BOSTON UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Dissertation

THE DIALECTICS OF SMALL STATES:

FOREIGN POLICY MAKING IN ARMENIA AND GEORGIA

by

ASBED KOTCHIKIAN

B.A., American University of Beirut, 1995
M.A., Boston University, 2000

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

2006

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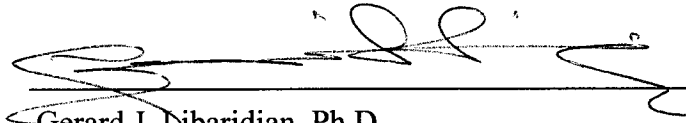P.O. Box 1346
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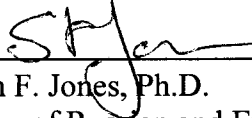
Approved by

First Reader _____

Walter D. Connor, Ph.D.
Professor of Political Science, Sociology and
International Relations
Boston University

Second Reader _____

Gerard J. Libaridian, Ph.D.
Alex Manougian Visiting Professor of
Modern Armenian History
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Third Reader _____

Stephen F. Jones, Ph.D.
Professor of Russian and Eurasian Studies
Mount Holyoke College

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The British statesman Winston Churchill described the process of writing a book very well when he said: "Writing a book is an adventure. To begin with, it is a toy and an amusement; then it becomes a mistress, and then it becomes a master, and then a tyrant. The last phase is that just as you are about to be reconciled to your servitude, you kill the monster, and fling him out to the public." The process of "killing" this dissertation has taken the time, attention, guidance and devotion of many individuals.

I am indebted to Professor Stephen F. Jones for his guidance on the history and politics of Georgia as well as on the theoretical discussion on minority/majority relations. Professor Gerard J. Libaridian helped me shed light on the politics of Armenia and on some events pertaining to the region, I thank him for that as well as for being a mentor and advisor in times of uncertainty. Professor Walter D. Connor provided his unequivocal support as the coordinator of the dissertation committee and never failed to have a word of encouragement every time we communicated. Professor David Mayers was the person who first suggested that I undertake a comparison of Armenia and Georgia at some level and also accepted to be a reader on the committee.

Having been written on three different continents and seven different cities, this work has been truly a global endeavor with many people assisting in its realization. It would have been impossible for this work to have started and been finished without the utmost support, cheering—and sometimes the complaints—of my partner, Talinn Grigor, who after finishing her own PhD, channeled all her energy and attention to help me

conclude mine. Christian A. and Richard A. have repeatedly reviewed, edited and corrected the dissertation to a point where they knew the content more that anyone else.

Alexander Rondeli in Tbilisi and Alexander Markarov in Yerevan both acted as intellectual "punching bags" for my ideas and helped me understand many of the realities exiting in Georgia and Armenia. Through their support I was able to refine many of the ideas and concepts expressed in this work.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my late mother, Dikranouhi and my father, Sarkis for instilling the love of books and scholarship in me by filling my childhood home with books and publications which in turn developed to become a passion for learning.

THE DIALECTICS OF SMALL STATES:

FOREIGN POLICY MAKING IN ARMENIA AND GEORGIA

(Order No.   )

ASBED KOTCHIKIAN

Boston University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, 2006

Major Professor: Walter D. Connor, Professor of Political Science, Sociology and
International Relations

ABSTRACT

The disintegration of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s resulted in the independence of

its constituent republics and the addition of fifteen countries to the international political

system. These new countries struggled with the state-making task with considerable

difficulty because of their lack of experience in statehood. Moreover, the changing

international system rendered their state-building process thornier. Two countries in the

South Caucasus—Armenia and Georgia—have faced numerous challenges in creating

stable, viable and functioning states since their independence in 1991, while at the same

time tackling ethnic and civil wars, building state institutions and interacting with other

actors in the regional and international domains.

This dissertation focuses on the foreign policy making processes in Armenia and

Georgia, but it also aims to survey, examine and critique the literature pertaining to the

theory of small states. Thus far, the field of studying small state foreign policy has been

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conditioned by the Cold War balance of power system, which disregards some of the attributes that small states are able to contribute to the analysis of foreign policy. To remedy this, the research examines the way small states conduct foreign policy and adapt to changing international political systems by forging alliances with larger neighbors and by becoming active in international organizations. In four separate sections, the dissertation analyzes the various concepts related to small states. Then it examines the political reality in the South Caucasus during the post-Cold War era, after which it focuses on the foreign policies of Armenia and Georgia. The latter employs the theoretical discussions on small states as well as interviews and statements of foreign policy formulators within each country. Finally a discussion of Armenian-Georgian bilateral relations addresses the dynamics of small state interaction with each other.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANM   Armenian Pan National Movement

ARF   Armenian Revolutionary Federation

AIOC   Azerbaijan International Operating Company

BTC   Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Oil Pipeline

BSEC   Black Sea Economic Cooperation

CASCO   Caspian Sea Cooperation Organization

CIS   Commonwealth of Independent States

CISPKF   CIS peacekeeping forces

CPG   Communist Party of Georgia

CSCE   Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe

EC   Council of Europe

EU   European Union

GTEP   Georgia Train and Equip Program

GUAM   Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova

GUUAM   Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Moldova

GDP   Gross Domestic Product

IPAP   Individual Partnership Action Plan

IRI   Islamic Republic of Iran

NKAO   Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast

NDP   National Democratic Party

NIS	Newly Independent States
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OSCE	Organization of Cooperation and Security in Europe
PACE	Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe
PfP	Partnership for Peace
SSOP	Sustainment and Stability Operations Program
TACIS	Technical Aid to CIS
TRACECA	Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia
TABDC	Turkish-Armenian Business Development Council
TARC	Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UN	United Nations

INTRODUCTION

The processes that culminated in the fall of the Soviet Union during the final decades of the 20th century produced new geopolitical and socioeconomic realities in the countries of that former "empire." The reshaping of power relations within the boundaries of the former Soviet Union was also felt in the countries neighboring the now-independent republics. For those newly independent states, the search for new political and economic orientations in a constantly changing international system became the dictate of the day. To achieve this, they faced numerous challenges such as building the necessary institutions for sustaining a state, establish working relations with various countries and above all chart foreign policies having in mind their own national and state interests.

This dissertation examines the foreign policies of two of the former Soviet republics of the South Caucasus—Armenia and Georgia—within the context of small state foreign policy. It argues that while the analysis of small states foreign policy strategies have mostly been ignored in the larger discipline of political science, their study is vital for Armenia and Georgia, enabling an intriguing analysis as a result of their appearance on the international scene after the disintegration of the Soviet Union without previous experience of modern statehood. Moreover the fact that both countries were engulfed in civil and ethnic wars rendered their attempts to reintegrate into the international system a thornier task, thus providing an opportunity for in-depth analysis of a range of facets of small state foreign policy formulation. The rubric of small and new states that Armenia and Georgia find themselves under, further, provides a multifaceted

understanding of the foreign policy tactics faced by such states. While there is a general consensus that in an international system dominated by long-established and great powers, small states tend to be powerless and unable to influence political processes, an exhaustively study of Armenia's and Georgia's foreign policy strategies demonstrates that whereas both are categorized as small and are therefore incapable of making their presence felt in the international scene, they can, and do formulate independent foreign policies to protect and promote their interests.

Inclusions, Exclusions and Choices

The choice of considering Armenia and Georgia as two comparative case analyses and excluding Azerbaijan—the third country in the South Caucasus—was made in view of several factors. Firstly, as a result of the author's ethnic background, traveling to Azerbaijan—much less having access to resources —proved to be near impossible. The 16 year-old conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Armenian populated enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh has made traveling between the two countries an impossible task while Armenians wishing to travel to Azerbaijan need special invitations approved by the government.

The second reason for focusing solely on Armenia and Georgia is based on the historical fact that both countries have had a longer presence as well developed and coherent political entities in the South Caucasus. While this research is not a historical analysis of events, the selection of the two nations with the longest period of interaction

with each other as well as with neighbors, helps examine trends and derive conclusions from the behavior over an extended period of time. Moreover because of the comparative context of this work, religion matters and it introduces a set of new variables which make the examination of foreign policy more tumultuous. While in and by itself religion is not a decisive factor for conducting foreign policy, it does influence a country's relations with others, especially in a region such as the South Caucasus where, more often than not, historically warring sides have belonged to various religions, superimposing religious tones and layers to otherwise geopolitical conflicts.

The second dimension of the research consists of the examination of the theory of small and new states' foreign policies. The choice of this topic to examine Armenia and Georgia stems from the fact that both countries are small and new and since independence have struggled to establish their political will both regionally and internationally. While the study of small states in political science and international relations is not a new field, the increase in such studies has proved to be directly proportional to changing international systems and the appearance of new states after major global political upheavals. Such events include the end of both World Wars, the period of decolonization in the 1960s and, last but not least, the disintegration of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia in the final decade of the 20th Century.

Apart from the mass presence and relevance of small and new states in the international system in late 20th and early 21st centuries, utilizing small state analysis to examine various political processes offers scholars a clearer vision of political processes in countries both in terms of the decision-making as well as implanting levels. In contrast

to larger and older states, because of the simplicity of the mechanisms involved in small and new state foreign policy making, it is possible to chart the political processes in smaller countries—such as conception of ideas and their implementations—an easier process.

Mapping the Field(s)

The concept of small states is not a new phenomenon in the field of political science or international relations. However, while during the past several decades many scholars raised this topic, there has not been a single definitive conclusion as to what constitutes as small state. The lack of a widely acceptable definition of what are the parameters and characteristics of a small or weak state, is the result of limitations set by scholars who work on this topic and eventually use definitions limited by the academic field, scientific discipline or the area with which they analyze.[1] The increased interest in the study of small states and their foreign policies resulted in the creation of at least one major challenge for scholars working in this field. As new publications appeared on this topic, so did a new dilemma on how to define small states. The problem of categorizing smallness is epitomized in the need to make a distinction between small states and non-small states. The reason behind this distinction is that it is far easier to measure the size of a nation and categorize it as small, when utilizing tangible indictors such as geographical

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[1] See Bojko Buèar, "International Cooperation of European Sub-National Regions," *Journal of International Relations* 2, no. 1-4 (1995): 6. Although Buèar talks about definition of regions, the implementation of his idea on the definition of small states is also applicable.

and demographic size, economic weakness or lack of natural resources. While the larger

the size and capabilities of a state, the more difficult it is to place that country in a certain

category.[2]

While there have been many attempts to define what constitutes a small state, this

research has chosen to make use of the following definition by Robert Rothstein who

characterized a small state as "a state which recognizes that it cannot obtain security

primarily by use of its own capabilities and that it must rely fundamentally on the aid of

other states, institutions, processes, or developments to do so."[3] Rothstein underscores

that a small state is unable to defend its national interests by its own political and military

means, hence making a small state a weak power. This definition is based on the fact that

it deals with a country's inability to influence political processes, exemplified through the

utilization of foreign policy.

The task of labeling the studies conducted on modern Armenia and Georgia can

be accomplished by utilizing techniques used to define the field of Soviet studies.

Beginning in the mid-1960s and continuing well into the early 1980s, a great number of

texts attempted to address the conceptual/methodological difference between "Soviet

Studies" and "Sovietology."[4] Ironically it was the end of the subject of the study—the

Soviet Union—that made possible the development of finite parameters for these terms.

Aryeh L. Unger made one of the clearest distinctions in 1998:

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[2] See Ronald Barston, ed., *The Other Powers: Studies in the Foreign Policies of Small States* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1973), 14-15.
[3] Robert Rothstein, *Alliances and Small Powers* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 29.
[4] See for instance Dan N. Jacobs, "Area Studies and Communist Systems," *Slavic Review* 26, no. 1 (March 1967): 18-21 and Frederic J. Fleron Jr., "Soviet Area Studies and the Social Sciences: Some Methodological Problems in Communist Studies," *Soviet Studies* 19, no. 3 (January 1968): 313-339.

> Sovietology concerns first and foremost the study of Soviet politics thus making it a field or sub-discipline of political science. While not the exclusive preserve of political scientists, specialists from other disciplines—history, economics, sociology, law, among others—may be considered as practicing Sovietology to the extent that their work touches on aspects of politics.[5]

He continued:

> "Soviet Studies" suggests itself as an obvious candidate for the generic term designating studies in the humanities and social sciences that have the Soviet Union as their object, leaving "Sovietology" as the specific term designating the study of Soviet politics.[6]

Furthermore, by looking into the classic definitions of area studies' goals, one observes four main trends: provide knowledge of practical value about important world areas; provide students and scholars awareness of cultural relativity; present understanding of social and cultural entities as they exist in areas; and to further the development of a universal social science.[7]

Based on this classification and distinction between "ologies" and area studies it might be possible to operationalize the concepts of Caucasus Studies and Caucasology, as well as include the various publications dealing with post-Soviet Armenia and Georgia under either or both of these categories. The problem of Caucasus Studies, however, is that a lack of structure prohibits a multidisciplinary approach utilizing the various social sciences, language instructions supplemented with strong supporting courses in history, government or religion.[8] Instead, those scholars dealing with the region have chosen to

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[5] Aryeh L. Unger, "On the Meaning of 'Sovietology'," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 31, no. 1 (March 1998): 18.

[6] Ibid, 23.

[7] See Julian Haynes Steward, *Area Research, Theory and Practice* (New York, Social Science Research Council, 1950), 2.

[8] See Marshall K. Powers, "Area Studies: A Neglected Field of Academic Responsibility," *The Journal of Higher Education* 26, no. 2 (February 1955): 82.

observe and analyze problems from the prism of a single discipline, pigeonholing their concerns, thus rendering the field a Caucasology rather than Caucasus Studies.

Far too many countries exert political and socioeconomic influence in the Caucasus. Thus, while Russia considers the region as its backyard, other regional powers, such as Iran and Turkey, also have a keen interest in the area. The West, too, has been making its presence felt. The United States and Europe regard the Caucasus as geostrategically important because of its proximity to the troubled Middle East and its potential as a steppingstone to Central Asia. If the factor of Caspian energy and its immediacy to the region is also added to the formula, it becomes apparent that the Caucasus is a region of extreme importance for regional and international actors alike. Thus, it is important for both scholars and policy makers to understand the intricacies through which Armenia and Georgia conduct their foreign policies by examining the foreign policy formulation processes within each country, as well as to understand the views of policymakers—past and present—in order to have a better perspective on the various factors influencing policymaking in each country.

Anatomy of this Dissertation

The overall structure of the dissertation is linear temporally in terms of narrative with several thematic interjections to elaborate various points and concepts. Over a five year period, research was conducted on the literature of small state foreign policy while at the same time carrying out fieldwork in the form of interviews and on location

observations in Yerevan and Tbilisi. The bulk of the literature on small states was compiled mainly in Boston University's Mugar Library and Harvard University's Widener Library which either had or provided access to journals dating as old as 1912 dealing with the theoretical framework of analyzing small states. Further research was conducted at the Cambridge University Library in the United Kingdom. Finally, the Library of Congress provided reference in double checking the validity of selected journal articles and dates.

The examination of Armenia's and Georgia's foreign policies was done at two levels. The easier but longer process was to research the daily news pertaining to political processes in both countries' foreign policies and their relations with other relevant countries. This was done over a period of five years by scavenging through news sources found either online at various electronic news sources or on the ground by obtaining published news in Armenia and Georgia. The second shorter but more daunting task consisted of interviewing policymakers and individuals involved in the policymaking communities in each country. Thus interviewing former and current foreign ministry officials in Yerevan, Tbilisi, New York, Boston, London and Washington DC provided invaluable insight into and understanding of the various nuances involved in the process of formulating and implementing foreign policies in small and new countries such as Armenia and Georgia. In Yerevan, interviews were conducted with former Armenian Foreign Ministers Vahan Papazian and Raffi Hovannisian as well as with heads of several of the departments at the Armenian Foreign Ministry. In Tbilisi the interviewees included the First Deputy Ministry of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as the heads

of the Russian, Americas and CIS departments. Outside of the Caucasus numerous interviews and discussion with current and former employees of the foreign ministries of both countries have provided invaluable help and insight into the subject matter. Some of the people within this category include Gerard J. Libaridian who, because of his past involvement as a senior advisor to the former Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrossian, and in his capacity as a member of this dissertation committee was able to point to discrepancies in the way events were interpreted.

This study is divided into four main sections, each dealing with a specific topic in an attempt to weave together a narrative to show the extent of small state theory applicability in the specific cases of Armenian and Georgian foreign policies. To this end, the first chapter traces a detailed discussion of what constitutes smallness. Here the historical development of the idea is mapped and the contribution of various authors is juxtaposed before reaching to a definition of small states applicable to Armenia and Georgia. Since both countries are new additions on the international scene, the concept of new states are also dealt with in this section rendering the overall theoretical discussion on small and new states in the post-Cold War era. Yet another component of the theoretical framework of the dissertation includes the analysis of foreign policy making and diplomacy and their various components. Finally both concepts—smallness and foreign policy—are converged into a larger discussion on how small and new states conduct foreign policy and what are the elements which they choose to dwell on while forgoing others.

Chapter two maps the overall geopolitical situation in the South Caucasus immediately before and after the collapse of the Soviet Union in an attempt to show the interest—or sometimes the lack of—expressed by the countries neighboring and interested in the South Caucasus. To make this task more manageable, a comparative approach is adopted to juxtapose the interests of Russia and the West—comprising both the Unites States and Europe—on the one hand and Turkey and Iran on the other. In this context the examination of Russian-Western rivalry and cooperation is pivotal in order to grasp the predicament of the smaller states caught in between these great powers. Moving from global powers to regional ones, a contrast between Iranian and Turkish policies towards the South Caucasus helps situate the these territories in the regional context of Central Asia, North Caucasus and more importantly the Middle East. The conclusion of this section facilitates the projection of the various geopolitical forces at flux in the region, which more often than not hinder the development of normal relations between the three countries of the South Caucasus.

The following two chapters take up in-depth analyses of Armenia's and Georgia's foreign policy processes and issues respectively. Chapter three begins with Armenia's balancing act between Russia and the West. It reveals the intricacies of Armenia's shifting policy directions from an independent foreign policy since independence in 1991 to an eventual quasi-vassal state considered by many today. Next, Armenia's relations with the Arab countries of the Middle East as well as Iran are dealt with because of two major factors: Armenian-Iranian relations have been the most stable one among the Armenia's bilateral relations with its neighbors in the sense that Iran has always been

regarded by Armenian's to be Yerevan's ally. Moreover the Armenian-Iranian border is also the least-troublesome land border of all of Armenia's borders. Armenia's interaction with the Middle East also stems from the fact that there are large Armenian communities in several countries such as Lebanon, Syria and Iran and these communities act as conduits for the development of bilateral relations between their hostlands and homelands. The analysis of Armenia's relations with Turkey is conducted through the prism of bilateral historic relations between the two countries focusing on the border opening between the two countries. In this section a distinction is made between Armenia's and Armenian foreign policy priorities bringing in the Diaspora dimension into Yerevan's foreign policy prerogatives. The final segment of the third chapter is an attempt to elucidate some of the components involved in the relations between Armenia and the diasporas.

Chapter four addresses Georgia's diplomatic relations with various powers, the most problematic of which is Russia. Thus, the historical narrative tracing the turbulent relation between Czarist, Soviet and then Federal Russia on the one and Georgia on the other sheds light on the sources and origins of the latter's mistrust of the former. This section spans from the period of Georgia's incorporation into the Czarist Empire in 1801 until the negotiations of Russian takeover of the Georgian energy pipeline network in 2005. This historical overview brings the chapter's focus to the ethnic tensions that have dictated Georgia's relations with Russia and other neighbors since its independence in 1991. Georgia's two Autonomous Republics, Abkhazia and Ajaria, and one autonomous oblast, south Ossetia, became—and continue to be—a source of separatist ethnic and civil

wars in post-Soviet period. Due mainly to an attempt to counterbalance Russia's sway

over Georgia and in part to a optimistic projection about Georgia's future, Tbilisi has

been keen to develop closer cooperation with the West. In this section, particular

attention is paid to Georgia's involvement with Western security institutions, such as the

North Atlantic Treaty Organization, followed by Georgian-Turkish bilateral relations.

Turkey is regarded as Georgia's main land outlet to Western institutions. The final

section of the final chapter looks at Armenian-Georgian bilateral relations and the

historical and current geopolitical dictates that determine the interactions between the two

states. In this section the analysis of the relations between the two nations, as well as

between the two states, are examined in an attempt to explain the rivalry existing between

the two.

CHAPTER I: SMALL AND NEW STATES IN A SMALL NEW WORLD

In the field of political science and international relations, the examination of the foreign policy of small states has always been overshadowed by the importance given to the foreign policy of greater powers. Without a doubt this neglect stems from the belief that it is the larger states that have influential foreign policies capable of having an impact on the international stage. After the end of the Second World War and the beginning of the Cold War the international community witnessed the rivalry of not great powers but two superpowers. Consequently with the end of the Cold War and the demise of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) the international community faced a new reality when the former constituents of the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc countries became actors in their own right on the international stage, thus considerably increasing the number of states as actors on the international political scene.

This chapter will attempt to establish the parameters within which the analysis of Armenia's and Georgia's foreign policies—as small states—would be discussed in later chapters. To achieve this, the study will first survey the previous work done on the concept of small states by various scholars by analyzing the existing literature on the concept of "small states." Within that context, the works of European and American authors who have tried to define "smallness" will be examined with an attempt to arrive to a concrete definition which will be used as a point of reference for the ongoing discussion on small states. It should be noted here that the interchangeable use of "small" and "weak" states by most scholars is one of the major problems that inhibits the field examining the size and impact of states in the international system.

The second section will analyze the nature of foreign policy making and the strategies used to implement those policies in the post-Cold War era. The international political system underwent major changes after the collapse of the Soviet Union and as such, the way state and non-state actors interact with each other is considerably different than the established norm during the Cold War era. In this section some attention will be paid to the issues of changing priorities of states and the methods they pursue to achieve their redefined goals.

The final section of the chapter will address the different concerns small states face in conducting their distinct foreign policies. The discussion in this section will dwell on the weaknesses and strengths that small states embody during the processes of defining their relations with neighboring countries, international organizations and institutions as well as with other countries in the international system. It will be argued that while having limited impact on the international system because of their lack of resources, small states do cope with the larger processes and find means to define and defend their national securities and interests in a changing world.

When is "Small," Small?

Analyzing the concept of small states has been a task undertaken by many

scholars over the past several decades. Throughout the history of political thought, many

philosophers and thinkers have dealt with the issue of small states going as far back as

Plato.[1] The tradition of studying small states has been very well established in Europe

and it dated as far back as the 19th century.[2] The interest by European scholars to analyze

small states stems mostly from the fact that Europe was the home of many small states,

such as the numerous German and Italian principalities existing before the unification of

those two countries in the second half of the 19th century. The strong European tradition

of studying small states continued well into the 20th century and even intensified after the

end of the First World War when the number of states in the international system—and

specifically in Europe—increased tremendously.[3]

However, this century-long interest in the field of small states and the existing

vast literature has not resulted in a unified and agreed upon definition on what constitutes

a small state. The lack of such a definition could be mostly attributed to two major

factors: Firstly, scholars dealing with this concept set limitations on their own work either

because of the restrictions of the academic field and discipline that the scholars belongs

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[1] See Otmar Höll, ed., *Small States in Europe and Dependence* (Vienna: Austrian Institute for International Affairs, 1983), 14.

[2] Niels Amstrup, "The Perennial Problems of Small States: A Survey of Research Efforts," *Cooperation and Conflict* 11, no. 4 (1976): 163-164. The same article provides an excellent survey of books and articles published on the issue of small states in both Europe and the Unites States.

[3] The breakup of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires resulted in the independence of most of the Eastern European countries. See William Rappard, "Small States in the League of Nations," *Political Science Quarterly* 49, no. 4 (December 1934): 544-575.

to, or because of the geographic area that the undertaken study deals with.[4] Secondly, the fact that the literature on small states focuses more on the task of defining what is a small state rather than analyzing the behavior of small states has undermined the examination of this field.[5] The absence of a coherent and a well-defined theoretical framework to study small states has seriously handicapped the field.[6]

When and why study small states?

As mentioned above, while the study of the field of small states has been underway in Europe as early as the 19th century, there have been cycles of increased interest in the field. According to Mark Bray and Steve Packer, some of the reasons which resulted in the increase in the number of studies on small states include:

> a) Some state characteristics are more typical in small states and led themselves to generalization;
> b) *The increase in the number of small states attracts research*;
> c) Numerous political crises in the last few years have increased the interest in the study of small states and
> d) The determination of small states for their voice to be heard (and taken into account) in debates on international questions.[7] (emphasis added)

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[4] For instance scholars dealing with European small states use definitions which do not correspond to the criteria used by scholars studying small states in Latin America, the Caribbean or Africa. Similarly a *sociologist would use different criteria to measure size which might not necessarily be the same indictors* used by a political scientist or an economist. See Amstrup, "The Perennial Problems," 165 and Bojko Buèar, "International Cooperation of European Sub-National Regions," *Journal of International Relations* 2, nos. 1-4 (1995): 6.

[5] Amstrup, "The Perennial Problems," 165.

[6] Margret Sieber, "Dimensions of Small States Dependence: The Case of Switzerland," in *Small States in Europe and Dependence,* ed. Otmar Höll, (Vienna: Austrian Institute for International Affairs, 1983), 108 and Raymond Vogel, "Small States' Efforts in International Relations: Enlarging the Scope," in *Small States* in *Europe and Dependence,* ed. Otmar Höll, (Vienna: Austrian Institute for International Affairs, 1983), 56.

[7] Mark Bray and Steve Packer, *Education in Small States: Concepts, Challenges and Strategies* (Oxford, UK: Pergamon Press, 1993), xxiii-xxiv.

Thus, the beginning of the 20th century marked one of the first instances when the study of small states received attention. Specifically the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in June 1919 amplified this interest not only because a number of small states, for instance Belgium and Serbia had an important presence at the assembly but also the treaty single-handedly brought into existence a significant number of previously unknown small states such as Armenia and Georgia.[8] Another period which witnessed a surge in the examination of the small state phenomenon was after the end of the Second World War and the establishment of a new world order with many small states operating on the international stage. The final wave of interest in small states was after the fall of the Soviet Union and the introduction of new states—be it the constituent republics of the Soviet Union or the ones of former Yugoslavia. The increase in the number of states after the fall of Soviet Union was not merely quantitative but also qualitative for the Eastern Bloc countries of Eastern Europe—such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Bulgaria—were able to conduct policies distinct from hose of Moscow.

Geographically speaking the genesis and the hotbed of the field of examining small states was Europe. It was not until after the Second World War that this field was ventured into by American scholars, albeit with complete neglect of the work done by scholars in Europe. In the United States, such studies could be tracked down to Annette Baker Fox's *The Power of Small States* where she deals with small states within the context of their security vis-à-vis great powers.[9] Her study concentrates on five countries

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[8] See Höll, *Small States in Europe and Dependence*, 14.
[9] Annette Baker Fox. *The Power of Small States: Diplomacy in World War II*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959).

during the Second World War and the way they resisted being drawn into that conflict.[10]

Many European scholars have argued that, because of their lack of insight to previous studies carried on by European researchers, American scholars approached it solely from a security perspective rather than a wider angle of economics and integration issues. According to one European scholar:

> The omissions [by American scholars] indicate a surprising lack of knowledge of the literature concerned, and first and foremost a lack of knowledge of European research efforts. From a scientific point of view, the deplorable aspect is that the most interesting and fruitful theoretical developments took place as the result of European research effort, but the decision as to whether the approach was of scientific value or should be abandoned was taken mostly by American scholars as a consequence of their superior resources in manpower, periodicals and text books."[11]

The timing of Fox's study may be one reason to explain the increased interest in the study of small states in the United States. Considering that the international political system had recently reconfigured by the end of the Second World War and the emergence of two superpowers, several medium powers and many small powers, the understanding of the concerns of small states was imperative for policy makers in the United States to devise necessary strategies to deal with those states. In this context, Fox's study of how smaller countries could manipulate rivaling great powers and receive concessions from all or most of them became an important case study to understand how smaller countries could and do function within the parameters of existing rivalries between several powers—in this context two superpowers.

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[10] The study included Finland, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and Turkey. The peculiarity of the study is that it did not include the study of the less "fortunate" smaller states such as Czechoslovakia and thus ignored a whole level of great power-small state relation in which the loser was the side with no bargaining power i.e. the small state.

[11] Wilhelm Christmas-Møller, "Some Thoughts on the Scientific Applicability of the Small State Concept: A Research History and Discussion," in *Small States in Europe and Dependence,* ed. Otmar Höll (Vienna: Austrian Institute for International Affairs, 1983), 38.

In the 1960s, several other authors tried to widen the scope of the small state studies by examining various behaviors of small states within the context of the international system, the most discussed one of which was the issue of security. The concentration on small state security is not unexpected since, at the time, it seemed that security was the guiding principle for the behavior of all states—big and small. To address the security of small states Robert Rothstein's *Alliances and Small Powers* tried to explain the motivations beyond which small states join alliances.[12] Rothstein's research deals with the pre-World War II alliances existing in Europe with a special attention given to two alliances. The first example was a study in the case of small state-large state alliance with a specific case study of Franco-Belgian cooperation, which he regarded as an unequal alliance where one of the coalition members (Belgium), relied on the other (France) to guarantee its security from a third (Germany). The second alliance that Rothstein discusses was as a case of small states cooperating with each other to alleviate the pressure exerted on them by greater regional power. For this, he focuses on the "Little Entente," which was an alliance between several small East European countries to resist the rising German and Soviet pressures on them during the interwar period (1920-1939). In an earlier study, Rothstein dealt with the issue of small state alignment and non-alignment in the Cold War era;[13] however the overall theme of his research remains the security concerns of small states within the context of alliances.

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[12] Robert Rothstein. *Alliances and Small Powers.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1968.
[13] Robert Rothstein. "Alignment, Nonalignment, and Small Powers: 1945-1965," *International Organization* 20, no. 3 (Summer 1966): 397-418.

While most of the small state scholarship was published in the post-World War II

era, an overwhelming number of them dealt with pre-World War II states in an

international system defined by multiple poles of power. In an article published in the

journal *International Organization*, Robert Keohane gave an analysis and a review of

several books dealing with the topic of small states and alliances.[14] Keohane's article

provided a much-needed critical edge to the study of the field and became the driving

force to make scholars look beyond the concept of alliances being the sole guarantor of

small state weaknesses. His main contention was that the study of small states were to be

examined within the context of the then existing bipolar international system of the Cold

War world, which radically broke from the previous studies dealing with a balance of

power system as it was prevalent in Europe in between the two world wars.

Defining small states

The increased interest in the study of small states and their foreign policies

resulted in the creation of at least one major challenge for scholars working in this field.

As new publications appeared on this topic, so did a new dilemma on how to define small

states. The problem of defining smallness is epitomized when the need to make a

distinction between small states and non-small states. What is meant by this is that it is

far easier to make a distinction between small and non-small states when the countries

involved are geographically isolated, physically small and do not have natural or human

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[14] Robert Keohane, "Lilliputians' Dilemmas: Small States in International Politics," *International Organization* 23, no. 2 (Spring 1969): 291-310. Keohane's review included Rothstein's and Vital's books as well as two books dealing with alliances—George Liska. *Alliances and the Third World*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1968 and Robert E. Osgood. *Alliances and American Foreign Policy*. Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1968.

resources, on the contrary the larger the size and capabilities of states, the more difficult the categorization.[15]

Some of the criteria used by scholars to categorize states include geographic size, population size and economic development. In a number of cases two or more of these criteria are used simultaneously to arrive to a classification accepted by all, however a general survey of the literature on small states which utilized population size and economic activity as indictors for smallness reveals a discrepancy which extends over individuals as well as over time-periods. For instance writing in 1967, David Vital coupled Gross Domestic Product (GDP) with population size and arrived to the conclusion that small states are those which have a population range of 10-15 million together with a GDP of at least US$ 300—economically more developed—or a population range of 20-30 million along with a GDP of less than US$ 300—economically less developed.[16] This method to indicate state size has been mapped over a wide spectrum ranging from a low of one million to a high of 16 million as a maximum population limit for a small state.[17] Between 1970s and 80s, the population upper cutoff points have become smaller perhaps reflecting to reflect the population boom in some countries which while were considered small in the past have gradually managed to

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[15] See Ronald Barston, ed., *The Other Powers: Studies in the Foreign Policies of Small States* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1973), 14-15.

[16] See David Vital, *The Inequality of States: A Study of the Small Power in International Relations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 7-9 and 52-53.

[17] For instance at the two opposite sides of the spectrum, Ronald Barston uses a population limit of 10-15 million, Colin Clarke and Tony Payne, (*Politics, Security, and Development, in Small States.* London; Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987) use significantly lower threshold of 1 million.

become quite active on the international scene.[18] Thus in the 1960s few scholars suggested cutoff points between five to fifteen million, while in the 1970s that threshold was between one to three million.[19] By the mid-1980s and 1990s authors appear to have agreed that smallness is indicated by an absolute maximum population of one and a half million, with most setting at the level of one million, and some as low as 100,000.[20]

While the usage of population size as an indicator of a country's overall size in the international system does carry some merits, there are also some problems with this technique. Thus it is true that countries with smaller population would lack the necessary manpower to conduct effective and well developed government agencies and that economically speaking, a country with a small population will have trouble competing with those who have a large workforce. On the other side of the spectrum, with the changing nature of economic and political transactions in the modern era of technological and scientific advances, it seems that the quality, rather than the quantity of the population is what matters for a state's ability to have a regional or even international impact.

It is important to point out that the categorization of states into a hierarchy of small, medium or great is very much dependent on the level of analysis used by a scholar while examining any country or region. A country might be classified medium or great when examined on a regional level but the same country might be classified as small

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[18] See Edward Dommen and Philippe Hein, eds., *States, Microstates, and Islands* (London; Dover, N.H.: Croom Helm, 1985), 23-25.
[19] Philippe Hein, "The Study of Microstates," in *States, Microstates and Islands*, eds. Edward Dommen and Philippe Hein. (London: Croom Helm, 1985), 24-25.
[20] See for instance Mark Bray, "Education in Small states: Growth of Interest and Emergence of Theory." *Prospects* 21, 4 (1991): 503-516 and Bray and Packer, *Education in Small States*.

when the analysis is done on a global or international level. Another important criterion

in determining a country's size is the field of study which the country is being examined

in. Accordingly, if a study is dealing with economic issues then some countries might

prove to have a significant impact on regional or global level; however the same country

might not be of importance when dealing with global military might. For instance the

Netherlands, Belgium or the Scandinavian countries all have a significant impact on the

global trade and economy, however militarily they are almost non-existent on the global

map.[21] Hence, this impacts the categorization of each of these states as small or large.

The utilization of physical indictors to define size has been associated with the

structural approach in the study of international relations where scholars would look at

the structure and composition of states and their components to categorize them in the

hierarchy of states. This approach has been the accepted norm for the examination of

small states until Annette Baker Fox utilized a behavioral model for defining the size of

states. According to her:

> ... we can think of small states as those whose leaders recognize that their own state's
> political weight is limited to a local arena rather than a global one, that they are
> dependent upon outside political forces for much of their security, and that their
> particular state's interest may be dispensable in the eyes of one or more great powers.[22]

Robert Rothstein had a similar definition of small states:

> A small power is a state which recognizes that it cannot obtain security primarily by use
> of its own capabilities and that it must rely fundamentally on the aid of other states,
> institutions, processes or developments to do so.[23]

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[21] Omer De Raeymaeker et al, *Small Powers in Alignment* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1974), 19-20.
[22] Annette Baker Fox, "The Small States in the International System, 1919 -1969," *International Journal* 24, no. 4 (1969): 751-752.
[23] Rothstein, *Alliances and Small Powers*, 29.

It is apparent that both Fox and Rothstein utilized security and military issues when trying to define small states which, while making it relevant in the Cold War period, became largely obsolete since 1991 where military strength and power are not the sole guidelines of power and strength of states.

It was Keohane who took on the task of providing a more comprehensive definition of small states, one which broke away from the security-oriented study of small states and focused on the influence that a country could have on various regional and international processes.[24] He summarized the categorization of states by:

> A great power is a state whose leaders consider that it can, alone, exercise a large , perhaps decisive, impact on the international system; a secondary power is a state whose leaders consider that alone it can exercise some impact, although never in itself decisive, on that system; a middle power is a state whose leaders consider that it cannot act alone effectively but may be able to have a systemic impact in a small group or through an international institution; a small power is a state whose leaders consider that it can never, acting alone or in a small group, make a significant impact on the system.[25]

Based on Keohane's definition, small states are system dominated units with the inability—either acting alone or in small groups—to make a significant impact on the international system.

According to the examination of the existing literature and the work of scholars on the topic of defining small states, it becomes clear that the usage of the word "small" to categorize states in the international system is one which utilizes physical size. While this classification could have its advantages when examining economic or military systems, small size does not necessarily reflect the ability of a state to pursue a series of policies—both domestic and foreign—to safeguard its own national interests as defined

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[24] Keohane, "Lilliputians' Dilemmas," 309-310.
[25] Ibid, 296.

by policymakers in that specific country. Many authors have the tendency to use the terms "small," "weak," "failed," and "insecure" interchangeably to designate states which are economically and militarily poor, do not have strong governments and which mostly do not register on the international relations radar.[26] This lax usage of various terms to denote the same concept feeds into the problem of definition as it was discussed above. Thus the fact that different authors use various terms to denote the same phenomenon is a major reason why the field of studying small states still lacks a uniform concept defining the size of states.

As one of the few authors who conducted detailed analysis of weak sates, Michael Handel surveyed over 600 titles (books and journals) and summarized his findings in the following table.[27]

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[26] While examples are abundant about the way authors interchangeably use these terms it is suffice to see Miriam Elman's " The Foreign Policies of Small States: Challenging Neorealism in its Own Backyards," *British Journal of Political Science* 25, no. 2 (April 1995): 171ff1. Elman, just like many of the other scholars, starts her discussion by admitting that the terms used will be interchangeable.

[27] Michael Handel, *Weak States in the International System* (London: F. Cass, 1981).

Table 1: Michael Handel's criteria to distinguish weak and strong states

CRITERIA	THE WEAK STATE	THE STRONG STATE
POPULATION	Very small	Very large
AREA	Very small	Very large
ECONOMY	1. GDP small in absolute terms. 2. Little or no heavy industry. 3. High degree of specialization in a narrow range of products. 4. Small domestic market, hence high dependency on foreign markets for imports and exports. 5. Research and Development very low in absolute terms. 6. High dependence on foreign capital.	1. GDP very high in absolute terms. 2. Very large, highly developed heavy industry (including weapons). 3. Very high degree of specialization in large variety of products. 4. Very large domestic market, hence little dependence on foreign export/import trade. 5. Research and Development very high in absolute terms. 6. No dependence on foreign capital.
MILITARY POWER	1. Cannot defend itself against external threats by its own strength; high or total dependence on external help. 2. Total (or very high) dependence on weapon acquisition in foreign countries. 3. A high proportion of strength always mobilized or at its disposal; longer range war potential very low.	1. Can defend itself by its own power against any state or combination of states; very little reliance on external support. 2. Has full array of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. 3. Domestic production of all weapons system. 4. Large standing armies, combined with very high war potential.
THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM	1. Limited scopes of interests (usually to neighboring and regional areas). 2. Little or no influence on the balance of power (or the nature of the system). 3. Mainly passive and reactive in foreign policy.* 4. Tends to minimize risks, especially vis-à-vis the powers. 5. Can be "penetrated" relatively easily.* 6. Strong support for international law and norms of international organizations.*	1. Worldwide (global) interests. 2. Weighs heavily in world balance of power; shapes the nature of the international system. 3. Pursues a dynamic and active foreign policy.* 4. Tends to maximize gains (rather than minimize risks).* 5. Relatively difficult to "penetrate" (depends on the nature of the internal political system).* 6. Low regard for international law and organizations; prefers power and summit policies.*

Source: Michael Handel, *Weak States in the International System* (London: F. Cass, 1981), 52-53.
* Characteristics frequently found in the literature of small states, with which Handel does not entirely agree.

Handel did note that his categorization for weak and strong states were the extremes in the sense that he has taken the absolute weakest and absolute super-power to illustrate his points.[28] Based on this table it becomes clear that such a classification is very much dependent on the criteria that a scholar uses. Although Handel does not discuss in detail the possibilities of a state being strong in one criteria and weak in another it is obvious that the task of categorizing all states as either weak or strong is an impossible task since there are numerous countries which could fall in the "strong state" category if they satisfy even at least one criteria.

For the purposes of this study, the criteria used to designate a state as weak will be solely the activity of a given state in the international system and the way it interacts with other states; in other words the foreign policy of a state. Also the terminology to be used to indicate states which are at the bottom of the hierarchy would be, weak rather than small since small is an adjective describing size—and in this case physical size— while weak is an adjective which indicates the lack of capabilities. This being said it should be mentioned that in the context of this study—i.e. the former Soviet space in the South Caucasus—the states examined happen to be weak AND small: the reason why the two terms might be used interchangeably is not because of lack of definition but because they coincide.

Finally to operationalize the concept of small and weak state, the definition to be used in this work will be an amalgam of what scholars in the field have previously stated. According to this research a small state is a state with limited resources—be it natural,

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[28] Handel, *Weak States in the International System*, 52.

human or experience in conducting foreign policies—as well as limited power—as defined by the inability of a state to project its interest beyond the immediate geographical neighborhood and the inability to pursue national interests relying solely on its own resources thus depending on alliances or close cooperation with stronger states.

New vs. modern states

Within the context of this study another dimension which needs to be addressed is the concept of new states. The reason for the introduction of yet another concept and its relevance to this study stems from the fact that most of the new states appearing in the post-Cold War period are small (in terms of size, population and GDP) as well as weak (limited impact and presence on the international system with a foreign policy geared towards regional environment). Table 2 below indicates the list of countries which achieved independence either during or after the end of the Cold War. In that list, Russia stands out as the only non-small—with population size and GDP comparable to those of Western developed states— and non-weak country—with a presence on the international scene as a country pursuing its national interest globally with enough impact on the system to be considered an international actor. Almost all of the remaining countries on the list fall within the category of small or weak states, with most countries satisfying both criteria simultaneously.

Among the former Soviet republics—save for Russia—Kazakhstan and Ukraine seem to be the only two countries with enough population, area and GDP, to be spared from being identified as small. However both are entrenched in the category of weak

states mostly because their field of diplomatic activity and activism is confined in the former Soviet space or at best in their immediate geographic surrounding. All of the former Yugoslav republics fall in the category of small and weak states because of their limited population, area and GDP. The categorization of the Czech Republic requires more pondering mostly because of its GDP, which is comparatively higher than most of the other countries in the list. However once taken within regional context and compared to its neighbors, the Czech Republic would also be classified as a small and weak state.

