cold War when there was a risk of military confrontation between two military blocks, although NATO never accepted that it is a military block. But now what is the situation? Does the Russian Federation really think that one day Turkey is going to invade neighboring countries or Russia, etc.? Of course, there are security considerations of the Russian Federation for internal
reasons, Chechnya for example, but you don’t deal with such an uprising or rebellion with heavy artillery, heavy tanks, etc. That has been tried in Grozny and the city has been destroyed, and it left a very deep scar, I would say, not only in the area but also in world public opinion. And then there is quite a long distance between Chechnya and Armenia. İncirlik may be presented as a counter-balance, but the purpose of İncirlik, you see, that it is not really Russia or any other country, but the questions of military situation in the Middle East and Iraq. You know, from the Turkish point, we certainly are not happy with the stationing of the Russian bases in Armenia although we don’t care so much because we know that Russia cannot use these bases against us. You know, simply the international circumstances for the foreseeable future are not going to permit such a situation, and even if there is an aggression towards Turkey, I believe we are perfectly capable to deal with that situation. So the very military structure, the character, nature, quality of these bases is out of the context of the present day. But, of course, if Russia wants to keep them and spend a lot of money for these bases, it is up to them. But another concern for the regional countries is that about sixty percent, now maybe even seventy per cent of the personnel of these military bases, including military, they are of Armenian origin. So it is obvious that, for Azerbaijan, they may be considered as a training ground of military forces against Azerbaijan. Then this is again another point of contention between these two countries. I believe that the military situation also in this area should be revised. Today the Russian Federation is almost a member of NATO. You know, in my days, I served two times on our delegation in NATO. When a Russian diplomat was visiting NATO, which was a rare event, it was really something which created emotion in the organization. Now you see everywhere Russian diplomats, I don’t say, anymore Eastern European diplomats because they have all become part of the European Union before Turkey, but this is a usual situation. You know, the quality of the security relations between the Russian Federation and NATO and
the European countries have drastically changed. For example, Russia was objecting very much to the inclusion of the Nordic countries, the Baltic countries in NATO for reasons of security. That happened or is happening, and nobody is going to certainly launch an aggression against Russia. Maybe our mentalities, for all of us, events are progressing, changing so quickly that we have difficulties in adapting ourselves, our mentalities to these situations. Thank you.