Table 2: New states in post-Cold War period

STATE	POPULATION	AREA (in sq km)	GDP (in $ billion)
Former Soviet Union			
Armenia	2,982,904	29,800	13.65
Azerbaijan	7,911,974	86,600	30.01
Belarus	10,300,483	207,600	70.5
Estonia	1,332,893	45,226	19.23
Georgia	4,677,401	69,700	14.45
Kazakhstan	15,185,844	2,717,300	118.4
Kyrgyzstan	5,146,281	198,500	8.495
Latvia	2,290,237	64,589	26.53
Lithuania	3,596,617	65,200	45.23
Moldova	4,455,421	33,843	8.581
Russia	143,420,309	17,075,200	1408
Tajikistan	7,163,506	143,100	7.95
Turkmenistan	4,952,081	488,100	27.6
Ukraine	47,425,336	603,700	299.1
Uzbekistan	26,851,195	447,400	47.59
Former Yugoslavia			
Bosnia & Herzegovina	4,025,476	51,129	26.21
Croatia	4,495,904	56,542	50.33
Macedonia	2,045,262	25,333	14.4
Serbia & Montenegro	10,829,175	102,350	26.27
Slovenia	2,011,070	20,273	39.41
Other New States			
Czech Republic	10,241,138	78,866	172.2
East Timor	1,040,880	15,007	0.37
Eritrea	4,561,599	4,561,599	4.154
Namibia	2,030,692	825,418	14.76
Slovakia	5,431,363	48,845	78.89

Source: CIA World Factbook. Found at www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/countrylisting.html. The population data are for 2005 while the GDP figures are 2004 estimates.

While talking about the concept of new states, it is worth examining the ways in which states become independent and enter the world arena as new countries. One of the first methods for a country to come into being is the dismantling of an empire or a larger country and the independence of its various parts. A good example for this case would be the fall of the Soviet Union and the independence of its constituencies; similarly Yugoslavia is a point in case for the creation of this type of states. Historically this has been one of the most common methods by which the international system has witnessed the appearance of new states, a good example being the period after the First World War when with the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires over ten new states appeared from the Baltics to the Balkans.

While in the previous example the creation of states was a result of devolution of a larger, previously existing entity, a second method for countries to appear is when two or more partners—be it an already existing independent state or two non-independent entities—join each other to form a new country. Several examples of this type of state formation and appearance include the unification of various German principalities and kingdoms during the 19th century, culminating in the creation of a larger German state in 1871. Italy offers a case very similar to that of Germany—both in terms of time period as well as process. More recent examples include the case of the short lived United Arab Republic, created by the union of Syria and Egypt in 1958-1961 and the more durable case of Tanzania which was the union of two independent states of Tanganyika and Zanzibar.

A third major method for states to appear on the international system is when colonies, vassal states or provinces become independent. This method has been the common trend in the post-Second World War period when many of the British and French colonies achieved independence. However there are also many cases of decolonization closer to our own time period such as the case of Namibia, which obtained its independence from South Africa in 1994 and East Timor which gained its independence in 2002 when Indonesia finally agreed to withdraw from this former Portuguese colony.

In the case of the creation of states from larger existing entities a relevant issue, especially when addressing the former Soviet republics, is to make a distinction between the secession and the remaining state. On the one hand, the secession state is conditioned by its former status in an empire or a larger entity were it was either an administrative unit, governed mostly from the center, or lacked considerable amount of autonomy or experience in conducting foreign policies.[29] On the other hand the remaining state is formed from the "mutated former central regions" of the former empires and hence this new state keeps the majority of the central state's administrative infrastructure, personnel and experiences in conducting foreign policies.[30] The lack of resources—infrastructure, personnel and experience—constitute a major handicap for a new "secession" state and limits its ability to become active not only internationally but also regionally hence reinforcing the idea that new states are *a priori* weak.

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[29] See Josef Langer and Wolfgang Pöllauer, eds., *Small States in the Emerging New Europe* (Eisenstadt: Verlag für Soziologie und Humanethologie, 1995), 13-15.
[30] Ibid.

To better understand the nature of the states in the post-Cold War period, Robert

Cooper's *The Post-Modern State and the World Order*, provides a good insight.[31] In

categorizing states based in their historic development, Cooper prioritizes three distinct

characteristics and rubric of statehood: pre-modern, modern and post-modern. The former

lacks order, and is characterized by a system where the state does not have exclusive right

to use force making it a fragile structure.[32] In the pre-modern state people survive relying

on natural resources (excluding oil and energy) and they are heavily dependent on aid

from richer countries. Examples include Sierra Leone, Somalia and Liberia.[33]

Modern states are the ones, according to Cooper, which rely on the classical

notion of a nation-state.[34] They rely heavily on the concepts of sovereignty and non-

interference by making sure that there are no external influences on the domestic policies

and politics, hence a distinction is made between domestic and foreign affairs.[35] Modern

states are willing to use force to protect their interests and hence utilize nationalism to

define, shape and guide their foreign policies and national interests. To this group belong

Brazil, China, India as well as most of the countries of Southeast Asia, Latin America and

the Middle East.[36]

The traditional understanding of sovereignty is no more an issue in Cooper's

view, when dealing with post-modern states. For they rely on cooperation with other

countries, which in turn leads to a great amount of interdependence among sovereign

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[31] Robert Cooper, *The Post-Modern State and the World Order* (London: Demos, 1996).
[32] Cooper, *Post-Modern State*, 18.
[33] *The Economist* magazine picked up on Cooper's idea and added some countries of its own. See "A Three-Way World," *The Economist*, December 18, 1997.
[34] Cooper, *Post-Modern State*, 19.
[35] Ibid.
[36] "A Three-Way World," *The Economist*, December 18, 1997.

states and develops a sense of belonging to a larger supra-state entity.[37] European

countries and specifically the European Union members, count among this latter group.

Furthermore, the characteristics of the international system or environment in which the

post-modern states operate include:

1. The breakdown of the distinction between domestic and foreign affairs;
2. Mutual interference in (traditional) domestic affairs and mutual surveillance;
3. The rejection of force for resolving disputes and the consequent codification of rules of behavior. These rules are self-enforced. No one compels states to obey CFE limits. They keep to them because of their individual interest in maintaining the collective system. In the same way the judgments of the European Court of Justice are implemented voluntarily, even when they are disliked, because all EU states have an interest in maintaining the rule of law;
4. The growing irrelevance of borders: this has come about both through the changing role of the states but also through missiles, motor cars and satellites. Changes of borders are both necessary and less important;
5. Security is based on transparency, mutual openness, interdependence and mutual vulnerability.[38]

Cooper's categorization also enables the classification of three historical periods in the

development of the international system. The first precedes the Peace of Westphalia and

is characterized by the absence of defined territorial sovereignty as well as the key

concept of a state. During this era, people living on a territory would identify themselves

with the territorial sovereign rather than with state institutions—if any existed.[39] The

period that followed the Peace of Westphalia is known as the Westphalian system or the

modern state period, during which, sovereignty and territoriality guided the principles of

inter-state relations. This period furthermore, witnessed the development of the modern

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[37] See Cooper, *Post-Modern State*, 23.

[38] Ibid, 26.

[39] For a detailed discussion of the Peace of Westphalia and the Thirty Year's War, refer to: Ronald G. Asch, *The Thirty Years War: The Holy Roman Empire and Europe, 1618-1648* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); Derek Croxton, *Peacemaking in Early Modern Europe: Cardinal Mazarin and the Congress of Westphalia, 1643-1648* (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press, 1999); Geoffrey Parker, ed., (*The Thirty Years' War*. New York: Routledge, 1997) and Friedrich Schiller, *The History of the Thirty Years' War*. Translated by the Rev. A. J. W. Morrison (London: G. Bell and sons, 1901).

international system, basic elements of which included: non-interference in the domestic affairs of other states and the concept of diplomatic immunity.[40] The need to establish the Westphalian system was mainly preconditioned by the need to have order and stability amongst states, particularly in Europe.[41] The final period, according to Cooper, which is still in the making, could trace its origins to the fall of the Soviet Union and the reshaping of the international political system where the traditional concepts of nation-states, sovereignty and balance of power seem to have lost their importance. Moreover the rise in influence of non-state actors on the international political scene rendered the role of the nation-state if not peripheral, at least less central.

It is the characteristics and attributes of this last period that one needs to consider when examining the notion of a post-modern state. As a result of the rapid nature of development of technology and knowledge, the state, in its traditional organization, is not capable to keep pace with the new ideas and technologies developing in the world. In other words the traditional state institutions seem to be incapable of processing the demands of change since the nature of world society has been transformed.[42] Based on this ever-changing world system it thus becomes clear that although the number of states, over the past decade or so, has increased tremendously, there have also been substantial changes in the way global culture, economy and technology are being processed or

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[40] See, Matthew Horsman and Andrew Marshall, *After the Nation State: Citizens, Tribalism and The New World Disorder* (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1995), 5.
[41] See Horsman and Marshall, *After the Nation State*, 263.
[42] Langer and Pöllauer, *Small States in the Emerging New Europe*, 26.

viewed. Consequently the 19th century model of the international community is no more a viable option.[43]

Despite the changes in the international system where the balance of power seems to have been substituted by "might makes right," and despite the rise of non-state actors—such as multinational corporations, non-governmental organizations, and inter-governmental organizations—the state still has a role to play in the international community mostly because collective identity and national institutions are deeply entrenched in the territorial state, hence the importance of the state as a basic unit of the international system.[44] Moreover the modern-state plays another important part in negotiating with trans-national or international organizations by protecting the national interests of the country and its citizens.[45] In other words, individuals themselves are unwilling or unready to give up on the concept, notion and institutions of the state since for them it still remains the basic point of collective identification and reference.[46]

The study of small and weak states within the context of the international system has gone through cycles. Scholarship in this field is not as scarce as it is widely believed, however interest in it seems to wane or increase depending on the changes in global politics. Thus with each major change in the international political system—the end of World Wars I and II, the Cold War period as well as the modern post-Cold War period—scholars tend to focus their attention on the role of small and weak states to explain

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[43] Ibid.
[44] Cooper, *Post-Modern State*, 26.
[45] Horsman and Marshall, *After the Nation State*, 240.
[46] See Horsman and Marshall, *After the Nation State*, 263-264 and Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers, Economic Change and Military Conflict From 1500 to 2000* (London: Fontana Press, 1988), 176-177.

changes no only in the system but also in the way interaction among states takes place. The analysis of small-state function is very much dependent on the academic field in which the research is carried out however even within the same field there are various definitions, making it impossible to utilize a common concept clarifying the meaning of small or weak state. While this might be viewed as a shortcoming, the production of a common definition is not a serious handicap hampering the development of the field. It is always possible to analyze various aspects of small and weak states as long as these terms are defined in advance.

Foreign Policy and Diplomacy

The study of foreign policy has been very popular among American scholars, with the general trend of examining the foreign policy of the United States. The wealth of material on this topic is also astonishing mostly because it falls within the academic sphere of not only international relations but also political science. However unlike the multiple definition referred to "small states," there seems to be an agreement upon the definition of foreign policy, as the study of how individual states in the international system make and implement decisions by interacting with other states, non-states actors and international organizations.[47]

Ronald Barston's more elaborate definition, here below, will be used in this study:

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[47] See for instance William Wallace, *Foreign Policy and the Political Process* (London, Macmillan, 1971), 7 and Joseph Frankel, *The Making of Foreign Policy: An Analysis of Decision-Making* (London, Oxford University Press, 1963), 1.

...foreign policy is the range of external actions pursued to achieve certain defined objectives or goals of which these may or may not have internal cognizance or approval. The essential elements of policy are: (1) capability, e.g. internal human and material resources, organization, political will; (2) purpose; (3) means, which will range from statements of position, diplomatic negotiations, foreign visits, economic agreements, cultural-technical exchanges, to the threat and use of military force. A government's policies will be shaped not only by internal factors but by the interplay between these and external restraints such as the dominance of a more powerful neighbor, limitations arising out of membership of an alliance and so on.[48]

The three categories of capability, purpose and means as defined by Barston, will

constitute the theoretical base in the different sections of this s dissertation: "capability"

in elaborating on foreign policy of small states in this chapter; "purpose" in examining

the specific foreign policies of Armenia and Georgia in chapters 3 and 4; and "means" in

analyzing diplomacy and diplomatic processes of small states again in this chapter. The

remaining section of this chapter will deal with the methods in foreign policy analysis.

Evolution of diplomacy

In addition to Barston's definition of foreign policy, his statement on diplomacy

can further push the theoretical discussion. According to him:

[d]iplomacy is concerned with the management of relations between states and between states and other actors. From a state perspective, diplomacy is concerned with advising, shaping and implementing foreign policy. As such it is the means by which states through their formal and other representatives, as well as other actors, articulate, coordinate and secure particular or wider interests, using correspondence, private talks, exchanges of view, lobbying, visits, threats and other related activities.[49]

In addressing diplomacy, the evolution of diplomatic practices is valuable to understand

the nuances of specific diplomatic activity. With the beginning of tribal societies, the

various interactions of clans had to have some rules and rituals attached to them thus

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[48] Barston, *The Other Powers*, 14.
[49] Barston, *The Other Powers*, 1.

marking the beginning of diplomatic activity.[50] However if we consider the institutions of

the state to be the ones responsible for diplomacy then the development of diplomatic

practices in the western world could be traced back to the Greek city-states.[51] An

important progress in this area occurred in the 15th century when the Italian city-states

interacted with each other. This increase in political and economic contacts developed the

concept of residential diplomatic missions.[52] By the late 15th century, residential

diplomacy was well established in Europe however diplomatic missions were represented

rulers rather than states in their host countries.[53]

Similar to the modern concept of a state, classical diplomacy traces its origins to

the Peace of Westphalia, which, among other factors and socio-political occurrences,

facilitated the start of the classical era of European diplomacy and kept equilibrium of

power within these states creating a system of mutual policing.[54] Parallel to the

establishment of the balance of power system in Europe, the practice of establishing

permanent diplomatic missions became a norm where diplomats started representing their

states rather than their sovereigns.[55]

The formative period of modern diplomacy is the 18th and 19th centuries, when

Western Europe developed its overseas economic expansion, with alternating

combinations of balance of power and constantly rearranged political relations within the

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[50] Sir Harold Nicolson, *Diplomacy* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, 1988), 5.

[51] Biswanath B. Sen, *A Diplomat's Handbook of International Law and Practice*, (Boston, MA: Kluwer Boston, 1988), 3-5.

[52] Sir Ernest Satow, *A Guide to Diplomatic Practice* (London: Longman, 1994), 4-5.

[53] Matthew Anderson, *The Rise of Modern Diplomacy* (London: Longman, 1993), 1.

[54] Satow, *A Guide*, 10.

[55] Ibid.

leading group of European states. This facilitated the further development and

formulation of diplomatic practice and encouraged the expansion of international law and

its codification. The advance of diplomacy as an institution reached its apogee at the

Congress of Vienna in 1815, when it was first recognized as a profession or an activity

with is own internationally recognized rules of behavior. Classical diplomacy was thus

clearly codified, while at the same time we can observe the appearance of new elements

of diplomatic practice in the form of international conferences and international

organizations. As Sen notes:

> The institution of diplomacy, with its roots in the days of the Greeks and the Romans, had itself blossomed through a continuous process of growth in the intercourse of European nations in the years following the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. Diplomacy had gradually become an art and a profession with a set of rules and norms that had received the seal of approval at the Congress of Vienna in 1815. The Reglement of Vienna had become the law to be respected and observed by nations which seemed to need no basic change in spite of the enlargement of the 'civilized world' beyond the four corners of Europe to embrace the United States of America, the Latin America republics, the older nations in Asia and the newly independent countries that have emerged through the process of decolonization.[56]

Following the logic of the development and metamorphosis of the modern and post-

modern states, discussed earlier, it is possible to draw an analogy about the development

of diplomacy as a tool. The cataclysmic changes in the international system during the

last decade of the 20th century had its deep impact on the nature of diplomacy.[57] Thus

with the advent of regional and international integration processes such as the European

Union, many countries had to adapt to amalgamation process by opening many aspects of

their domestic affairs to international control, as established in numerous international

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[56] Sen, *A Diplomat's Handbook*, 8.
[57] Cooper, *The Post-Modern State*, 30.

agreements.[58] Because of this opening up to supra-state entities and organizations, states had to balance their activities between the protection of the rights of their citizens—in areas such as human rights, safety, education, rights of children, women and the disabled—and on the other hand focus on cooperation with other states to achieve stability by developing methods to build inter-state confidence, conflict prevention, peace-making and peace-keeping operations.[59] Thus the evolution of the functional interdependence between the state and diplomacy points to the great flexibility of the latter, which in spite of the constant changes in the international community is still capable of accepting new themes and methods while preserving its basic mission.

From the functional perspective between the state and diplomacy it is possible to draw the conclusion that diplomacy emerged as a function of a historic situations. The post-World War II international system, coupled with the growth in the number of states has provided a powerful impulse for the further evolution of diplomacy. Thus, according to Sen

> [t]he establishment of the United Nations at the end of the Second World War had helped to provide a forum for consultations and negotiations between the community of states; nevertheless, bilateral contacts through the establishment of diplomatic missions with its age old traditions remain the cornerstone in the official relations between governments.[60]

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[58] It should be noted here that while there have been equal amount of disintegration processes—such as the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia—two facts make the integration process to gain the upper hand. The first is that integration started even before there was any reference for the collapse of the Soviet Union. Second, and perhaps because integration processes especially European ones were more natural in their process in terms of countries coming together rather than being forced to be integrated into a larger transnational entity.

[59] Cooper, *The Post-Modern State*, 35.

[60] Sen, *A Diplomat's Handbook*, 8.

In addition, the fact that the post-Cold War international system is still far from being

stable, the role of diplomacy—as a tool to achieve inter-state and international

cooperation—becomes more pronounced and vital.[61]

Diplomacy remains that tool with which a state represents itself and its interests in

an official manner, interprets those interests in the form of written agreements with other

states and negotiates to develop cooperation and resolve conflicts among states and other

non-state actors in the international system. Therefore it is a mechanism through which

relations between states and other international actors are structured. The specific

functions of diplomatic institutions have been summarized as:

1. Representing the sending state in the receiving state;
2. Protecting in the receiving state the interests of the sending state and its nationals, within the limits permitted by international law;
3. Ascertaining, by all lawful means, conditions and developments in the receiving state, and reporting thereon to the government of the sending state;
4. Promoting friendly relations between the sending state and the receiving state, and developing their economic, cultural and scientific relations.[62]

Because of the variety of themes on which decisions have to be made and which

constitute the foreign policy of any state, the extent and composition of this information

has to change accordingly. While in the past, diplomats provided information on political

and military issues, modern-day diplomacy reports on issues ranging from economy,

culture, science and technology, to various concerns at play in their host countries. This

need in turn, has given rise to specialist diplomacies and specialized diplomats, which not

only widened the scope of diplomacy but also allowed such activities to venture outside

the political and military spheres. According to Barston:

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[61] See Barston, *The Other Powers*, 5 and Ralph Feltham, *Diplomatic Handbook* (Harlow; New York: Longman, 1998), 4.
[62] Feltham, *Diplomatic Handbook*, 3.

> ... there have been significant changes in the number of those engaged in diplomacy. The broadening of those involved, to include not only those officially responsible for diplomacy, but a wide range of others, including non-state actors and 'unofficial' diplomats have brought variety, opened up new options and avenues of interaction and, perhaps, introduced elements of uncertainty.[63]

Regardless of its changing nature, diplomacy remains the main tool for states to cooperate and interact within the international system with the ultimate goal of achieving their foreign policy objective and advancing their interest vis-à-vis those of other states.

Analyzing foreign policy

While identifying the tools that help countries to conduct their foreign policies is an important task, the analysis of the foreign policy itself requires the establishment of a conceptual framework. While a discussion on the origins and evolution of various schools of international relations studies is beyond the scope of this work, it is worth highlighting several issues which are relevant to the study of international relations and foreign policy, or as it is more commonly known as Foreign policy analysis.[64] Explaining international relations and its analysis has been a task taken by scholars since the end of World War II. During this increased interest in the analysis of international relations, James Rosenau was one of the first scholars who advocated for the study of foreign policy on a cross national level to be able to derive commonalties on the way states conducted foreign policies. To this end he stated:

> To recognize that foreign policy is shaped by internal as well as external factors in not to comprehend how the two intermix or to indicate the condition under which one

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[63] Barston, *The Other Powers*, ix.

[64] For a very comprehensive survey of the various theories and approaches in the analysis of foreign policy refer to Valerie Hudson and Christopher Vore, "Foreign Policy Analysis: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," *Mershon International Studies Review* 39, no. 2(October 1989): 209-238.

predominates over the other.... Foreign policy analysis lacks comprehensive systems of testable generalization.[65]

Extracting those commonalties, he further argued, help the development of a theory that could explain the behavior of states within the international system, hence providing a framework for the theory foreign policy. Rosenau was encouraging development of actor-specific theory—one that mediated between grand principles and the complexity of reality by focusing on the role of states in international relations; he labeled it a middle-level theory of intentional relations. Rosenau's work, therefore, is considered the stepping stone of comparative foreign policy analysis where the behavior of a number of states are examined and general theories of foreign policy behavior are extrapolated.

As an alternative to Rosenau's approach, a group of scholars focused on the nature of foreign policy by analyzing the decision-making processes and the operation of a state's institutions vis-à-vis domestic and international events. These authors mentioned that:

> [w]e adhere to the nation-state as the fundamental level of analysis, yet we have discarded the state as a metaphysical abstraction. By emphasizing decision making as a central focus we have provided a way of organizing the determinants of actions around those officials who act for the political society. Decision makers are operating in a dual-aspect setting so that apparently unrelated internal and external factors become related in the actions of the decision makers. Hitherto, precise ways of relating domestic factors have not been adequately developed.[66]

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[65] James Rosenau, "Theories and Pre-Theories of Foreign Policy," in *Approaches in Comparative and International Politics*, ed. R Barry Farrell (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966), 99.

[66] Richard Snyder, H.W. Bruck and Burton Sapin, *Decision Making as an Approach to the Study of International Politics* (Foreign Policy Analysis Project Series no. 3, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954), 53.

Their attention to decision-making processes relies on institutional analysis; in effect, the

impact of various institutions and bureaucracies to shape and implement foreign

policies.[67]

A third approach to the study of foreign policy has focused on more micro-level

analysis by examining the sociological and psychological factors—such as beliefs,

attitudes, values, experiences, emotions, memory, national, and self-conceptions—

influencing foreign decision-makers. The founders of this approach, Harold Sprout and

Margaret Sprout explain their approach in the following terms:

> Instead of drawing conclusions regarding an individual's probable motivations and
> purposes, his environmental knowledge, and his intellectual processes linking purposes
> and knowledge, on the basis of assumptions as to the way people are likely on the
> average to behave in a given social context, the cognitive behavioralist—be he narrative
> historian or systematic social scientist—undertakes to find out as precisely as possible
> how specific persons actually did perceive and respond in particular contingencies.[68]

This method dwells on the impact of perceptions and image as well as their influence on

foreign policy and national self-image. In short it underscores the significance of how

nations view themselves and their role in the international system.[69]

The end of the Cold War gave rise to the actor-specific approach in the analysis of

international relations and foreign policy. This renewed interest was mostly the result of

the conviction that in order to explain events in international relations required a

multifaceted approach where the study of various actors—both within states as well as

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[67] Graham Allison's *The Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, 1971) is one of the best examples of the examination of foreign policy from a bureaucratic/domestic perspective.

[68] Harold Sprout and Margaret Sprout, *The Ecological Perspective on Human Affairs with Special Reference to International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965), 118.

[69] One of the most important books dealing with perceptions and image is Robert Jervis' *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976). An early study on the role of national image and its role in foreign policy is Kalevi Holsti, "National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy," *International Studies Quarterly* 14, no. 3 (September 1970): 233-309.

non-state actors in the international system—helps provide a more comprehensive look of

global politics. A practitioner of this method concludes:

> A bipolar, quasi-zero-sum rivalry lends itself relatively well to abstract, actor-general
> analysis focused primarily on the macro-constraints imposed by that system.
> Furthermore, actor-general theory was more practical for scholars to use during the Cold
> War because the Soviet system was fairly opaque. However, the end of the Cold War
> revealed anew that it is not possible to explain or predict system change at the level of
> system-level variables alone. Our intuitive understanding of this event involves variables
> more in harmony with FPA: the personalities of Gorbachev, Havel, Walesa; the activities
> of actors such as the Lutheran Church and the Green Movement; the struggles between
> various domestic players, such as the military, the Communist Party, the bureaucrats, and
> so forth. The need for renewed progression in actor-specific theory development was
> made plain.[70]

Therefore, the study of small state foreign policy in the post-Cold War era is determined

by the examination of the states themselves—big or small and weak or powerful—as well

as other active players in the international system with an influence on the actions and

paths of small states. Some of these players comprise multi-national corporations and

businesses, international organizations and transnational groups as well as non-

governmental groups. Moreover the national interests and self-perceptions of states and

policy makers is an important factor that needs to be considered when examining the

foreign policy of new and small states.

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[70] Valerie Hudson "Foreign Policy Analysis: Actor-Specific Theory and the Ground of International
Relations," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 1, no. 1 (March 2005): 13-14.

The Foreign Policy of the Small and the New

Most often the size and power of a state are the factors most considered when determining a state's influence on the international scene. Their limited size constrains their human and natural resources and hence curtails their power to influence in international politics.[71] These limitations, for instance, influence a country's ability to set up and conduct administrative tasks, not to mention the financial burden that might accompany the setting up of a new state apparatus.[72] As such, small states are much dependent on their regional and international environment and are, in turn, sensitive to changes in the international system.[73] However while small powers lack the capacity to significantly influence their environment, they are more likely to adapt their foreign policies and priorities to the dictates of that larger system.[74]

Does size matter?

Several shared features come into play when examining the foreign policy behavior of small states. They include:

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[71] See, Werner Levi, *International Politics: Foundation of the System* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota press, 1974), 104-109; Rudolph Rummel, "Some Empirical Findings on Nations and Their Behavior *World Politics* 21, (January, 1969), 226-241; Maurice East, "Size and Foreign Policy Behavior: A Test of Two Models," *World Politics*.25, no. 4 (July 1973): 556-577.

[72] These ideas are explored in detail by Maria Papadakis and Harvey Starr, "Opportunity, Willingness and Small States: The Relations between Environment and Foreign Policy," in *New Directions in the Study of Foreign Policy*, eds. Charles F. Hermann, Charles W. Kegley, Jr. and James N. Rosenau (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 423; as well as by Letterio Briguglio, "Small Island States and the Globalization Process," in *Small States in the Emerging New Europe*, eds. Josef Langer and Wolfgang Pöllauer (Eisenstadt: Verlag für Soziologie und Humanethologie, 1995), 110.

[73] Samo Kropivnik and P. Jesovnik. "Small Countries in the Global Economy: Slovenia, an Exception or the Rule?" *Journal of International Relations* 2, no. 1-4 (1995), 67 and Papadakis and Starr, "Opportunity, Willingness and Small States," 423.

[74] See, for example, Handel's *Weak States in the International System*; Keohane, "Lilliputians' Dilemmas" and Raimo Väyrynen, "Small States in Different Theoretical Traditions of International Relations Research" in *Small States in Europe and Dependence*, ed. Otmar Höll (Vienna: Braumuller, 1983).

- Low levels of overall participation in world affairs;
- High levels of activity in intergovernmental organizations;
- High levels of support for international legal norms;
- Avoidance to the use of force as a technique of statecraft;
- Avoidance of behavior and policies which tend to alienate the more powerful states in the system;
- A narrow functional and geographic range of concern in foreign policy activities;
- Frequent utilization of moral and normative positions on international issues.[75]

This model is based on the traditional understanding of the limited resources—human capital to establish large diplomatic missions or large armies and natural resources to have a say in the global economy—of small states. These limitations call for their economical use in the foreign affairs sphere as well, but the overall power deficiency requires cautious, careful, low risk policies, while simultaneously looking for and utilizing available means to enlarge international impact and advance national interests. The lack of resources also prohibits small states from maintaining a sufficiently large foreign affairs department, including the diplomatic corps. The relatively few foreign affairs personnel, on its own, makes it necessary to narrow the scope of addressable foreign affairs issues, which are at times considered functionally and geographically limited.[76]

The impact of small size and its relations with the economic development of the state could be summarized in the following points:

- Limited natural resources endowments and high import content;
- Limitation on import substitution possibilities;
- Small domestic market and dependence on export markets;
- Limited ability to influence domestic prices;
- Limited ability to exploit economies of scale;
- Limited possibility for domestic competition;
- Marginalization in international trade;

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[75] East, "Size and Foreign Policy Behavior," 557.
[76] See for example, Barston, *The Other Powers*, 13-26.

- High costs of public administration and infrastructural development due to indivisibility of overhead costs.[77]

Yet, however costly and pervasive their governments, most inhabitants of small states prefer these liabilities to those they would probably suffer should they lose their sovereignty. Even clustered among supportive neighbors, small states sense the enveloping pressure of nearby larger states and great powers. These outsiders not only interfere in times of crisis, but also impinge on the day-to-day livelihood and well being of their small neighbors. Nationalism in small states is often an expression of a cohesion needed to bolster autonomy against such incursions, the pressures of global development and the perils of piracy. As a result, small states indoctrinate attachments to anything national, which helps distinguish them from other states, their people from other people and prevent outsiders from owning local land and other resources.[78] However this does not automatically imply that small states become externally aggressive and demanding in their foreign policies, for they understand too well the limits of their power and their place in the international system to risk heightening tensions. For small states with their restricted capacities to get involved in a conflict or to deliberately aggravate relations with more powerful states, often means to also endanger their own autonomy. Therefore

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[77] Briguglio, "Small Island States and the Globalization Process," 113. For an economic perspective of small states see; Edward Dommen and Philippe Hein, eds., *States, Microstates, and Islands* (London: Croom Helm, 1985); Bimal Jalan, ed., *Problems and Policies in Small Economies* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982); A. D. Knox, "Some Economic Problems of Small Countries," in *Problems of Smaller Territories,* ed. Burton Benedict (London: Athelon Press, 1967), 35-44; Edward A. G. Robinson, ed., *Economic Consequences of the Size of Nations; Proceedings of a Conference Held by the International Economics Association* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1960); Percy Selwyn, ed., *Development Policy in Small Countries* (London: Croom Helm, 1975); and Paul Streeten, "The Special Problems of Small Countries," *World Development* 21, no. 2 (February 1993): 197-202.

[78] Clarke and Payne, *Politics, Security, and Development,* 43-44.

they endeavor to avoid getting involved in conflicts at all costs.[79] That also prescribes small state behavior in the international system on the whole, as cautious and careful, with the accompanying effort to avoid high-risk actions in foreign relations.

To compensate for their unequal position in the international system, small states further strive to utilize the help of international legal norms and institutions. The legal rights of national sovereignty and equality very often are the most important tools that small states have to resolve urgent problems at the international level. The actual inequality of states in the international system is the basis for small states to call on legal norms and moral principles to defend their national interests.

The limited pool of human resources, directly influence the state's ability to allocate personnel and develop strong institutions for the conducting of their foreign policies. As a result small states devote a decreased proportion of an already small resource base to the international sector.[80] Furthermore, if a small state is also a new one then this problem is more emphasized having direct limitations on a country's ability to develop a well-built foreign policy apparatus and hence limit its ability to formulate and implement a successful foreign policy.[81] Their limited diplomatic resources leads small states to identify potential threats at an earlier stage and thus take preemptive measures. While last-moment problem solving leads to hard decision and political vulnerability, the lack of such institutions and bureaucracies lend itself a high degree of personal

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[79] David Vital, *The Survival of Small States: Studies in Small Power Great Power Conflict* (London, Oxford University Press, 1971), 12.
[80] East, "Size and Foreign Policy Behavior, 558.
[81] Papadakis and Starr, "Opportunity, Willingness and Small States," 424.

intervention and a corresponding *ad hoc* approach to issues.[82] In short, the foreign policy of small states is geared towards resisting pressure from larger powers to preserve their territorial integrity and sovereignty, while balancing their national identity.

Securing smallness

As of their formation, one of the most important issues that states in general face, and small ones in particular, is security guarantees for their existence because of their weak military strength and lack of resources.[83] Nevertheless, small states have proved to be very resourceful and adaptive to the changing international and security systems and developed mechanisms to safeguard their interests and security.[84]

According to realists and neo-realists on the one hand, a state functions only as a mechanism for satisfying its own interests. Seeking greater security is almost exclusively the only goal of any state.[85] The idealist or transnational school, on the other hand, considers that international relations essentially exist to seek peace and reconciliation rather than power and superiority. In the future this peace could be based on developing mutual understanding and cooperation, the global democratization of international affairs, in lieu of looking for a balance of power.[86] However it is possible that shared aspects of

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[82] Clarke and Payne, *Politics, Security, and Development*, 20 and East, "Size and Foreign Policy Behavior," 559-560.

[83] See Väyrynen, "Small States: Persisting Despite Doubts," in *The National Security of Small States in a Changing World,* eds. Efraim Inbar and Gabriel Sheffer (London: Frank Cass, 1997), 41.

[84] Papadakis and Starr, "Opportunity, Willingness and Small States," 422.

[85] See for example, Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, 3-17.

[86] See for instance, David Mitrany, *The Functional Theory of Politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975) and Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, eds., *Transnational Relations and World Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971).

the realist power position and the idealist peace position may be found.[87] No matter how paradoxical it seems the concept of national security in international relations theory has not been clearly defined or adequately developed. The explanation is quite simple, thus during the Cold War, security almost exclusively was considered a military category, understanding by that primarily: national military defense, deterrence and the necessity for disarmament.[88] The latest theoretical studies and international relations theories deal with non-military security aspects of states' national security dilemmas. Efforts to avoid war seem to begin several steps before its outbreak by eliminating potential sources of military conflicts and war, which frequently are rooted in economic, ethnic, religious, or ideological spheres.[89]

National security policy could be categorized as a political activity carried on by an actor in the international system to achieve its goals and to balance or counterbalance threats from other actors.[90] However, a state's security policy is determined in the first instance by the features of the international system, not by the state itself.[91] Small states have to take special notice of this, considering their own limited role in the international system. Apart from the inability to influence the international system, the security of small states is very much dependent on regional or international great powers.[92] Relying

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[87] Bary Buzan, *People, States and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1983), 251.
[88] Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, 451.
[89] See for instance Dietrich Fischer, *Nonmilitary Aspects of Security: A Systems Approach* (Brookfield, VT: Dartmouth Publishers, 1993), 7 and Buzan, *People, States and Fear*, 253.
[90] See, Bengt Sundelius, "Coping with Structural Security Threats," in *Small States in Europe and Dependence,* ed. Otmar Höll, (Vienna: Austrian Institute for International Affairs, 1983), 283.
[91] Michael Mandelbaum, *The Fate of Nations: The Search for National Security in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988), 2.
[92] Trygve Mathiesen, *The Functions of Small States in the Strategies of the Great Powers* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1971), 67-129.

on the academic literature dealing with the security issues of small states, three options

seem to dominate the strategies of small states to achieve security guarantees. These are

a) neutrality, b) developing alliances, and/or c) becoming members in international

organizations.[93]

The option of neutrality in international relations is one of the oldest strategies

often utilized by small states. Neutrality is a status chosen by a state confronted by an

imminent or existing war and accepted by the belligerents of that war.[94] A state that

declares itself neutral is doing no more than declaring an intention to claim neutral status

if and when war occurs.[95] During the bi-polar power system of the Cold War, states

which claimed neutrality emphasized their political choice by not joining any military or

political alliances. In today's world, neutrality often rests on a particular state's historical

traditions and on the deep-rooted public attitude towards neutrality as a guarantor of

independence. This renders neutrality a matter of more politics rather than policy.[96]

Although this option is a byproduct of the Cold War, it still provides a form of security to

small states as they choose to not take sides with regional powers or alliances.[97] Over the

years since 1991, however, neutrality has shown some questionable tendencies. For

example it has acquired such new forms as self-isolation or political and economic

dissociation from the international system. As the new international system takes shape

and develops, protests invariably will grow from individual members against the system's

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[93] See Amstrup, "The Perennial Problems," 163 and Gärtner, "Small States and Concepts of European Security," 189.
[94] Sheila Harden, ed., *Neutral States and the European Community* (London: Brassey's, 1994), 144.
[95] Ibid, 145.
[96] Ibid, 145 and 156.
[97] Roberto Espindola "Security Dilemmas" in *Politics, Security and Development in Small States*, eds. Colin Clarke and Tony Payne (London; Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 76.

restrictive nature, with an increased tendency for states to self-isolate and possibly develop new forms of neutrality. In a system where the defining paradigm is "you are either with us or against us" the meaning of neutrality has essentially changed and its future perspectives are rather uncertain.[98]

Joining regional or international alliances is another strategy used by small states to find security guarantees. A regional group with a large membership poses little threat to its smaller members and could in fact guarantee their security if its membership were a pluralistic one.[99]Such an organization could supply the funding and training facilities required to provide small states with professional well trained and well equipped force capable of handling most security threat. By joining an alliance small states gain additional guaranties for their security, while simultaneously losing some of their autonomy, an important part of their national security agenda. In an alliance, small states may be exposed to additional risks that perhaps on their own they may have avoided. Furthermore the alliance agreement does not always create confidence that small states will receive military help when in need.[100] There are three main mechanisms through which states join alliances: 1) bilateral alliance with a great power; 2) alliance with other small power states; 3) multilateral (mixed) alliance with great powers and other small power states. The first two options seem to have more liabilities than the third one in that an alliance with a great power might result in the total dependence of the small state on its larger partner and thus risk losing its sovereignty. In the case of small states creating

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[98] Harden, *Neutral States and the European Community*, 93.
[99] Roberto Espindola "Security Dilemmas," 77.
[100] Amstrup, "The Perennial Problems," 171-172.

alliances, the major problem would be that the collective power of small, weak and new states would remain inefficient to counterbalance the strength of greater powers. Multilateral alliances seem to have the right mix to keep the small states in the alliance autonomous enough to not feel threatened while at the same time the presence of a larger power give that alliance enough weight to shield the junior partners in the alliance form the threats of other regional or international powers.[101]

Yet another byproduct of small states joining international organizations is that they are enabled to internationalize their security interests and widely utilize legal and moral norms to influence other members of the international system. At present, many of the new states in the current international system, gear up their diplomatic activities to be included in such organizations to become a part of the international community at large. Consequently a large number of international organizations include small states as members.[102] The presence of small states in international organizations allows these countries to be involved in various political processes which otherwise they would not have been able to be a part of.[103] One of the organizations with the most sought after membership for small states in particular is the United Nations Organization (UN), which provides opportunities for taking part in a multitude of political, social, economic and cultural issues all within its internal mechanism and networks. Such activities also cut down the cost of participation in international processes, which is a burdensome issue for small states given their limited financial resources. However this does not mean that

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[101] Rothstein, *Alliances and Small Powers*, 244.
[102] See Bray and Packer, *Education in Small States*, 21.
[103] Fox, "The Small States in the International System," 753.

membership in international organizations is without any financial responsibility, and although in such organizations the financial requirements—such as membership dues— from small states are considerably lower than that of larger states, many small states choose not to seek membership because of the implied financial burden.[104] Small states which subsidize membership dues and become involved in regional and international organizations demonstrate a high rate of participation in those institutions or in conferences. Unsurprisingly, therefore, the chairpersons and presidents of many UN or other international committees and conferences are representatives of small countries.[105] This led one scholar to conclude that "international institutions are the best friends of small states."[106]

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[104] See Bray and Packer, *Education in Small States*, 241-242.
[105] For more discussion on this issue see, Amstrup, "The Perennial Problems," 164 and Fox, "The Small States in the International System," 784.
[106] Väyrynen, "Small States: Persisting Despite Doubts," 42.

Is Small Viable?

The end of the Cold War, symbolized by the fall of the Berlin Wall represented a major turning point in the development of the international political system. The magnitude of this change could be measured by the huge territory and the large number of people it involved,[107] the short duration of time in which the changes took place[108] and the large number of states involved.[109] In a system with increasing number of actors, which try to pursue their interests, the nation-state remains the basic subject of international law. In the process of international transformation and change, the appearance of numerous states, raises questions about the necessity, role and characteristics of states in the international system. Among these characteristics, foreign policy as a concept and diplomacy as a tool play important roles for states to interact and negotiate with other actors. Hence the task undertaken by states—big or small—to set up and organize their own diplomatic mechanisms proves to be essential and inevitable. Aside from the size and number of diplomatic missions, the stages for these activities are of great importance. Since small countries cannot afford to have embassies everywhere they concentrate on setting up embassies in countries vital to their national interests.[110]

Diplomacy, therefore, remains an irreplaceable instrument for the implementation of the foreign policies of new, small states—as well as for the large and strong ones—and to make the presence of these states visible in international forums. As a result of the

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[107] The whole of Central and Eastern Europe, the European part of the former Soviet Union and Transcaucasia and 150-200 million people.
[108] Approximately three years between 1988-1991
[109] Between 25-30 states gained their independence and sovereignty.
[110] See Marshall Singer, *Weak States in a World of Powers: The Dynamics of International Relationships* (New York: Free Press, 1972), 196

burst in the number of actors on the international scene, the current global system is characterized by increased interaction and interdependence of its actors. This could also be ascribed to the amplification of communication among nations as a result of technological advancement. Consequently the role of information technology, media and multi-national companies becomes more underscored in the international system.[111] It is in such an environment that small, new states are required to deal with new themes and adjust their diplomacies accordingly. They face realities based on the role of the nation-state in transition and more often than not they are undermined. The centuries-old Westphalian system, which governed the international system for over three centuries collapsed and consequently the concept of sovereignty, is currently metamorphosed beyond recognition.

The traditional functions of nation-states have been in a constant flux sine the fall of the USSR. However the reliance of the international system on the state and state institutions makes it possible for the modern state to persist as one of the basic foundations of the current international system.[112] On the other hand one of the functions of a state that has remained intact is its ability to conduct diplomatic relations with other entities in the international system.

In conclusion, it becomes apparent that states in general and small states in particular need to be active in various regional and international integration processes. Only by being part of those processes could they benefit from the ever-increasing interdependence that shapes the current international system because:

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[111] Langer and Pöllauer, eds., *Small States in the Emerging New Europe*, 26.
[112] Cooper, *The Post-Modern State*, 265.

> ... by joining the global community, they [small states] have, ironically, strengthened their independence. In the process, many small states managed to recover their national identity and dignity, things that could have been seriously threatened had they not joined the United Nations. They have also shown that a small state can exercise sovereignty in a meaningful way within a global framework, and that they contribute to global well being.[113]

Furthermore even if they choose to, it is almost impossible for small states to remain completely independent, utterly isolated and outside the main currents of various international processes.

The making of small state foreign policy is conducted on a different scale, in a different manner and out of somewhat different materials. The range of political problems judged real and relevant is much reduced. The machinery maintained for the collection and interpenetration of information is smaller in size, probably less effective and focused on a limited number of subjects. The leaders of small powers will therefore generally find themselves operating in the light of their own regional interests, conflicts and fears.[114] In this context, small states are in a position to use their shortcomings and limitations to their advantage. Because of their smallness, their diplomatic structures are flexible and easily organized; in other words they are not just miniatures of large state diplomatic organizations but a machinery of considerable smaller magnitude with more room for maneuvering. Consequently, the adoption of new working methods in the new small diplomacies is not perceived as a difficulty, but rather an adaptive method resulting in diplomatic flexibility and transparency. These observations might not be fully tested yet because of the new nature of small state diplomacy and foreign policy, a field still being examined and developing.

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[113] Briguglio, "Small Island States and the Globalization Process," 110.

[114] Vital, *The Inequality of States*, 29-30.

CHAPTER II: THE NEW "GREAT GAME" IN THE CAUCASUS: OVERLAPPING INTERESTS AND OPPOSING AXES

In the mid-1980s, Mikhail Gorbachev's *perestroika* (restructuring) and *glasnost* (openness) policies led to uncalculated and unexpected developments in the Soviet Union. While Gorbachev intended to strengthen the decaying Soviet economy, the waning Soviet structures proved to be incompatible to his policies of restructuring, leading to the dismantling of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).[1] As Gorbachev's policies were being implemented, Moscow's control over the republics was waning which led the various components of the empire to chart their own domestic and foreign policies. This task was not an easy one for the new republics since the various geographical regions of the former USSR had varying degrees of geopolitical importance for the countries surrounding them as well as for international actors. Faced with new international and regional realties, the South Caucasus underwent the above-mentioned transformation.[2] The task of the newly independent countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan and

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[1] For details on Gorbachev's policies, see Seweryn Bialer, *Politics, Society, and Nationality Inside Gorbachev's Russia* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989); John F. N. Bradley, ed., *Soviet Perestroika, 1985-1993: Russia's Road to Democracy* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1995); Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1996); Leo Cooper, *Soviet Reforms and Beyond* (London: Macmillan Academic and Professional, 1991); Alexander Dallin and Gail W. Lapidus, eds., *The Soviet System: From Crisis to Collapse* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995); Marshall Goldman, *What Went Wrong with Perestroika* (New York: Norton, 1992),; Ed A. Hewett and Victor H. Winston, eds., *Milestones in Glasnost and Perestroyka* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1991); Walter Laqueur, *The Long Road to Freedom: Russia and Glasnost* (New York: Collier Books, 1990); Steven L. Solnick, *Stealing the State: Control and Collapse in Soviet Institutions* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998); and Stephen White, Alex Pravda, Zvi Gitelman, eds., *Developments in Russian and post-Soviet Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994).

[2] The term "South Caucasus" refers to the areas encompassing the internationally recognized borders of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. I have chosen to use this categorization while at the same time interchangeably using the term Caucasus to designate the same geographic area. Some of the other versions

Georgia to pursue an independent track of political and economic path was not easy given

the region's geostrategic and economic importance for its neighbors as well as for

interested great powers. On the one hand, the South Caucasus constitutes Russia's link

with the Middle East, and on the other a Western bridge to Central Asia. Added to the

geopolitical significance is the fact that the region—and more specifically the Caspian

basin—is abundant with energy resources, hence also vital to countries with no direct

strategic interest in it.[3]

This chapter will look at the position of various actors in the region and try to

reveal the extent of their converging and diverging interests. This aspect of Caucasian

politics is important because it reveals the environment in which Armenia and Georgia

operate as well as the specific factors that determine their foreign policy choices. It helps

determine whether there are opposing alliances and axes through which countries with

similar geopolitical interests face off countries with opposing interests in the region. The

presence of competing camps could create a situation where the countries of the region

might belong to opposing sides and thus the Caucasus could at worst witness a war by

proxy and at best be a stage of post-Cold War rivalry akin to the international system

existing between World War II and the fall of the USSR.

The examination of the influence of different actors in the Caucasus needs to be

based on historical, geopolitical and economic considerations. Historically, the region has

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of designating the area, such as Caucasia or Trans-Caucasus are used only when quoting someone else and
hence it is kept in its original version.

[3] For a general survey on the economic and geopolitical importance of the Caspian region see Michael P.
Croissant and Bülent Aras eds., *Oil and Geopolitics in the Caspian Sea Region* (Westport, Connecticut:
Praeger, 2000); and R. Hrair Dekmejian and Hovann H. Simonian, *Troubled Waters: The Geopolitics of the
Caspian Region* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003).

been the battleground for empires. During the past several centuries the armies of

imperial Russia, Ottoman and Persian empires have clashed in the region, and during

each of those numerous encounters the local states were used as pawns by rival empires.

This aspect of the region's history has created both a sense of reliance and mistrust in the

minds of the local populace towards the successors of those empires, namely Russia, Iran

and Turkey. The historical rivalry both in the Caucasus and Central Asia allows scholars

to examine the current rivalry between various states within the context of a continued

"Great Game."[4] The geopolitical factor instigating interest in the region is further

underlined by the strategic location of the Caucasus; a link between the north and south

(Russia and Middle East) as well as between East and West (Turkey and Central Asia).

In examining the regional and international actors in the region, this chapter looks

at Russia, the West (United States and Europe), Iran and Turkey. For Russia, an ex-

imperial power and a country dominating the region for over two centuries, its interest

and involvement is an inevitable foreign policy choice, as Moscow regards the region as

its backyard, and any attempts by other actors to challenge Russia's supremacy are

viewed with apprehension. While Russian views of, and involvement in, the South

Caucasus have gone through stages over the past 14 years, Moscow has also shown

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[4] The Great Game is a term, usually attributed to Captain Arthur Connolly of the East India Company, used to describe the rivalry and strategic conflict between the British and the Tsarist empires for supremacy in Central Asia. The term was later popularized by British novelist Rudyard Kipling in his work, *Kim*. In Russia, the same rivalry and strategic conflict was known as the Tournament of Shadows. The classic Great Game period is generally regarded as running from approximately 1813 to the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907. For more details, see Ian Cuthberston, "The New 'Great Game'," *World Policy Journal*, 11 (Winter 1994/5): 31-43; Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia* (New York: Kodansha International, 1992); and Karl E. Meyer & Shareen Blair Brysac, *Tournament of Shadows: The Great Game and Race for Empire in Central Asia* (Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 1999).

divergences when defining Russia's role in the new world system. These views will be examined to help explain Russia's attitudes vis-à-vis the region.

The next major actor to be examined in this chapter is the West. The main issue with defining the "West" is the dichotomy that exists between the policies of the United States on the one hand and Europe on the other. As the perceived "winner" of the Cold War and the "guarantor" of the international system, United States' role in the region is detrimental. However, the military and economic expectations of the region's countries from the United States have not materialized as a result of lack of American involvement in the region. This, in turn, could be explained by the United States' unwariness in the early 1990s to chart or devise a distinct foreign policy towards the newly independent states of the former USSR and, at the same time, the concentration of Washington on revising its relations with Russia. Thus, since the early years of the 1990s, the United States' priorities vis-à-vis the former Soviet space was limited to its relations with Russia, and not enough emphasis was given to the independent countries of the region. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the United States gradually began to shape distinct foreign policies towards the countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia, mostly because it had both the capability to devote individual attention to those countries, and the obligation to redefine the overall post-Soviet space. This latent interest was subsequently transformed into involvement after the attacks on the United States in September 11, 2001 which launched a new activism in American foreign policy in the region. European involvement in the region has been more cautious and less antagonistic towards Russia. Whereas the US shifted its policies in the region from a Russia-first policy to a policy

tailored to specific cases in the region (such as energy pipelines, anti-terrorism activities, etc.), Europe seemed to be consistently pursuing a policy of appeasing Russia and approaching the region through Moscow's prism. These great power priorities have resulted in divergence of Western policies in the South Caucasus.

One of the two regional actors which have developed long historical relations with the Caucasus is Iran. The Iranian factor in understanding the political development in the Caucasus is important not so much because of the country's cultural, religious and historical ties with the nations and states of the South Caucasus but because of Iran's careful and balanced approach to the issues faced by the countries of the region. As a state isolated by the United States for over two decades, Iran's interest in the region is both economic and geopolitical. The fall of the Iron Curtain could allow Iran to use the Caucasus as an economic transit point for its energy resources as well as its manufactured goods to reach Russia and Europe without relying on Turkey. Geopolitically, Iran was alarmed by Turkey's claims to be a conduit to link Europe and Central Asia as of the fall of the Soviet Union. Moreover, the promotion of a Turkish model of secular Islam as an alternative for Communism also raised some concern in the Iranian leadership.

The involvement of the other regional actor, Turkey, a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and close associate of Washington, made it the stepping stone, for the West in general and the United States specifically, to the former Soviet South. In the early 1990s, Turkish claims of cultural and linguistic affinity with the Muslims of the Soviet Union were used as a platform to make Turkey the middleman between Europe on the one hand and the Caucasus and Central Asia on the other. After

the end of the initial enthusiasm of uniting all Turkic peoples into one cooperative union,

Turkey realized that a more cautious approach was necessary to deal with the region so as

to not antagonize Russia. This chapter will present the larger context of geopolitical

influences of the regional and international powers, on the South Caucasus and hence will

try to set the parameters to discuss the individual foreign policy priorities and actions of

Armenia and Georgia in subsequent chapters.

The New 'Great Game' between Russia and the West

As former super-powers, Russia and the United States are the first two powers

that need to be examined in the Caucasus. After the initial 'honeymoon' period ended, an

intense rivalry for influence and access to energy resources in the region started between

Washington and Moscow, one that led some observers to name it a new "Great Game."

While by no means absent and despite its vital contribution, the role of Europe has been

mostly undetected in this rivalry.

Russia's perceptions of the South Caucasus

For over two centuries Russia and subsequently the Soviet Union has been the

ruling powers in the South Caucasus. With the dismantling of the latter and the

independence of the constituent states of the former USSR, policy makers in Russia were

faced with a previously domestic region which now has moved to the sphere of foreign

policy.[5] In turn, the impact of the Soviet legacy in the South Caucasus is widespread.

After over 70 years of Soviet rule, the regional countries' political, social and economic

structures have been heavily influenced and shaped along the lines of the Soviet model.

Moreover, the Soviet influence has also been apparent on the worldview of most of the

policy makers in the South Caucasus because during the first 10 years of independence,

most—if not all—of the policy makers themselves were the byproducts of the Soviet

system.[6]

Russia's policies towards the South Caucasus are not just manifestations of the

colonial legacy. The proximity of the region to Russia's South (i.e., the troubled region of

the North Caucasus) focuses Russian involvement in the region—from Moscow's

perspective—an imperative task to be able to contain the ethnically troubled region of the

North Caucasus (Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia and North Ossetia).[7] During the

immediate aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia considered the South

Caucasus a buffer zone between itself and Turkic nationalism represented by Turkey and

with political Islam represented by Iran.[8] Hence in the words of one analyst:

> ...Russia's long-term interests in the Transcaucasus are related not so much to the republics themselves and the peoples living therein as to the fact that if the Russian Federation leaves the political arena in this region a vacuum will form that will be filled by the contiguous countries, and in that way they will move right up to Russia's borders. The West unambiguously prefers Turkey and will promote its interests in the Transcaucasus and in Central Asia. If this happens, a ring of ethnically, religiously and culturally homogeneous states gravitating toward Turkey will form around Russia. Furthermore, after

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[5] See Shireen Hunter, *Transcaucasia in Transition: Nation Building or a New Empire?* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1994), 145.

[6] See Hunter, *Transcaucasia*, 13.

[7] For a survey on the situation of the North Caucasus within the post-Soviet Space, refer to Jane Ormond, "The North Caucasus: Confederation in Conflict," in *New States, New Politics: Building Post-Soviet Nations*, eds. Ian Bremmer and Ray Taras, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997): 96-139.

[8] See Hunter, *Transcaucasia*, 146.

leaving the Transcaucasus Russia will have to part with the North Caucasus autonomous entities, where it is already losing control anyway.[9]

Various analysts divide the different stages of Russian foreign policy doctrines towards the former republics into several periods. In the early 1990s, under the presidency of Boris Yeltsin, it was suggested that a close cooperation with the West would result in the strengthening of Russia and its integration with the world community. Those who supported this idea were known as Atlanticists or Euro-Atlanticists, who believed that Russia should have a policy supporting the United States as the leader of the Atlantic alliance and to identify itself with Western democracies. To this end a Western-oriented Russia needed to align itself with the Western world and together play a leading role in the new world order.[10] One of the main proponents of Atlanticist thought was the first Russian foreign minister under Yeltsin, Andrei Kozyrev, as well as the then Vice Premier Yegor Gaidar. Both were unabashed believers in Western economics and the universality of the application of market economics.[11] In addressing the challenge faced by the Atlanticists, Kozyrev warned in 1992:

> Talk of a uniquely Russian third way is an illusion and would lead to complete disaster. Moreover such an approach would either rapidly degenerate into military confrontation with the West or reduce Russia to the level of a dangerously unstable Third World country with no hope of ever joining the club of first-rate countries. It would lead to oblivion for us, that is why, together with some other people, I am saying that we have to make a big effort and not give in to these opposition forces.[12]

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[9] Andranik Migranyan, "The Soviet Union Has Gone Off in All Directions," *Current Digest of Post-Soviet Press (henceforth CDPSP)* XLIV, no. 43, (November 25, 1992), 11.

[10] For a general introduction of the Atlanticist ideology and worldview, see John Dunlop, "Russia: In search of Identity?" in *New States, New Politics: Building Post-Soviet Nations*, eds. Ian Bremmer and Ray Taras, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997): 37-41 and Hunter, *Transcaucasia*, 146-157.

[11] "Anti-Western Feeling Grows across Russia," *Christian Science Monitor*, April 12, 1992.

[12] "Russian Leaders Warning of Threat to Reforms," *The Washington Post*, October 24, 1992.

Opposing the Atlanticists were the Eurasianists who contended that Russia should not

blindly follow the West's lead and that geography and demographics alone dictate a

different approach.[13] Considering that Russia has a sizable Muslim population, borders

China for thousands of miles and straddles Europe and Asia, it was argued, it would be a

more feasible option for Russia to trade and cultivate alliances with the developing

countries of Asia rather than with the industrialized West.[14] One of the first who pushed

forward the concept of Eurasianism and criticized Atlanticism was vice-president Sergei

Stankevich. Considering the suggestion that Russia could be integrated into the Western

economic system as an "illusion," he declared:

> From my standpoint, Russia's mission in the world is to initiate and maintain a multilateral
> dialogue of cultures, civilizations and states. ... A country that takes in West and East,
> North and South, and that is uniquely capable—perhaps it alone has this capability—of
> harmoniously unifying many different elements, of achieving a historic symphony. That is
> how I see Russia in a renewed world.[15]

In describing the differences between the Atlanticists and Eurasianists Stankevich further

added:

> In my opinion, two lines have been taking shape in our foreign policy recently, lines that can
> be given the provisional designations of Atlanticism and Eurasianism. Atlanticism
> gravitates toward the following set of ideas and symbols: to become part of Europe, to
> enter the world economy quickly and in an organized manner, to become the eighth
> member of the Group of Seven...

> The opposite trend—Eurasianism—is not yet as clearly expressed as Atlanticism, but is
> already knocking on the door of the tall building on Smolenskaya [the Russian Foreign
> Ministry]. It is evidently just as senseless and unproductive to try at the end of the 20th
> century to resuscitate the idea of Russia's reorientation toward the East and the idea of
> opposition to Russia's Europeanization (in the extreme forms of that opposition) as it is to
> try to hastily pull an Atlantic dinner jacket, with bow tie, over Russia's broad shoulders. It
> is obvious that we will have to look for a new balance of Western and Eastern orientations

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[13] For a general introduction of the Eurasianist views, see Dunlop, "Russia: In Search of Identity?" 37-41
and Hunter, *Transcaucasia*, 146-157.
[14] "Russians Debate Foreign Policy," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, June 10, 1992.
[15] "Stankevich Charts Russian Foreign Policy," *CDPSP* XLIV, no. 13, (April 29, 1992), 1.

that is distinctive to today's Russia and our times. Initially, however, we will most likely have to devote special attention to strengthening of our positions in the East, rectifying the obvious distortion caused by the creators of the conception of the "common European home."[16]

The main concern of the Eurasianists was that Russia would always be viewed as a junior partner in its relations with the West. Their anti-Western sentiments and resentments were partly based on Russia's forced cooperation with the West and dependence on Western financial aid. In their view, Russia had to play an important role in bridging Europe and Asia as a result of its unique capability of understanding and absorbing both cultures. The Eurasianists also believed that Russia should counter the spread of the influences of Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia on the Muslim population of the former Soviet Central Asian republics and Russia's own sizeable Muslim minority. Economically, Stankevich's view projected a better future for Russia in its alliances with newly industrializing countries, such as India, China and the Southeast Asian nations; South Africa; the Latin American regional powers of Brazil, Mexico, Chile and Argentina; and countries such as Greece and Turkey in Europe.[17]

From a Russian perspective the foreign policy options of the country could be summed up as follows:

> In theory there are three options for Russia's role in Europe. It can either be the "little brother" of America. This option was already tried during Andrei Kozyrev's tenure as foreign minister, and it ended shamefully.

> The second option is to distance itself from Europe, the USA and Western institutions and to try to turn into a self-sufficient political center for all those who have problems with the West, ranging from the Bosnians to the Iranians. This option is supported by some political groups in Russia, first of all by the communists and nationalists. But it offers no prospects.

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[16] Ibid.

[17] "Anti-Western Feeling Grows Across Russia," *Christian Science Monitor*, April 12, 1992.

In any case, Russia will not be able to become a prominent political center today, simply because it is not an economically strong country.

Intuitively, Russia has found a third option, which is the most natural and realistic one. It develops its relations with the West, playing independently in other arenas and building its own relations with China, Asian and Middle Eastern countries. This option can be defined as Primakov's doctrine.[18]

The Primakov doctrine—named after Prime Minister Evgeny Primakov under Bois Yeltsin—is based on the argument that Russia should be promoted as a great power, as a counterweight to the United States in creating a multi-polar world, the doctrine—according to which Russia should have acted as a peacemaker in regional disputes—was explicitly designed to counter American influence and interests.[19] This strategy provided Russia with more opportunities to maneuver and exclude any detrimental collisions with the leading actors in the political drama. This doctrine was also interesting because it permitted a broad choice of options such as Russia's ability to rely on the United States whenever needed, had a choice of approaching or distancing from leading European states, and retained its choices in critical situations (e.g. cooperation with Iran).[20]

Based on these foreign policy priorities, a new concept entered the Russian foreign policy lexicon: the "near abroad." Strictly speaking the near abroad was considered the republics of the former Soviet Union in which either there are sizeable Russian populations[21] or Russia has geostrategic and political interests.[22] This keen

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[18] "The New Order in Europe," *What the Papers Say*, October 27, 1997. Taken from *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, October 24, 1997.

[19] Campbell, Andrew. "Russia's Primakov and Iraq's Hussein: The World's Most Dangerous Political Partnership," *National Observer* 41, (Winter 1999).

[20] For a brief survey on Primakov and his policies, see "Russia shipwrecked," *The Economist*, September 12, 1998, 55. For a comparative piece on the various doctrines in Russian foreign policy, see Igor Torbakov, "Putin's Russia Defines Its Foreign Policy Agenda," *Eurasia Insight*, July 23, 2004.

[21] Depending on various estimates, there are anywhere between 25-30 million Russians living in former Soviet republics.

interest in the near abroad has led Russian policy makers to come up with their own version of the "Monroe Doctrine" to define the post-Soviet space as a zone of Russian influence where other regional and international actors are regarded as trespassers. One political analyst has expressed Russia's foreign policy priorities vis-à-vis the "near abroad" as:

> It seems to me that Russia should declare to the world community that the entire geopolitical space of the former USSR is a sphere of its vital interests. This does not at all presuppose a threat to solve problems by force; Russia is opposed to any conflicts in this space and is prepared to play there the role of intermediary and guarantor of stability. However, Romania's involvement in dealing with the problems of the Dnestr region and the involvement of Turkey and Iran in the problems of the Transcaucasus are cause for perplexity. Russia should say openly that it is opposed to the formation of any closed military-political alliances whatsoever by the former Union republics, either with one another or with third countries that have an anti-Russian orientation. And that it will regard any steps in this direction as unfriendly.[23]

Moscow, as an expression of this view and aware of the former Soviet republics' economic and strategic importance to Russia, has been anxious to ensure that the countries are run by compliant governments. This policy of containment also stemmed from Russia's awareness of the rising Islamic fundamentalism on its borderlands— mostly in Central Asia—that could threaten its already tenuous stability. Russia exerts its influence in the near abroad by indirectly replacing the former dissident nationalist leaders with former communists whose association with the old days appeal to a population exasperated by economic chaos.[24]

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[22] For an excellent analysis on the origins and usage of the term "near abroad," refer to "On Language; the Near Abroad," *The New York Times*, May 22, 1994.

[23] Andranik Migranyan, "Real and Illusionary Guidelines in Foreign policy," *CDPSP* XLIV, no. 32, (September 9, 1992), 1.

[24] See for instance "Moscow's Spies Claw Back the Republics," *Sunday Times*, July 4, 1993.

Due to the military and economic importance of the region, Russia's major aim is to remain the most influential power in the South Caucasus. The territories of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia serve as a buffer for Russia against intrusion from Turkey and Iran. Therefore, it is in Russia's interest to minimize the influence of the latter two countries and extend its own military presence in the region. Russia operates military bases in Armenia as well as the strategic Gabala radar facility in Azerbaijan,[25] which represents a $10 billion Russian investment and is capable of monitoring air traffic over Turkey, Iran, China, India, Iraq, Pakistan and much of northern Africa.

Another method for Russia to exert its influence in the near abroad is by flexing its military muscles.[26] The military pressure has been part of an effort by Moscow to destabilize and reassert influence over the former Soviet republics, thus not allowing these states to develop independently. For instance, Russian military intervention on the side of separatists in the breakaway Georgian province of Abkhazia tipped the scales in 1993 and forced Georgia temporarily back into alignment with Moscow. Soon after suffering a defeat in Abkhazia, the Georgian leader, Eduard Shevardnadze, announcing that his Republic was on the verge of disintegration, flew to Moscow and agreed to Yeltsin's demand to join the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).[27]

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[25] Construction of the Gabala radar station started in 1978 and was completed in 1984. The station was put into operation in 1988. The USSR had nine such radar stations, the Gabala station being one of the last to be constructed. The radar was intended for detection of launches from the Indian Ocean. However, the radar is unable to process the information independently, and transmits it to installations near Moscow. Russia probably pays rent for the land where the radar is stationed. See http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/russia.

[26] See "Kremlin Backs War to Protect Ethnic Russians," *The Independent*, April 19, 1995. Also see "Kozyrev Wants to Encourage Military Ties in 'Near Abroad'," *Financial Times*, July 7, 1995.

[27] "Russia Trying to Regain Grip Over Republics," *The Boston Globe*, January 5, 1994.

To promote Moscow's influence, Russian forces in the near abroad have taken a role as "peacemakers." In several instances, Moscow negotiated a ceasefire between warring factions in the near abroad, enforced and monitored by Russian troops.[28] Furthermore, Moscow tried but failed to obtain a United Nations mandate for its operations in the former Soviet space. Some Russian officials even went as far as requesting international funding for their country's military missions or suggesting that some Russian "peacekeeping" army divisions "be exempt from international treaty limits on conventional forces."[29]

Because of shear size and historic connectivity, Russia is destined to play an important role in the region. A constructive dialogue with Russia is therefore necessary to realize the conditions under which Moscow is ready to cooperate with other powers in the South Caucasus. This is not an easy task since Russia has been able to assert itself as a power to be reckoned with when dealing with the South Caucasus. A good example of this is the fact that Russia has taken over all peacekeeping missions in the CIS.[30] Following the clashes and the wars in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, only Russia was able to step in without delay—although for some, Russian intervention itself was the reason behind the wars of secession by these regions. Moreover, the absence of other military actors in the region has made Russian mediation inevitable.

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[28] Two such instances are the Russian involvement in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

[29] "Russia as Big Brother to Neighboring States," *Christian Science Monitor*, March 2, 1994.

[30] In March 1992 the CIS members adopted an 'Agreement on military observer and collective peacekeeping groups in the CIS'. The agreement was based on UN and OSCE standards, and declared that peacekeeping was applicable only where the parties to the conflict had given their prior consent and had already reached an agreement to end all hostile acts.

This being said, there are indicators that Russia's problems in the North Caucasus make Moscow more willing than in the past to pursue its interests in the South Caucasus in cooperation with other major—albeit Western—powers. Thus, to find solutions to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, under the auspices of the Organization of Cooperation and Security in Europe's (OSCE) Minsk group, which includes—alongside Russia— representatives of France and the United States.[31] This might be one of the first instances where it would be possible for other powers to take part in various peacekeeping activities in Russia's near abroad and be able to find some solutions to the conflicts in the South Caucasus.

The United States: From 'Russia first' to 'oil first' policy

While Russia was trying to find a new basis for its relationship with the South Caucasus in a post-Soviet context, the United States was very hesitant to get involved in the region. However, just like Russian attitudes and policies, American views and policies towards the region also underwent a significant change during the past decade or so. Given the fact that the United States was the "winner" of the Cold War and it had significant resources to project its influence and power throughout the globe, it was not a surprise to see Washington express a keen interest in the region. What was surprising however, was the lack of a consistent policy towards the region.

At the early stages of the independence of South Caucasus, United States policy towards the region was one based on confusion, lack of consistency and, more

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[31] See "New Round of Minsk Group Consultations," *RFE/RL Caucasus Report* 1, no. 30 (September 22, 1998).

importantly, perceptions of the region from the prism of Moscow. This strategy, which

came to be known as the "Russia First" policy, was in reality not a policy towards the

individual countries of the South Caucasus but one towards the countries surrounding the

region and ways to either promote (as in the case of Turkey) or to contain them (as in the

case of Iran).[32]

Vis-à-vis Russia and the successor states of the USSR, one of the first tasks of the

US in the early 1990s was to assure that the nuclear weapons of the former USSR. While

this did not mean that the sole concern of the United States regarding Russia was the

nuclear weapons arsenal—that was its short-term concern. In the long run the future

political and economic evolution of Russia was of the greatest importance.[33] Even before

the fall of the Soviet Union, the United States was not interested in dealing with the

territorial disputes that ravaged the former Soviet space, relying instead on Soviet central

authorities at first and then on Russia and the newly formed CIS to handle those

problems. These sentiments were summed up by President George Bush in 1991 while on

a visit to Ukraine:

> We will support those in the center and the republics who pursue freedom, democracy and
> economic liberty. We will determine our support not on the basis of personalities but on
> the basis of principles... Some people have urged the United States to choose between
> supporting President Gorbachev and supporting independence-minded leaders throughout
> the U.S.S.R. I consider this a false choice... We will maintain the strongest possible
> relationship with the Soviet Government of President Gorbachev, but we also appreciate
> the new realities of life in the U.S.S.R. and therefore, as a federation ourselves, we want
> good relations, improved relations with the republics.[34]

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[32] See Zeyno Baran, "The Caucasus: Ten Years after Independence," *The Washington Quarterly* 25, no. 1 (Winter 2002): 222.
[33] See for instance Raymond L. Garthoff, "U.S. Relations with Russia: The First Five Years," *Current History* 97, no. 12 (October 1997): 305-312.
[34] "Excerpts from Bush's Ukraine Speech: Working 'For the Good of Both of Us'," *The New York Times*, August 2 1991.

He added further:

> In Ukraine, in Russia, in Armenia and the Baltics, the spirit of liberty thrives. But freedom cannot survive if we let despots flourish or permit seemingly minor restrictions multiply until they form chains, until they form shackles...

> And yet freedom is not the same as independence. Americans will not support those who seek freedom in order to replace a far-off tyranny with a local despotism. They will not aid those who promote a suicidal nationalism based upon ethnic hatred.[35]

However, when the Soviet Union was dissolved and its constituent republics became independent, the United States promptly recognized the countries of the South Caucasus and established diplomatic relations with them.[36] The establishment of diplomatic relations and, consequently, embassies in the new independent states of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia did not translate into an active involvement of the United States in the region. Between 1991 and 1994, the US policy towards the region was summed up as follows: 1) Provide rhetorical support for the independence and territorial integrity of all states of the former Soviet Union; 2) give Russia some space to maneuver their "security interests" in "near abroad;" 3) and support for UN and OSCE efforts (as opposed to unilateral American initiatives) to help resolve conflicts that were endangering the Transcaucasian states' survival.[37]

Initial American interests in the region were to guarantee and encourage the economic transition of the former Soviet republics. This was apparent since late 1991 and early 1992 when the Bush administration pushed for the membership of the Newly

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[35] Ibid.
[36] See "U.S. Names Envoys to Five Republics," *The New York Times*, February 7 1992 and "Baker Opens Tour of The Caucasus," *The New York Times*, February 12 1992.
[37] Richard D. Kauzlarich, "Time for Change? US Policy in the South Caucasus," *Century Foundation Report*, 2001, 16.

Independent States (NIS) to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank

to allow those countries access to billions of dollars in development loans to help make

the transition from a centralized to a free-market economy.[38] This signaled Washington's

policy to work with Yeltsin, while previously the United States had argued that

Gorbachev was not sufficiently committed to the broad economic reform necessary to

bring the country into line with Western economies.[39] Similarly, American involvement

in the region was not on an equal basis with all the republics, thus diplomatic relations

arrived earlier to Armenia than to Azerbaijan or Georgia. This was rather circumstantial

rather than intentional,[40] for the first American involvement in the region came in the

form of humanitarian assistance after the earthquake that devastated northern Armenia in

December 7, 1988.[41] Although the American mobilization was largely due to the

Armenian communities living in the United States, government assistance also poured in,

mostly in the form of transportation costs.[42]

The initial one-sided engagement of the United States by favoring Armenia could

also be explained by the influence of the Armenian lobby groups in Washington and their

attempts to give preferential treatment to Armenia. This has been best exemplified in the

passing into legislation of the Freedom support Act by the US Congress in the fall of

1992 to facilitate economic and humanitarian aid to the former republics of the Soviet

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[38] See "World Bank Gear Up To Aid Ex-Soviet Union," *Christian Science Monitor*, January 21 1992.
[39] "Ex-Soviet States Gain US Support for Tie to Lenders," *The New York Times*, January 4 1992.
[40] What is meant as circumstantial is that because of the absence of a clear foreign policy towards the South Caucasus and because of the lobbying efforts of various Armenian groups in the US—all this in the absence of counter lobbying by oil companies to support Azerbaijan which did develop later—Washington reacted by adopting policies and decision favoring Armenia and putting pressure on Azerbaijan.
[41] "U.S. Prepares To Send Plane To Earthquake Area," *The Associated Press*, December 9, 1988.
[42] "U.S. Quake Relief Donations Reach $3.2 Million," *The Associated Press*, December 12, 1988.

Union, hoping it would help stabilize democratic forms of government and foster economic growth.[43] All the former Soviet republics were qualified for assistance with the exception of Azerbaijan. This might be yet another example of the limited interest of American policy makers in the South Caucasus in the sense that Washington was not interested in fostering good relations with Azerbaijan, which at the time was not yet well positioned on the energy map of the world. However, Section 907(a) of Freedom Support Act,[44] which was designed to restrict American aid to Azerbaijan, did not hinder American aid to circumvent the provisions of the Act, and American assistance did reach Azerbaijan through non-American organizations.[45]

By the mid 1990s and after early hesitant moves in the South Caucasus, the United States re-prioritized its interest in the region and became interested in gaining access to the oil resources of the Caspian basin. It started to promote political stability and democratic reforms in all three republics; it also began to create a new regional balance of power, one in which no outside state would be able to dominate the region or use its influence to the disadvantage of American interests.[46]

The United States furthermore, made use of other regional and international organizations to penetrate the former Soviet space, including NATO and its Partnership

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[43] "Freedom Support Act Signed Into Law," *Department of State Dispatch*, October 26, 1992.

[44] The clause restricting aid to Azerbaijan reads as follows: Restriction on Assistance to Azerbaijan (Title 9: Section 907) "United States assistance under this or any other Act . . . may not be provided to the Government of Azerbaijan until the President determines, and so reports to the Congress that the Government of Azerbaijan is taking demonstrable steps to cease all blockades and other offensive uses of force against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh."

[45] "US May Circumvent Act on Cutting Aid to Azerbaijan," *Journal of Commerce*, October 27, 1992. The lifting of Section 907 (a) of the Freedom Support Act in early 2002 opened new prospects for an expansion of US relations with Azerbaijan. See "White House Statement on Presidential Waiver of Section 907," *State Department: News from the Washington File*, January 30, 2002.

[46] See for instance Paul Goble, "From Myths to Maps: American Interests in the Countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus," *Caspian Crossroads* 3, No.1, (Summer 1997).

for Peace (PfP) program. Agreed upon in early 1994, the PfP became a means of political and military cooperation between NATO and the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union.[47] For the countries of the South Caucasus, PfP came to be regarded as the first stage of their integration in Western institutions and eventually NATO, but for some of the former Soviet republics PfP also symbolized a break from the Soviet orbit and the possibility for creating enough influence to counterbalance Russian hegemony in the region. The involvement of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia with the PfP has not been at the same level though. Georgia seems to be the one most involved in NATO activities with the hope of full membership within the next several years, while Armenia is the one with minimum participation.[48]

The major reason for American policy change towards Russia and the South Caucasus was the growing importance of Caspian oil. Estimates of proven oil reserves in the Caspian region vary from 17 billion to 33 billion barrels, whereas proven gas reserves are estimated to amount about 232 trillion cubic feet.[49] The quantity of oil and gas in the region has made the United States pursue a more active involvement and engagement in the region to guarantee the safe passage of those energy resources to the West.[50]

Another issue determining American policy in the region are the concerns that the United States has with the countries neighboring the South Caucasus—namely Iran and

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[47] For a discussion on PfP see Robin Bhatty and Rachel Bronson, "NATO's Mixed Signals in the Caucasus and Central Asia," *Survival* 42, no. 3 (Autumn 2000): 129-145.

[48] Bhatty and Bronson, "NATO's Mixed Signals," 136.

[49] "Caspian Sea Region: Key Oil and Gas Statistics," *Energy Information Administration*, August 2003. http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/caspstats.html.

[50] For an overview of US interest in and policy towards the Caspian, see Julia Nanay, "The U.S. in the Caspian: The Divergence of Political and Commercial Interests," *Middle East Policy* 6, no. 2 (October 1998).

Turkey. The United States has opposed Iranian influence in the region. Thus in 1996, the

congress passed the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act, according to which foreign companies

investing more than $20 million in Iran's energy sector would be liable to sanctions.[51] At

the same time, Washington endorsed Turkey's role in the South Caucasus and the

Caspian, presenting it as a secular model for Islamic nations and as a gateway to the

West. By these dual acts the United States sent a clear message that it wants Caspian oil

to pass through Turkey and not Iran.[52] By 1997 the United States considered the South

Caucasus a strategically important and vital region. This was emphasized by the Deputy

Secretary of State Strobe Talbott during a speech in July 1997, where he mentioned:

> Today, they [the countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia] have the chance to put behind them forever the experience of being pawns on a chess board as big powers vie for wealth and influence at their expense.

> The United States has a stake in their success. If reform in the nations of the Caucasus and Central Asia continues and ultimately succeeds, it will encourage similar progress in the other New Independent States of the former Soviet Union, including in Russia and Ukraine. It will contribute to stability in a *strategically vital region* that borders China, Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan and that has growing economic and social ties with Pakistan and India...

> The ominous converse is also true. If economic and political reform in the countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia does not succeed—if internal and cross-border conflicts simmer and flare—the region could become a breeding ground of terrorism, a hotbed of religious and political extremism, and a battleground for outright war.

> It *would matter profoundly to the United States if that were to happen in an area that sits on as much as 200 billion barrels of oil.* That is yet another reason why conflict resolution must be job one for US policy in the region: *It is both the prerequisite for and an accompaniment to energy development.*[53] (emphasis added).

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[51] See "Foreigners Investing in Libya or in Iran Face U.S. Sanctions," *The New York Times*, July 24, 1996.
[52] For a discussion on US energy policy see Ian Bremmer, "Oil Politics: America and the Riches of the Caspian Basin," *World Policy Journal* 15, no 1. (Spring 1998) and S. Frederick Starr, "Power Failure: American Policy in the Caspian," *The National Interest* 47 (Spring 1997): 20-31.
[53] "A Farewell to Flashman: American Policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia," Transcript speech given by Strobe Talbott, Deputy Secretary of State, *US Department of State Dispatch*, July, 1997.

The change in American policy towards both the South Caucasus and Russia was a result

of Russia's inability to deal with Chechnya in the Northern Caucasus. Thus starting from

the mid-1990s, the failure of the Russian army to quench demands for independence in

Chechnya made American policymakers realize that Russia is not the superpower that it

once was and that its control over its own territory—let alone in the near abroad—was

waning. Another crucial component in US policy change came after the September 11,

2001 attacks. Soon after the terrorist attacks on New York and the Pentagon, the

American Department of Defense provided combat helicopters to Georgia, and started a

program known as "train and equip" for several Georgian battalions to enhance the

country's counter-terrorism capabilities and address the situation in the Pankisi Gorge

region of northern Georgia.[54] This region was identified by counter-terrorist intelligence

as a corridor for Al-Qaeda members as well as other Islamic extremists from Chechnya to

transfer weapons and fighters to and from Afghanistan.[55] Clearly such an act on the

American side could not have been taken if Washington did not have the tacit approval

and the support of Russian President Vladimir Putin.[56]

The 'other West'

European involvement in the South Caucasus has been of a somewhat different

nature from that of Russia or the United States. Since the independence of the South

Caucasian countries European presence has been cautious and shy, initially based on the

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[54] The United States has expanded its military engagement in the region by sending some 150 military advisors to aid Georgia to rid the Pankisi Gorge of Chechen and other terrorists.

[55] "Green Beret Vanguard Arrives in the Former Soviet Georgia," *The New York Times*, April 30, 2002.

[56] "Russia's Leader Says He Supports American Military Aid for Georgia," *The New York Times*, March 2, 2002.

premise that the West needed to mold the post-Soviet states according to western norms

of democracy, human rights and market economy.[57] These were set as guidelines for the

independent states to initiate membership in various European institutions. With the

membership of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia in the Conference of Security and

Cooperation in Europe (CSCE later OSCE) in early 1992,[58] the OSCE became more

active in the region as mediator of the conflicts within and in between these countries.[59]

The OSCE proved to be a means for the West to curb Russia's influence in the

South Caucasus, especially in the process of finding a solution for the Nagorno-Karabakh

conflict, which by the collapse of the USSR was transformed into a full-blown war

between Armenia and Azerbaijan.[60] Thus begining in 1992, the United States and Europe

attempted to dilute Russia's role in the resolution of the conflict by pushing the OSCE to

take a more active role in the mediation process between the two conflicting sides. By

engaging the OSCE through the Minsk Group,[61] the West hoped that Russia would pass

along its responsibilities to a multilateral group that had the confidence of all the parties

to the conflict. While in the short run the Minsk Group did not halt unilateral Russian

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[57] See Neil MacFarlane, *Western Engagements in the Caucasus and Central Asia* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1999), 9-10.

[58] Armenia and Azerbaijan became members during the CSCE Prague Meeting on January 31, 1992. Having sent its application later, Georgia became a member in the CSCE Helsinki meeting in March 1992. See "Security Forum Adds 10 States," *The Boston Globe*, January 31, 1992.

[59] For an assessment and evaluation of the role of the OSCE in the conflicts of Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, please refer to Olivier Paye and Eric Remacle, "UN and OSCE Policies in Transcaucasia" in *Contested Borders in the Caucasus*, ed. Bruno Coppieters, (Brussels: Free University Press, 1996.)

[60] The conflict is discussed in Chapter 3.

[61] The meeting of the CSCE Council on March 24, 1992 requested the establishment of a conference on Nagorno-Karabakh under the auspices of the CSCE to provide a forum for negotiations towards a peaceful settlement of the crisis. This became to be known as the Minsk Group and was headed by the Co-Chairmanship consisting of France, the Russian Federation and the United States. Membership included: Belarus, Germany, Italy, Portugal, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Turkey, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

mediation activity, it did provide an internationally authorized basis for the involvement of outside powers in helping to resolve the dispute.[62] OSCE's prior involvement in the South Ossetian conflict in Georgia proved to be important since the organization already had some experience in the region and mediation in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was more welcomed.

Before it became conflict mediator, the European Union (EU) was present in the region in the form of various assistance programs, the best known of which was the Technical Aid to the CIS (TACIS) program. Launched by the European Commission in 1991, TACIS provided grant-financed technical assistance to the NIS countries and aimed at enhancing the transition process in these countries.[63] TACIS later expanded its role by establishing the Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia (TRACECA) program, with the intention of developing a transport corridor on a west-east axis from Europe, across the Black Sea, through the Caucasus and the Caspian Sea to Central Asia. It also aimed at developing energy corridors by setting up the Interstate Oil and Gas Transport to Europe (INOGATE). The zenith of EU involvement was in July 2003 when the EU Council of Ministers appointed an EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus.[64] This decision was preceded in March of that same year with another one, when the EU issued a communiqué announcing the launch of Wider Europe/Neighborhood program.[65]

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[62] Michael P. Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict: Causes and Implications* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1998), 86.
[63] From the European Commission Web site, http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/ceeca/tacis/ (retrieved on December 7, 2004).
[64] "Council Appoints an EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus," *RAPID*, July 7, 2003.
[65] See "Wider Europe-Neighborhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbors," *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament*, Brussels, March 11, 2003, COM(203), 4.

From a larger perspective, Europe seems to be a weak player in the balance of power game played between the US and Russia in the South Caucasus. However, integration into the EU and other European institutions—such as the Council of Europe, the Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe (PACE), as well as the OSCE—acts as an incentive for Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia to keep close relations with the EU.

The diplomatic "tango" between Russia and the United States in the South Caucasus since the collapse of the Soviet Union has gone through stages; both the rate of cooperation and mutual trust has not remained constant. In the immediate aftermath of the breakup of the USSR, both Moscow and Washington found a *modus vivendi* in the region. That co-existence—or the non-existence of the United States—changed very soon when Washington realized Russia's weakness. Furthermore, the abundant energy resources in the region and American search for energy sources outside the Middle East tremendously increased the importance of the South Caucasus in American foreign policy agenda. The policies of both Russia and the United States in the South Caucasus have gone through phases where both moved from the acceptance of Russia's hegemony in the region to a confrontation in the form of a renewed rivalry. Needless to say that Caspian oil does play an important role in this rivalry; however, the increased American military presence both in the Caucasus and Central Asia after September 11, 2001 has created tension in American-Russian relations. This bilateral tension has added fury to the already existing conflicts in the region, as some of the countries looked up to Russia for support while others threw in their lot in the American camp.

Europe seems to offer a third way for the countries of the South Caucasus since it is more acceptable to both Russia and the United States. Both Washington and Moscow realize that European presence in the region is neither confrontational for one nor is it competitive with the other. In this sense Europe, with its various institutions, seems to offer a good opportunity for out-of-region actors to make their presence felt in the South Caucasus and break the political, economic and cultural duopoly. Granted that the EU does not have the means and capabilities to compete with the United States and Russia, but it is still a worthwhile player to be considered in the various initiatives that other actors take in the region.

Iran and Turkey: Regional Great Powers

Iran and Turkey are the two most populous states in the region,[66] with considerable economic and military strengths. While Turkey's interests in the region are conditioned by its participation in Western institutions (such as NATO), Iran has had to attempt deepening its relationships with regional actors as well as strengthen bilateral relations with countries such as Russia, China, India, and Pakistan. This situation has resulted in a competition between the two countries to exert political and economic influence on the region, but at the same time both Tehran and Ankara have realized that cooperation might also be possible.

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[66] According to CIA World Fact book estimates, in July 2004 Iran had a population of over 69 million while Turkey's population was just below that same figure. www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook.

Iran: Between religion and Realpolitik

Iran's geographical position, population and physical size, as well as economic and military capabilities, make it possible for the Islamic Republic to become a major power on a regional scale. When the Soviet Union broke apart in 1991, Iran faced a new configuration on its northern border where an apparent power vacuum and the creation of new, unstable and war-torn countries threatened Iran's northern flank. Furthermore, the collapse of the USSR left the United States—at least temporarily—the major superpower in the world, a reality that forced Iran to reconsider its foreign policy priorities regionally as well as internationally.

Early on, Iran tried to prevent the collapse of the Soviet Union, regarding that as a situation favorable to the West. Iranian-Soviet relations during the final years of the USSR were very cordial. In June 1989, just after the death of Ayatollah Khomeini, Hojatoleslam Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, then speaker of the Iranian parliament, traveled to Moscow and met with Gorbachev to discuss bilateral relations between the two countries and to sign cooperation deals with the USSR.[67] The agreements included one on military cooperation, according to which Iran was permitted to buy sophisticated military aircraft from Moscow. It came at a time when after the Iran-Iraq war in 1988, the Iranian army and air force were in desperate need of military supplies and aircrafts to replenish their depleted equipments.[68] This visit in itself did not have any impact on the way Iran viewed the South Caucasus, if it were not for the fact that on his way back to Tehran, Rafsanjani made a stop in Baku and gave a Friday sermon at the Tazapir

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[67] "Tehran and Moscow Seal Ties," *The Independent*, June 23, 1989.
[68] Robert O. Freedman, "Russia and Iran: A Tactical Alliance," *SAIS Review* 17, no.2 (1997): 99.

Mosque, the main mosque in the Soviet Azerbaijani capital. Rafsanjani praised

Gorbachev's reforms, while warning against the dissolution of the USSR.[69] In January

1990, when Azerbaijani crowds rioted along the border between Soviet Azerbaijan and

Iran, attacking border posts and demanding freedom to cross into Iran,[70] the Iranian

official response was that it had no intention to take advantage of the unrest, regarding it

as an internal problem of its northern neighbor.[71]

When the Soviet Union ceased to exist, Iranian interests in the South Caucasus

and Central Asia entered a stage of activism. The dissolution of the Soviet Union and

emergence of eight states as a buffer between Iran and Russia was an important

development for Iran, because these countries were either influenced by Iranian culture

and traditions or enjoyed a common language and ethnicity with the Iranian people.[72]

Seeing an opportunity to expand its influence in the newly independent republics, Iran set

out to fulfill what it saw as its natural geopolitical role of providing a bridge between the

outside world and landlocked Central Asia.[73] Given the sensitivity of issues besetting the

expansion of Tehran's ties and the possibility of a discontented Russian government, Iran

adopted a very calculated and measured approach towards the former Soviet republics.[74]

The Islamic Republic positioned itself to play a crucial role in the region by building new

political and economic relationships with the countries of the South Caucasus and Central

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[69] "Rafsanjani's Baku Sermon Boosts Moscow Ties," *Financial Times*, June 24, 1989.

[70] "Unrest Rekindled in Two Soviet Regions," *The Independent*, January 3, 1990.

[71] *Tehran Times*, January 8, 1990.

[72] Abbas Maleki, "Iran and Russia: Neighbors without Common Borders," in *Russia and Asia: The Emerging Security Agenda*, ed. Gennady Chufrin (SIPRI: Oxford University Press, 1999), 235.

[73] Peter Feuilherade, "Searching for Economic Synergy," *The Middle East*, no. 209 (March 1992): 33.

[74] Alireza Bigdeli, "Overview of Relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan," *Amu Darya: The Iranian Journal of Central Asian Studies* 4, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 162.

Asia and by promoting itself as a bridge between these on the one hand and the Middle

East and the Persian Gulf on the other. In effect, Iran offered these countries potential

access to the Persian Gulf and the Middle East through its extensive transportation

network.

By 1992 Iran's strategic interest and foreign policy priorities in the South

Caucasus and Central Asia were as follows:

1. Building relationships that help it escape from international isolation, which it sees as guarded by US global hegemony.

2. Maintaining the security of its borders, which implies a need for stability in neighboring states. Iran's "revolutionary," anti-US, anti-Israel policy is expressed only toward the south and west.

3. Developing positive political relations with the states of the region, to include expanded trade and investment, particularly with Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Armenia, although its relations with Azerbaijan are likely to remain professional but strained.

4. Maintaining close relations with Russia and professional, but not necessarily cordial (depending on the fluctuating Kurdish issue), relations with Turkey. At some point (but not currently), Azerbaijan figures more overtly in this relationship, consistent with the position noted in the third point.

5. Protecting open access to energy supplies, including the development of energy-based industries that complement rather than compete with domestic industry.

6. Continuing efforts to bypass US attempts to thwart Iranian economic influence, with the hope that such attempts will be eclipsed by US-Iranian rapprochement and simple business logic.

7. Improving relations with the EU, China and Japan, leading eventually to greater international cooperation.[75]

Concordantly, Iran's policies towards its neighboring former Soviet republics

neighboring it have been based on the following spheres: security, economic cooperation

and energy transportation.

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[75] Charles Fairbanks, C. Richard Nelson, S. Frederick Starr and Kenneth Weisbrode, "Strategic Assessment of Central Eurasia," *The Atlantic Council of the US & Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, Johns Hopkins University* (January 2001): 73-74.

In terms of security in the South Caucasus, Iran faced a very tough balancing act

with Armenia and Azerbaijan over the conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh. The conflict

became one of the most important issues on the Iran's foreign policy agenda.[76] While

Iran felt a geopolitical attraction to Armenia after the break-up of the USSR, it looked to

Azerbaijan with apprehension. A major source of concern among Iranian officials in their

relations with Baku was—and remains—the existence of irredentist claims by Azerbaijan

on large parts of northwestern Iran. The Russo-Iranian War of 1826-1828 established the

border between what is now Azerbaijan and Iran, which left significant ethnic Azeri

populations on each side of the frontier; those to the north were integrated into the

Russian and later Soviet empire, while those to the south remained within Qajar and later

Pahlavi Iran.[77] Due to Soviet-era historical revisionism over the decades, a whole

literature of grief over the separation of the so-called Northern and Southern Azerbaijans

came into being, and the myth was internalized by large number of Azerbaijani scholars,

including the nationalist forces, which came to the fore following the introduction of

glasnost.[78] Tehran was concerned that its own Azeri population—estimated to be

anywhere between 15 to 20 million—might support their co-ethnic brothers to the north

in their war against the Armenians over Nagorno-Karabakh.[79] However, this concern was

soon thwarted, and even though Iran pursued what many circles believed to be a pro-

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[76] See Edmund Herzig, *Iran and the Former Soviet South* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1996), 30.

[77] For a historical view on this issue see Tadeusz Swietochowski, *Russia and Azerbaijan: A Borderland in Transition*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

[78] Hunter, *Transcaucasia*, 61.

[79] On a discussion on the issue of "northern" and "southern" Azerbaijan and its impact on Azerbaijani identity, see Brenda Shaffer, *Borders and Brethren: Iran and the Challenge of Azerbaijani Identity* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002).

Armenian policy in the conflict, the Iranian-Azeri population did not start any uprisings or create any troubles. Iran began its mediation initiatives in early 1992, when it invited high-ranking delegations from Armenia and Azerbaijan to Tehran for negotiations. A temporary ceasefire, a lifting of the blockade of Armenia by the Azeri side, the deployment of observer forces and an exchange of prisoners of war and bodies were discussed. On March 15, 1992, a declaration on the resolution of the conflict was signed by the delegations in Tehran.[80]

Despite the signing of a common declaration on restoring stability in the region, the war continued and even intensified. On May 9, Armenian forces captured Shusha (Shushi in Armenian) to alleviate the pressure on Stepanakert, the capital of Nagorno-Karabakh. This victory was followed by the capture of Lachin, which opened a corridor between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh.[81] Iran's foreign ministry voiced its concern about the events in Shusha and Lachin and denounced the occupation of new territories. Iran's deputy foreign minister, Mahmoud Vaezi, expressed his country's concern in a dispatch where he declared, "the Islamic Republic of Iran will not accept any change in the borders of these Republics (Armenia and Azerbaijan). Such measures will be of no help to the settlement of the Karabakh crisis and will further aggravate and complicate the present problems in the region."[82] Iran made it clear that it would not accept any significant changes in the balance of power in the region. In September 1993, when the Armenians launched a new attack on Nakhichevan, Iranian troops crossed the border with

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[80] "Pact Reported on Ending Ethnic War in Caucasus," *The New York Times*, March 16, 1992.
[81] "Azerbaijan: A Time of Turmoil," *The Economist*, May 23, 1992
[82] "Iran Denounces Armenia's 'Flagrant Aggressions'," *Agence France Presse*, May 19, 1992.

the aim of securing the "jointly managed" dams over the Arax River and establishing several camps for Azeri refugees.[83] Eventually, Iranian mediation efforts were thwarted when Russia and the United States became actively involved in the crisis under the auspices of the OSCE. This, however, did no mean that the OSCE Minsk Group ignored potential Iranian impact on the negotiations and Iran was constantly updated and informed about the peace process.[84]

On the economic level, Iran's interaction with the NIS did not prove to be a viable economic alternative. The volume of trade between Iran on the one hand and the former Soviet republics of Central Asia and the South Caucasus on the other was not as much as expected, mostly because of the poor economic bases that the NIS countries started from. Regardless of this disadvantage, Tehran pursued an active policy of economic, social and cultural interaction with its new neighbors.[85] This regional cooperation had in its basis some of the aspects of Iran's competition with Turkey to establish influence in the South Caucasus and Central Asia. Thus, Iran sponsored and was active in regional projects such as the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and the Association of Persian-Language Speakers, both of which could be considered the counterparts of the Turkish-sponsored Organization for Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and the Turkic

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[83] See "Contradictory Reports About Presence of Iranian Troops in Azerbaijan," *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts (SWB) (SU/1785/F)*, September 4, 1993 and "Iran to Build Two More Refugee Camps in Azerbaijan," *Agence France Presse*, September 28, 1993.

[84] "CSCE Envoy Calls for Iran to Participate in Resolving Conflict," *BBC SWB (SU/2088/F)*, August 31, 1994.

[85] One of the more drastic measures undertaken by Teheran to fuel economic cooperation and trade with its neighbors has been the establishment of regional free trade zones. Also the central government entrusted provincial governments with the power to establish relations with their regional counterparts in neighboring states. See Herzig, *Iran and the Former Soviet South*, 35-6.

Summits.[86] At the same time, as Iran was expanding the membership of ECO it also

launched a new multilateral intergovernmental initiative, proposing the creation of a

Caspian Sea Cooperation Organization (CASCO) to increase cooperation between the

Caspian Sea littoral states (Azerbaijan, Russia, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan).[87] On the

economic level, Iran's activity and success have been modest, partly because its own

economy has been weak and, therefore, unable to invest substantially in or enter into joint

ventures with other countries. It is also because private companies and businessmen in

Iran have had little experience in investing in foreign countries.[88]

Within the energy sector, Iran's geographical position and oil potential make it an

important actor in the Caucasus.[89] Although the United States has tried to isolate Iran

from the Caspian Oil negotiations, such as Iran's participation in the Azerbaijan

International Operating Company (AIOC),[90] Tehran participated in several projects of oil

extraction and exploitation in the Caspian fields.[91] After the fall of the USSR, Iran has

actively promoted itself as the most viable route to transfer Caspian and Central Asian oil

and gas to the international market, promoting its well-developed shipping terminals,

technically skilled workforce and the well-developed pipeline network that can easily act

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[86] On the BSEC, see http://www.bsec.gov.tr/. On the Turkic Summits, see Gareth Winrow, *Turkey in Post-Soviet Central Asia* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1995), 16-21.

[87] For a discussion on ECO and CASCO, refer to Edmund Herzig, "Regionalism, Iran and Central Asia," *International Affairs* 80, no. 3 (2004): 512-516.

[88] Adam Tarock, "Iran's Policy in Central Asia," *Central Asian Survey* 16, no. 2 (1997): 185-200.

[89] See Rosemarie Forsythe, "The Politics of Oil in the Caucasus and Central Asia," *Adelphi Paper* 300, (1996): 23-6.

[90] AIOC is a consortium of 10 major international oil companies created in December 2, 1994 to develop the oil and gas fields in the Azerbaijan sector of the Caspian Sea. Participating companies and their initial stakes in AIOC include: BP (UK, 34.1%), Unocal (USA, 10.3%), LUKoil (Russia, 10%), Statoil (Norway, 8.6%), ExxonMobil (USA, 8%), Pennzoil (USA, 5.6%), ITOCHU (Japan, 3.9%), TPAO (Turkey, 6.7%), Delta Hess (USA-UAE, 2.7%) and SOCAR (the Azerbaijani National Oil Company, 10%)

[91] "Iran to be Involved in Azeri Oil Development," *BBC SWB (ME/W0380/MEW)*, April 18, 1995.

as a conduit to transfer oil from Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. Iran's

attempts, however, were blocked by the United States through the Iran-Libya Sanctions

Act, which limited Iran's participation in many joint ventures in the Caspian region. This,

in turn, has resulted in considering Turkey as an alternative transit point for the region's

energy resources and the building of oil and gas pipelines, such as the Baku-Tbilisi-

Ceyhan project.[92] Although Iran considers Turkey an instrument that seems to further

American interests, the two countries have worked together on several pipeline projects

connecting their countries.[93]While Iran regards American expansion in the region as a

challenge, it considers Russia to be a partner with whom it cooperates on many levels.[94]

This is best exemplified by the Russian-Iranian cooperation in the sphere of energy which

also includes Armenia, with whom Iran has started the building of a gas pipeline to

export over one billion cubic meters of natural gas per year.[95]

Iran has been present on the political and economic scene of the South Caucasus

since the fall of the USSR. While initially it was able to exert a considerable amount of

influence on the region, it was soon pushed aside by an active US engagement in the

Caspian region. Short of being isolated, Tehran has approached US involvement in the

region with pragmatism and instead tried to counterbalance that presence by

strengthening its cooperation with Russia. Moscow and Tehran have been regional

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[92] Ziya Onis, "Turkey and Post-Soviet States: Potential and Limits of Regional Power Influence," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 5, no. 2 (June 2001): 1-16.

[93] See Gareth Winrow, "Turkey's Evolving Role in the Post-Soviet World," in *The Political Economy of Turkey in the Post-Soviet Era, Going West and Looking East?* Ed. Libby Rittenberg (Connecticut, London: Westport, 1998), 111.

[94] See "Iran Seeks to be Outlet for Caspian Sea Oil," *Oil & Gas Journal*, (January 1, 1996).

[95] The project, which took years to be realized, includes the Russian company Gazprom. See "Premier Hopes for 'Changes in Region' as Iran-Armenia Gas Pipeline Launched," *BBC Monitoring International Reports*, November 30, 2004.

powers for a long time and have seen many changes in regional and international political

systems. Both acknowledge those changes but at the same time are adamant to preserve

their status in the region.

Turkey: From big brother to good neighbor

With the weakening and subsequent collapse of the USSR, Turkey felt that its

geographically strategic location as the first line of defense against the Soviet Union was

waning, which in turn could have resulted in decreased US and Western assistance. This

resulted in strategic reinvention to ensure Turkey's position as an important Western ally.

[96] With the new realities of the post-Soviet space and the increased number of new states

in the South Caucasus and Central Asia, Turkey was able to present itself as a bridge

between the Western world on the one hand and South Caucasus and Central Asia on the

other. Furthermore, it saw itself as a model of a Westernized, secular, market-orientated

democracy upon which the new republics could rely.[97] As early as 1990 and 1991,

Ankara displayed a strategic interest in several of the Soviet republics; it saw this as a

historic opportunity to increase its influence in the South Caucasus and Central Asia.

Turkey continued to exploit this opportunity in the post-Soviet era, bearing in mind

Russia's strategic interests in the region.[98]

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[96] See Hunter, *Transcaucasia*, 162.
[97] See Andrew Apostolou, "New Players in an Old Game," *The Middle East*, no. 213 (July 1992): 5 and Duygu Bazoglu Sezer, "Turkey in the New Security Environment in the Balkans and Black Sea Regions," in *Turkey Between East and West, New Challenges for a Rising Regional Power*, eds. Vojtech Mastny and Craig Nation (Oxford: Westview Press, 1996), 87.
[98] See Ekavi Athanassopoulou, "Ankara's Foreign Policy Objectives after the End of the Cold War: Making Policy in a Changing Environment," *Orient* 36, no. 2 (1995): 31.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 radically altered Turkey's geopolitical situation and security perceptions. For the first time since the 17th century, Turkey did not have a common border with Russia.[99] Ankara's efforts to become the center of a "Turkic world" prompted it to become involved in the regional conflicts in the South Caucasus. As a result, it could not avoid confrontation with Russia, which had grounds to view Turkey as its biggest rival in the struggle for hegemony in that region.[100] Parallel to the American policy of "Russia First,", the Turkish approach to the South Caucasus could be characterized as an "Azerbaijan First" policy.[101] The existing cultural and historic links between Azerbaijan and Turkey played an important factor in this orientation.

In order to have unimpeded access to Azerbaijan and to reduce the Russian presence in South Caucasus, Ankara also wanted to develop good relations with Armenia and Georgia. However, Armenian involvement in the undeclared war with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as demands by Armenians (both in Armenia and the Diaspora) to recognize the Armenian Genocide committed by the Ottoman Empire during World War I, made the possibility for developing normal relations between Turkey and Armenia very difficult. While relations with Georgia were easier to develop due to a lack of political dispute between the two countries, a rapprochement between Turkey and Georgia became possible only after the overthrow of Zviad Gamsakhurdia. In May 1992,

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[99] Save for a short period of time between 1918 and 1920 when Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia declared their independence only to be absorbed into the Soviet Union soon after.

[100] Andranik Migranyan expresses this best when he says: "Russia's long-term interests require that Turkey's advance into the Transcaucasus and from there, naturally, into Central Asia be halted. This advance could disrupt the balance of power on Russia's southern borders and create a potential threat to its interests." See Migranyan, "Real and Illusionary Guidelines in Foreign Policy," 1.

[101] For a detailed discussion on Turkey's policy towards Azerbaijan see Suha Bolukbasi, "Ankara's Baku-centered Transcaucasia Policy: Has it failed?" *The Middle East Journal* 51, no. 1 (Winter 1997): 80-94.

Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Hikmet Cetin paid an official visit to Tbilisi and

established diplomatic relations with Georgia.[102] On July of the same year, during a visit

by Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel to Tbilisi, a treaty of friendship, cooperation and

good-neighborly relations, along with agreements on trade and economic cooperation, on

encouragement and protection of investments and a number of other accords, were

signed. Yet initially, the Turks failed to recognize the importance of a special relationship

with Tbilisi until it became clear in 1994 that the most realistic export route for

Azerbaijan's Caspian oil was through Georgia. Economic cooperation between the two

countries was revived after a visit by the Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Çiller in August

1995. At that time, the decision by the Turkish government to grant Georgia additional

credit amounting to $150 million was also announced.[103] The two countries also signed

an agreement on military assistance and cooperation, which envisaged the construction of

military training centers in Kodori and Gori and a shooting range outside Tbilisi. Turkey

also assisted Georgia with the reconstruction of the Vaziani military base, and Georgian

military personnel have been studying at Turkish military establishments since 1998.[104]

In 2000, Turkey and Georgia launched a joint initiative to create a "South Caucasus

Stability Pact"[105] with the hope to increase Western involvement in the area.

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[102] "Georgia and Turkey Establish Diplomatic Relations," *BBC SWB (SU/1387/ i)*, May 22, 1992.

[103] "Turkish Premier and Shevardnadze Sign Economic Agreements," *BBC SWB (EE/D2398/F)*, September 2, 1995.

[104] "Georgia, Turkey Sign Protocol on Military Cooperation," *BBC SWB (SU/D3475/S1)*, March 5, 1999.

[105] For a detailed analysis of this agreement see Michael Emerson and Nathalie Tocci, "A Stability Pact for the Caucasus," *CEPS Working Documents* No. 145 (Brussels: Center for European Policy, June 2000) and Michael Emerson, Nathalie Tocci and Elena Prokhorova, "A Stability Pact for the Caucasus in Theory and Practice - A Supplementary Note," *CEPS Working Documents* No. 152 (Brussels: Center for European Policy, November 2000).

Intergovernmental contacts between Turkey and Azerbaijan were established in March 1991 when the Turkish President Turgut Özal paid an official visit to Baku.[106] That visit initiated cultural, scientific and economic cooperation between the two countries, but it cannot be viewed as initiating their political rapprochement, since at the time Turkish politicians were still avoiding comments or activities that might be interpreted as interference in the domestic affairs of the Soviet Union.[107] On November 9, 1991, the Turkish government recognized Azerbaijan, almost a month before it recognized the rest of the NIS, indicating the priority status of Azerbaijan for Turkey.[108] The relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan were cemented early the following year when then Azerbaijani President Ayaz Mutalibov paid an official visit to Ankara and signed cooperative agreements with Turkey.[109] In March 1992, Heydar Aliyev, the then president of the Autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan paid an official visit to Ankara and signed a separate protocol of cooperation between Turkey and Nakhichevan, according to which, Turkey pledged to grant a $100 million credit to the Nakhichevan Republic; the protocol also provided for the integration of power grids, the establishment of rail, air, and bus connections and guidelines for the promotion of Turkish companies in the Autonomous Republic.[110]

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[106] "President of Turkey Visits Azerbaijan," *BBC SWB (SU/1025/A4/ 1)*, March 20, 1991.

[107] President Özal's visit coincided with the Turkish newspaper *Milliyet* opening a press office in Baku. See "Turkish Newspaper to be Sold in Azerbaijan," *BBC SWB (SU/1025/A4/ 1)*, March 20, 1991.

[108] "Report on Turkish Recognition of Azerbaijani Independence," *BBC SWB (SU/1229/A4/ 1)*, November 14, 1991.

[109] "President of Azerbaijan Meets Turkish Leaders; Cooperation Agreement Signed," *BBC SWB (ME/1286 i)*, January 28, 1992.

[110] "Nakhichevan President in Turkey," *BBC SWB (ME/1338/A/ 1)*, March 25, 1992.

Turkey's assistance to Azerbaijan continued unbroken ever since the signing, in November 1992, of a bilateral agreement under which Turkey pledged to grant Azerbaijan credits totaling $250 million.[111] Turkey's aid to Azerbaijan had a cultural component, hence Turkish aid to Azerbaijan and the Nakhichevan Republic was intended to stimulate the processes of the reawakening of ethnic and national consciousness. Therefore, as early as November 1991, Turkey transferred to Azerbaijan equipment serving to transmit Turkish television channels and provided organized telephone links between Baku and major Turkish cities.[112] Of special importance was Turkey's assistance in the changeover of the alphabet underway in Azerbaijan. Turkey provided Azerbaijan not only with specialized linguistic assistance but also with a considerable number of typewriters and keyboards with Latin fonts adapted to the phonetic features of the Turkic language group.[113] Another important form of assistance was scholarships in Turkish universities for students from Azerbaijan as well as special trainings for diplomats from Baku and other Central Asian capitals in Ankara.[114] This initial "pan-Turkic" euphoria, however, was soon replaced by realism as the newly independent states in Caucasus and Central Asia, eager to secure political and economic support from all possible sides, refrained from identifying themselves solely with a Turkic identity.[115]

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[111] "Agreement Signed on 250m-dollar Loan to Azerbaijan," *BBC SWB (ME/W0256/A1/ 1)*, November 10, 1992.

[112] See "Turkey Pushing Eastward by Satellite; Muslim Ex-Soviet States Are Focus of Cultural, Commercial Plan," *The Washington Post*, March 22, 1992 and "Turks Installing Telecommunications Equipment in Nakhichevan," *SWB (SU/W0231/B/ 1)*, May 22, 1992.

[113] See "Turkic Countries Switch to Latin Alphabet," *BBC SWB (EE/2319/B)*, June 2, 1995.

[114] See "Turkey and Azerbaijan Sign Accord on Educational Cooperation," *BBC SWB (SU/1298/A4/ 1)*, February 7, 1992 and "Azerbaijani and Central Asian Diplomats to Be Trained in Turkey," *BBC SWB (SU/1410/A4/ 1)*, June 18, 1992.

[115] See Cengiz Candar and Graham Fuller, "Grand Geopolitics for a New Turkey," *Mediterranean Quarterly*, (Winter 2001): 33.

In energizing its political activity in the South Caucasus, Turkey tried to avoid moves which might have adversely affected its relations with Russia. However, in view of the conflicts existing in that region, this policy proved impossible to maintain in the long run. As early as January 1992 Huseynaga Sadykhov, at that time minister of foreign affairs of Azerbaijan, when proposing talks with representatives of Armenia concerning the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, implied that the government he represented was counting on Turkey's aid in a peaceful resolution of the conflict.[116] Five months later, when Armenian forces made some offensive moves in Nakhichevan, Ankara's reaction was sharp, as Turkish Prime Minister Demirel declared that the Armenian aggression in Nakhichevan may become a pretext for Turkish armed intervention.[117]

A much more important factor determining the position of Ankara was, however, the changes taking place on the political scene in Azerbaijan itself. The military successes of the Armenians contributed to the fall of President Ayaz Mutalibov. Elections held in June 1992 resulted in the presidential victory of the leader of the Azerbaijani National Front, Abulfaz Elchibey, who had declared during the presidential campaign that, if the National Front were to win the elections, Azerbaijan would withdraw from the CIS and become closer to Turkey.[118] However, almost a year later Elchibey was ousted in a coup d'état, diminishing Ankara's hopes of becoming a "big brother" for that country. Elchibey was succeeded by Heydar Aliyev who believed that to remain in power he should skillfully maneuver between Russia and the West. This thought however did not

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[116] "Azerbaijani Evaluations of Moscow Talks with Armenia," BBC SWB (SU/1312/C4/ 1), February 24, 1992.
[117] "Turkish Prime Minister Pledges Support for Nakhichevan," BBC SWB (ME/1385/C/ 1), May 20, 1992.
[118] See "Turkey's Star Rises over the New Azerbaijan," The Independent, June 13, 1992 also "Warming Azeri-Turkish Relations Pose Challenge to Russia and Iran," Christian Science Monitor, June 16, 1992.

prevent him asking for Turkish military assistance when he visited Ankara in February

1994.[119] Turkish-Azerbaijani cooperation over the next several years was apparent in the

military field when many Azerbaijani officers were trained in Turkey and an Azerbaijani

army platoon participated as NATO peacekeepers in Kosovo as part of the Turkish

battalion in KFOR (Kosovo Force).[120] Turkey's attempts to establish close military

relations with Azerbaijan and Georgia was boosted with the establishment of NATO's

PfP and the active involvement of both Azerbaijan and Georgia in it. The Turkish

military provided substantial support to Baku and Tbilisi in their endeavors to develop

professional armies as well as replacing the Soviet era military cadres with new, western

educated and trained officers.[121]

After the initial euphoria of "finding" their ethnic kin in the Caucasus and Central

Asia, reality started to prevail in Turkish policies towards the region. This reality check

was triggered by the existence and transportation of Caspian oil. A project called "East-

West Energy Corridor" made Turkey a central hub for the transportation of Caspian oil

and natural gas to the Mediterranean Sea and an important partner with Azerbaijan and

Georgia.[122] This project consisted of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline and two

gas pipelines (Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum and Turkmenistan-Turkey-Europe).[123] Ankara was

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[119] See "Turkey and Azerbaijan Sign 16 Agreements and Protocols," *BBC SWB (SU/1921/F)*, February 14, 1994 and also "President Aliyev Asks Turkey to Supply Arms to Azerbaijan," *BBC SWB (EE/1921/B)*, February 14, 1994.

[120] "Baku Facilitates Military Contacts with Turkey," *What the Papers Say*, July 30, 1999.

[121] Gareth Winrow, *Turkey and the Caucasus: Domestic Interests and Security Concerns* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2000), 4-5.

[122] See "Turkey Determined to Remain at the Center of East-West Energy Corridor," *Oil & Gas Journal*, January 14, 2002.

[123] For a discussion on the issue of pipelines on Turkish geopolitical role, refer to "Of Politics and Pipelines," *The Economist*, July 10, 1999, "Baku-Ceyhan Pipeline: Bad Economics, Bad Politics, Bad Idea," *Oil & Gas Journal*, October 26, 1998 and Bülent Aras and George Foster, "Turkey: Looking for

able to successfully lobby for the pipelines on the grounds that shipping the Caspian oil from the Black Sea and through the Bosporus could be environmentally disastrous.[124] Parallel to promoting itself as an energy conduit and similar to the attempts made by Iran, Turkey started promoting regional cooperative organizations as a mechanism to interact and even influence the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union. The major Turkish initiative in this aspect was the BSEC, which was created in 1990 even before the dissolution of the Soviet Union to facilitate the transport of goods and services between the member states.[125] In June 1992, when the Soviet Union no longer existed, BSEC witnessed a large expansion when representatives from eleven countries[126] met in Istanbul to sign an agreement to promote cooperation in the fields of energy, transportation, communications, information and ecology.[127]

Turkey's attempts to redefine its role in the new century have had mixed results. On the one hand it had to face a new region, which although ethnically and culturally similar, proved to be socially, politically and economically very different. Furthermore the role that Turkey set itself to follow as a "guide" for the newly independent countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia soon dissipated, and Ankara realized that those

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Light at the End of the Caspian Pipeline," in *Oil and Geopolitics in the Caspian Sea Region*, eds. Michael P. Croissant and Bülent Aras, (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2000), 229-248.

[124] In March 1994 an oil tanker collided with a freighter in Bosporus boosting support to Turkish demands for land rather than sea transport of oil. See "Tanker, Freighter Collide in the Bosporus Strait," *The Associated Press*, March 14, 1994.

[125] "Black Sea Economic Co-operation Meetings Held in Ankara," *BBC SWB (ME/0955/A/ 1)*, December 24, 1990.

[126] These countries were Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Turkey, Moldova, Romania, Russia, and Ukraine.

[127] See "Black Sea Cooperation Summit in Istanbul," *BBC SWB (ME/1418/C/ 1)*, June 27, 1992. For a discussion on the BSEC refer to Ercan Özer, "Concept and Prospects of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation," *Foreign Policy Review* 20, no. 1-2, (1996): 75-106.

countries were far from looking for a "big brother" having just left another one.[128] These

realties at first resulted in a disappointment, but that quickly changed to a more pragmatic

approach from Turkey, especially vis-à-vis the issue of energy transportation and

assisting the countries of the South Caucasus to be integrated in some of the Western

institutions (such as NATO).

Whose Backyard is it Anyway?

Since the Soviet Union ceased to exist in the early 1990s, the South Caucasus

witnessed very bloody turmoil. Inter-state as well as intra-state ethnic and civil conflicts

ravaged the countries of the region, and transition from communist state-oriented

economies and political hegemony did not prove to be an easy task. The initial

withdrawal—or the perception of withdrawal—of Russia from the region saw the two

regional powers in the region, Iran and Turkey, competing for influence. While both

Tehran and Ankara tried to flex their political, economic and cultural muscles in the

South Caucasus, they both eventually faced the reality that although the countries of the

region are not directly controlled by Moscow, there was still Russian presence in those

countries to rebuke attempts by outside forces to establish control in the region.

The perceptions that Russian policy makers had towards Iran and Turkey

gradually changed and became more pragmatic. Whereas initially Iran was considered to

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[128] Patrick Clawson, "The Former Soviet South and the Muslim World," in *After Empire: The Emerging Geopolitics of Central Asia*, ed., Jed C. Snyder, (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1995), 141.

be a radical Muslim country interested in exporting militant Islam to the former Soviet Muslim countries, Moscow gradually came to regard Tehran as another pragmatic regional actor. Policy makers in Iran were also quick to realize that what many outsiders considered to be a "vacuum" in the Soviet South was a misconception and Russia made its presence felt in the region either as a mediator in local conflicts or in the form of military bases that it had in all three countries of the region. In the case of Turkey, Russia viewed "pan-Turkism" as challenging as pan-Islamism. The close association of Turkey with the United States and NATO increased Moscow's apprehension of any Turkish moves into their near abroad. This Russian apprehension gradually dissipated as it became clear that the Turkic republics of Central Asia and Azerbaijan were not interested in having Turkey as a big brother. Moreover, the limited financial capabilities of Turkey weakened its ability to sustain a long-term influence in the region. Iran and Turkey approached the final days of the Soviet Union with caution. Neither country antagonized Moscow by interfering in the domestic affairs of the Soviet Union. This policy changed when in 1991 the Soviet Union ceased to exist and both Tehran and Ankara utilized every means possible to fill in the void.

Western involvement in the region witnessed an almost opposite trend. Thus up until 1993, the West did not have a clear policy towards the region except to accept Russian supremacy. However, the "Russia First" policy of the United States gradually gave way to a more assertive oil-first policy, which saw the increased involvement of United States oil companies in the Caspian and an increased participation of the West in the mediation processes of the conflicts in the region. To achieve these goals, the United

States was able to use its immense resources to provide economic and military aid to Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia and gradually push into the region some of the Western institutions where it has a predominant role (such as NATO). No doubt, September 11, 2001 added a security dimension to American involvement in the South Caucasus and made the region an important link for the United States to reach Central Asia and to curb the movement of terrorist groups through the region. American involvement in the region had also the goal of checking Iran's participation and activities in the Caspian basin and the South Caucasus.

The attempts by the United States to exclude Iran from the region, coupled with its increased confrontation with Russia, created a situation where Iran and Russia found themselves on the same side of the fence without necessarily having converging policies. At the same time, the US came to rely on Turkey as one of its main allies in the region. This renewed importance that Turkey had was not a factor of the cultural links that Ankara had with the Turkic republics of former USSR, but was rather pure geopolitical and geo-economic calculations of transferring Caspian oil, bypassing Russian and Iranian territory. Regardless of the reasons, Ankara and Washington realized that their converging interests in the region required them to cooperate closely even if they did not see eye to eye on their policies in other regions, such as Iraq.

The policies of Russia, US, Iran and Turkey towards the South Caucasus as well as towards each other in the region had created a situation of cold peace where the main concern of the parties are to manage conflicts and contain crises. The divergence of Russian and Iranian policies on the one hand and US and Turkish views on the other has

gradually created a system where there are two opposing axes in the region. Each of these axes has its own supporters as well as its opponents in the region, gradually substituting the regional cold peace situation into a cold war one. In the "polarization" of relations between these two sides another actor promises to become a tension breaker. Europe seems to share some of the priorities and policies of the US without alienating Russia or Iran, and this could be beneficial to the region if it wasn't for the lack of confidence that the countries of the South Caucasus have in the EU to be able to become a viable player.

The rivalry of these axes in the South Caucasus for economic and political supremacy could threaten the region with further fragmentation. Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia have each pursued a policy that converges with one of those axes. With not having enough power to influence the system on their own or through cooperation with each other, the countries of the South Caucasus face a not so bright future.

CHAPTER III: ARMENIA'S FOREIGN POLICY: HOSTAGE TO GEOPOLITICS AND HISTORY

It was apparent that in the mid 1980s Armenia, which at the time was a constituent republic of the USSR, was already in the process of pursuing a national policy contradictory to the wishes and calculations of Moscow. The main point of contestation between the Armenian nationalist groups and Moscow was the thorny issue of Nagorno-Karabakh and its status as an autonomous region under the sovereignty of the Azerbaijani Soviet Socialist Republic.[1]

Starting in 1988, Armenians began demonstrating in Yerevan to demand a solution for the Karabakh issue. Their demands gradually increased to include more sovereignty for the Armenian economy and priority for the Armenian language in schools and in public affairs. Other demands included the freedom to fly the tricolor flag used during Armenia's brief independence between 1918 and 1920, the right to open consulates in countries with large Armenian populations, and the creation of an Armenian army detachment so that young men from the Soviet Republic could perform their military service on home soil.[2]

The growing Armenian demands resulted in the establishment of independent political parties in the country – the most prominent and popular one being the Armenian Pan National Movement (ANM). In the local parliamentary (soviet) elections of Armenia in 1990, the ANM was able to get one of its leaders, Levon Ter-Petrossian, elected as the

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[1] The issue of Nagorno-Karabakh within the framework of Armenia's foreign policy is discussed below.
[2] See "Armenia's Capital is Roused by Calls for New Freedoms," *The New York Times*, September 5, 1988 and "Thousands of Armenians Rally, Shut Down Businesses After Shootout," *The Associated Press*, September 20, 1988.

President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Armenian SSR.[3] After the ANM

came to power, events unraveled quickly and Armenia was set on its path to

independence. In September 1991, a referendum resulted in an overwhelming (99%)

support for Armenia's independence and eventual secession from the USSR.[4] On

September 23, 1991, the parliament declared the Republic to be independent, hence

pushing the new state towards sovereignty.[5] A month later during the first ever

presidential elections in the country, Ter-Petrossian was elected president with a vast

majority of the votes.[6]

      The new leadership of independent Armenia came to power with a complete

break from traditional and conventional Armenian views about the country's relations

with its neighbors, especially when it came to the bilateral relations with Turkey and

Russia. Whereas many groups in the country and in the Armenian Diaspora considered

strategic reliance on Russia and a tough stand against Turkey major tenets for the new

Republic's foreign policy, Ter-Petrossian and his administration adopted a more cautious

and pragmatic approach in dealing with both those countries. Concordantly, Ter-

Petrossian and his administration defined Armenia's foreign policy orientation based on

the following principles: a) establishment of friendly relations with all of Armenia's

neighbors including Turkey, b) preservation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of

Armenia, c) guarantee the security of Nagorno-Karabakh and its population, d) and an

active participation of Armenia in the process of the formation of a new European

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[3] "Nationalist Leader Elected President of Legislature," *The Washington Post*, August 6, 1990.
[4] "Armenians Near Unanimous for Independence," *United Press International*, September 22, 1991.
[5] "Armenia Declares Independence," *The Associated Press*, September 23, 1991.
[6] "Ter-Petrossian Becomes President of Armenia," *ITAR-TASS News Agency*, October 19, 1991.

security system.[7] These parameters became the country's guidelines to conduct a foreign policy during Ter-Petrossian's administration between 1991 and 1998, and when the regime changed and Robert Kocharian came to power in 1998, the same principles were maintained; albeit an almost radically different strategy and tactics were utilized to achieve those goals.

This chapter will analyze Armenia's foreign policy within the framework of three major parameters. First there will be an analysis of the political orientation of the Republic vis-à-vis the regional and international political currents and actors. The issue of orientation will be traced based on the pretext and announcements by Armenian officials about the "uniqueness" of Armenia's foreign policy and the introduction and practice of the concept of "complementary" foreign policy as a cornerstone of Armenia's diplomatic activity.[8] Within this context, the changing international political environment and the adaptation – or the lack – of Armenia's foreign policy will be dealt with.

The second aspect of the analysis will be the study of diverging priorities resulting from Realpolitik – as defined by geopolitics and pragmatism versus the historical perceptions and experiences – which in turn have shaped Armenia's foreign policy orientations and relations with its neighbors. This facet of Armenia's foreign policy will be examined within the context of Armenia's relations with Turkey.

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[7] See Nikolay Hovhannisyan, *The Foreign Policy of the Republic of Armenia in the Transcaucasian-Middle Eastern Geopolitical* Region (Yerevan: Noyan Tapan, 1998), 14.

[8] The term "complementary foreign policy" was introduced into the Armenian foreign policy dictionary as early as 1997. The concept was based on the premise that Armenia was to develop balanced relations both with Russia and the West. While the term itself was new, the practice of complementary foreign policy was one of the pillars of Armenia's foreign policy since its independence.

The final point of the study will consider the role of the Armenian Diaspora in the foreign policy formulation of the Republic. This concept brings forward a dichotomy between Armenian and Armenia's foreign policies. The economic reliance of Armenia on investments and assistance from the dispersed Armenian communities has quite often diverged national (meaning pan-Armenian) and state interests.

It should, however, be kept in mind that Armenia's most pressing foreign policy issue has been the conflict with Azerbaijan over the Armenian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh. Created in 1923, the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) was a mostly Armenian populated region that was put under the administrative control of the Azerbaijani SSR and was separated from the Armenian SSR by a 10-km strip of land known as the Lachin Corridor. Since the 1960s the Armenian population demanded the unification of the region with Armenia; however their demands were dismissed by the Soviet central authorities.[9] When Gorbachev began pushing his reform policies, the

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[9] The analysis and discussion of the origins and development of the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute and conflict is beyond the confines of this work. However, because of the centrality of this issue in discussing Armenia's foreign policy this short overview was necessary to put the issue in perspective. The range of books, articles, and research done on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is extremely wide. A very small sample of the work done on this issue includes: Audrey L. Altstadt, "O Patria Mia: National Conflict in Mountainous Karabagh," in *Ethnic Nationalism and Regional Conflict*, eds. W. Raymond Duncan and G. Paul Holman (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994); Levon Chorbajian, Patrick Donabedian, and Claude Mutafian *The Caucasian Knot: The History and Geo-Politics of Nagorno-Karabagh* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Zed Books, 1994); Michael P. Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict: Causes and Implications* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1998); Thomas De Waal, *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan Through Peace and War* (New York: New York University Press, 2003); Stuart J. Kaufman, "Ethnic Fears and Ethnic War in Karabagh," *Center for Strategic and International Studies Working Paper*, October 1998; Gerard J. Libaridian, ed., *The Karabakh File: Documents and Facts on the Question of Mountainous Karabakh, 1918-1988* (Cambridge: The Zoryan Institute, 1988); Erik Melander, "The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Revisited: Was the War Inevitable?" *Journal of Cold War Studies* 3, no. 2 (Spring 2001): 48-75; Edgar O'Balance, *Wars in the Caucasus, 1990-1995* (New York: New York University Press, 1997); Mehmet Tütüncü, ed., *Caucasus: War and Peace: The New World Disorder and Caucasia* (Haarlem, Netherlands: SOTA, 1998); Ronald Grigor Suny, "Nationalism and Democracy in Gorbachev's Soviet Union: The Case of Karabagh," in *The Soviet Nationality Reader: The Disintegration in Context*, ed. Rachel Denber (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992); Christopher J. Walker, *Armenia and Karabagh: The*

Armenian population saw an opportunity to petition Moscow to transfer the NKAO to

Armenia. The Armenian demands for border re-structuring was eventually rejected by the

central authorities in Moscow and the dispute between the two Soviet Republics of

Armenia and Azerbaijan gradually escalated and transformed into an armed conflict by

the end of 1988. The Soviet authorities tried in vain to solve the conflict by keeping the

status quo and sending troops to both the Armenian and Azerbaijani SSRs, but those

moves only led to subsequent anti-Russian sentiments amongst Armenians and Azeris. In

1991, after the fall of the USSR and the independence of both Armenia and Azerbaijan,

the dispute of Nagorno-Karabakh mutated into an all-out war between the two

independent states and thus became a conflict that attracted the attention of regional and

international actors. Since its inception, the conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh has

conditioned Armenia's relations with Azerbaijan and furthermore has been an important

factor in its relations with Iran, Turkey, Russia, and the West. Over the years, the

conflict, then the ceasefire negotiations, and finally negotiations to find a permanent

solution has taken over a substantial amount of Armenian diplomatic efforts, initiatives,

and resources. The conflict's original framework as an internal USSR dispute and then its

transformation into an inter-state conflict defined Armenia's foreign policy initiatives and

rendered it almost impossible to conduct diplomacy without addressing that issue in

various international venues.

Struggle for Unity (London: Minority Rights Publications, 1991); and Alexei Zverev, "Ethnic Conflicts in the Caucasus 1988–1994," in *Contested Borders in the Caucasus*, ed. Bruno Coppieters (Brussels: VUB PRESS, 1996).

Between North and West

As a result of Armenia's geographic position as a landlocked country, a sense of isolation has pushed the Armenian psyche to develop a strategy of reliance on outside forces; this belief has been reinforced from the late 18th century on, when Russia by and large has acted as that "outside" force. This reliance on Russia has continued even though the Russian views and policies towards the Armenians and Armenia has been less than consistent and Russian policy has seen instances of neglect towards Armenia.[10]

In the "new world order" after the fall of the Soviet Union, Armenian foreign policy makers realized that their foreign policy orientation should be shifted from a traditional Russo-centric approach to a more balanced orientation vis-à-vis the new actors and old neighbors in the region. This created a challenge especially considering the fact that Armenia lacked natural resources and trained human resources (at least in the early years of independence) as well as the capacity to conduct a foreign policy that did not take sides with any major power and was based on cooperation with all. The external factors influencing this were also important, since in the early 1990s the regional and international system was still in flux after the disappearance of the Soviet Union and the apparent end of the Cold War. Thus in a volatile and constantly changing world system, Armenia had to find a formula based on which it could conduct balanced relations, especially with the United States and Russia. The principle of balanced foreign policy remained a focal point in Armenian diplomacy and it evolved into a doctrine. Thus during the tenure of President Ter-Petrossian, the notion of establishing good relations

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[10] Ronald Suny deals with this issue in *Looking Towards Ararat: Armenia in Modern History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 34-43.

with all of Armenia's neighbors was reiterated repeatedly but it was not until the Robert

Kocharian administration that this notion was given the name "complementary" foreign

policy. While helping quantify the concept, it lost its true meaning because of the over-

dependence of the Kocharian administration on Russia.

The term and the notion of complementarism, as it evolved in the Armenian

diplomatic and political lexicon was an adapted version of a concept originally developed

within the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). In the OSCE

Lisbon Summit of 1996, a declaration on a *Common and Comprehensive Security Model*

for Europe for the 21st Century was adopted, where various elements of the evolving

European security architecture were regarded as complementary rather than conflicting or

mutually exclusive.[11] The declaration stated:

> The Lisbon Declaration on a Common and Comprehensive Security Model for Europe for the
> twenty-first century is a comprehensive expression of our endeavor to strengthen security
> and stability in the OSCE region; as such, *it complements the mutually reinforcing efforts*
> *of other European and transatlantic institutions and organizations in this field.* (emphasis
> added).[12]

The idea that complementarism could be introduced as a useful instrument of Armenia's

diplomatic and political advocacy, and even as an element of its foreign and security

policy, was picked up by the Armenian foreign ministry and debated upon in the post-

Lisbon conference period. In early 1997, the need for developing a new thinking to

overcome two major issues that Armenian diplomacy and domestic politics seemed to

face. The first consisted of Armenia being perceived as a nation uninterested in European

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[11] The various institutions in mind are Western European Union, North Atlantic Treaty Organization and its
Partnership for Peace program, Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, Commonwealth of Independent States,
etc.
[12] *OSCE Lisbon Summit of Heads of State or Government*, DOC.S./1/96, December 3, 1996, 6.

integration within the OSCE community, and was instead perceived as being a nation uninterested in European integration, preoccupied instead with consolidating ties with Russia while at the same time exploiting the advantages of OSCE membership. The second issue was domestic in nature and consisted of a strong opposition within Armenia—among the senior interagency community—against any substantive moves toward integration with the West.

Armenia's complementary foreign policy was first mentioned in a talk given by Foreign Minister Vardan Oskanian at the Washington based think-tank Center for Strategic and International studies (CSIS) in June 1999.[13] This followed the initial test-reference of the idea in the local Armenian media in early 1997 when it was positively welcomed in Armenian political circles because it accommodated the views of the various groups involved in the Armenian foreign policy debate. Thus, on the one hand, the mostly pro-Russian circles appreciated the term "complementary" as a euphemism for lip service to the West and a full-spectrum relationship with Russia. Other circles, on the other hand, regarded it as a positive sign where Armenian diplomacy had finally come up with an elegant, flexible, non-controversial formula to get things moving toward greater diversification of the country's policy choices, while at the same time providing conservatives some room to engage and own stakes in the debate.[14]

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[13] A full but unedited version of the talk may be found at the Armenian Foreign ministry website at: http://www.armeniaforeignministry.com/speeches/99june_intl_studies.html.
[14] The details of Armenia's complementary foreign policy doctrine development were obtained mostly during an interview with a former official at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in February 2005.

The concept of complementarism eventually gave rise to the idea of "positive equilibrium" according to which Armenia was willing to act as a conduit between the West and Russia. In Oskanian's view:

> ... Armenia's whole security doctrine and its web of bilateral relations are guided by the notion that with the disappearance of a bi-polar world, its underlying ideology should be scrapped with it. *Based on this element Armenia has successfully created a network of security arrangements complementary to each other, with contributions from both former Cold War camps.*

> ... We have been conducting a policy of "positive equilibrium" by providing equal opportunity to all countries wishing to engage themselves in the region and in Armenia. *For example, our cooperation with NATO intends to complement our bilateral cooperation with Russia, to complement our collective security cooperation within the CIS,* while Azerbaijan's cooperation with NATO intends to counterbalance Russia's influence on Azerbaijan. Our approach is based on complementary theirs on confrontation. Azerbaijan's will lead to polarization, ours to rapprochement. (emphasis added).[15]

While the concept of complementary foreign policy was welcomed in Armenian circles, the international and regional community could not make sense of it and sometimes even criticized what they perceived as Armenia's attempts to play various international powers against each other.[16]

Brother Bear

Since 1991, the countries of the former USSR gradually developed a political orientation moving away from Moscow's zone of influence and developing closer relations with the West. This move could be explained by two major factors; first those countries realized that Russia, being the successor of the Soviet Union, is consequently the inheritor of Soviet and czarist imperial policies in the borderland areas. Secondly, a

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[15] See the text of a speech given by Foreign Minister Vardan Oskanian at the May 1998 commencement of American University of Armenia at the Armenian Foreign Ministry website, http://armeniaforeignministry.com/speeches/.

[16] "Armenia's 'Complementary' Foreign Policy Losing Substance," *Jamestown Foundation's Eurasia Monitor* 7, no. 86 (May 3, 2001).

move away from Russia reassured both the world and the pubic in those countries that the

new republics were independent enough to chart a policy that would not rely solely on

Russia. For some countries—such as the Baltic nations and Georgia—the break from

Moscow was abrupt and stained with hatred and a sense of liberation. Armenia walked a

more cautious line in its break from the Russian orbit and Levon Ter-Petrossian adopted a

carefully crafted path toward independence, asserting control over Armenian life and

developing closer working relations with the West while avoiding an open break with

Moscow. During his inauguration as the first president of an independent Armenia, Ter-

Petrossian made it clear that his administration's vision of the country's foreign policy

would be based on Armenia's firm ties with all countries of interest and the continued

bilateral economic and political treaties with all the republics of the former Soviet Union,

first and foremost Russia.[17]

During the initial years of Armenia's quest for autonomy and then independence

from Moscow, the new Armenian leadership realized that Russia was not the historical

ally as was popularly expressed in Armenian circles. Thus many intellectuals and

political activists both in Armenia and in the Armenian Diaspora were divided on the role

of Russia in the worldview and orientations of the infant Republic. These views were

polarized between those circles that considered utmost reliance on Russia for the sake of

Armenia's security, especially vis-à-vis Turkey, and those that advocated a balanced

Armenian foreign policy regardless of historical experiences. The circles calling for

continued Russian orientation put forward the argument that pan-Turanism continues to

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[17] See "Inauguration of Ter-Petrossian as Armenian President," BBC Summary of World Broadcasts (SWB) (SU/1228/B), November 13, 1991.

constitute a threat for Armenia's existence and that a Russian orientation remains the

only guarantee to safeguard the survival of Armenia.[18] For instance, Zori Balayan, a

Soviet-era journalist and writer, was one of the proponents of an unconditional Russian

orientation. He exemplified the general notion of Armenia being the "barrier" resisting

the onslaught of Turkic expansionist policies, which aim the creation of a single empire

stretching from Turkey to Azerbaijan and Central Asia an empire dangerous not only for

Armenia but Russia as well. He, therefore, viewed the close association and alliance with

Russia a benefit for both nations. According to Balayan:

> It is sufficient to look into the folds of history. [...] One thing is clear, the Armenian and
> Russian peoples have together shed blood against the common enemy in order to see
> Armenia enter the structure of a unified Russian state. And Armenia did enter that state, by
> escaping from the fatal and barbaric Ottoman rule.[19]

The pro-Russian orientation was not limited to Soviet-era intelligentsia nor to the

Russophiles in Soviet and later independent Armenia. Many Armenian Diasporan

organizations and scholars propagated the same idea of reliance on Russia, albeit with

less reliance on pan-Turkic threats and based more on the interpretation of historical

necessities of such acts. One of the foremost defenders of pro-Russian orientation was

Richard Hovannisian, a historian at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA),

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[18] Also known as pan-Turkism, pan-Turanism is a political movement aimed at uniting the various Turkic peoples into modern political states. The rise of a pan-Turanic movement is closely related to the development in Europe of similar ideologies, such as pan-Slavism and pan-Germanism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Pan-Turanism is and has always been a movement viewed with suspicion by many, particularly by non-Turks. Some see it as nothing else but a new form of Turkish imperial ambition. Others see it as downright racism, particularly when considering the associated racial and historical teachings. Proponents see it as a way of increasing regional security, economic growth and as a viable bulwark against Islamist movements, by furthering secular and democratic government in the region. For a detailed study see Jacob M. Landau, *Pan-Turkism: From Irredentism to Cooperation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).

[19] Zori Balayan, "The Threat of Pan-Turanism," in *Armenia at the Crossroads: Democracy and Nationhood in the Post-Soviet Era*, ed. Gerard Libaridian (Watertown, MA: Blue Crane Books, 1991), 151.

who analyzed the orientation of Armenia's foreign policy in a context wider than pan-Turanism.[20] According to him, during the Karabakh movement when Armenians were calling for the unification of the NKAO with Armenia, Moscow's rejection of those demands eventually resulted in the development of strong anti-Russian sentiment both amongst the masses as well as in the upper political circles in Armenia.[21] This observation, however, did not deter Hovannisian from concluding that:

> In the end, the historical record may demonstrate that there is no more viable alternative than a permanent, close association with Russia, even in the absence of a common boundary, and that Russia will inevitably emerge as a major regional and even world power. The question remains whether such a Russia would view the continued existence of the small, land-locked Armenian state as vital to its own interest in the turbulent meeting grounds of the Slavic and Middle Eastern Christian and Muslim worlds.[22]

Outside academia and within political practice however, Ter-Petrossian's cautious policy of breaking away from Russia had to consider the fact that Russian troops were present on the ground in Nagorno-Karabakh and they could have easily shifted the balance in any direction as they saw fit to exert pressure on either Armenia or Azerbaijan.[23] On December 21, 1991, Ter-Petrossian signed the Alma Ata declaration that called for the establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and put forward a new set of guidelines to define the inter-state relations between the republics formerly

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[20] See Richard G. Hovannisian, "Historical Memory and Foreign Relations: The Armenian Perspective" in *The Legacy of History in Russia and the New States of Eurasia,* ed. S. Frederick Starr (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1994): 237-276.

[21] See Hovannisian, "Historical Memory and Foreign Relations," 261 and Shireen Hunter, *Transcaucasia in Transition: Nation Building or a New Empire?* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1994), 53.

[22] Hovannisian, "Historical Memory and Foreign Relations," 271.

[23] For instance during the initial years of the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute within the Soviet context, the Soviet army cooperated with Azerbaijani internal security forces to conduct the "Operation Ring," which aimed at surrounding Armenian populated villages and regions in Nagorno-Karabakh to push the inhabitants out of their homes with the hope of instilling fear in the larger Armenian population. See David E. Murphy, "Operation Ring," *Journal of Soviet Military Studies* 5, no. 1 (March 1992): 80-96.

constituting the Soviet Union. The speed by which this agreement was ratified by the Armenian parliament—merely five days later—signaled the existing close relations and cooperation with Russia in the minds of politicians and policy makers in Armenia.[24] Another reason for Armenia's ascension of the CIS is that its enrolment came days after Russian President Boris Yeltsin recognized the independence of Armenia thus placing the relations of both countries with each other on a diplomatically equal footing.[25] This relation were cemented further when during a visit to Yerevan in early April 1992, the Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev signed a protocol on the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.[26]

The next stage of development of Armenian-Russian relations within the context of the CIS was the signing of the Collective Security Treaty by six CIS members in Tashkent, Uzbekistan on May 15, 1992.[27] Armenia had but little option to sign the treaty for, at the time, there was no other security system in the former Soviet space that could have provided safety guaranties for Armenia. The security and military cooperation that dominated Armenian-Russian relations throughout the 1990s, led to the view from Yerevan that Russia's interests in the South Caucasus and surrounding regions overlap with the security concerns of Armenia. It came as of little surprise when during the visit of Russian Prime Minister Yegor Gaydar to Yerevan in October 1992 Armenia signed a treaty granting Russia access to military bases in Armenia and the Armenian borders

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[24] "Armenian Parliament Approves Membership in Commonwealth," *Agence France Presse*, December 26, 1991.

[25] "Statement by Boris Yeltsin on the Recognition of the Independence of Armenia," *Russian Press Digest*, December 18, 1991.

[26] "Russian Delegation Led by Kozyrev Leaves Yerevan," *ITAR-TASS News Agency*, April 4, 1992.

[27] The signatories were Armenia, Kazakhstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

were to be monitored and protected by Russian troops.[28] During the next several years, additional agreements were signed between the two countries advocating closer military cooperation. In the summer of 1994, Yerevan and Moscow announced that the two countries had reached an agreement to establish Russian military bases in Armenia. The Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev on a visit to Yerevan in June 1994 negotiated a military deal that allowed the stationing of Russian ground forces, anti-aircraft as well as air force units close to the northern Armenian city of Gyumri.[29] During this visit the idea of creating a united Russo-Armenian anti-aircraft defense system was also discussed and an agreement was reached on the placement of Russian anti-aircraft units to monitor and protect Armenian airspace.[30] In 1997, Ter-Petrossian and Yeltsin further increased their cooperation by signing a Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, which covered the political, economic, military, and scientific aspects of bilateral relations between both countries.[31]

The pattern of close cooperation between Armenia and Russia intensified when Robert Kocharian came to power after a palace coup that removed Ter-Petrossian from the presidency in 1998. This change of government had its impact on Armenia's foreign policy orientation towards Russia. While under the former Armenia president attempted to pursue a balanced policy towards all major regional and international actors, the

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[28] "Gaydar in Yerevan Trade Agreements Signed Border Troops to Remain," *BBC SWB (SU/1501/C1)*, October 2, 1992.

[29] The treaty establishing a Russian military base in Armenia was signed by Presidents Ter-Petrossian and Yeltsin in March 1995, when the Armenian President visited Moscow. For details see "Russian-Armenian Military Treaty," *Current Digest of Post-Soviet Press (CDPSP)* XLVII, no. 11, (April 12, 1995), 22.

[30] "Russia, Armenia Agree on Military Base," *ITAR-TASS News Agency*, June 9, 1994.

[31] "Russia, Armenia sign 'Joint Russian-Armenian Declaration'," *ITAR-TASS News Agency*, August 29, 1997.

latter's administration viewed Russia as a strategic partner and developed closer

economic and military cooperation with Moscow. In December 2002, the commander of

Russian troops in the South Caucasus, Lieutenant General Nikolay Zolotov, announced

that a number of communication units would be redeployed from Georgia to Armenia.

This in turn raised concerns in Baku and Tbilisi that Russia was strengthening Armenia's

position vis-à-vis Azerbaijan and Georgia even though Moscow announced that the

redeployment was in no way directed against any country.[32] The opposition against the

redeployment of Russian forces was also apparent in the domestic Armenian scene when

a statement by the former ruling party ANM cautioned that Armenia was becoming

"almost absolutely dependent militarily and politically on Russia."[33] The moves by the

Kocharian administration to increase military cooperation with Russia were driven from

the belief that Russia remains the sole guarantor of Armenia's security.[34]

In addition to developing military and political cooperation with Russia,

Armenia's reliance on economic support from Russia constitutes another major barrier in

the development of equal relations between the two countries. At the time of

independence, Armenia remained the most heavily dependent of all the Soviet republics

on Russian trade. Only 3 percent of Armenian exports went beyond the borders of the

[32] "Azerbaijani Defense Minister Objects to Transfer of Russian Military from Georgia to Armenia," *RFE/RL NewsLine*, December 17, 2002.
[33] "Russian Troop Deployment Damages Armenia's Security," *Mediamax News Agency*, December 26, 2002.
[34] On May 24, 2002, Armenian Foreign Minister Vardan Oskanian and Russian Ambassador to Armenia Anatoliy Dryukov exchanged an official document related to the deployment of a Russian military base in Armenia. On that occasion, Oskanian announced that the presence of the Russian military base on the territory of Armenia is one of the most important factors for safeguarding the security of the country. See "Armenia, Russia Agree on Mutual Assistance, Russian Military Base," *Mediamax News Agency*, May 24, 2002.

Soviet Union.[35] Even before the signing of the treaty establishing the CIS, Armenia was

keen on developing economic ties with the former Soviet republics. In October 1991, an

economic agreement for cooperation in the spheres of transportation, energy, and

currency issues was agreed upon by the heads of the five Central Asian republics. Russia,

Belarus, and Armenia showed the extent to which Armenia was dependent on Russia and

the Soviet Union in the economic arena.[36]

After the election of Kocharian as President, Armenia's foreign policy came to

possess a more pro-Russian—some would say unconditionally pro-Russian—orientation,

in the economic realm, resulting in even greater dependence of Armenia on Russia. As

evidence of the overlap between political and economic interests and its effect on

Armenian foreign policy, the Armenian parliament voted in December 2002 to transfer

control of five Armenian state-owned enterprises to Russia in exchange for the

elimination of debt that Armenia owed to Russia.[37] The enterprises involved—The

Yerevan Research Institute of Automated Control Systems, the Hrazdan Thermal Power

Plant, the Yerevan Institute of Computers, the Mars Plant, and the Research Institute of

Materials Science—were mostly defense-related industries and could be used in Russia's

arms program.[38] The Russian consolidation of power in the Armenian energy sector was

further boosted in 2003, with the transfer of the financial management of the Armenian

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[35] Suzanne Goldenberg, *Pride of Small Nations: The Caucasus and Post-Soviet Disorder* (New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd. 1994), 72.
[36] "Eight Republics Sign Economic Cooperation Treaty," *ITAR-TASS News Agency*, October 19, 1991.
[37] This scheme known as "assets-for-debts," speculated that in return of Armenia's $94 million debt to Russia, the control of strategic enterprises in Armenia would be transferred to Russia.
[38] "Armenia Ratifies Transfer of Assets in Repayment of Russian Debt," *Interfax News agency*, December 4, 2002.

nuclear power plant Metsamor to Russia.[39] The supporters of the "assets for debt" scheme

argued that the transfer of enterprises could result in the revitalization of those businesses

with Russian capital and that eventually Armenia would not need to allocate funds from

the state budget to repay the debt it owed to Russia. On the other side of the fence,

opponents have suggested that the transfer would increase Armenian economic

dependence on Russia by expanding the latter's economic presence in the country.[40]

Armenia's relations with Russia began as strategic partnership between two

countries with a common regional policy and security outlook. However over the past

decade, that relationship evolved into an absolute dependence of Armenia on Russia in

military, strategic, and economic spheres. The inability of Armenia to balance its security

concerns with those of its sovereignty has created an image of a country that acts as a

Russian pawn in the South Caucasus and hence an unreliable partner. David

Shahnazaryan, a former head of the National Security service and a member of

Armenia's former ruling party ANM, assessed the Armenian over-reliance on Russia as

follows:

> At present Armenia links its national security exclusively with the presence of Russia,
> particularly, Russian military bases, on its territory. Armenia has lost all its independence,
> moreover, the incumbent Armenian government acts under Moscow's instruction turning
> the country into Russia's vassal. Meanwhile, Russia is a serious destabilizing factor in the
> region. Armenia has become that country's instrument against Georgia and Azerbaijan.[41]

While this view is shared by the majority of the Armenia political elite, another, more

"realist approach," was best expressed by a foreign ministry official where Russia was

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[39] "Russia Takes Control of Armenia Reactor," *Nuclear Engineering International*, March 31, 2003.
[40] See "Russian-Armenian Debt Deal Narrowly Ratified" *RFE/RL*, December 4, 2002.
[41] "Two Extremes: Both Far From the Truth," *Azg Daily*, January 20, 2004.

compared to a bear "without teeth which might not be able to bite but is massive enough to push."[42]

Which way is West?

Unlike Armenian-Russian long-lasting and multilayered relations, Armenia's perception of and dealings with the West has been, by and large, a new phenomenon. This is in part, due to the fact that the Armenian sovereign state itself has recently emerged on the international scene. Armenia's emergence, in turn, coincided with the appearance of a new international system where Cold War-era rivalry between the West and the Soviet Union was no longer the guiding principle to conduct foreign policy for many small states. Furthermore, Armenia's independence, which coincided with—or was a result of—the end of the Cold War, witnessed the divergence of the interests and policies of the West into the American and European approaches about the former Soviet Union and the world in general.

The leadership of Armenia realized that with the unraveling of events in the Soviet Union and its gradual disintegration, the West and the United States were proving to be a viable alternate power that could provide guarantees and safeguards for the independence and sovereignty of the new country. Identifying themselves as "western" or "European" counties moreover, the former Soviet Republics attempted to develop western values be those political (democratization), economic (free market economy) or cultural (Eurocentrism). After the 1988 earthquake that hit northern Armenia, Western

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[42] Author's interview with the head of the CIS department at the Foreign Ministry Levon Khachatrian. Yerevan, Republic of Armenia April 25, 2002.

involvement in and with Armenia took a new turn as a result of the direct interaction between Soviet Armenian authorities on the one hand and Western aid agencies on the other. These relations helped create a rapprochement between Armenia and Western institutions and governments. This rapprochement was further reinforced when Vazgen the First, the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, paid a visit to the United States and met with Armenian community leaders in North America to brief them about the restoration work done in the earthquake zone. The patriarch also met with President George H. W. Bush in Washington D.C. and thanked him for the US assistance to the earthquake victims.[43]

During the independence movement in 1991, the Armenian leadership was keen on establishing ties—albeit informal ones—with major Western countries. Even before the referendum that brought about Armenia's independence, Ter-Petrossian made several trips to the West to promote Armenia's independence, gather international recognition for it, to present the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict from the Armenian perspective and finally to lobby for more aid for the Republic. One major feature of these visits consisted of a change in the official position of Western countries about the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the independence movements of the constituent republics, especially considering the fact that major European countries and the United States were vocal supporters of Mikhail Gorbachev's policies and the continuation of the USSR as an intact entity.

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[43] "Vazgen the First Arrives in New York," *ITAR-TASS News Agency*, February 4, 1989.

First of Ter-Petrossian's Western visits was to the United States in October 1990 at the invitation of the local Armenian community. The 10-day visit took Ter-Petrossian to Washington, D.C., New York, and Los Angeles with three clear objectives in mind: to meet with the Armenian-American community, to gain access to the American media, and to meet American political leaders.[44] The importance of this visit lied in show of Armenia's sovereignty from Moscow and an attempt to rally Diasporan support for the new Republic. Furthermore, Ter-Petrossian's pushed forward the idea of center versus peripheries within the Soviet Union in that the constituent republics of the Soviet Union had more to say in the management of their domestic concerns. In Ter-Petrossian's views, his:

> ... visit did not pursue any practical goals. It was of purely political significance, first of all as a display of the republic's sovereignty, an act of breaking its political isolation and starting to conduct an independent foreign policy, and second, it was a coordination of our efforts with the Armenian Diaspora in building a new Armenian state.

> ... I tried to show that very significant changes are under way in the Soviet Union, that real power is shifting from the center to the republics, and that American policy should be reoriented in accordance with these changes.[45]

The "practicality" of the visit however was reflected in a deal that the American telecommunication giant AT&T signed just several days after Ter-Petrossian's return from his US tour. On October 15, 1990, the Russian newspaper *Pravda* announced that AT&T and the Ministry of Communications of Armenia had signed an agreement for

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[44] See Tony Halpin, "Armenian President's Inaugural Visit to the U.S.: Rumblings of Discontent Linger..." *Armenian International Magazine (AIM)* 1, no. 3 (November 3, 1990): 13.

[45] "Levon Ter-Petrosyan: Confrontation Exhausted Its Potential," *Current Digest of Soviet Press (CDSP)* XLII, no. 41, (November 14, 1990), 24.

broadening Armenia's telephone system and ensuring a direct link between Armenia and the United States.[46]

Armenia's new leadership's next major undertaking was intended at Europe. In May 1991, Ter-Petrossian paid an unofficial visit to Paris and met with the French President Francois Mitterrand and his Foreign Minister Roland Dumas. Unlike the visit to the United States, the main goal of this visit was to gather European and Western support for Armenia's independence movements.[47] It was therefore planned to take place ahead of the G-7 meeting in London. Ter-Petrossian informed the French leadership about the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh as well as demonstrated Armenia's determination to become independent from the Soviet Union, even though at the time France—as most states in the West—was not willing to antagonize Moscow by recognizing the independence of the Soviet republics. Moreover, Ter-Petrossian also reassured that Armenia's secession from the Soviet Union was going to take place only through constitutional means, by underscoring that:

> The large-scale punitive action launched by the Center [Moscow] against Armenia is a rude attempt by the USSR to tighten its grip on a republic wishing to secede constitutionally, which may create a dangerous precedent for Moscow.[48]

The increasing activism in—what was then still Soviet—Armenian foreign policy and the increased attention that it obtained resulted in several ventures, as a clear indication of sovereignty from Moscow. Thus in August 1991, Ter-Petrossian appointed Alexander

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[46] "'Hello' Across the Ocean," *Russian Press Digest*, October 15, 1990.
[47] "France Supports Armenian Drive for Independence, Says Petrossian," *Agence France Presse*, May 24, 1991.
[48] Ter-Petrossian's press conference after his meeting with Mitterrand. See "Armenia: A Hot Summer Ahead," *Russian Press Digest*, May 28, 1991.

Arzumanian as Armenia's first representative in North America without any official

ranks or an ambassadorial position.[49] The decision to have a representative in New York

was explained on the grounds that Armenia wanted to advocate its point of views on

various issues and to advance and develop relations with the Armenian communities in

the United States and Canada.[50] No doubt, the appointment of a representative was also

carried out with the intent of coordinating humanitarian assistance and aid that the

Armenian communities in North America were sending to Armenia since the 1988

earthquake.

Almost three weeks after the referendum that resulted in the independence of

Armenia in September 1991, and several days before the presidential elections, Ter-

Petrossian sent a message to the president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council

of Europe and the Council's General Secretary expressing Armenia's desire to join the

Council of Europe.[51] The message stated that Armenia—isolated from international life

for decades—"strived to re-establish normal relations with Europe and regain its place in

European agencies."[52] This clearly indicated that the leadership of new Armenia was

aware of the European integration processes and the potentials of Armenia's

incorporation into various European and Western institutions and organizations.

Furthermore, a membership in European and Western institutions and organizations

could provide safeguards for Armenia's independence and strengthen its drive for

sovereignty.

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[49] "First Armenian Plenipotentiary Nominated," *ITAR-TASS News Agency*, August 5, 1991.
[50] "Armenia Will Have Her Own Man in New York," *Russian Press Digest*, August 12, 1991.
[51] See "Armenia Wants to Join Council of Europe," *BBC SWB (SU/1204/A1)*, October 16, 1991.
[52] "Armenia Seeks to Join Council of Europe," *ITAR-TASS News Agency*, October 13, 1991.

After the referendum in September 1991 that resulted in Armenia's independence

and the election of Ter-Petrossian as president, the new Republic's rapprochement with

the West took an official turn. In November 1991—several days after his inauguration—

President Ter-Petrossian visited the United States and Canada to seek Western

recognition for the independence of his country.[53] At the time, the prevailing concern in

Western capitals was the act of balancing between "center and periphery" in the Soviet

Union: how could Washington develop relations with the Soviet constituent republics,

supporting their independence movements, without undermining Moscow's interests and

presence in those regions. Ter-Petrossian aimed at bringing his case directly to President

Bush and to have a chance to discuss Armenia's constitutional, peaceful road to

independence and the ways in which the United States could properly respond.[54] Another

issue on his agenda was the way American aid was to be distributed in the Soviet Union.

Thus, the Bush administration had announced a Soviet aid package, including technical

assistance and farm credits, but held off because of differences over ways to distribute the

aid. The issue of American aid was raised not only because of its economic implication

but to a large extent because in the past Moscow had used the distribution of Western aid

packages as a means to pressure the republics to fall in line with the center.[55] During a

press conference in 1991, Ter-Petrossian emphasized:

> Problems of relationships between the center and the republics were the focus of our talk. I
> have conveyed to President Bush that Western assistance to the Soviet Union should be
> coordinated and granted not through the center, but directly to the republics. This refers

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[53] Ter-Petrossian visited the United States at the invitation of Senator Robert Dole, then leader of the Senate Republican minority.
[54] "Armenian Leader Seeks Recognition of Republic by Bush," *Christian Science Monitor*, November 14, 1991.
[55] "Armenia's President Asks Bush for Direct Aid," *Agence France Presse*, November 14, 1991.

primarily to food aid and technical assistance. I am absolutely sure, and I told President Bush about it, that Western aid through the center would be used by the latter as a political instrument. I don't believe the center, no matter what it will be like in the future, is able to guarantee an even distribution of such aid.[56]

While by the end of the visit, Washington did not recognize the independence of Armenia, several agreements—such as the opening of an American consulate in Yerevan in early 1992,[57] as well as the exchange of parliamentary delegations with the United States and Canada—were reached.[58] In addition, Canada promised to deliver 250,000 tons of grain to Armenia, and several US banks agreed to extend credits to the new Republic.[59]

As Armenia's stature as an independent state in the international community was being consolidated, Yerevan aimed at gradual participation in all major Western institutions. Thus in January 1992, the Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) admitted all but one (Georgia was admitted two months later) of the former Soviet republics into the European agency with the hope of eventually integrating them into Europe.[60] Soon after, in March of the same year, Armenia joined Russia and other former Soviet republics in multilateral talks with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) within the framework of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council.[61] Gradually, Armenia's relations with Western institutions took two major directions. The first

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[56] "Ter-Petrossian's Visit to North America," *BBC SWB (SU/1232/A1)*, November 18, 1991.

[57] In February 1992, the United States opened up an embassy in Armenia along with embassies in Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan, bringing the number of US embassies in the Commonwealth of Independent States to six (the other two embassies being in Russia and Ukraine). See "United States Opens Embassies in Four Commonwealth States," *The Associated Press*, February 3, 1992.

[58] "Ter-Petrossian Discusses North American Visit," *BBC SWB (SU/1235/A1)*, November 21, 1991.

[59] "What L. Ter-Petrossian Brought Back from the United States," *Russian Press Digest*, November 19, 1991.

[60] "Security Forum adds 10 States," *Boston Globe*, January 31, 1992.

[61] "NATO States, Ex-East Bloc Meet for Talks," *The Washington Post*, March 11, 1992.

focused on cooperative programs in developing Armenia's economic, social, and political

structures with the help of European technical and financial assistance, while the second,

military in nature, pertained to Armenia's participation in NATO programs.

As discussed in chapter one, similar to other small states, Armenia's interest in

integration into European structures stems from the fact that a country geographically as

isolated as Armenia and without well-established institutions of government, regards

international and regional institutions as safeguard mechanisms for the continuation of

the state as well as the development of multilateral ties with other member states of those

international and regional organizations. This phenomenon is very much in tune with the

way small states behave in the international system. Thus because of their limited

influence on the international political system—especially at a time when the post-Cold

War fluidic system resulted in constant changes—small states have come to view

international organizations as important entities for their polices mostly because of:

1) their vulnerability in international relations;
2) the competition for attention and recognition by the international community;
3) the opportunity to restructure international organizations such as the UN to be more responsive to their needs; and
4) the need to cooperate on a common agenda and a common objective in order to maximize their influence.[62]

Based on this premise, Yerevan followed a path of steady and gradual participation in

various European programs. Certainly the international atmosphere allowed European

participation and active presence in the former Soviet Union, played an important role in

easing the integration process for the former Soviet republics. A program titled Technical

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[62] Mark Hong, "Small States in the United Nations," *International Social Science Journal* 47, no. 2 (June 1995): 277.

Assistance for the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) was one of the most important initial European cooperative ventures with the former Soviet republics.[63] Within its framework, Armenia was able to make economic cooperation agreements with many European countries to develop and upgrade its own infrastructure.[64] Closer working relations with Europe also included the upgrade of the aged Soviet-built Armenian nuclear power plant under the supervision of European technicians to guarantee the plant's safety.[65] Cooperation with Europe within TACIS eventually encouraged Armenia to seek membership in the Council of Europe (EC) and its various institutions, the most notable one being the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE).

While economic and political cooperation with European countries was being developed, the Armenian leadership did not neglect the growing presence of US led military alliances in the post-Soviet space. Beginning in 1992, NATO initiated meetings between its members and the countries of Eastern Europe and former USSR. Initially within the context of North Atlantic Cooperation Council, these meetings eventually developed to become a new institution called Partnership for Peace (PfP). Launched at the January 1994 NATO Summit, the PfP intended to establish strong links between NATO and the former Soviet bloc countries and provide a structure for the improvement of political and military cooperation between the two. However, Armenia's participation

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[63] Launched in early 1992, TACIS primarily aimed at supporting economic and democratic reforms in CIS countries and helping design overall energy policies, with particular emphasis on oil and gas production and inter-state transport. Moreover, special attention was given to the problems of nuclear energy, focusing on safety measures. Other general areas, such as business support services, and government advice was also included in the package within the context of local government advice on macro-economic and sectoral reform.

[64] For instance in December 1993, the French state-owned electricity company Electricite de France was awarded a contract to renovate small hydro-power stations in Armenia. See "Electricite de France to Upgrade Armenian Power Plants," *European Report*, December 1, 1993.

[65] "EU to Help Boost Safety of Armenia's Aging Nuclear Plant," *Arminfo*, February 16, 2002.

in the PfP was more reactive rather than proactive in that Yerevan did not wish to

intimidate Russia by developing relations with NATO too close and too soon. However,

when in early May 1994, Azerbaijan officially joined the PfP,[66] Armenia's Defense

Minister Serge Sargsian visited Brussels to negotiate Armenia's membership to the

organization.[67] This was realized in October of the same year.[68] Armenian interest in PfP

membership was, no doubt, also a result of the ceasefire singed in May between

Azerbaijan on the one hand and Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh on the other under the

auspices of Russia and the CSCE.[69] It seemed that both Yerevan and Baku were in a

diplomatic race to become members in international and European institutions to promote

their views and guarantee their security beyond the limits of the former Soviet diplomatic

realms.

Over the next several years Armenia's cooperation with PfP and NATO remained

cordial but not intense and Yerevan was very careful not to increase the apprehensions

felt by Russia regarding the increased NATO presence in its "near abroad." For instance,

when in February 1997, NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana visited Armenia,

Armenian Foreign Minister Alexander Arzumanian declared that while Solana's visit

intended to discuss Yerevan's participation in PfP, it in now way targeted isolating

Russia. In a press conference Arzumanian underscored:

> Armenia and Russia are strategic partners, and that partnership will continue....We are
> convinced that this [NATO expansion] question can be settled through a dialogue, and

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[66] "Azerbaijan Signs Partnership for Peace Programme," *ITAR-TASS News Agency*, May 5, 1994.
[67] "Armenia Negotiates Joining Partnership for Peace," *ITAR-TASS News Agency*, May 26, 1994.
[68] "Armenia Joins NATO Partnership," *The Associated Press*, October 5, 1994.
[69] "New Cease-fire Agreement for Karabakh Reached in Moscow," *BBC SWB (SU/2000/F)*, May 18, 1994.

Russia's vital interests will be taken into account when decisions on NATO expansion are taken.[70]

However, Armenia's modest involvement in European and Western security structures was compensated by state rhetoric which indicated that Yerevan was more than willing to be fully integrated in various European processes and organizations. For instance in a 1998 speech, Oskanian stated:

> Although Armenia may be geographically distant from Brussels, its concerns and interests are not. This is a country with strong connections with allies on both sides of the Atlantic, and a country which shares a border with the Alliance...
>
> ... Armenia is committed to take on its share of responsibility by continuing to be actively engaged at three parallel levels: a direct political relationship with the Alliance, expanded participation in the enhanced PfP, and efforts aimed at establishing and advancing a viable regional security cooperation.[71]

In subsequent years Armenia's role and participation in the PfP showed signs of duality. Starting in 1998 numerous statements made by various government officials about rapprochement with NATO were contradicted by statements indicating that Armenia does not seek such ties. For example in October 1998, Armenia's Prime Minister Armen Darbinian expressed willingness to work closely with NATO,[72] only to be followed by a statement three days later by the foreign minister that Armenia's cooperation with NATO was nominal.[73] Similarly, while in May 1999 Armenia's deputy Defense Minister

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[70] "Foreign Minister Arzumanyan Sums up Results of NATO Chief's Visit," *BBC SWB (SU/D2846/F)*, February 18, 1997.
[71] A statement by Foreign Minister Vardan Oskanian at the Meeting of Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council Foreign Ministers Session in May 29, 1998. See http://armeniaforeignministry.com/speeches/. Accessed on July 8, 2005.
[72] "Armenia Eager to strengthen cooperation with NATO," *Snark News Agency*, October 3, 1998.
[73] "Foreign Minister Says Cooperation with NATO will not Hurt Russia," *Snark News Agency*, October 6, 1998.

announced that Armenia does not intend to join NATO,[74] less than a year before the

foreign ministry extended an invitation to NATO deputy Secretary-General for Political

Affairs Klaus-Peter Klaiber to visit Armenia to discuss the prospects of closer relations

between the two entities.[75]

The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States and the subsequent

"war on terror" forced many countries to re-evaluate their policies vis-à-vis the United

States and its growing presence in the international arena. A month after the attacks when

Foreign Minister Oskanian was visiting Washington D.C., he conveyed to US deputy

Secretary of State Richard Armitage that Armenia was one of the first countries to

provide the United States with intelligence information and air space for anti-terrorism

operations.[76] This and such statements were a clear sign that Yerevan was aware of the

implications of refraining from joining large-scale measures taken to combat international

terrorism. This resulted in a situation where Armenia joined an alliance as a result of

which its foreign policy came to rely more heavily on the dictates of the great power in

that alliance. The hegemony of the United States in the alliance of "war on terror" fits

into the classic case of great power/small state "cooperation" where as a result of the lack

of leverages, the small allies are often completely dependent on the larger ally to continue

receiving aid and support in an otherwise unfriendly environment.[77]

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[74] "Armenia does not Intend to Join NATO," *TASS News Agency*, May 6, 1999.
[75] "Armenian Diplomat says Yerevan Ready to Expand Cooperation with NATO," *Snark News Agency*, August 18, 2000.
[76] "Armenian Foreign Minister, USA's Armitage Discuss was on Terror," *Mediamax News Agency*, October 25, 2001.
[77] See Robert Rothstein. *Alliances and Small Powers* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), discussed in chapter 1.

In a world where the United States viewed relations as "if you are not with us, you are against us," the shift of Armenia's relations towards closer cooperation with the United States was inevitable. As a sign of tighter cooperation with the Washington's "war on terror," Armenia agreed to send an army contingency consisting of doctors, sappers, and non-combat personnel to Iraq.[78] This decision was hotly debated in Armenian political circles both in Armenia and the Armenian Diaspora where opponents of the decision argued that Armenia's involvement in Iraq would jeopardize the lives of those Armenians living there and in other Arab countries.[79]

While compared to Azerbaijan and Georgia, Armenia seems to have a more conservative approach and involvement with Western organizations, it is clear that Yerevan distinguishes its relations between Europe and the United States. In numerous official and public circles Europe is viewed as a counterbalance to US and Russian hegemony in the region and closer cooperation with European—rather than American— institutions are often preferred.[80]

The most intensive interaction of Armenia with the West has been in the arena of the OSCE, specifically the OSCE's mediation process for finding a solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The OSCE became officially involved in the conflict on March 24, 1992, when the Ministerial Council adopted a decision to convene a

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[78] "Forty-six Armenian Troops Depart for Iraq on Humanitarian Mission," *Agence France Presse*, January 18, 2005.

[79] See for instance, "Armenian Opposition Party Condemns Decision to Send Troops to Iraq," *Noyan Tapan News Agency*, September 13, 2004.

[80] In a survey conducted by the Armenian Center for National and International Studies in Yerevan in May 2004, one of the questions asked was "Which country or international structure promotes Armenia's independence and development?" to which 72% of the respondents answered the "European Union and PACE" while only 6% considered the United States to be important. It is interesting that 6% also found that the United States restricts Armenia's development and a surprising 56% considered Russia an obstacle for Armenia's independence and development. The survey may be found at www.acnis.am.

conference under the auspices of the CSCE (as it was known then) to provide an ongoing

forum for the negotiation of a peaceful settlement of the armed conflict. The forum,

which came to be known as the Minsk Process, consisted of eleven participating

countries.[81] In 1993, following intensive efforts, the Minsk Group proposed a step-by-

step negotiation approach intended to build confidence between Armenians and

Azerbaijanis, but in vain. It was not until May 1994 that an informal ceasefire brokered

by Russian mediators was put into place. Armenian and Azerbaijani diplomats have since

been meeting under the auspices of the OSCE to find a final solution to the conflict with

not much luck. Regardless, the OSCE provided a forum where Armenian diplomacy

interacted not only with Azerbaijan but also with the European member states of the

organization.

Since the breakdown of the Soviet Union, the West has been viewed the force that

could counterbalance Russian presence in the region. In the case of Armenia, this

perception was not realized both because of the strategic constraints tying Yerevan with

Moscow and the post-Cold War rivalry between Russia on the one hand and the United

States on the other. In this context Europe provided a third way for Armenia's aspirations

to become part of Western institutions. The "war on terror" and the shifting international

system gave Armenian diplomacy a much needed push to increase cooperation with the

United States, however much work and interaction is still needed for Armenia to develop

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[81] These were, with Armenia and Azerbaijan as the main parties of the conflict, the countries which held the chairmanship of the CSCE at the time (Czechoslovakia, Germany, and Sweden), countries interested in the conflict (France, Italy, Russian Federation, Turkey, and the United States), and the host country (Belarus).

its relations with the United States and place it on par with the ones that Georgia and Azerbaijan have with Washington.

Armenia and the Middle East

Since its independence Yerevan's foreign policy outlook has been oriented towards the West; however Armenia's geographic proximity to the Middle East and the fact that there are many Armenian communities all over the Arab East and Iran has kept the region in the forefront of Armenia's diplomatic initiative. Nevertheless, the development of Armenia's diplomatic relations with the Middle East has not been uniform; nor have such relations evolved uniformly vis-à-vis Iran and the Arab countries. Even within the Arab world an inconsistency in the development of relations seems to be present. Thus interaction—especially on the economic and trade level—with the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf increased tremendously since 1998, whereas relations with the Arab countries of the Levant have witnessed a more modest and consistent development in the spheres of trade and political cooperation as of the independence of Armenia. On the forefront of those countries have been Lebanon and Syria, in part due to the large and influential local Armenian communities there.

Iran: The pragmatic Islamic Republic

Even more important than the role of Armenian communities, Yerevan's relation with Tehran is conditioned by the geopolitical reality that since the breakup of the Soviet

Union the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) remained the only reliable neighbor of Armenia. Bordered by an economic blockade to the west (Turkey) and a war to the east (Azerbaijan), with a neighbor ridden by civil/ethnic wars and tensions to the north (Georgia), Iran remained the only viable option for Armenia to have land access to the world. However among Armenian officials, Armenia is not indispensable for Iran in the region as one official noted: "Iran views Armenia as a link in its chain with Russia; as a bridge." Yet, "But this is not the only link since Iran already has maritime borders with Russia in the Caspian rendering Yerevan's reliance on Tehran a vicarious one."[82]

From an Iranian perspective, the fall of the Soviet Union and the independence of the countries of the South Caucasus proved to be a challenge rather than an opportunity specifically because two of its new northern neighbors—Armenia and Azerbaijan—were engaged in a war over Nagorno-Karabakh.[83] Tehran's foremost concern has been the mediation between the two countries and finding a solution to the conflict before it gives rise to domestic ethnic conflict with Iran's Azeri minorities. On its side, Yerevan welcomed Iranian involvement in conflict's resolution and Tehran's mediation attempts due to several factors. First, Yerevan considered Iran to be less partial than Turkey in its support of the warring sides and hence a more acceptable authority to mediate, which was also acceptable to Azerbaijan.[84] Secondly, the fact that Iran was an Islamic Republic helped diffuse the misconception that the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan had a religious overtone, as in the early 1990s the international press frequently referred to the

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[82] Author's interview with the head of Iran desk at the Foreign Ministry, Garnik Badalyan. Yerevan, Republic of Armenia April 25, 2002.
[83] Edmund Herzig deals with this issue in *Iran and the Former Soviet South* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1995).
[84] Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*, 30-31.

conflict being between "Christian Armenia" and "Muslim Azerbaijan." Finally, as mentioned above, Iran provided the sole reliable land connection between Armenia and the rest of the world Furthermore; keeping Iran involved in the mediation of the conflict had the potential to increase the interaction between Yerevan and Tehran.

In February 1992, Armenia's Foreign Minister Raffi Hovannisian led an Armenian delegation to Tehran where a memorandum of understanding was signed. The statement emphasized the opening of the two countries' embassies and political, economic, cultural, and scientific cooperation. The memorandum also dealt with the exportation of Iranian gas to Armenia, the establishment of a refinery, the training of Armenian experts in Iran, and joint investments.[85] The signing of this agreement was the beginning of very close and cordial relations between the two countries, and over the next several years economic, technical, and political cooperation between them intensified.

In early 1992, Iranian diplomacy was active in finding a viable solution to the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. After signing an agreement to establish diplomatic relations with both Armenia and Azerbaijan, the Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati and his deputy Mahmoud Vaezi launched shuttle diplomacy between Baku and Yerevan. From February to May 1992, Iran appeared to be the main mediator between the two, and from Yerevan's perceptive, Tehran seemed to offer one of the best opportunities for reaching a solution. This idea was expressed in April 30, 1992, at the opening of the Iranian embassy in Yerevan, when President Ter-Petrossian revealed his full "trust" in a "just" Iranian resolution. He stated:

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[85] "Armenian Foreign Minister Discusses Outcome of Visit to Iran," *BBC SWB (SU/1304/B)*, February 14, 1992.

> The Iranians have proved their complete impartiality in this [Nagorno-Karabakh conflict] issue, respecting the rights of both sides and striving to achieve a just solution. Thus the sides trust Iran. This is actually the only effective peace-making mission of all the recently offered.[86]

The culmination of Iranian shuttle diplomacy was the visit of Ter-Petrossian to Tehran on May 6, 1992 when the Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani hosted meetings between the Armenian president and the Azerbaijani acting President Yaqub Mamedov. A ceasefire was signed between the two countries followed by a variety of cooperation agreements between Tehran and Yerevan as well as Tehran and Baku.[87] However, the Iranian mediation faced a serious challenge when on May 8 the Armenian forces in Nagorno-Karabakh launched an attack and occupied the city of Shusha (Shushi in Armenian) in Nagorno-Karabakh.[88] The timing of the attack amid the negotiations rendered the Iranian mediators dubious about the success of their attempts to find a solution to the conflict. While it soon became clear that the attack was undertaken by Armenian forces in Nagorno-Karabakh outside of Yerevan's jurisdiction, the capture of Shusha was described as an "accident of timing," placing the Armenian president in a tight corner vis-à-vis Tehran negotiations.[89]

The extent of Iranian commitment to find a solution to the conflict and maintaining its friendly relations with Armenia became apparent in March 1994, when a major diplomatic incident was barely averted over Nagorno-Karabakh as a military

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[86] "Ter-Petrossian on Iranian Role in Regional Stability," *ITAR-TASS News Agency*, May 1, 1992.
[87] "Iran Signs Wide-Ranging Accords with Armenia, Azerbaijan," *Agence France Presse*, May 8, 1992.
[88] The mostly Azeri populated city of Shusha overlooked the capital of Nagorno-Karabakh Stepanakert and its capture aimed and relieving the capital from constant bombardment by Azeri forces.
[89] See "Peace Process in Peril as Armenians Capture Azeri Army HQ," *Agence France Presse*, May 9, 1992 and "The Fall of Shushi; An Accident of Timing," *AIM* 3, no. 5 (May 31, 1992), 8.

transport airplane belonging to the IRI was shot down by Nagorno-Karabakh anti-aircraft missiles just north of Stepanakert, killing all thirty-two on board. The plane carried families of Iranian diplomats who were returning to Tehran from Moscow for the Islamic New Year. According to Armenian officials, the plane had been on its way back to Tehran from Moscow and that after crossing Georgian air space, it had moved away from its course by about 100 km.[90] While this incident put pressure on Yerevan-Tehran bilateral relations, Iran avoided making inflammatory statements and instead tried to resolve the issue as quietly and peacefully as possible.

Since 1993, Russia and subsequently the OSCE began taking over the conflict resolution process, while Iran slowly dropped out of its mediating role. However, relations between the two countries remained at a very good footing, politically and economically alike. As a sign of increased cooperation, in December 1995, both countries opened a bridge over the Arax River on Armenia's southern frontier.[91] The construction cost of the 192 meter-long bridge, which took over three years, was funded by the governments of both countries. Similarly, economic cooperation between Iran and Armenia developed to include energy import and the connection of telecommunication networks. After years of negotiations and signed agreements, for instance, Armenia and Iran finally launched the construction of a gas pipeline in March 2005.[92]

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[90] "Armenian Representative on Iranian Plane Crash," *ITAR-TASS News Agency*, March 18, 1994.

[91] "Motor-Road Bridge Opened to Connect Armenia and Iran," *ITAR-TASS News Agency*, December 26, 1995.

[92] "ArmRosGazprom Starts Construction of Armenian Section of Iran-Armenia Gas Pipeline," *Arminfo*, March 29, 2005. It should be noted here that numerous agreements between Iran and Armenia have been signed for the development of this pipeline. However, it wasn't until the Russian gas company Gazprom took part in the negotiations that the construction entered its implementation phase. This could be interpreted as Russia having great interest in the development of Iranian-Armenian relations and that even

One interesting aspect of Armenian-Iranian relations is the cooperation of both countries with Greece on various levels. Thus starting in 1995, there have been intensive activities between Armenia, Greece, and Iran and multiple meetings within economic, transportation, telecommunication, military, and political spheres.[93] In December 1997, the foreign ministers of all three states signed a joint memorandum on cooperation in the fields of industry, technology, economy, and energy.[94] During the past several years, the development of Iranian-Armenian relations also benefited from the increased interaction of people between the two countries thus trickling down from an official state level cooperation onto a popular level allowing ordinary people to interact with each other. Since 2000, hearing Persian spoken in Yerevan is common, and cultural ties between the two countries have also been on the rise. A good example of this is the restoration and the administration of the Blue Mosque in Yerevan by the Iranian government at a cost of more than $1 million. Apart from being a symbol of Iranian presence in Armenia, the mosque also includes a museum and a library where Persian language instructions are given.[95]

Yet bilateral relations between Armenia and Iran have not been pressure free. On several occasions Tehran expressed dismay over the way Armenian diplomacy is conducted. For instance, when in November 1998, Armenian Foreign Minister Oskanian

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on the economic level it wants to have a say in any bilateral agreement involving Armenia. See "Gazprom to Take Part in Iran-Armenia Pipeline Construction Tender," *ITAR-TASS News Agency*, December 13, 2004.

[93] See "Iran, Armenia, Georgia, and Greece Begin Quadrilateral Meeting in Tehran," *BBC SWB (EE/D2788/B)*, December 6, 1996. Later on Georgia dropped out of these negotiations.

[94] "Greek, Iranian, Armenian Foreign Ministers Sign Cooperation Agreement," *BBC SWB (EE/D3110/B)*, December 24, 1997.

[95] "Islam in Armenia: Restored Blue Mosque Serves Yerevan's Growing Iranian Community," *AIM* 13, no. 3 (April 2002): 44.

paid an official visit to Israel, the Israeli local media reported that he offered to mediate between Israel and Iran.[96] This report was sharply and swiftly refuted by Iranian officials, who "expressed surprise" at Oskanian's remarks and maintained that "those remarks by the Armenian foreign minister demonstrate his lack of information about the Islamic Republic of Iran's principled stances."[97] Another instance of Iranian concern about the way Armenia conducted its foreign policy regarded Armenia's repeated announcements of its complementary foreign policy. Thus in 2002 the Iranian Ambassador to Armenia, Mohammad Farhad Koleini, challenged Oskanian, indicating that Armenia lacked the resources and international clout to continue to pursue its complementary foreign policy of maintaining good relations with the West, Russia, Iran, and other major powers. Ambassador Koleini made his remarks after Oskanian laid out Armenia's foreign policy priorities at a public meeting. In a gathering that was also attended by foreign diplomats and journalists, Koleini stated:

> Complementarism requires both software and hardware instruments. Armenia's software capacity is good. But in terms of the hardware, there are problems. ... Don't you [Oskanian] think that it would be more correct to describe your policy as a multilateral dialogue, rather than use the word 'complementarism'?[98]

However, despite the criticism, Armenia continued to maintain close political and economic ties with Iran, viewing the latter as a major counterweight to Turkish influence in Azerbaijan and in the region at large; the two countries continue to maintain more than cordial relations. For instance, in March 2002, the Iranian Defense Minister Adm Ali

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[96] "Armenia Offers to Mediate Between Israel, Iran," *BBC SWB (ME/D3375/MED)*, November 4, 1998.
[97] "Iran Rejects Armenian Minister's Remarks on Mediation with Israel," *BBC SWB (SU/D3379/F)*, November 9, 1998.
[98] "Armenia: Westward Foreign Policy Shift Brings Unease in Iran," *RFE/RL Report*, October 2, 2002.

Shamkhani paid an official visit to Yerevan where he signed a military cooperation with his Armenian counterpart Serge Sargsian.[99]

The changing face of geopolitics in the Middle East and increased American presence in the region has amplified Armenia's importance to Iran. Increased cooperative agreements between the two demonstrate that Tehran views Yerevan as a strategic partner. Iran does not want to be isolated at a time when the United States has been establishing a foothold around its borders. Based on these premises the view from Yerevan is that Tehran remains the only contiguous friendly neighbor and that maintaining good relations with Iran is of utmost importance for Armenia. Yerevan's view of Iran was analyzed in an article published by one of the Yerevan newspapers in which Yerevan's relations with the United States and Iran were weighed:

> The USA is not an enemy of Armenia, but neither is it an ally. When there are talks about friendly relations between Iran and Armenia, Washington's position regarding Armenia becomes markedly less well-disposed.

> Despite the hostile relationship between Iran and the USA, inwardly both Tehran and Washington are interested in overcoming their 20-year-old problems. The USA is an important state for Armenia, but no more important than Iran. Expanding and deepening relations with Iran stems from Armenia's viable interests. Iran, like Armenia, cannot boast of having friendly neighbors so Armenia is also of key importance for it.[100]

The view that Iran as a reliable partner and friendly country is not restricted to the political elite but also resonates in popular circles as reflected in a survey conducted by the Armenian Center for National and Strategic Studies (ACNIS) in 2004. When a question was asked to a sample of Armenian citizens about their view of Iran, 50% of the

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[99] "Armenia, Iran Sign Military Cooperation Accord," *Arminfo News Agency*, March 5, 2002.
[100] "Relations with the USA are Important, relations with Iran - a priority," *Azg Daily*, July 4, 2002.

respondents viewed Iran to be a friend—compared to 47% of the respondents considering the United States to be a friend.[101]

The Arab world and Israel

Armenia's relations with the Arab world have been based on two major motives. The first is the presence of Armenian communities in the countries of the Arab east (notably in Lebanon and Syria), and the second, the economic dimensions of Armenian-Arab relations. In 1992, President Ter-Petrossian declared that in the future, Armenia will strive to be part of the Middle Eastern security and cooperation system.[102] This led Armenia to target three Arab countries as its main partners in the Middle East. The first two were Lebanon and Syria, where the local Armenian communities were well established and integrated into the host societies. The third country was Egypt, which is considered one of the major Arab countries. In early March 1992, Armenian Foreign Minister Raffi Hovannisian paid official visits to Egypt, Lebanon, and Syria and signed a series of agreements enabling the establishment of diplomatic relations with them. The development of bilateral relations between Armenia on the one hand and Syria and Lebanon on the other witnessed a surge over the following years. Thus on March 5, 1994, the opening of Armenian Embassy in Lebanon was announced,[103] followed four days later with the arrival of the first Armenian Airlines plane signaling the start of regular

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[101] The Survey could be found at the ACNIS website at www.acnis.am/
[102] "Ter-Petrossian Says that Armenia Discards the Idea of Orientation," *ITAR-TASS News Agency*, August 13, 1992.
[103] The inauguration of the embassy took place on June 13, 1994. See "Armenian Foreign Minister Inaugurates Embassy in Beirut," *BBC SWB (ME/2022/MED)*, June 15, 1994.

scheduled flights between Beirut and Yerevan.[104] Over the next years Armenian-

Lebanese and Armenian-Syrian relations remained constant, but the Lebanese and Syrian

factors in Armenia's foreign policy remained secondary and indecisive in Yerevan's

orientation. Throughout the years official delegations kept visiting each other's capitals,

but other than the increased movement of mostly ethnic Armenians from and to Armenia,

the interaction was not significant.[105]

The Arab counties of the Persian Gulf, however, offered enough economic

incentives for Armenia to attempt to develop close ties with several of those countries.

For instance the volume of trade between Armenia and United Arab Emirates (UAE) has

witnessed a steady increase between 2001 and 2004.[106] The economic cooperation

between Yerevan and the Gulf Arab countries surpassed such cooperation between

Yerevan and Lebanon or Syria, mostly due to of the consumer goods offered by UAE.

Thus while in 1999 Armenia's trade turnover (total imports and exports) with Lebanon

amounted to about $9.5 million and with Syria $1.8 million, trade with UAE topped over

$43 million.[107] The fact that the frequency of flights between Yerevan and Dubai is equal

to that between Yerevan and Beirut indicates the importance Yerevan attaches to its ties

with the Gulf countries. Apart from the economic dimension, Armenia and UAE

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[104] "Armenian Planes Begin Flights to Beirut," *United Press International*, March 8, 1994.
[105] One detailed research made on the economic relations between Armenia, Lebanon, and Syria is by Vrej Chichiyan, "Armenia and the Middle East: Prospects of Economic Cooperation with Syria and Lebanon," published by *Armenian Center for National and International Studies* (Yerevan: ACNIS, 2001). While this research focused on the Lebanese and Syrian economies within the context of pan-Arab markets, it did offer some alternative ways to develop the bilateral economic relations between Armenia on the one hand and Syria and Lebanon on the other by relying on the Armenian communities living in those countries.
[106] The total volume of trade between Armenia and UAE in 2001 was about US $55 million; in 2004 it was close to $75 million. See National Statistic Service of the Republic of Armenia, http://www.armstat.am/Publications/2005/trade_2n/trade_2n_3.pdf. Accessed on December 20, 2005.
[107] See the official website of Armenia's Ministry of Trade and Economic Development, http://www.minted.am. Accessed on September 15, 2005.

established diplomatic relations in 1998 through their representatives in the United Nations.[108] This shows the extent to which international organizations, such as the UN, could provide an outlet for countries with limited resources, such as Armenia, to conduct foreign policy.

It is, nevertheless important to note that Armenia's attempts to develop ties with Israel have always been counter-balanced with Armenia's relations with Arab countries. Some political circles in Armenia argue that during Ter-Petrossian's administration, Yerevan was able to conduct a balanced foreign policy and avoid any possible tension between its relations with Arab countries on the one hand and Israel on the other. This view was epitomized in a Yerevan based newspaper, where an analogy between Ter-Petrossian's and Kocharian's relations with the Arab world and Israel was made.

> During Armenian ex-President Levon Ter-Petrossian's tenure, we had high-level relations with the Arab world (not wanting to damage these relations, during his seven-year tenure Levon Ter-Petrossian never visited Israel despite many opportunities and invitations).
>
> And what about Robert Kocharian? First, Armenian Foreign Minister Vardan Oskanian, then Armenian President Robert Kocharian visited Israel for certain objectives and the Arab world naturally did not like this visit. These visits could not improve Armenian-Israeli relations (because Armenia and Israel are on different sides of the regional cold division), but they damaged Armenia's relations with the Arab world.
>
> ... It is a fact that during the last two years Armenian President Robert Kocharian has been able to ruin Armenian-Arab friendly relations.[109]

Despite overtures by the Kocharian administration, Armenia's relations with Israel remain limited to trade of refined and cut diamonds, which account for more than double of Armenia's trade volume with the Arab countries.[110] Furthermore, the fact that Israel

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[108] "Armenia and UAE Establish Diplomatic Relations," *Snark News Agency*, June 26, 1998.

[109] "Nothing to Praise in Armenia's Foreign Policy," *Aravot Daily*, April 7, 2000.

[110] According to Armenia's Ministry of Trade and Economic Development, the volume of trade between Armenia and Israel in 2003 amounted to over $265.7 million. See http://www.minted.am.

regards Azerbaijan to be its major partner in the South Caucasus and cooperates with it on a variety of levels—including trade and security matters as well as cultural and educational exchanges—makes the need for Armenian diplomatic overtures towards Israel a necessity to counterbalance Azerbaijani-Israeli increased rapprochement.[111]

Turkey: Enemy at the Gate?

Armenia's historical experiences and domestic politics played an important role in determining the Republic's relations with its western neighbor, Turkey. During the initial independent phase, the new Armenian leadership under President Levon Ter-Petrossian was very keen on establishing diplomatic relations with Turkey to counterbalance the Russian influence as well as to obtain an outlet towards the West for the infant Republic. However, despite the initiatives of the Armenian government to normalize relations with Turkey, several factors rendered their attempts futile.

The factors influencing the Turkish-Armenian relations are multifaceted. The reasons most commonly cited from either side include the following: Armenian demands and Turkish refusal for the recognition of the Armenians Genocide of 1915 by the Young Turks;[112] the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh and Turkish solidarity with Azerbaijan; pressures from nationalists in both countries demanding a tougher policy against their neighbor; and potential economic dependence of Armenia on Turkey,

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[111] For an analysis of Israeli-Azerbaijani relations, refer to Soner Cagaptay and Alexander Murinson "Good Relations between Azerbaijan and Israel: A Model for Other Muslim States in Eurasia?" PolicyWatch #982, *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, March 30, 2005.

[112] The recognition of the Genocide is closely associated with the territorial demands and reparations that Armenia might claim from Turkey if the latter recognizes its responsibility in the Genocide.

which among many Armenians is tantamount to political dependence. This section will examine the causes for the unimproved Turkish-Armenian relations are unimproved by focusing on the development in the bilateral relations between the two, specifically within the context of the border opening.

The politics of nationalists

In 1991, Turkey, along with other countries, recognized Armenian independence and showed clear signs that it was willing to cooperate with the new Republic.[113] However, Ankara put forward a set of preconditions to normalize its relations with Yerevan and to establish diplomatic ties. The most important of these preconditions was that Armenia not only forgoes Genocide recognition demands from Turkey, but also pressures the Armenian diasporic communities to refrain form doing so.[114]

For his part, President Ter-Petrossian realized that land-locked Armenia required an outlet and that it needed to establish good relations with Turkey. He claimed that Turkey was not the same country as it was 70 years ago and that establishing good relations with Ankara would benefit Armenia not only economically but politically as well.[115] A former senior advisor to Ter-Petrossian later wrote:

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[113] When the Turkish ambassador to Moscow paid a visit to Armenia in 1991, he expressed optimism for the development of normal relations between his country and Armenia. See "Turkish Official Says Relations with Armenia 'Relatively Positive'," *BBC SWB (ME/1057/A)*, April 27, 1991.

[114] See Gerard J. Libaridian, *Modern Armenia: People, Nation, State* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2004), 268.

[115] See Hunter, *Transcaucasia in Transition*, 30.

> What if having normal diplomatic and economic relations with Turkey is in the interest of
> Armenia as well as of Karabakh? Would not improved Armeno-Turkish relations weaken
> the Azerbaijani negotiating position, the rigidity of which is based on a policy of strangling
> the Armenian economy? Should the answer to these questions be positive... then the
> normalization of relations with Turkey would facilitate Armenia's role as a transit route of
> Caspian Sea hydrocarbon resources."[116]

This policy of establishing good relations with Turkey came under attack from many

Armenian circles, especially nationalist ones. The arguments that the nationalists, such as

the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), underscored was that Turkey remains a

genocidal power, which if left unchecked would overrun Armenia and commit atrocities

against the Armenian population.[117] These fears were aggravated when the Turkish

President Turgut Özal, while on a visit to Baku, threatened Armenia with a blockade if a

peaceful resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict were not achieved.[118] A year later,

Ankara announced that it would stop the delivery of wheat or any other aid through its

territory until the Armenian government complied with Ankara's demands.[119] This

signaled the closing of the border between the two countries, which remains in effect to

this day.

During the 1990s, the entities opposing the opening of the border between

Armenia and Turkey included large segments of the Armenian Diaspora, nationalist

groups in both Armenia and Turkey, and, most importantly, Azerbaijan. While some of

these groups have merely voiced their concerns about the border's opening, others have

actively lobbied to prevent such an act by the Turkish government.

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[116] Gerard J. Libaridian, *The Challenge of Statehood. Armenian Political Thinking Since Independence* (Blue Crane Books, 1999), 116.
[117] Hovannisian, "Historical Memory and Foreign Relations," 237-276.
[118] See "Turkish President Calls Armenian Government 'Criminal'," *The Associated Press*, April 14, 1993.
[119] See "Turkish Wheat Deliveries to Armenia Stopped," *BBC SWB (SU/1660/C1)*, April 12, 1993.

On the Armenian side the major groups opposing the opening of the border are

the Diaspora and several political parties in Armenia.[120] For their part, foreign policy

makers and formulators in Armenia view Turkey as a regional power and a neighbor with

which Armenia must establish diplomatic relations and engage in political and economic

activities. In this formula, the burden of history is not forgotten, but is put on the

backburner, or at least used as a card to exert pressure on Turkey. However, the main

dilemma facing Armenia's foreign policy makers is how to balance Realpolitik with the

wishes and demands of the Diaspora and those of the nationalists in Armenia, which

contributes in no small degree to the various economic and social development plans and

projects in the Republic.

One of the most vocal opponents of opening the Turkish-Armenian border is the

ARF, a nationalist party well established in the Diaspora. The diasporan connection of

the ARF might be one of the reasons why it opposes the border opening since the

Armenians living in the diasporas are the main opponents of normalizing relations with

Turkey; hence the party's projection of the concerns of the diasporas. Other nationalist

groups and parties in Armenia have also voiced their concern against the border opening,

considering it a direct threat not only to the interests of Armenian economy, but also to

Armenian statehood as a whole. While they have thus far failed to provide a viable

argument supporting their claims that the border opening would harm Armenia, they have

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[120] The Armenian Revolutionary Federation is the most visible and outspoken opponent to the border opening. Another party is the Democratic Party of Armenia, which on occasion has announced its concurrence with the views of the ARF on this issue.

repeatedly stated that such an act would hurt the Armenian economy.[121] Apart from the

economic arguments, the ARF disputed that even if Turkey opens the border without

preconditions such an act should be undertaken having in mind "the interests of other

regional countries such as Russia and Iran."[122] Furthermore, the ARF put forward its own

precondition for normalizing relations with Turkey, which includes recognition of the

Genocide.[123]

On the other side of the border, the groups opposing the opening of the border

include Turkish politicians and nationalists and the Azerbaijani lobby. Whenever the

issue of opening up the border became a topic of discussion, Turkey emphasized that it

was out of question so long as Armenia did not comply with several of the conditions that

have been put forward. One of the most recurring preconditions has been demands by

Turkey that Armenia cease its campaign to force Turkey's recognition of the World War

I Armenian Genocide.[124] The introduction of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict's resolution

by Ankara, as a precondition for the normalization of the Turkish-Armenian relations

came in around 1993 (nearly two years after the start of independent relations between

the two countries). This indicates that the conflict might have not been a factor between

the two states' relations. Rather, it was introduced only after public opinion, along with

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[121] The ARF has repeatedly spoken out against the opening of the border considering that such an act would prove disastrous economically and politically. See "Armenian Politicians, Economists Divided Over Opening Border With Turkey," *RFE/RL Caucasus Report* 7, no. 38 (September 30, 2004).

[122] "Unchanged Turkey is a Serious Threat to our National Security," *Azg Daily*, August 22, 2003.

[123] This idea was expressed in an interview by the ARF Bureau Chairman Hrand Margarian. See "On Power & Responsibility: Hrand Margarian, ARF Bureau member, Speaks on Domestic and Foreign Policy," *AIM* 11, no. 12 (December 31, 2000), 54.

[124] On June 27, 2003, the Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan in his speech during a trip to the city of Kars, demanded from Armenia to give up its territorial claims on Turkey and to stop its Genocide claims. See "Turkish PM Insists On Preconditions For Improving Ties With Armenia," *RFE/RL* June 30, 2003.

the opinion of certain officials,[125] in Turkey wanted their government to have a more pro-Azerbaijani stance and put pressure on Armenia.[126] Another factor that might explain the Turkish government's solidarity with Azerbaijan and the introduction of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue is to appease the Azerbaijani leadership, which by that time was disillusioned by the lack of Turkish support in their war with Armenia and was looking for alternative—or Iranian—supporters to resist the Armenians.[127]

From the Azerbaijani perspective, similar statements were repeatedly made whenever the border issue was raised. The confidence of Azerbaijani leadership that Ankara would not open up the border with Armenia until the Nagorno-Karabakh issue was solved was reestablished on many occasions when the late Azerbaijani President Heydar Aliyev visited Turkey. At the end of almost every visit, Aliyev reconfirmed that Turkey is taking into consideration Baku's views in regards to the border opening.[128] For instance in September 2003, when Turkish and Azerbaijani foreign ministers Abdullah Gül and Vilayet Guliyev, respectively, met in Ankara, they issued a joint statement

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[125] At the time the opposition parties in Turkey adamantly demanded that their government go to the extent of sending military aid to Azerbaijan. The leader of one of those parties, Bülent Ecevit of the Democratic Left Party (DSP), when coming to power several years later continued the more balanced policy of his predecessors, which makes one wonder if the demands by the opposition to send militarily support to Azerbaijan were not made for local political consumption in Turkey.

[126] Shireen Hunter discusses in detail the domestic factors influencing Turkey's relations with Armenia and Azerbaijan. See Hunter, *Transcaucasia in Transition*, 163-166.

[127] The border closing from Ankara's side came only days after Azerbaijani President Abulfaz Elchibey dispatched his vice president, Panah Husseinov, to Tehran to seek "material and spiritual" aid in Azerbaijan's conflict with Armenia. For details see "Disillusioned with Turkey, Azeris Turn to Iran," *Inter Press Service*, April 13, 1993.

[128] "President Aliyev Arrives in Turkey," *ITAR-TASS News Agency*, January 9, 2000.

dismissing claims by Armenian Defense Minister Serge Sargsian that the border would be opened in the near future.[129]

One of the latest developments related to the Turkish-Armenian border took place before and during the visit of Azerbaijan's new President, Ilham Aliyev, to Turkey in April 2004. Prior to the visit, the Azerbaijani press declared that Turkey was likely to open its border with Armenia; a committee of Azerbaijani media representatives organized demonstrations in Turkey to protest against such an event.[130] After meeting with the Turkish president and other officials, Aliyev reiterated his belief that the border between Turkey and Armenia would not open anytime soon.

The Realpolitik of opening the border

Similar to those who oppose the border opening, the "camp" supporting the opening includes a wide range of individuals and institutions in both Turkey and Armenia. From the Armenian side, supporters of opening the border cite two main reasons for their conviction. The first is that such an act could help fuel Armenia's economy by lowering transport costs and creating new markets, although like the opposition, these groups also fail to provide a viable economic study on this issue. Secondly, Armenian politicians realize that the opening of the border with Turkey is a political victory not only for Armenia but also for the current Armenian leadership. Some of the more vocal supporters in Armenia for the border opening include both government

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[129] "Gül Says Relations with Azerbaijan Are Beyond Friendship," *Turkish Daily News*, September 13, 2003.
[130] "Azeri Reporters Protest in Turkey's Igdir Against Opening of Armenian Border," *ANS TV/BBC Monitoring*, April 6, 2004.

representatives (such as Prime Minister Andranik Markarian and Defense Minister Serge

Sargsian)[131] and the opposition (among them the former Prime Minister and presidential

candidate Vazgen Manukian).[132]

A very rough survey of Armeno-Turkish relations over the past several years

reveals increased activities between the two states to break the existing deadlock. These

actions include the creation of the Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission

(TARC) and the Turkish-Armenian Business Development Council (TABDC). Formed in

Geneva on July 9, 2001, TARC became one of the hotly debated and contested

organizations in Armenian communities around the world as well as in Armenia.

The objectives of TARC were published in a document called "Terms of

Reference." According to it, TARC aimed to promote mutual understanding and goodwill

between Turks and Armenians; to encourage improved relations between Armenia and

Turkey; to build on the increasing readiness for reconciliation among Turkish and

Armenian civil societies, including members of Diaspora communities and to support

contact, dialogue, and cooperation between Armenian and Turkish societies in order to

create public awareness about the need for reconciliation and to derive practical benefits.

"Terms of Reference" stated that TARC would undertake activities and catalyze projects

by other organizations and it would also develop recommendations to be submitted to

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[131] See for instance "Armenian Prime Minister: Opening of Armenian-Turkish Border Mutually Beneficial," *Economic News*, July 31, 2002, and "Armenian Defense Minister Gives Wide-Ranging Newspaper Interview," *Golos Armenii*, September 9, 2003.
[132] "Veteran Armenian Politician Supports Opening of Borders with Turkey," *ArmenPress*, August 4, 2003.

concerned governments. TARC pledged to support activities in the fields of business, tourism, culture, education, research, and environment.[133]

TARC neither dealt with the Armenian Genocide nor Nagorno-Karabakh conflict; rather it skipped them as they were deemed difficult to compromise. According to some of the members of the commission, the main idea behind TARC was to open new horizons for the future and enhance mutual understanding between Turkey, Armenia, and the Armenian Diaspora following a method of unofficial or second-track diplomacy.[134] The assumption that the governments of Armenia and Turkey had nothing to do with the founding and activities of TARC comes across as being very naive. The statements issued by Armenia's foreign ministry at the time stated that the Armenian government was aware of such activities, but neither participated in nor prevented them.[135] This statement was able to shift criticism away from the Armenian government and onto the individual members of the commission itself. This scenario is a perfect example of how the current Armenian administration handles Armenian-Turkish relations and avoids coming under fire by the Diaspora. This is especially true considering that those segments opposed to any such activity over the past years have become closely identified with President Kocharian's administration. The short-lived TARC was not able to create the rapprochement between Armenia and Turkey. Although TARC had unequivocally supported the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border, the discrediting of the members of the commission did not allow it to become a viable force in the process of such

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[133] See the official TARC website at http://www.tarc.info/tor.htm.
[134] "Turks and Armenians Establish Reconciliation Body," *Reuters*, July 10, 2001.
[135] See the official statement of the Armenian Foreign Ministry on TARC on August 2, 2001, titled "TARC Statement," at http://www.armeniaforeignministry.com/PR/PR108.html.

negotiations. Moreover, because of the opposition that it faced from wide circles in the Diaspora and in Armenia,[136] TARC lacked the necessary momentum to become an actor in improving Turkish-Armenian relations. Having been stripped of official support and without popular backing, the commission met several times until it was dissolved in April 2004. In 2005, David Phillips, a representative of US State Department and the moderator of TARC, revealed what was already suspected, namely that TARC was the brainchild of the US State Department as we as the driving force behind it.[137] This disclosure reinforces the idea that TARC was doomed for failure since it was an attempt forced upon Armenia and Turkey from outside and thus lacked popular support in both countries.

Unlike TARC, TABDC has been more consistent in its efforts. Established in May 1997, TABDC served as a link between the public and private sectors within and in between Armenia and Turkey. Co-chaired by an Armenian (Arsen Ghazarian) and a Turk (Kaan Soyak), TABDC was able to promote and facilitate close cooperation between the Armenian and Turkish business circles. It also tried to establish direct trade and business links in various sectors to maintain close ties between the governments of Armenia and Turkey and enable them to forge global economic policies.[138] Operating to this date, TABDC has been an active lobbying group that works in Ankara to have the border with Armenia opened.

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[136] Discussing the opposition of TARC is beyond the confines of this paper. A comprehensive survey of the opposition to the commission could be found at http://asbarez.com/TARC.

[137] In February and March 2005, David Phillips went on a book signing and public speaking tour in a score of US cities which included New York, Boston, and Washington DC. His opinion and reflections on TARC's activities and failure could be found in his book, *Unsilencing the Past: Track Two Diplomacy and Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation* (New York: Berghahn Books), 2005.

[138] See the official TABDC website at http://www.tabdc.org/about.php.

TABDC has been more of a business group, and that might be one of the reasons why it did not receive the same amount of negative attention as TARC did. In addition, the main concern of TABDC is the eastern regions of Turkey and its view that opening the border could bring economic development to the regions of Kars and Erzerum through agricultural cooperation and tourism.[139] Furthermore, TABDC's efforts have been reinforced by the support it received from local government officials in Eastern Turkey. For instance, Kars Mayor Naif Alibeyoglu was one of the main engines behind the drive to collect signatures from Kars residents appealing Ankara to open the border with Armenia.[140]

Who would benefit after all?

The arguments for and against the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border vary from nationalist-based rejection to a more pragmatic acceptance. As mentioned above, since there has not been any full-range economic research conducted on this topic, assessing the economic benefits or losses of opening the border remain ambiguous at best. From a political perspective, however, the biggest loser of the border's opening would undoubtedly be Azerbaijan since its attempts to isolate Armenia and bring it to "submission" through blockade would fail. Moreover, the Azerbaijani side would face tremendous pressure to deal with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, while Armenia would be able to transcend the economic embargo. The completion of the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline

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[139] "150 Historical Monuments to be Restored and Relations to be Formed between Armenia and Erzurum, Kars," *Turkish Daily News*, May 18, 2002.
[140] "Kars Mayor Urges Opening of Armenia Border Gate," *Turkish Daily News*, June 9, 2004 and "Kars Governor has Collected 50,000 Signatures in favor of Opening of Armenian-Turkish Border," *Arminfo News Agency*, November 11, 2004.

could also deprive Azerbaijan of its leverage against Turkey, and the lobbying by pro-Azerbaijani groups in Ankara would significantly lose power.

From the Armenian perspective, opening the border could be translated as a great diplomatic success and victory against Azerbaijan, one that could be applied on the domestic front. The political gains that the Armenian government will receive include propaganda that the policy of blockade has failed and that Armenia was victorious, consequently boosting President Kocharian's struggle with the Armenian opposition, which has accused him of maintaining a policy of isolation. Kocharian will prove his ability to end the country's isolation without concessions in such principled issues as Nagorno-Karabakh.

The border's opening could also have an impact on the process of Genocide recognition by Turkey. If the border between the two countries were opened, interaction between Armenians and Turks on the societal level would increase. In turn, this interaction could allow a rapprochement between the two nations once they start regarding each other as neighbors. Negative views that Turks have towards Armenians and vise-versa could diminish over a period of time and that could eventually prepare the ground for social pressure on the Turkish government from within the country to come to terms with its past and recognize the Genocide. Although the idea that the Turkish government might yield under pressure from social currents from within could be considered far-fetched, Turkish attempts to join the European Union could provide a fertile ground for society-government dynamics that shifts the situation in favor of society. The impact of Genocide recognition on Turkish national identity is an issue that

is underestimated and is one of the reasons why Turkey is unwilling to take the first step that could result in reexamining its own national and state identity. Repeated interaction between Armenia and Turkey—even in the border area—could help create a ripple effect, and Turkish society could eventually come to terms with its past and negotiate its identity not only vis-à-vis Armenia and Armenians but also by paving the way for the advancement of a liberal society in Turkey.

Geopolitically, the border opening could lessen Armenia's dependence on Russia and Georgia. The idea that relations with Turkey might be normal could eventually diminish the view that Armenia should rely on Russia to "protect" it from Turkey.[141] Similarly, the direct contact between Armenia and Turkey could make Georgia's role as a transit country less important and hence put the relations between Tbilisi and Yerevan on an equal footing. The détente between Turkey and Armenia could also result in Russia seeking to reassess its own relations with Armenia. Whereas currently Moscow feels that its control over Yerevan is almost unchallenged, once relations between Armenia and Turkey are normalized, the role of Russia as a protector of Armenia could diminish or at least decrease exponentially. This, in turn, could provide Armenia with more choices to conduct its foreign policy and allow a more European (but not necessarily a US) orientation of Yerevan using Turkey as a conduit.

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[141] It is worth mentioning here that the idea of reliance on the third force mentioned at the beginning of this paper has been re-emerging in Armenia. According to a survey done by a research center in Yerevan, researchers are finding the "law to exclude third force" a more feasible alternative than relying on Russia or the West. See "Armenia's National and International Security in the Next Decade," *Presentation of Expert and Public Poll Results*, Armenian Center for National and International Studies, Yerevan, Armenia, August 2004.

However, if the border between Armenia and Turkey remains closed, Turkey might come under heavy pressure from the EU as well as international organizations to lift the blockade. These pressures could go hand in hand with international demands for Turkey to recognize the Genocide, as it might force the Turkish government to engage in negotiations with Armenia, a move which could be interpreted as a sign of weakness and consequently undermine Turkey's image as a reliable partner not only for Azerbaijan, but also for Ankara's Middle Eastern neighbors.

Similarly, in the absence of normal relations between Turkey and Armenia, compounded by the closed border, Armenia could have a tougher negotiation position on the international stage vis-à-vis Turkey. The continued border blockade is nothing but ammunition for Armenian diplomacy to keep the pressure high on Turkey and use the blockade as leverage against Turkey's integration into Europe. In the event that Armenia keeps calling for the opening of the border without any preconditions—as it does now— the diplomatic ball remains in Turkey's court, and all of Ankara's actions and statements remain under the spotlight.

Finally, the closed border could reflect badly on Turkey's European policy since Ankara's integration into the EU comes with a dowry, which is Europe's expansion into the Middle East and South Caucasus. Surrounded by cordial but not friendly neighbors, Turkey is in desperate need to promote itself as Europe's reliable partner in the region. Over the past several decades, the EU has been vigorously breaking down borders and barriers, and having a country such as Turkey—which creates, rather than transcends

barriers—among its folds, seriously undermines Europe's ideology as a collection of states and nations operating beyond borders.

Armenia vs. Armenian Foreign Policy

No doubt, the ability of Armenia to conduct an influential foreign policy is very much dependent on the dispersed Armenian communities all over the world. Compared to most of the former Soviet republics, Armenia has the most exposure in foreign media stemming from the relentless efforts of Diasporan Armenians. Since the first days of independence, Diasporan Armenians started to play an increasingly prominent role in the government. For instance in the first government of independent Armenia, two Armenian-Americans were given key ministries. Raffi Hovannisian was appointed foreign minister while Sebouh Tashjian took on the ministry of energy.[142] This was a clear sign that what Armenia lacked geographically and in terms of natural resources, it tried to compensate for by drawing on the expertise and funds of its widespread Diaspora.[143]

However, Armenia's reliance on the Diaspora came with many strings attached, and the dilemma that the successive administrations in Armenia had to face was to what extent it would be possible to conduct a foreign policy based on the preferences and demands of the Armenia communities that do not reside on the territory of the Republic.

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[142] "Armenia Lives," *The Economist*, May 23, 1992.
[143] An initiative that showed Armenia's financial reliance on its Diaspora to conduct foreign policy was the setting up of a foreign ministry fund to finance the diplomatic activities of the Republic. See "Armenian Foreign Ministry Fund Set Up," *ITAR-TASS News Agency*, January 17, 1992.

The way this dilemma was handled varied between the administrations of Levon Ter-Petrossian and Robert Kocharian. In the first years of independence, the Armenian government wanted to clarify to the Armenians that it was not a pan-Armenian government but was the government of the Republic of Armenia and its priorities laid in the welfare of its citizens and the realities of the country rather than the wishes and demands of the Diaspora. However, this policy did not mean that Armenia did not need the Diaspora or that it was not interested in cooperating with it on various levels. For instance in May 1997, Ter-Petrossian signed a decree on the formation of a state council for coordination of relations between Armenia and the Diaspora. According to the decree, "The council is being set up in view of the need to give new meaning to relations with the Diaspora and create new structures to ensure effective cooperation in the new conditions of an independent Armenia."[144]

One of the main issues influencing Armenia's relations with the Diaspora is the fragmented nature of Armenian Diasporic life. Apart from the fact that the Armenian communities residing all over the world have their own distinct and sometimes diametrically opposite views of what it means to be an Armenian, the long-established political organizations in the Armenian Diaspora add a political dimension to the already factionalized dispersion and its relations with the "homeland."[145] During the early days of Armenia's independence, the Diaspora gave a tremendous amount of time and money to support the country's initial steps towards independence as well as to support the

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[144] "Armenia Sets up Council to Coordinate Relations with Diaspora," *Noyan Tapan News Agency*, May 6, 1997.

[145] While most of the Diasporans trace their ancestries to Ottoman Armenia and consider Western Armenia to be their homeland, the emergence of independent Armenia provided most of the Diaspora with a physical connection to a now tangible homeland with territory and statehood.

Armenian fight for Nagorno-Karabakh's self-determination. But with the passage of time and the decrease of the crisis situation, the Diaspora began to reevaluate its position and responsibilities towards the new state.

After the initial euphoria of independence withered away, the Armenian Diaspora faced a challenge of how to cope with the realities of a new Republic in the creation of which the dispersed Armenian communities have little role to play. One example epitomizing the difference between Armenia's and the Diaspora's views of what was important for Armenia came in 1988 when the three major Diasporan political organizations,[146] issued a statement denouncing the independence of Armenia at a time when the overwhelming portion of Armenia's population were calling for Armenia's secession from the Soviet Union. The statement by the three parties read:

> We also call upon our valiant brethren in Armenia and Karabakh to forgo such acts as work stoppages, student strikes, and some radical calls and expressions that unsettle law and order in public life in the homeland; that harm seriously the good standing of our nation in the relations with the higher Soviet bodies and other Soviet Republics.[147]

Faced with the duality of appeasing an out-of-touch Diaspora with the realities of an independent country, Ter-Petrossian chose to prioritize the state over the nation by insisting that financial and technical aid to the homeland from the Diaspora be channeled through official state mechanisms. In the words of one Diaspora-based magazine:

> This [policy] seemed a reasonable enough position. After all, the government is responsible for the welfare of 3.5 million people and the continued survival of the Republic in a harsh environment far removed from the daily experience of most well-off Diasporans.[148]

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[146] These were the Ramkavar Liberal Democrat Party, the Hunchakian Social Democratic Party, and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation.

[147] See Libaridian, *Armenia at the Crossroads*, 127-29.

[148] "The Courtship of 3.5 Million Diasporans," *AIM* 9, no. 7 (July 31, 1998).

The reactions from the Diaspora regarding this policy were not uniform. While the majority of the Diasporans did support the foreign policy efforts of the new Republic, some sections realized that with the creation of an Armenian state, their "guardianship" of Armenian identity was seriously challenged. This was very much true for the nationalist ARF party, which for over 70 years cherished the idea that Armenia would regain its independence under its leadership.[149] Excluding the ARF, almost all of the remaining factions in the Diaspora, univocally geared their energy to support the efforts of the Armenian state to conduct a foreign policy based on the needs and priorities of the state.

Two issues exemplify the difference between the views of the Armenian government and the diasporas in terms of Armenia's foreign policy priorities: the Armenian Genocide and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. While the Genocide has been the focal point of the Diaspora's identity and its organizational agenda, it was less important for Armenia's leadership and the identity of Armenia's society.[150] It was based on the premise that Armenia needed to develop normal relations with all its neighbors and that Ter-Petrossian set out to establish normal relations with Turkey without preconditions, discarding any criticism from the Diaspora that Turkey could not be trusted.

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[149] The party's slogan, "Free, independent, and united Armenia" has been the mantra of party membership since the days of the First Armenian Republic of 1918, when the ARF was briefly in power. The continued profession of this slogan in the Diaspora created an enigma that it would be under the ARF banner and leadership that Armenia would again become independent and set out on the task of unifying the historical Armenian lands as well as repatriating the Armenians to their historic homeland.

[150] This does not mean however that the Genocide is not an important issue for the society or political parties operating in Armenia. However, it is not the sole issue guiding or governing Armenia's political and social processes.

> The politicization of the Genocide had served, wittingly or unwittingly, to create the mentality and psychology that Turkey, through its nonrecognition of the Genocide, is likely to repeat it, that Turkey is the eternal enemy. If Turkey is the eternal enemy, then Russia is the eternally necessary friend. And this then creates pressures on your policy of independence."[151]

This policy of downplaying the Genocide as a central issue in establishing relations with Turkey was based on Ter-Petrossian's claim that the steps to be taken by the Armenian nation must be proportionate to its strength.[152] Ter-Petrossian maintained that if Armenia wished to achieve political democracy and real independence from Russia, it should open up to Turkey. It was, in his opinion, an illusion that Russia could ensure the security of Armenia.[153]

When Kocharian came to power in 1998, he reverted to traditional anti-Turkish modes of Armenian nationalism—including the reintroduction of the Genocide in Armenia's foreign policy agenda—in the hope of appeasing the Diaspora.[154] Kocharian emphasized the importance of the Genocide as an emotional rallying point for the Diaspora to gather its support and made promises of closer working relations with all the factions of the Diaspora. In his inaugural address Kocharian said:

> Our generation is destined to assume one more responsibility. That is the unification of the efforts of all Armenians and the ensuring of Diaspora Armenians' active participation in the social, political, and economic life of our Republic. A constitutional solution to the matter of dual citizenship will also contribute to the issue. Armenia should be a holy motherland for all the Armenians, and its victory should be their victory, its future their

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[151] Conversations with Gerard Libaridian "The New Thinking Revisited," *Armenian Forum* 1, no.2 (Winter 1998), 124.

[152] See Stephen Astourian, "From Ter-Petrosian to Kocharian: Leadership Change in Armenia," *Working Paper 2000 04-asto* (Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies. 2001), 18.

[153] Ibid, 18-19.

[154] See Ronald Suny, "Provisional Stabilities: The Politics of Identities in Post-Soviet Eurasia," *International Security* 24, no. 3 (Winter 1999/2000), 158-59.

future. We have to realize that a nation which understands the value of its combined force, can never be defeated.[155]

Kocharian's coming to power and his accommodative policies towards the Diaspora resulted in the heavy influence of the Diaspora's views on the creation of state policy. The renewed emphasis on the Genocide in conditioning Armenia's relations with Turkey[156] was nothing more than an attempt by Kocharian to appease the Diaspora in the hope of receiving continued Diasporan financial assistance even if that meant the limitation of Armenia's foreign policy choices and its increased reliance on Russia.

Similarly in the case of Nagorno-Karabakh, the Diaspora attached more importance to the preservation of the land occupied by the local Armenian forces while Ter-Petrossian refused to recognize the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh and rejected calls for its annexation with Armenia, concerned that any official involvement of Armenia in the conflict could aggravate Yerevan's already dire situation of diplomatic isolation. He instead wanted to depict the conflict as being between the Armenians of Karabakh and the government of Azerbaijan. The existing dichotomy between Armenia and the Diaspora on the meaning of territory and land is yet another example of how the priorities of a nation are viewed from almost contradictory points of view. An article dealing with this duality explains the roots of contestation between the homeland and its Diaspora:

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[155] President Robert Kocharian's Inauguration Speech at the Special Session of the National Assembly. April 9, 1998. http://www.armeniaforeignministry.com/speeches/000521rk_inaguration.html.

[156] In 1998 after Kocharian had been in power for several months, Vardan Oskanian paid an official visit to the US and went on a multi-city tour. At one of the Armenian community centers in Boston, he announced that the Kocharian administration will be putting the Genocide issue and its recognition by Turkey on the forefront of Armenia's foreign policy agenda. This statement was welcomed by emotional—and to some extent, hysterical—applause by the audience showing the importance of the Genocide in Armenian Diasporic psyche.

> For example, consider a state that gives up its claim to a piece of historically significant territory in order to achieve peaceful relations with a neighboring state. Diaspora and homeland citizens often have different attitudes toward the implications such policies have for ethnic and national identity. For many homeland citizens, territory serves multiple functions: it provides sustenance, living space, security, as well as a geographical focus for national identity. If giving up a certain territory, even one of significant symbolic value, would increase security and living conditions, a homeland citizen might find the tradeoff worthwhile. By contrast, for the diaspora, while the security of the homeland is of course important as well, the territory's identity function is often paramount. Its practical value (and, indeed, the practical value of peace with a former rival) is not directly relevant to the diaspora's daily experience. In such situations, altering the geographic configuration of the homeland state for the sake of peace may be more disturbing to some diaspora elements than to some segments of the homeland community.[157]

Indeed, one of the main reasons that Ter-Petrossian lost popular support in both Armenia and the Diaspora was his attempt to conclude an agreement with Azerbaijan on the future of Nagorno-Karabakh. His policy was depicted by nationalist circles in Armenia and the Diaspora as nothing more than defeatist and borderline treason. Furthermore, the association of the Genocide with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has also been a factor for Diasporan or nationalist demands for a tougher stand on the conflict's resolution. As one analyst wrote in 2001, "Many Armenians do not distinguish between Azeris and Turks. They view the fight for Nagorno-Karabakh as one to preserve their unique Armenian Christian culture, as revenge for the 1915-18 Genocide at the hands of the Turks, and for anti-Armenian violence in Azerbaijan."[158]

The reconciliation of the interests of both factions of the nation—Armenia and the diasporas—is a process which requires time and interaction. Thus the interaction between the two have only ten years experience of "normal" relations and that has been one of the

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[157] Yossi Shain, "The Role of Diasporas in Conflict Perpetuation or Resolution," *SAIS Review* 22, no. 2 (Summer–Fall 2002), 135.
[158] Carol Migdalovitz, "Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict," *CRS Issue Brief for Congress IB92109*, December 4, 2001, 10.

major reasons why there has been tension, misunderstandings and stereotypes between them.[159] Although during Soviet times there used to be a committee in charge of communicating with the diasporas—*spyurki het kaberi komiteh* [Committee in charge of Relations with the Diaspora]—it limited its interaction with selective groups of Diasporans. After independence the official task to interact with the Diasporas was transferred to the newly created Armenia-Diaspora Agency, which was affiliated with the foreign ministry—a fact that leads to conclude that the Diaspora relations was within the realm of Armenia's foreign policy conduct. Over the years the Armenian government tried to gather the diasporas around pan-Armenian issues to address pan-Armenian priorities but according to one official, "the diasporas did not have a unified structure so the government had to work with various organizations without much success."[160] Even the two highly publicized Armenia-Diaspora conferences—one in September 1999 and the other in May 2002—failed to achieve any concrete results and they mostly served as publicity stunts.

With all the dualities existing between Armenia and the Diaspora on a multitude of issues, the fact remains that financial assistance pouring in from the worldwide dispersed Armenian communities constitutes an economic lifeline not only for Armenia but also for Nagorno-Karabakh.[161] For a country with limited resources like Armenia, foreign aid becomes important to keep the economy going and at the same time invest in

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[159] Author's interview with Jivan Movsisian, the head of Armenia-Diaspora Agency at the Foreign Ministry. Yerevan, Republic of Armenia April 26, 2002.
[160] Ibid.
[161] According to a study done in 2003, the total amount of money transferred to Armenia from the Diaspora amounted to $550 million or almost 20% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (the figures for 1998 and 2002 were $570 million and $500, respectively). See "Private Transfers to Armenia from Armenian Diaspora Total $570 Million Annually," *Arminfo News Agency*, April 29, 2004.

infrastructure development and maintenance.[162] Because of its diasporas, Armenia has

been able to escape the trap of diplomatic under-representation often faced by small

states.[163] Thus if it was not for the generosity of Armenian philanthropists many capitals

(especially in the West) would not have had Armenian embassies or consular offices.

According to a former foreign minister, "without the support of the Diaspora it would

have been impossible to creates these [embassies] and missions."[164] However, receiving

financial aid from the Diaspora and being dependent on it carries some risks in the form

of distorting the boundaries between the good of the state and the good of the nation.

Furthermore, because of this increased dependence of the state on the nation, many

organizations in the Diaspora have developed a sense of indispensability of the Diaspora

in Armenia's existence, which could further blur the lines between the priorities of

Armenia and the Diaspora.[165]

Since its independence, the foreign policy formulation of Armenia has undergone

a drastic change from a state-centric one under Ter-Petrossian to a more nation-centered

policy under Kocharian. While there are some advantages in a Diaspora-friendly foreign

policy, such as financial support and international exposure, the end-result of having a

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[162] Diasporan financial assistance has been crucial in the building of a highway connecting the southern Armenian city of Goris to the capital of Nagorno-Karabakh, Stepanakert. The funds were accrued mostly through world-wide telethons organized by the All-Armenian Fund. In 2004, another world-wide telethon to fund the building of a north-south highway in Nagorno-Karabakh brought in close to $9 million. For details on the projects of the All-Armenian Fund and their funding, see http://www.himnadram.org.
[163] See Marshall Singer, *Weak States in a World of Powers: The Dynamics of International Relationships* (New York: Free Press, 1972), 196. Discussed in chapter 1.
[164] Author's interview with former Foreign Minister Vahan Papazain. Yerevan, Republic of Armenia November 13, 2001.
[165] A representative of one Diasporan organization expressed his belief in the messianic role of the Diaspora in Armenia's development when he said that "Without the Diaspora, no one would know or care about Nagorno-Karabakh or Armenia: it would have become just another former Soviet republic with no prospects." See "Armenian Diaspora Carries Some Clout," *Financial Times*, May 19, 1998.

disproportional relation between Armenia and the Diaspora could lead to the hijack of Armenia's foreign policy by the nation and run based on perceptions rather than realities of what is the homeland's advantage and who is an enemy or a friend. This disproportionate power relation is a direct result of Armenia's weakness in the domains of politics and economy, which in turn undermines the state's ability to assert its own leadership of the transnational Armenian community.

Can the Past be Reconciled?

The foreign policy formulation and execution of a small and new state such as Armenia—handicapped by geography and the lack of natural resources—could be viewed as a diplomat's nightmare. The lack of institutional mechanisms to operate and process information into policies was yet another challenge for Armenia's first administration. Since its independence the country has faced dilemmas in terms of foreign orientation, interpretation of issues and events, and, more importantly in closing the gap between the ideas of national security and the nation's well-being.

The way foreign policy has been formulated and conducted in Armenia has gone through phases between the two administrations that have governed the country. The government of Levon Ter-Petrossian, while lacking experience in state management, was able to conduct a foreign policy devoid of traditional ideologies and approached the issues facing Armenia with a pragmatic view. The early years of the Republic have been dominated by the war in Nagorno-Karabakh, which forced Armenia's diplomacy and

foreign policy to devote a tremendous amount of time and energy to find a solution for that conflict. Perhaps it is because of the ongoing negotiations that the first administration was able to view its choices in a pragmatic way and looked at the best possible solution for its citizens. The Ter-Petrossian administration chose to break away from conventional wisdom and break the stereotypes of who is Armenia's enemy and who its friend. This in turn created a friction with some segments of the society and the Diaspora, which still viewed Armenia's neighbors through the prism of historical experiences.

When Kocharian became president, Armenia had already seven years of state-building experience. During those years Armenia's foreign policy establishment and the diplomatic corps became professional and experienced. However, the country's foreign policy remained mostly dictated by the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict; Yerevan tried to address this issue in many venues putting this topic at the top of Armenia's foreign policy agenda. While in terms of agenda and vision it seems that both administrations shared many similarities, the fact that Kocharian intensified Armenia's political and economic relations—and hence dependence—with Russia reversed Armenia's balanced foreign policy developed during Ter-Petrossian. Although complementary foreign policy became the mantra of the new administration, Armenia's increased dependence on Russia made Armenia more isolated both regionally and internationally. Thus, Ter-Petrossian conducted a foreign policy void of any burden of history, while Kocharian brought back conventional and traditional Armenian thought in a changing world where neither convention nor tradition could have answered the dictates of regional and international politics.

CHAPTER IV: GEORGIA'S FOREIGN POLICY: IN THE SHADOW OF THE BEAR

On February 3, 1994, Russian President Boris Yeltsin paid an official visit to

Georgia and was welcomed by Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze. The two

leaders signed a series of agreements to boost bilateral military collaboration as well as to

cement their non-military cooperation with a treaty of friendship, cooperation, and good

neighborliness. Eleven years later, on May 9, 2005, United States President George W.

Bush arrived in Tbilisi and was welcomed by President Mikhail Saakashvili of Georgia.

The first visit was preceded by coming to power of Shevardnadze in Tbilisi after his

predecessor Zviad Gamsakhurdia was ousted in a bloody civil war limited mostly to

Tbilisi and Mingrelia (western Georgia) that brought the newly independent republic to

the verge of total collapse. The second change that preceded the US president's visit by

two years was the ouster of President Shevardnadze in a popular, but mostly peaceful

revolt known as the "Rose Revolution."

During the period between visits of Russian and US presidents, Georgia had to

deal with two breakaway regions—Abkhazia and South Ossetia—which in turn resulted

in the development of conflict between Georgia and Russia in those two regions. These

political realities forced Shevardnadze to pursue conciliatory policies vis-à-vis Russia and

adjust to Russia's attempts to exert its influence—if not control—over Georgia. The Rose

Revolution that ousted Shevardnadze in 2003 had a tremendous impact on Georgia's

foreign policy orientation since the country's new leadership made it clear that it would

adopt a policy of full eventual integration into European structures and other Western

institutions, the most prominent being the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). While official declarations were very much in tune with what Shevardnadze was professing, what changed between the policies of the two administrations was that the new leadership in Tbilisi did not have Shevardnadze's Soviet-era experience or baggage, making them less conciliatory with Russia.

In this chapter, an analysis of Georgia's foreign policy will take into account the various components influencing Tbilisi's views, perceptions, and relations with its neighbors as well as the West. The first section will address Georgia's relations with Russia in a historical context. The examination of historical developments between Georgian-Russian relations provides insights into the modern-day relations between Tbilisi and Moscow. Furthermore, this historical outlook of bilateral relations also helps explain the origins of current contestation between the two countries. The overview will touch upon the origins of mistrust between the two, beginning with the Russian annexation of the Georgian kingdom in the early 19th century all the way to the Soviet era, its eventual collapse, and the reemergence of a new Georgian republic.

The second aspect of studying Georgia's foreign policy is the domestic constraints on the country's ability to conduct a policy of rapprochement with the West while simultaneously distancing itself from Moscow. These constraints, examined in this section, include the civil and ethnic wars and their impact on the way the central authorities in Tbilisi sought the support of Russia in some cases and blamed it in many others for too much involvement in Georgia's domestic affairs. The conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, the civil war plaguing the infant Georgian Republic that resulted

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in the ouster of Gamsakhurdia from power and the tensions with the region of Ajaria will be discussed as well.

The third level of analysis will dwell on Georgia's ability to extend its foreign policy options by identifying regional and international partners with whom it can cooperate on issues of security, economy, and energy. The cooperation with various organizations, institutions, and countries will mainly be analyzed within the context of Georgia's attempts to gradually pull away from the Russian shadow. In this framework, a survey of the various programs and activities that Georgia has participated in, such as NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP), the US-sponsored "train and equip" program, and the alliance that Tbilisi began with Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova. This alliance was named GUAM (from the initials of the country names); when Uzbekistan temporarily joined the alliance its name was changed to GUUAM only to revert back to the original name after Uzbekistan dropped out in 2005.

The final section of this chapter will look at Georgian-Armenian bilateral relations through the prism of their foreign policies. The aim is to examine how these two countries of the South Caucasus have developed cordial relations while simultaneously viewing each other's foreign policy orientations with anxiety and mistrust. The analysis of the bilateral relations will be based on the views and perception of each towards the other—formed mostly throughout their long history together—and at the same time looking at the potential areas of tension between the two, such as the Armenian populated region of Javakheti in southern Georgia as well as each country's perception of enemy and friend.

Georgia's Relations with Russia

Georgian-Russian relations have been viewed by Georgian intellectuals as a relation of unequals with a history of betrayal and exploitation of the former by the latter. The roots of this perception lie within the recent 200-year history of the two nations and the incorporation of Georgia into the Russian Empire in the early 19th century. While the expansion of Tsarist Russia into the South Caucasus was welcomed by the Armenians, and Georgians, eventually this was viewed by the Georgians as the end of their independence and the beginning of Russian domination. This image persisted in the Georgian psyche, reinforced through the Soviet rule by Moscow's various policies forced on the constituent republics of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Consequently, historical memory has imposed the "tyranny of the past upon the imagination" of the Georgians.[1] While at the beginning Russian involvement was welcomed by the Georgians, the Tsarist colonial policies of assimilation attempts eventually gave way to mistrust. What follows is a brief historical overview of Georgian-Russian relations and the various seminal events that have helped shape the Georgian perceptions towards Russia. While this section might be more factual than analytical in nature, it aims at setting the stage to analyze current bilateral relations between Tbilisi and Moscow.

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[1] Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), 217-218.

Russian annexation

By the early 18th century, what is today Georgia consisted of several independently controlled principalities that came together in a very loose alliance in an attempt to keep Qajar and Ottoman advances away from their principalities or kingdoms.[2] However, since the lax alliance of Georgian princes was not a match for the advancement of Ottoman and Persian armies, Georgians actively sought protection from the Russians—their fellow Orthodox Christians. By the 1760s, this reliance led the Georgians to seek, and temporarily gain, Russian military assistance against the Ottomans. In 1783, King Erekle II of Kakheti and Empress Catherine of Russia signed the Treaty of Georgievsk, which made Kartli-Kakheti a protectorate of Russia.[3]

In 1787, however, Russia did not live up to the conditions of the Georgievsk Treaty, and Catherine withdrew the Russian troops from Georgia leaving Erekle to face a vastly superior Persian army that invaded Kartli-Kakheti in 1795.[4] The situation in Kakheti grew critical after Erekle's death in 1798, when his son and heir Giorgi XII proved unable to rule the country. Various feudal and political groups supported Giorgi's brothers and sons in their claims to the throne and a fratricidal war ensued. Looming

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[2] Some of the sources dealing with the ancient and medieval history of the Caucasus with an emphasis on Georgia are William E. D. Allen, *A History of the Georgian People: From the Beginning Down to the Russian Conquest in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1971); David Marshall Lang, *The Last Years of the Georgian Monarchy, 1658-1832* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957); David Marshall Lang and Charles Burney, *The Peoples of the Hills: Ancient Ararat and Caucasus* (New York: Praeger, 1972); Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994); Ronald Grigor Suny, ed., *Transcaucasia, Nationalism, and Social Change: Essays in the History of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia* [hereafter *Transcaucasia*] (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996); and Cyrille Toumanoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1963).

[3] Kartli-Kakheti is the name that the Georgian kingdom was known as at the time. It comprised what is today central and eastern Georgia.

[4] Lang, *Last Years*, 227, 232.

ahead the threat of another Persian invasion, Giorgi XII desperately called on Russia to

stand by its commitments of the Georgievsk Treaty, but the terms of the treaty no longer

satisfied the Russian government, and on December 18, 1800, Tsar Paul I of Russia

declared Kartli-Kakheti's annexation to the Russian crown. All societal structures and

classes were to retain their privileges, though the continuation of the Bagratid Dynasty of

Georgia was ended. In January of 1801, Paul's son, Alexander I, went further and

declared the outright incorporation of the Georgian Kingdom into the Russian Empire

and thus abolished the kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti. Less than 10 years later, the King of

Imereti was forced by the Russians to flee his kingdom and found refuge in the Ottoman

Empire. Thus Imereti came under Russian rule, making most of Georgia a Russian

possession.[5]

The annexation of Georgia by Russia put an end to the independent existence of

the Georgian kingdoms and principalities; Georgia lost its age-old statehood. Over the

next 60 years, Russia expanded its control by incorporating into its empire the remaining

Georgian lands. Although the Georgians felt protected in the Russian Empire, they

resented the fact that their country was divided into separate administrative divisions and

that their language and culture was discriminated against.[6]

During the Russian rule several provincial revolts took place in the years of 1812

(in Kakheti), 1819 (in Imereti), and 1828 (in Guria). In 1829, the grandson of Erekle II

tried to convince Georgian students and the nobility that revolting against the Russians

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[5] The Imereti kingdom was also a Georgian kingdom in Eastern Georgia. Throughout history it had been incorporated into a larger Georgian kingdom only to be separated during wars.

[6] See for instance Suny, *Georgian Nation*, 57-59, Muriel Atkin, *Russia and Iran, 1780-1828* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), 60-65, and Muriel Atkin, "The Pragmatic Diplomacy of Paul I Russia's Relations with Asia, 1796-1801," *Slavic Review* 38, no. 1 (March 1979): 60-74.

could achieve Georgian independence; however, the conspiracy was discovered by the Russian authorities and was terminated in its embryonic stage in 1832.[7] It should be noted that these revolts were mostly the doings of the Georgian-landed aristocracy and the nobility while the majority of the peasants were more ambivalent to Russian rule mostly due to the fact that because of Tsarist laws of 1862, emancipating them from their Georgian princes and landowners.[8]

Short independence and Sovietization

It took the Georgians over a century to regain their lost independence from Russia. When the Russian Empire disintegrated under the pressure of World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution, Georgia—along with Armenia and Azerbaijan—declared its secession from the Empire and established a new Georgian Republic.[9] Although on May 7, 1920 Lenin signed a treaty renouncing Soviet Russia's claim to Georgian territory, less than a year later on February 11, 1921, the Red Army invaded and occupied Georgia, putting an end to the short-lived Georgian Republic.[10]

During the following decades, Soviet Georgia witnessed uprisings by the local population against Moscow's control of their land. While these uprisings had a popular appeal, there were many Georgians who embraced Communist and Soviet ideology and

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[7] Suny, *Georgian Nation*, 71.
[8] For a detailed discussion on this issue, see Suny, *Georgian Nation*, 96-112 and Ronald Suny, "'The Peasants Have Always Fed Us': The Georgian Nobility and the Peasant Emancipation, 1856-1871," *Russian Review* 38, no. 1 (January 1979): 27-51.
[9] For a detailed discussion and evaluation of this period, refer to Firuz Kazemzadeh, *The Struggle for Transcaucasia, 1917-1921* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951).
[10] Constantin Kandelaki, *The Georgian Question Before the Free World (Acts, Documents, Evidence)* (Paris, 1953), 182-90. Kazemzadeh, *The Struggle for Transcaucasia*.

viewed Georgia as an integral part of the Soviet Union. Since the sovietization of

Georgia, there were mass demonstrations and limited revolts almost every other decade

in the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR). In 1924 the Georgian Mensheviks and

nationalists attempted to restore independence; however, it was brutally crushed by the

Soviets.[11] The next major uprising occurred in 1956 when, after Soviet leader Nikita

Khrushchev's condemnation of his predecessor Joseph Stalin during the 20th Congress of

the Communist Party of the USSR, there were demonstrations in Georgia as a

manifestation of wounded Georgian pride, as attacks on Stalin were perceived as attacks

on Georgians.[12] The 1956 demonstrations took a bloody turn when Soviet troops opened

fire on the demonstrators and consequenlty propagated anti-Soviet sentiments in the

Georgian population. While the events of 1956 were not anti-Russian in nature, they did

have elements of resistance to the central authorities.

The next major manifestation of Georgian nationalism and anti-Russian

sentiments was in April 1978, when an attempt was made to remove a clause in the

Georgian SSR Constitution recognizing Georgian as the state language of the Republic.

Over 20,000 people demonstrated against the move, with most of them gathered outside

the Georgian Communist Party headquarters on Rustaveli Avenue.[13] Unlike previous

instances, the 1978 demonstrations had a positive outcome; Soviet authorities withdrew

their decision, they left the clause guaranteeing the special status of the Georgian

language in the Georgian SSR's constitution, and the demonstrators were dispersed

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[11] See Stephen Jones and Robert Parsons, "Georgia and the Georgians," in *The Nationalities Question in the Post-Soviet States*, ed. Graham Smith (Harlow, U.K.: Longman, 1996), 295-297.
[12] Ibid, 297, and J.W.R. Parsons, "National Integration in Soviet Georgia," *Soviet Studies* 34, no. 4 (October 1982): 555.
[13] See "Soviets Back Down on Georgian Language after Protests," *The Washington Post*, April 18, 1978.

without any bloodshed.[14] In 1981, two further demonstrations, each involving about a thousand people, protested against what they perceived as threats directed against the Georgian language and demanded the introduction of courses dealing with Georgian history in schools and higher education institutions.[15]

Georgia during Gorbachev's reign

Like the rest of the Soviet republics, the Georgian SSR was deeply influenced by the monumental changes in the spheres of economy, politics, and social life pushed forward by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and his reform-minded advisors—one of the main ones being his Foreign Minister, Eduard Shevardnadze. Up until his appointment as Gorbachev's Foreign Minister, Shevardnadze was the first secretary of the Communist Party of Georgia (CPG), and for over 13 years (1972-1985) he tightly controlled the various aspects of Georgian society through his political appointments. During his tenure as the First Secretary of the CPG, he was able to address numerous Georgian nationalist issues while managing to never undermine Moscow's authority.[16] For example, in 1978 when the central authorities in Moscow decided to remove the clause from the Georgian constitution declaring Georgian to be the official language of the Republic, Shevardnadze intervened directly with Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev and convinced the leaders in Moscow to not remove the article.

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[14] See "Marching through Georgia," *The Economist,* April 22, 1978.
[15] See Elizabeth Fuller, "Expression of Official and Unofficial Concern over the Georgian Language," *RFE/RL Report* 81, no. 149 (April 17, 1981) and "Demonstrations Reported in Soviet Georgia," *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts (SWB) (SU/6694/B/2),* April 8, 1981.
[16] See Suny, *Georgian Nation,* 309, 319 and Svante Cornell, *Small Nations and Great Powers* (England: Curzon Press, 2001), 154-55.

In 1987, taking advantage of the newly introduced concepts of *Glasnost* and

Perestroika, the Georgian national opposition protested against Soviet plans to build a

new railway connecting Georgia with Russia. Over 180 km in length, it was to run

through the Aragvi River basin and was to be in the immediate proximity to the Zhinvali

Reservoir—the chief source of water for the cities of Tbilisi and Mtskheta. Since the

tracks were to be treated with pesticides, there were fears that drinkable water would

eventually become toxic and undrinkable.[17] Furthermore, despite the authorities'

assurances to the contrary, archaeological monuments were destroyed in Mukhrani

Valley and the Assa Gorge, the site of one of the oldest Christian churches in Georgia.

These events led to protests, not on popular level but by intellectuals, scientists,

and local officials, and eventually the plan was shelved.[18] In September 1988, taking

advantage of a US-Soviet conference taking place in Tbilisi, many Georgians

demonstrated against the usage of some of Georgia's ancient monasteries for Soviet army

artillery firing practice.[19] Not long after, in November of the same year, over 100,000

Georgians demonstrated in Tbilisi against proposed amendments to the USSR

constitution, which if passed would have limited Georgia's internal autonomy and would

have prohibited the Georgian SSR, among others Soviet republics, from attempting to

secede from the Soviet Union.[20]

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[17] See "Project of the Century: But What Century?" *Current Digest of the Soviet Press (CDSP)* 40, no. 14 (May 4, 1988), 18.
[18] For a more detailed description of this issue see Stephen Jones, "The Caucasian Mountain Railway Project: A Victory for Glasnost?" *Central Asian Survey* 8, no.2 (1989): 47-59.
[19] The main monument in question was the monastery of Davitgaredja, 50 miles outside of Tbilisi. See "Police Break Up Protest in Southern Soviet City," *The Associated Press*, September 22, 1988.
[20] See "Thousands March in Southern Soviet Republic," *The Associated Press*, November 13, 1988 and "Thousands of Soviet Georgians Rally," *United Press International*, November 23, 1988.

After the Baltic States, Georgia became the first of the Soviet republics to start its secession campaign from the Soviet Union. The movement for independence in Georgia was an indirect result of Gorbachev's *Glasnost* policies; Abkhazian demand for greater autonomy from Georgia was to fuel the Georgian nationalist sentiments, further helping the cause of Georgian independence. At the time, many Georgian associations were asking for independence. The most prominent of these organizations was the Ilia Chavchavadze Society, founded in October 1987 by Merab Kostava, Irakli Tsereteli, Giorgi Chanturia, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, and others.[21] While the Chavchavadze Society was a loose coalition of individuals from various social and political backgrounds, and it was eventually fragmented into other smaller groups, it established the roots of non-Communist political parties in Georgia.[22]

By 1988, the Georgian political scene was spotted with various small groups and associations, some of which were actually splinter groups from the Ilia Chavchavadze Society. One of those societies was the National Democratic Party (NDP), led by Giorgi Chanturia, whose demands included nothing less than the separation of the Georgian Republic from the USSR and the establishment of an independent Georgian state based on the foundations of Georgian self-determination and religion.[23] One of the other main

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[21] See Shireen Hunter, *Transcaucasia in Transition: Nation Building or a New Empire?* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1994), 115. Ilia Chavcavadze (1837-1907) was a Georgian aristocrat/writer who founded the *Iveria* newspaper and argued for greater cultural freedoms and full civil rights for Georgians in the Russian Empire. Also see Suny, *Georgian Nation*, 126-27, 129-33 and Suzanne Goldenberg, *Pride of Small Nations: The Caucasus and Post-Soviet Disorder* (London; Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Zed Books, 1994), 24. Both Gamsakhurdia and Kostava were Soviet-era dissidents who in 1974 formed the Helsinki Watch group in Georgia and were consequently arrested in 1977 by the Soviet authorities. Gamsakhurdia recanted his dissident views on television and was pardoned while Kostava refused to capitulate.

[22] Cornell, *Small Nations*, 159.

[23] Goldenberg, *Pride of Small Nations*, 95 and Cornell, *Small Nations*, 159.

nationalist groups was the Society of St. Ilia the Righteous led by Zviad Gamsakhurdia.

The rivalry between these two organizations was a manifestation of the personal rivalry

between their leaders, and it was only through the influence of Kostava that the two

parties formed a nominal alliance. To become inclusive rather than confrontational, the

Georgian Communist Party helped found the Rustaveli Society, [24] which had a nationalist

agenda without demanding independence or session.[25] The aim of the latter was to break

the polarization between the state and the public by introducing state-sponsored

nationalism thus rendering government structures indirectly involved in society at large.

In March 1989, the Abkhazian Popular Front—*aydgylara* (Unity)—organized a

rally of over 30,000 in the town of Likhni, Abkhazia in northeastern Georgia.[26] The

leading Abkhazian Communist Party cadres signed a petition addressed to Gorbachev,

calling for Abkhazian secession from Georgia and its incorporation into Russia within the

context of the Soviet Union.[27] To counterbalance Abkhazian demands, Georgian

opposition groups organized demonstrations in Tbilisi and thus began anti-Abkhaz

protests that evolved into massive demonstrations calling for Georgia's secession from

the Soviet Union.[28] Jumbar Patiashvili—the first secretary of the Georgian Communist

Party—called for Soviet special troops to scatter the demonstrators. Early in the morning

of April 9, 1989, airborne troops joined special and regular Interior Ministry units and

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[24] Named after the Georgian poet Shota Rustaveli who wrote an epic poem *Knight in Panther Skin* in the early 13th century.
[25] Cornell, *Small Nations*, 160.
[26] Aydgylara was the main Abkhaz political organization formed in the wake of Gorbachev's reform policies. It was the main driving force of the Likhni gathering; however, in subsequent years it lost its popularity as a movement, and its leaders later became integrated into the Abkhaz political processes.
[27] Stephen Jones, "Glasnost, Perestroika and the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic," *Armenian Review* 43, no. 2-3 (Summer/Autumn 1990): 132.
[28] See "Georgian Rejection of Abkhazian Secession Demands," *BBC SWB (SU/0425/B/ 1)*, April 4, 1989.

used clubs and shovels to disperse demonstrators. Twenty were killed (most of whom were women) and hundreds were treated for injuries in what became one of the bleakest days in modern Georgian history.[29]

The events of April 1989 intensified the strong anti-communist and anti-Russian sentiments in the Georgian psyche. These were compounded by centuries-old Georgian grievances against the Russians, whom they blamed for the loss of their independent kingdom in 1801 and then for the fall of their first republic in 1921. As a result of the April 1989 massacres, whatever political support the Communist Party still enjoyed was diminished, and many Georgians rallied around nationalist leaders such as Gamsakhurdia.[30] The impact of the massacre on the Georgian independence movement was revealed in a statement made exactly two years after the bloody events and on the occasion of Georgia's declaration of independence from the USSR when on April 9, 1991 Gamsakhurdia announced:

> This will be the day of restoration of Georgian independence because it was on this day that people taking part in a demonstration perished in the struggle for freedom and independence.[31]

On October 28, 1990, elections for the Georgian Supreme Soviet took place. Gamsakhurdia was able to bring together most of the opposition parties under the loose

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[29] The international media covered these events in Georgia extensively. See for instance "Soviet Georgia Quiet After Soldiers Charge Protesters," *The Associated Press*, April 9, 1989; "16 Killed At Rally in Soviet City," *The Washington Post*, April 10, 1989; "Soviet Georgians Continue Protests for More Autonomy," *The New York Times*, April 9, 1989.

[30] Gamsakhurdia was not the only prominent opposition figure in Georgia; however, the death of Merab Kostava in a car accident in October 1989 left him as the most popular leader of the Georgian nationalist movement.

[31] "Georgian Leader Asks West's Help to Break Free from Kremlin," *The Toronto Star*, April 10, 1991.

alliance of the Roundtable of National Liberation.[32] Meanwhile, several other political parties—the two major ones being the NDP of Giorgi Chanturia and the Georgian National Independence Party of Irakli Tsereteli—pre-empted the Supreme Soviet elections by their alternative "National Congress" elections in September 30, 1990. While the National Congress was not institutionalized and lacked any legitimate support, it signaled the fragmentation of the Georgian opposition not only in its quest for power but also in terms of creating rival institutions within the same state.

Adopted several months before the elections, the election law prohibited all parties with a regional base in Georgia from participating or even registering for the elections. This law directly targeted the non-Georgian, ethnic-based parties, especially in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, to prevent them from gaining any power base in national enclaves. Consequently, the Abkhaz and South Ossetian populations abstained from voting or voted for the Communist Party as the best guarantor of their rights.[33]

With a solid majority in the parliament, Gamsakhurdia was elected chairman of the Supreme Soviet and immediately set out to "de-communize" Georgia, eventually achieving independence from the USSR.[34] The beginning of Georgia's push for independence came in 1991 when Georgians boycotted a referendum on preserving the Soviet Union on March 17 and instead held a referendum of independence just three days later. About 98 percent of the population supported secession and independence, and on May 26, 1991, Gamsakhurdia was elected president of the newly independent Georgian

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[32] "Non-Communist Coalition Wins Georgia's Legislative Elections," *The Associated Press*, October 29, 1990.
[33] Jones, "The Trauma of Statehood," 512.
[34] See "Georgia Declares State Independence," *United Press International*, April 9, 1991.

Republic with 87 percent of the votes.[35] Under such circumstances Georgia reentered the

international scene as an independent country with distinct political priorities. In the

ensuing decade, these priorities would be colored by the heavy weight of history—both

recent and past.

The militia factor

An important factor in the Georgian civil war was the existence and operation of

many paramilitary groups in the new republic. The most notable among them included

the *mkhedrioni* (Horsemen) led by Jaba Ioseliani.[36] More of an opportunist than a

nationalist, Ioseliani was a career criminal and spent most of his life behind bars during

Soviet times for armed robberies. Under his leadership, the *mkhedrioni* were instrumental

in escalating the conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. In the absence of a strong

centralized government and the lack of a national army, the *mkhedrioni* proved to be one

of the best-organized militias in Georgia. Gamsakhurdia viewed them as a rogue militia

and feared that the numerous attacks conducted by the group against non-Georgians in

the Republic could aggravate the Russian sentiments against Georgia and provide them

with a pretext to militarily intervene in Georgia. Consequently, Gamsakhurdia asked

Tengiz Kitovani's Georgian National Guard to bring the *mkhedrioni* into subordination.

The subsequent brief armed conflict between the *mkhedrioni* and the National Guard

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[35] See "Nationalist Leader Wins Landslide Victory in Soviet Georgia," *The Associated Press*, May 27, 1991.

[36] For an overview of militias operating in Georgia and the former Soviet Union, refer to Charles H. Fairbanks, "Disillusionment in the Caucasus and Central Asia," *Journal of Democracy* 12, no. 4 (October 2001), 49-56.

resulted in Ioseliani's arrest and imprisonment.[37]

Meanwhile, the South Ossetians and the Abkhaz had their own paramilitary groups operating in their respective "autonomous" regions. As the Russian army pulled out from some regions in Georgia, the remaining weapons and ammunitions left throughout Georgia were handed over to either separatists groups or to the *mkhedrioni* and the National Guard. Thus, by the end of 1991, there was a surge in the number of arms in the hands of non-governmental entities. The militias—Georgian and non-Georgian alike—added a considerable amount of instability to an already unstable political system and provided Russia with an excuse to intervene militarily in Georgia, either under a peacekeeping mandate or in response to a request by Shevardnadze after returning to power.

Gamsakhurdia's wars

It was apparent, even before his election as the new Georgian leader, that Gamsakhurdia overwhelmingly represented the nationalist sentiments of Georgia. With increasing rhetoric of "Georgianization" and a demand for non-indigenous peoples to "pack up and leave" the country, Gamsakhurdia's behavior was "xenophobic, erratic, immature, and dictatorial."[38] Eventually, he managed to antagonize an overwhelming number of Georgian and non-Georgians alike. The country was soon engulfed in a bloody civil war, fueling the escalation of tensions with minority groups, including the South

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[37] Jones, "Georgia: The Trauma of Statehood," 525.
[38] Shireen Hunter, *Transcaucasia in Transition: Nation Building or a New Empire?* (Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1994), 119-20.

Ossetians and the Abkhaz.[39]

There is a general consensus among scholars and politicians alike that up until 1991 Gamsakhurdia enjoyed the support of most Georgians. With a strong mandate given to him by the presidential elections, he believed that he had a mission to lead Georgia in its difficult journey towards independence. However, the euphoria surrounding Gamsakhurdia's election was more due to a manifestation of nationalist sentiments and anti-Russian feelings prevalent in Georgia at the time rather than his own popularity as a leader.[40] Gamsakhurdia was able to build his popularity on the nationalist wave by aspiring to homogenize Georgia. He had a heavy-handed approach towards non-Georgian minorities, and called for the immediate Russian withdrawal from Georgia. All these factors comprised a credible excuse for Gamsakhurdia's opponents—both domestic and international—to "revolt" against the president and eventually oust him from office.[41]

Gamsakhurdia's main aim as Georgia's new leader was to purge the country of "KGB spies" and liberate it from the Soviet and Russian yoke. Although the nationalist sentiments were popular with the general public in the early days of his presidency, it was soon obvious that Gamsakhurdia was incapable of making sound and rational decisions on both the local and international fronts. His escalating nationalist rhetoric alienated many of his colleagues and eventually led to the escalation of the war in South Ossetia.[42]

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[39] For a detailed analysis of Gamsakhurdia and his leadership see Stephen Jones, "Populism in Georgia: The Gamsakhurdia Phenomenon," in *Nationalism and History: The Politics of Nation-Building in Post Soviet Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia,* eds. Donald Schwartz and Razmik Panossian (Toronto: Center of Russian and East European Studies, University of Toronto, 1994), 127-49.
[40] See "Gamsakhurdia's First 100 Days," *RFE/RL Report on the USSR* 2, no. 43 (March 8, 1993).
[41] Hunter, *Transcaucasia in Transition,* 122.
[42] The conflicts of Abkhazia and South Ossetia are not the sole result of Gamsakhurdia's nationalist policies—both regions were already aspiring to obtain greater autonomy or even independence from

He also showed a low level of tolerance towards the ethnic minorities in Georgia and set

the ground for continued mistrust between the Georgian and non-Georgian population.

An example of Gamsakhurdia's views about the latter is best exemplified in a speech that

he delivered in December 1990:

> ... Tatardom is rearing its head there [Kakhetia] and measuring its strength against Kakhetia. There are Laks in one place, Armenians in another, Ossetians in a third place, and they're on the point of swallowing up Kakhetia.
>
> They should be chopped up, they should be burned out with a red-hot iron from the Georgian nation, these traitors and venal people. Strength is on our side, the Georgian nation is with us; we will deal with all the traitors, hold all of them to proper account, and drive all the evil enemies and non-Georgians who have taken refuge here out of Georgia.[43]

As a result of Gamsakhurdia's policies, Russia viewed him as a *persona non grata*,

leading Moscow to help fuel ethnic conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia as a means

to pressure Georgia back into alignment with the former center.[44] Moreover,

Shevardnadze made himself more visible in the eyes of Western observers as a natural

choice to lead Georgia in its independence, which resulted in a lukewarm reaction by the

West towards Gamsakhurdia's overtures for breaking away from the Russian orbit.[45]

Tbilisi—however, there is no doubt that Gamsakhurdia heightened the tension with his uncompromising stand towards minorities in the Republic.

[43] "Georgia: Political Adversaries Use Violence," *CDSP* 42, no. 45 (December 12, 1990), 8.

[44] During the failed coup in Moscow in August 1991 against Gorbachev, Gamsakhurdia had a very ambiguous position. Although he never made any statements supporting the "rebels," his passivity and failure to condemn the coup sat heavily in the minds of policy makers in Russia and no doubt helped create anti-Gamsakhurdia sentiments in Moscow.

[45] For instance in an interview with the French television channel TF1, Shevardnadze expressed his willingness to "play a role alongside the democratic movement in settling the crisis in Georgia." See "Shevardnadze ready to play a role in Georgia," *Agence France Presse*, January 5, 1992.

Exit Gamsakhurdia, enter Shevardnadze

Not long after his election as president Gamsakhurdia alienated not only Russians and non-Georgian minorities in Georgia but also to a large extent the various Georgian political forces, including the Communists and the National Congress lead by Chanturia and Tsereteli. In August 1991, Tengiz Sigua—who was appointed prime minister after the election of Gamsakhurdia—rejected Gamsakhurdia's policies and resigned from his post.[46] In September 1991, thousands of demonstrators rallied in Tbilisi demanding the resignation of Gamsakhurdia.[47] The demonstrations became a daily event and soon turned bloody when anti- and pro-Gamsakhurdia supporters clashed in front of the parliament building. The Zviadists (as Gamsakhurdia's followers came to be known) rallied around the parliament building to create human shields and protect their president.

Meanwhile, the opposition—consisting of the former Prime Minister Tengiz Sigua, Kitovani, and Ioseliani—freed political prisoners, and on January 2, 1992 they set up a military council to replace Gamsakhurdia's government. When pro-president demonstrators rallied the next day, gunmen fired into the crowd, killing two and wounding 25 people.[48] On January 6, Gamsakhurdia escaped from the parliament building to Azerbaijan and then to Ijevan, Armenia.[49] Soon after taking control of the government, the Military Council invited Shevardnadze to take charge of Georgia, leading to greater stability in February 1992. The Military Council gave way to a less military sounding State Council, and Shevardnadze began the difficult task of stabilizing

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[46] See "Georgian Premier Resigns," *BBC SWB (SU/1154/ i)*, August 19, 1991.
[47] See "Opposition Leader Arrested, Thousands Rally in Tbilisi," *The Associated Press*, September 16, 1991.
[48] "Gunmen Open Fire on Pro-Gamsakhurdia Demonstration," *The Associated Press*, January 3, 1992.
[49] See "Embattled Georgian Leader Flees," *The New York Times*, January 7, 1992.

and rebuilding Georgia.[50]

The ouster of Gamsakhurdia did not mean the end of the civil war; thus the Zviadists still had a considerable amount of supporters in western Georgia.[51] Clashes between the new government and the Zviadists continued well into 1993, when Shevardnadze felt that the only way to regain control of Georgia was to sign an agreement with Russia to bring Georgia into the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).[52] This agreement came only a week after Gamsakhurdia returned to Georgia and along with his followers occupied the port city of Poti and marched on Kutaisi—the second largest city in Georgia—threatening Tbilisi itself. Not long after the signing of the CIS treaty, the Georgian army started gaining ground against the Zviadist rebels, and soon Russian "peacekeepers" landed in western Georgia to help quell the rebellion and consolidate Shevardnadze's authority.[53]

It should be noted that although Shevardnadze brought Georgia back under considerable Russian influence, Georgia's relations with Russia are still unsteady. One of the reasons for the persistence of Russian antagonism towards Georgia could be explained by the persona of Shevardnadze himself. For many Russians—especially hard liners and former communists—Shevardnadze and Gorbachev are viewed as the

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[50] Ronald G. Suny, "A Bitter Freedom: Extremist Nationalism Spoils Georgia's Taste of Long-Sought Independence," *Armenian International Magazine* 3, no. 2 (February 28, 1992): 22.

[51] Followers of Gamsakhurdia were known by this title after Gamsakhurdia's first name, "Zviad."

[52] "Georgia's Joining CIS is Way out of Crisis," *ITAR-TASS News Agency*, October 10, 1993. The agreement that Georgia enter the CIS was followed a day later by a separate agreement between Russia and Georgia according to which Russia was allowed to keep four military bases in Georgia, had the right of joint usage of all ports and airfields, and the right to help patrol Georgia's borders.

[53] S. Neil MacFarlane, Larry Minear, and Stephen D. Shenfield, *Armed Conflict in Georgia: A Case Study in Humanitarian Action and Peacekeeping* (Providence, RI: Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies, 1996), 12. After the intervention of the Russians on Shevardnadze's side to regain control of western Georgia, Gamsakhurdia reportedly committed suicide in the last days of 1993.

architects of the fall of the Soviet Union. Therefore, many Russian politicians continue to harbor grievances against Shevardnadze, often manifested in the relations between the two countries.

Although Shevardnadze enrolled Georgia into the CIS and allowed Russian peacekeepers to separate conflict zones in the country, he also tried to actively and openly court the West to the dismay of policy makers in Moscow. Furthermore, because Shevardnadze was an international figure—due to his previous position as the Soviet Foreign Minister—he encouraged many Western countries to support Georgia in its path to political and economic development.

Georgia's entry into the CIS came with a tremendous amount of hesitation and mistrust. From the Georgian perspective, the CIS was nothing more than a new version of the Russian attempt to colonize the "near abroad." However, in the face of imminent collapse of the country into a disorganized and dysfunctional entity, accepting Russian protection became the only way out for the continuation of Georgia as a viable state. This "alliance," which was not based on free choice, was one of the reasons for the tension between the two countries, since it provided Russia with a mechanism and tools to limit Georgia's ventures to conduct a foreign policy distinct from Moscow. The memories of the Georgievsk treaty, Soviet occupation, and the massacres of April 9, 1989 made Georgians wary of Russia's intentions in the South Caucasus. These sentiments were also fueled by Russia's continued presence in the country either through its military bases or through the Russian indirect—and sometimes very direct—participation in ethnic conflicts in the region.

Russian military presence in Georgia

Russia officially has two—unofficially three—army bases in Georgia which are

conveniently located in breakaway regions or potential conflict zones.[54] Thus there is an

evacuated base in Gudauta in Abkhazia (north of Sukhumi), a second base in Batumi in

Ajaria, and a third one in Akhalkalaki in the largely Armenian populated region of

Samtskhe-Javakheti. A fourth Russian army base, in Vaziani—just outside of Tbilisi—

was handed over to Georgian control on June 29, 2001.[55] The origins of the establishment

of the Russian army bases in Georgia date back to 1994 when Russian President Boris

Yeltsin visited Tbilisi, where he signed a friendship and cooperation treaty with his

Georgian counterpart, Shevardnadze. It was during this meeting that a military agreement

was signed legitimizing the presence of three Russian Army bases in Batumi,

Akhalkalaki, and Vaziani.[56] According to the Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev,

"the Russian military presence in Georgia was vital to ensure a stabilization of the

situation, to protect the rights of Russian speakers, and to help Georgia establish its own

armed forces."[57] The agreement signed on Russian military bases in Georgia had a span

of 10 years, after which it would have been prolonged by the consent of both parties.

However, consent was far from being in Georgia's mind when it came to the continued

presence of Russian bases in its territory. In 2000, the two sides decided to negotiate the

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[54] For a detailed study and discussion on Georgian-Russian relations concerning the latter's military presence in Georgia, see David Darchiashvili, "The Russian Military Presence in Georgia: The Parties' Attitudes and Prospects," *Caucasian Regional Studies* 1, no. 1 (1997) and Oksana Antonenko, "Assessment of the Potential Implications of Akhalkalaki Base Closure for the Stability in Southern Georgia," *Conflict Prevention Network Briefing Study*. Brussels: Stifung Wissenschaft und Politik, 2001.
[55] "Moscow Hands Over First of Four Military Bases to Georgia," *Agence France Presse*, June 29, 2001.
[56] See "Russo-Georgian Summit in Tbilisi," *BBC SWB (SU/1914/S1)*, February 5, 1994.
[57] "Grachev Satisfied with Results of Visit to Georgia," *ITAR-TASS News Agency*, February 3, 1994.

complete withdrawal of Russian troops from Georgia, specifically from the bases in

Batumi and Akhalkalaki.[58] The remaining two bases in Gudauta and Vaziani were

already in the process of being vacated, although Gudauta's location in the breakaway

region of Abkhazia made it difficult for Georgian central authorities to verify the

withdrawal.[59]

Over the following several years, negotiations to close the remaining two bases in

Batumi and Akhalkalaki became a hotly debated topic, not only between Russia and

Georgia but also between Tbilisi on the one hand and Ajarian president Aslan Abashidze

and the Armenians on the other. Abashidze's continued defiance of Tbilisi's authority

and the enablement of a strong control over Ajaria were assisted to a large extent by the

presence of the Russian army base in Batumi. While the military personnel in the Russian

bases did not take part in any conflict in the region, their presence was a sign that Russia

continued to cast a shadow in Ajaria.

As far as the army base in Akhalkalaki was concerned, the Russian base there had

a dual function in the region. The first was an economic one since the region was

considered one of the poorest and underdeveloped within Georgia. Providing services to

the Russian personnel and to the base made it possible for the local population to

supplement their income by either working as civilian administrators and factory workers

in the base or by becoming personnel in the Russian army stationed there.[60] The second

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[58] See "Accord Reached on Pulling two Russian Bases out of Georgia," *ITAR-TASS News Agency*, December 24, 2000.

[59] "Russia Starts Pull out of Weapons from Base in Abkhazia," *BBC SWB (SU/D4021/F)*, December 12, 2000.

[60] For a detailed discussion on this issue see David Darchiashvili, "The Army and Society in Javakheti," *The Army and Society in Georgia*, (May 1998), http://www.cipdd.org/cipdd/_a&s/a&s1998/may.htm.

factor was and continues to be the concerns of security of the local Armenian population against perceived as Turkish infiltration and presence in the region. Consequently, the continued Russian presence in the area provided psychological comfort for the local Armenian population, which still considers Russia as its protector against Turkey.

Regardless of the functions and roles of the Russian army bases in Georgia, it is clear that after the closure of the remaining two bases in the country, Georgia will have more maneuverability in its relations with Moscow.[61] The scheduled handover of the bases to Georgian control in 2008 is a date that needs to be observed carefully, mostly because while it marks the end of Russian presence in Tbilisi-controlled areas, it could prove the beginning of escalated tension with the Armenian population in the country's south.

The Russian energy takeover of Georgia

Similar to the Armenian energy sector, Georgian electricity and natural gas flow are largely controlled by Russian companies. However, unlike the Armenian case, the Russian takeover of the Georgian electricity grid has been hotly debated in Georgian political circles as a manifestation of Russian hegemony and leverage that could be used to exert pressure on Tbilisi. Russian penetration into the Georgian energy market had a dual track. The first was the takeover of the Georgian natural gas supply by GazProm— the largest of the Russian energy companies. Thus, in July 2003 an agreement was signed

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[61] During February-May 2005, intensive meetings between Russian and Georgian officials led to the signing of a joint statement according to which Russian bases would be closed and transferred to the Georgian army by 2008. See "Russia to Withdraw Bases from Georgia in 2008," *ITAR-TASS News Agency*, May 30, 2005 and "Russia and Georgia Agree to Bases Withdrawal," *Agence France Presse*, May 30, 2005.

between GazProm and official Georgian representatives, according to which the Russian

company would export gas to Georgia for 25 years as well as take part in the operation by

upgrading and expanding Georgia's gas pipeline grid.[62] The gas deal was soon followed

by a similar agreement in the power sector when Anatoly Chubais—the CEO of the

Russian electric company Unified Energy Systems (UES)—visited Tbilisi and signed an

agreement, according to which UES purchased 75 percent of Georgia's AES-Telasi joint

venture from AES Silk Road, a subsidiary of the US-based AES Corp.[63] The agreement,

which provided UES with a virtual lock on Georgia's domestic electricity market, raised

many eyebrows in Georgian political circles, and Shevardnadze was accused of selling

Georgia's national interests to Russia.[64] Perhaps by accident or by very ironic timing,

merely a week after the takeover, a nationwide blackout convinced those critical of

Russian economic presence in Georgia that Moscow's control had moved from the

military to the economic sphere.[65]

Based on the discussion above, it becomes clear that Georgia's relations with

Russia are very much influenced by the legacy of the past and the re-enforcement of past

events with current ones. Within the context of creating analogies in policymakers, and

given that individuals tend to choose historical events that are dramatic, the past can be

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[62] See "Gazprom to Carry out Major Investment Projects in Georgia," *ITAR-TASS News Agency*, July 29, 2003.

[63] Chubais has been a long-time Kremlin insider and has served in various governments under Yeltsin as an expert in economy and finance. He was one of the main architects of introducing privatization of state-owned businesses in Russia, and many analysts believe that his policies resulted in the ascendancy of oligarchy in Russia. "UES of Russia to Take Control of Tbilisi Electric Network," *ITAR-TASS News Agency*, August 5, 2003.

[64] One of the most vocal critics of the electricity deal was Zurab Zvania, who later became the Prime Minister in Saakashvili's administration.

[65] "Breakdown in Power System Deprives Georgia of Electricity," *ITAR-TASS News Agency*, August 18, 2003.

easily recalled and/or have superficial similarities with current events.[66]. In the words of

one Georgian official:

> We have enough ground to say that our foreign policy is shaped to some extent with the experiences we had with Russia. We have tried to have good relations with Russia but unfortunately after independence we have seen that Russia does not consider Georgia as an equal partner. Our relations are not developed based on equality.[67]

Continued Russian colonial behavior towards Georgia has made it even more difficult for

Tbilisi to transcend the past and base its bilateral relations on equal footing even though

Russia refuses to deal with Russia as an equal partner.

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[66] Jervis, *Perception and Misperception*, 281-282.

[67] Author's interview with Georgi Burduli, Georgian First Deputy Foreign Minister, conducted in Tbilisi on November 21, 2001.

Ethnic Tensions, Conflicts, and Wars

Within the domestic factors influencing Georgia's foreign policy, the ethnic and

linguistic heterogeneity of the country and the existence of breakaway—or potential

breakaway—regions play a great role in defining the country's relations with its

neighbors. Unlike the turbulent years of the civil war, when the major foreign power

involved was Russia, Georgia's ethnic conflicts and tensions influence the country's

relations with Russia, Turkey, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. Some of those tensions have

already escalated into full-blown wars, whereas others are still categorized as nothing

more than frictions between Tbilisi and the regions. The following section takes a look at

various regional conflicts and tensions within Georgia and their impact on the country's

relations with its neighbors. In addition, within the context of the internal conflicts, the

general belief of the population in Georgia is that Russians continue to support the

breakaway regions to render the country divided and weak hence retain it within Russia's

orbit.[68]

Post-Soviet Georgia can be described as a nationalizing state because of "the

promotion of the language, culture, demographic position, economic flourishing, or

political hegemony of the nominally state-bearing nation," which in this case are the

Georgians.[69] Yet the national minority groups and their leaders in the Republic have

sought "cultural or territorial autonomy and resisted actual or perceived policies or

processes of assimilation or discrimination."[70] These two contradictory currents are

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[68] On this topic see Thomas Goltz, "The Hidden Russian Hand," *Foreign Policy* 92 (Fall 1993): 92-116.
[69] See Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe.* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 57.
[70] Ibid.

complicated even further by the existence of an external national homeland of the Abkhaz and Ossetians where the ethnic brethren "vigorously protest alleged violations of their rights, and assert the right, even the obligation, to defend their interests."[71] In the case of the minority groups in Georgia, the presence of the external national homelands or ethnic kin within the confines of a larger entity—Russia—has added yet another component to the volatile system of balance in the region.

South Ossetia

Under Soviet rule, South Ossetia constituted an autonomous region in Georgian SSR. The population in the region is mostly Ossetian, and the region has strong ties with the neighboring North Ossetian autonomous region in the Russian Federation.[72] South Ossetia was also the first region in Georgia to take separatist steps from the central government when in November 1989 the South Ossetian Supreme Soviet approved a decision to unite South Ossetia with the North Ossetian Autonomous SSR, part of the USSR.

The first instance where South Ossetia and Georgia came to onflict occurred in early 1989 when the leader of the South Ossetian Popular Shrine (or *ademon nykhas* in Ossetian), publicly stated that Ossetians had nothing but sympathy for the Abkhaz efforts to achieve autonomy in the hope that such a move could pave the way for the Ossetian attempts to follow suit. Not long after, in a televised statement, Gamsakhurdia

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[71] Ibid.

[72] South Ossetia is also known as Shida Kartli (Inner Georgia) and the Tskhinvali region (after the capital of the region).

announced:

> Why is the Russian leadership interested in the stabilization of the situation in Shida Kartli? Because its so-called North Ossetia is of direct concern to Russia. I made it clear that there is no such place as North Ossetia: there is only one real Ossetia. In addition, I explained that neither has there ever been a South Ossetia, nor is there such a place today.[73]

The tension between Tskhinvali—the South Ossetian capital—and Tbilisi escalated in August 1989 when the Georgian Council of Ministers passed a decree according to which the Georgian language was given special consideration throughout the Georgian SSR. The South Ossetian local government retaliated by announcing that the Ossetian language would be the main language of the autonomous oblast and simultaneously demanded that the region receive more autonomy.[74]

South Ossetia declared its independence from Georgia on September 20, 1990. The declaration of independence by the South Ossetian soviet (parliament) was soon followed by elections for the regional parliament on December 9. On September 11, Gamsakhurdia pushed the Georgian Supreme Soviet to abolish South Ossetia's autonomous status within Georgia, something that he had pledged not to do months earlier. The action was justified on the grounds that South Ossetia's drive for unification with North Ossetia threatened Georgia's push toward independent statehood.[75] South Ossetia responded by declaring itself directly subordinate to the USSR and asked for help from Moscow. The next day, Georgia declared a state of emergency in South Ossetia as

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[73] "Georgian President on Distortions in Media and Inter-Ethnic Problems," *BBC SWB (SU/1030/B/ 1)*, March 26, 1991.

[74] For details see Elizabeth Fuller, "The South Ossetian Campaign for Unification," *Report on the USSR*, no. 49 (December 8, 1989): 17-20.

[75] Elizabeth Fuller, "Georgian Parliament Votes to Abolish Ossetian Autonomy," *Report on the USSR*, 2, no. 51 (December 21, 1990): 8.

armed clashes between Georgians and South Ossetians ensued. What followed was two years of sporadic violence during which some 1,000 people lost their lives, and some 40,000 of the region's Ossetian population fled north to the North Ossetian Republic, whereas the Georgian population was forced to flee the region and find refuge in various parts of Georgia.

One of the initial demands of South Ossetian separatists was unification with the autonomous region of North Ossetia. The fact that North Ossetia controlled a major energy link between Russia and Georgia made it impossible for Tbilisi to have separate bilateral talks with South Ossetia alone, which is why Boris Yeltsin and Shevardnadze had to find a working relationship with each other and include representatives from both North and South Ossetia. In April 1992, the Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev visited Tbilisi, and a protocol to resolve the conflict was reached.[76] This was not an easy task as some Russian officials provoked further tension by declaring that Georgian involvement in the conflict would result in an eventual Russian interference on the Ossetian side. For instance, on June 15, 1992 the chairman of the Russian parliament, Ruslan Khasbulatov, made the following statement:

> The trilateral accord recently reached by the Russian president, the leadership of Georgia, and representatives of South Ossetia has been cynically violated by Georgian armed groups. The conflict in South Ossetia can no longer be regarded as Georgia's internal affair. It directly affects Russia's state interests.
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> [...] Russia is fully able to take emergency measures to protect its citizens against criminal encroachments on their lives and render harmless the criminal groups which subject to fire peaceful civilians and Russian soldiers.[77]

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[76] See "South Ossetia: No Compromises with Georgia," *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press (CDPSP)* 44, no. 15 (May 13, 1992): 21.

[77] "Russian Parliament Chief on South Ossetia," *ITAR-TASS News Agency*, June 15, 1992.

According to this statement—in which South Ossetians were considered Russian citizens and Georgian armed groups criminal—it becomes clear why the Georgian leadership was apprehensive about Russian motives in the region. Shevardnadze was not slow to rebuff Khasbulatov's announcement. Just days before his meeting with Yeltsin, he announced that "Russian armed forces are now openly taking part in the conflict in South Ossetia, and this means that what is taking place is undisguised aggression against the Republic of Georgia."[78]

It should be noted that Shevardnadze was aware of the multiple centers of power in Russian politics. He surely realized that Khasbulatov's views were not necessarily shared by Yeltsin. This was the main reason why on June 24, 1992, Shevardnadze met with the Russian president in Dagomys near the resort town of Sochi. The two sides agreed to establish diplomatic relations on an embassy level, to enforce a ceasefire in South Ossetia, to set up joint patrol groups, and to establish a dividing belt between South Ossetia and Georgia proper.[79] The Dagomys meeting had an enormous impact: it ended the active hostilities in South Ossetia and introduced tripartite peace keeping forces in the region consisting of Russian, Ossetian and Georgian representatives, which in reality provided legitimacy to the Russian armed presence in the region to police the ceasefire.[80] The Russian-brokered ceasefire provided some stability in South Ossetia, and it promised to be a stepping-stone for the normalization of relations between Russia and Georgia. However, not soon after the signing of the peace agreement on South Ossetia, the conflict

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[78] "Shevardnadze Accuses Russia of 'Undisguised Aggression,'" *BBC SWB (SU/1413/C4/ 1)*, June 22, 1992.

[79] See "Communiqué Issued After Meeting in Sochi," *BBC SWB (SU/1417/C3/ 1)*, June 26, 1992.

[80] MacFarlane, Minear and Shenfield, *Armed Conflict in Georgia*, 49.

in Abkhazia aggravated the shaky relations between Russia and Georgia.[81]

One of the reasons why the conflict in South Ossetia did not escalate to the levels of conflict in Abkhazia could be attributed to the fact that the beginning of the conflict coincided with the civil war in Georgia and the subsequent ouster of Gamsakhurdia. The reason for the major escalation of tension between Tskhinvali and Tbilisi was due to the uncompromising nationalist rhetoric of Gamsakhurdia. With his removal from power, the South Ossetian leadership was more willing to negotiate with Shevardnadze since he was prepared to mend the strained ties with the breakaway region by engaging in trilateral talks with the South Ossetians and the Russians.

The issue of South Ossetia in bilateral relations between Russia and Georgia has two scopes, both having an impact on the relations between the two countries. The first capacity is the possibility that the South Ossetian drive for independence and autonomy might spill over across the border and create problems for Russia in North Ossetia. Based on this concern, Russia is very keen on keeping the *status quo* in South Ossetia, which while is not a definite solution to the conflict, it is at least creating a stable situation in which the Ossetian call for unification and autonomy does not take a bloody turn.

To this end, Russia has attempted to slow down the migration of people from South to North Ossetia and has gone as far as to give the South Ossetians an opportunity

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[81] Jonathan Aves, "Security and Military Issues in the Transcaucasus," in *State Building and Military Power in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, ed. Bruce Parrott (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1995), 216.

to obtain Russian citizenship, which in turn helped destabilize the situation even more.[82]

Another sign of Russia's attempt to keep its relations with Georgia on the brink of

conflict was Moscow's introduction of a visa system for Georgians, while citizens of

Abkhazia and South Ossetia were exempt from the law and could travel freely to

Russia.[83]

The second factor influencing Russian-Georgian relations through South Ossetia

is the proximity of the region to Chechnya and to the infamous Pankisi Gorge, which

Russia considers to be the main training grounds for Chechen separatists.[84] Russian

allegations of lawlessness in the region resulted in Moscow blaming Tbilisi for turning a

blind eye to the free movement of Chechen fighters and military equipment in the Pankisi

Gorge. Thus, the Georgian government was forced to use its security forces to ensure that

Russia does not have a pretext to intervene in the country. The operation of Georgian

armed forces—even though Russian military observers took part in these "security

sweeps"—has created anxiety and tension in South Ossetia because of the proximity of

the Georgian forces to the region and its capital, Tskhinvali.[85]

While South Ossetia was the first region to declare its independence from

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[82] In November 2001, the contested "presidential elections" in South Ossetia resulted in the election of Eduard Kokoyev—a South Ossetian-born Russian citizen. See Jean-Christophe Peuch, "Russian Businessman Takes Lead In South Ossetia Voting," RFE/RL Weekday Magazine, November 19, 2001 and "Former Communist Wins Vote in Breakaway Georgian Region," Agence France Presse, December 7, 2001.

[83] "New Russian-Georgian Visas in Force," BBC News Service, December 5, 2000, and "Russian Visa Requirement for Georgians Comes Into Force," Agence France Presse, December 5, 2000.

[84] For a detailed analysis of the Pankisi Gorge, refer to Shorena Kurtsikidze and Vakhtang Chikovani, "Georgia's Pankisi Gorge: An Ethnographic Survey," Working Paper Series (Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies, 2002).

[85] See Kosta Dzugayev, "South Ossetia Mobilizes," IWPR Caucasus Reporting Service, no. 150 (October 10, 2002).

Georgia, it was also the first to have the chance for a peaceful resolution to its conflict.[86]

Based on the factors mentioned above, neither of the sides involved in the conflict stand

to gain from its escalation. However continued Russian presence in the region makes it

difficult to address the conflict within the parameters of Georgian-Ossetian relations.

Abkhazia

The conflict in Abkhazia has been a thorn in the side of Georgian politicians and

is one of the most contested issues in Russian-Georgian relations. Unlike South Ossetia,

Abkhazia had the status of an autonomous republic during Soviet times and, thus, the

sense of sovereignty and independence has been stronger there. The Abkhazian call for

autonomy or separation from Georgia was not a post-independence phenomenon. The

Abkhaz, who made around 17% of the population, repeatedly attempted to secede while

still under Soviet rule and were declined that opportunity by Moscow.[87] It was previously

mentioned that the beginning of the Georgian independence movement was a direct result

of the demand for independence by the Abkhazians. Thus, to some extent, the foundation

of Georgian independence has been based on anti-Abkhazian sentiments. However, on a

positive level, the Georgians have never considered the Abkhaz to be "non-indigenous"

people, as many Georgians believe that the Abkhaz have lived in the region since the

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[86] "Prospects for Resolving South Ossetian Conflict Improve," *RFE/RL Newsline*, December 16, 2002.
[87] The history of Abkhazia and the independence movement is beyond the scope of this work. Some sources dealing with the history of the region include: John Colarusso, "Abkhazia," *Central Asian Survey* 14, no 1 (1995): 75-96; George Hewitt, *The Abkhazians: A Handbook* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998); George Hewitt, "Abkhazia: A Problem of Identity and Ownership," *Central Asian Survey* 14, no 1 (1995): 193-215; and Stanislav Lakoba, "Abkhazia Is Abkhazia," *Central Asian Survey* 14, no 1 (1995): 97-105.

creation of Abkhaz identity. Moreover, the fact that the Georgian parliament has accepted the Abkhazian language on an equal footing as the Georgian language in Abkhazia, puts afore the necessary requirements for the resolution of Georgian-Abkhaz conflict.[88]

At the time of the Soviet Union's disintegration, the main figure in Abkhaz politics was Vladislav Ardzinba. A historian by training, Vladislav Ardzinba had good connections with the Soviet nomenklatura in Moscow, having spent over a decade working at the Institute of Oriental Studies in Moscow under the directorship of Evgenii Primakov—who later became Prime Minister of Russia. In 1990 he was elected Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of Abkhazia and then in 1992 became the chairman of the newly elected Abkhaz parliament. His status as Abkhaz leader was consolidated in 1994 when he became the first president of the Abkhaz Republic. Ardzinba's close association with Moscow was seen as one of the main reasons why some foreign policy circles in Moscow supported him against Shevardnadze. Ardzinba reached a compromise with Tbilisi on the makeup of the local parliament (Supreme Soviet) in Abkhazia giving the deputies unproportional representation, thus providing a mechanism to diffuse the ethnic tension.[89] This *modus vivendi* allowed some period of peace between the two ethnic groups before the break out of full scale war in 1992.

However, two major factors rendered the cohabitation of the Abkhaz and the Georgians in Abkhazia a difficult task and eventually led to the escalation of the conflict and the subsequent war. First, the Abkhaz consider themselves the victims of a

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[88] The official Georgian parliament Web site (www.parliament.ge) explicitly states this fact.
[89] See Elizabeth Fuller, "Abkhazia on the Brink of Civil War?" *RFE/RL Research Report* 1, no. 35 (August 21, 1992).

systematic and continuous policy pursued by Tbilisi to make them a minority in their own

land. Some sources reveal that the percentage of Abkhazians in what is today Abkhazia

declined gradually and consistently from 1897 to 1989.[90] These sources show that in

1897, the Abkhazian population in the region was 55 percent and had decreased to 18

percent in 1939 and varied from 15 percent to 18 percent until 1989.

The second factor that has influenced the lack of progress to find a peaceful

resolution to the conflict is Russia. Many Georgians—politicians and citizens alike—

view their country's fragmentation and descent into chaos and multiple ethnic conflicts to

be a direct result of a premeditated Russian policy to keep the country divided. Although

this has some basis, the complete reference of the conflict in Abkhazia to Russian

"meddling" is far from complete.[91] Both these factors are based on the way history is

interpreted by either the Abkhaz or the Georgians, and the continued mistrust between the

two—as well as the Georgian view of Russia—is a manifestation of their perceptions of

their neighbors.

The year 1992 proved seminal in Abkhaz-Georgian relations. In June of that year

Ardzinba sent a message to Shevardnadze demanding more autonomy for Abkhazia; it

was promptly rejected. The following month the Abkhaz parliament reinstated the 1925

constitution of Abkhazia, which was tantamount to declaring independence.[92] On August

18, Defense Minister Tengiz Kitovani, led the Georgian National Guard troops into

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[90] The figures presented here are taken from Daniel Muller, "Demography: Ethno-Demographic History, 1886-1989," in *The Abkhazians: A Handbook*, ed. George Hewitt (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 218-39.

[91] For a multiple and general view of Georgian-Abkhaz relations and potential for agreements, refer to Jonathan Cohen, ed., "A Question of Sovereignty The Georgia-Abkhazia Peace Process," *Accord*, Issue 7 (London: Coalition Resources, 1999).

[92] See "Abkhazia 'Strong Enough to Fight Georgia,'" *BBC SWB (SU/1446/B/ 1)*, July 30, 1992.

Abkhazia on the pretext of chasing Zviadist rebels.[93] Soon after, the capital of Abkhazia,

Sukhumi, was captured and the local parliament building was burned to the ground.

Ardzinba was able to escape to the city of Gudauta—which had a Russian military

base—where he regrouped his troops. Bolstered by the support of troops from the

Confederation of Caucasus Mountain Peoples, he waged a full-scale war against the

Georgian troops.[94]

During the subsequent months the military balance between the Abkhaz and

Georgians shifted dramatically pending on the support that each received from Russia.

Many reports indicated that individual Russian troops sided with the Abkhaz either

passively (by providing military planning to the Abkhaz militia) or actively (utilizing the

Russian air force and tanks in combat against Georgian troops).[95] On the other side of the

equation, after Shevardnadze agreed to bring Georgia into the CIS, Russian troops took

sides with the Georgian troops and attacked Abkhaz and Zviadist forces inflicting great

harm on them.[96] Russian involvement in the conflict on the Abkhaz side also became

apparent when in September 1993, Russian troops did not intervene to stop an Abkhaz

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[93] There are many indicators that Kitovani was not acting on the orders nor the approval of the ruling State Council. It is widely accepted that Kitovani's advance into Abkhazia is what led to direct Russian involvement in the war and that Kitovani was nothing less than a "bandit."

[94] The Confederation of Caucasus Mountain Peoples—later renamed The Confederation of the Peoples of the Caucasus—was a loose amalgamation of various ethnic groups in the North Caucasus which, at the time, had its seat in Sukhumi due to the fact that the Abkhaz National Forum (Aydgylara) has been one of its main founders. The confederation's support to South Ossetia during its conflict with Tbilisi showed the extent of commitment that the group had towards its members. However in subsequent years it became clear that the group was not controlled by Moscow and that it might be even pursuing policies to the dismay of Moscow. See Alexei Zverev, "Ethnic Conflicts in the Caucasus, 1988-1994," in *Contested Borders in the Caucasus*, ed. Bruno Coppieters (Brussels: Free University of Brussels Press, 1996).

[95] See for instance Ghia Nodia, "Causes and Visions of Conflict in Abkhazia," *Working Paper Series* (Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies, 1997). Also, see "Georgia/Abkhazia: Violations of the Laws of War and Russia's Role in the Conflict," *Human Rights Watch Arms Project* 7, No.7 (March, 1995): 16 and 42-44.

[96] In September 1993 and after the fall of Sukhumi into Abkhaz hands, the Abkhaz militia joined Zviadist paramilitary units and advanced toward Kutaisi, the capital of a western Georgian province.

attack on Sukhumi—the capital of Abkhazia—while they were mediating a ceasefire

between the two warring sides. In December 1993, the Abkhaz and Georgian sides signed

a "Memorandum of Understanding" brokered by the UN, which provided the guidelines

to end the armed conflict and the beginning of negotiations.[97] In May 1994 a meeting

between the warring sides in Moscow resulted in the agreement to introduce Russian

peacekeepers (under the label of CIS peacekeepers) between the Abkhaz and Georgian

sides, thus establishing Russia as a power broker in the region.[98] Despite the official

termination of the war in Abkhazia, there were instances of serious violations of the

ceasefire agreements, and acts of violence were reported especially in the region of Gali

(on the border between Abkhazia and Georgia), mostly by Abkhaz militia and directed

against Georgian refugees returning to the region.[99]

By evaluating the Abkhaz conflict within the context of Georgia's foreign policy,

one could see that the main party most influencing the conflict—other than Georgia of

course—is Russia. Similar to the conflict in South Ossetia, Russia was the main peace

broker in the conflict and at various times shifted its support to the breakaway region.

The fluctuation of Russia's support to the separatist Abkhaz took the form of a pressure

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[97] See "Georgians and Abkhaz Sign Memorandum of Understanding," *BBS SWB (SU/1862/F)*, December 3, 1993.

[98] For the Moscow agreement, see "Russian Peacekeeping Forces to be Deployed in Abkhazia," *BBS SWB (SU/2002/F)*, May 20, 1994.

[99] The return of Georgian refugees to the Gali region has been used as a litmus test for the possibility of the return of Georgian refuges to Abkhazia. This test, however, proved to be very discouraging with the constant attacks waged by various "unofficial" Abkhaz militias on the returnees. On this topic, see ZaZa Chitanava, "Georgian Gloom in Abkhazia," *Institute of War and Peace Reporting: Caucasus Reporting Service (CRS)*, no. 16 (February 4, 2000) and Yuli Kharashvili, "Georgian Refugees in Limbo," *IWPR CRS*, no. 22, (March 10, 2000).

mechanism on Georgia whenever Tbilisi tried to "deviate" from the pro-Moscow line.[100]

Currently, the Russians control their border with Abkhazia and its coastal zone, where they have military bases. Russia is also the exclusive provider of peacekeeping forces, acting formally under the aegis of the CIS. Therefore, it exercises significant control over the external and internal policies of the Abkhazian government. The economic blockade imposed by Russia under Georgian political pressure conforms to the traditional pattern of Russian politics: its aim is to weaken all the parties in conflict so that it can effectively continue to play the role of arbiter in the dispute. In light of Russian policies towards the conflict zones in Georgia, Russia tried to compensate for its decline in the region by creating new problems and engagements, and then acted as a mediator in conflicts where it played a destabilizing role itself.[101] From the Abkhazian perspective, the Russian presence constituted the only guarantee against a catastrophic renewal of military operations and against the risk of losing the gains from their previous victory. However, Abkhaz dependence on Russia is not unconditional, and Abkhazia tries to walk a fine line between being an ally or a vassal of Russia.

The other country that Georgia had to deal with regarding Abkhazia—although not as directly as it did with Russia—was Turkey. The Abkhaz government tried to benefit from the Abkhazian diasporas in foreign countries (especially in Turkey) to influence governments of relevant countries and to gather support for the strengthening of Abkhazia's independence. The government of Abkhazia devoted much attention to its

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[100] To some extent, this policy was also apparent in the conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh where there were numerous indications that the tide of war was influenced by Russia to exert pressure on Armenia and Azerbaijan by supporting one side against the other at various points during the conflict.

[101] Pavel Baev, *Russia's Policies in the Caucasus* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1997), 47.

relations with other North Caucasians as well, which had a substantial number of

communities living in Turkey. For instance, it organized cultural movements that

generated great enthusiasm among North Caucasian peoples in Russia and in their

respective diasporas.[102] In 1991, the Abkhaz parliament issued a decree giving Abkhaz

expatriates wide-ranging privileges in privatization and in entrepreneurial activities. With

financial help from organizations in Turkey, three specialized educational institutes,

where repatriates teach, were established in Abkhazia. Then a mosque was built in

Sukhumi as well as a monumental landmark stretched to the Black Sea, symbolizing the

deportations of the 1860s and the hope for return of the Abkhaz Diaspora.[103]

When clashes between Georgian and Abkhazian forces escalated in August 1992,

Turkey took a passive approach on the conflict, viewing it as a domestic affair of

Georgia. Ankara refrained from taking sides in the conflict and went further in making

statements to the effect that Abkhazia is part of Georgia.[104] This has been the reason why

the outburst of North Caucasian solidarity with their ethnic kin in Abkhazia was met with

unease by the Turkish authorities.[105] The fact that the Turkish Government ignored what

the Abkhaz Diaspora considered an attempt to destroy the Abkhaz people created much

anger in the Turkish-Abkhazian community. The North Caucasians had always been

loyal to the Turkish state, and radicals within the North Caucasian communities saw the

Turkish passivity as a betrayal of their loyalty. However, the fact remains that—other

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[102] Egbert Wesselink, *Minorities in the Republic of Georgia* (Brussels: Pax Christi International, 1992), 30.
[103] When the Russians occupied the North Caucasus in mid 19th century, they forced the population living in the mountains to relocate to the plains. Those who refused were deported to the Ottoman Empire. See Egbert Wesselink, *The North Caucasian Diaspora in Turkey* (UNHCR report, May 1996), 4.
[104] See "Turkey Critical of Abkhazian Leadership," *BBC SWB (SU/1466/C2/ 1)*, August 22, 1992.
[105] See Wesselink, *The North Caucasian Diaspora in Turkey*, 10.

than sporadic reports of Turkish citizens of Abkhazian and North Caucasian background getting involved in the conflict on an individual level—Turkey's involvement in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict remained distanced, as a result of which Turkey was not viewed as a party to the conflict.[106]

Despite the ongoing conflict and the heavy Russian presence in the conflict area—either through the Russian base in Gudauta or under the mandate of CIS peacekeeping forces (CISPKF)—Georgia attempted to internationalize the mediation of the conflict to include the UN and the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).[107] These attempts on Tbilisi's side did not result in any positive outcome, and both the UN and OSCE missions in the conflict area presented themselves as mere observers rather than mediators.[108]

Regardless of the involvement of international organizations and Western countries in attempts to mediate and resolve the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict, Russia remains the main power broker in the region, and any possible solution to the conflict is bound by a larger agreement between Russia and Georgia.

Ajaria

Unlike the Autonomous Region of South Ossetia and the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia, the Ajarian Autonomous Republic does not have ethnic tensions with

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[106] The reports of Turks fighting in Abkhazia has been mostly reported by Russian sources. See "Cossacks, Russians, Syrians and Turks Fighting with Abkhaz," *BBC SWB (SU/1628/B)*, March 4, 1993.

[107] MacFarlane, Minear and Shenfield, *Armed Conflict in Georgia*, 49-63.

[108] For a detailed discussion about the role of UN and OSCE involvement in the Abkhaz conflict, refer to Oliver Paye and Eric Remacle, "UN and CSCE Policies in Transcaucasia," *Contested Borders in the Caucasus*, ed. Bruno Coppieters (Brussels: Free University of Brussels Press, 1996), 105-110.

Tbilisi because its population is ethnically Georgian. The persistence of Ajaria's

autonomous status after the fall of the Soviet Union is more of a political struggle rather

than ethnic "oppression," as is claimed by South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Aslan Abashidze

governed Ajaria since 1991 as Chairman of its Supreme Soviet and leader of its dominant

political party, the Union for National Revival Party. After the suppression of the

Zviadists in Western Georgia, opponents to Shevardnadze throughout Georgia gathered

largely around Abashidze's party. The fact that many of these opponents were in Tbilisi

made it possible for Abashidze to expand his power base beyond Ajaria and become a

major player on the domestic political scene in Georgia.

In the 2000 presidential elections, Abashidze conceded to Shevardnadze and

threw in his support for the incumbent Georgian leader. Within days after the elections,

the parliament in Tbilisi amended the constitution to create the Ajarian Republic as a

political entity, effectively federalizing the Georgian state, which up until then was

defined as being unitary.[109] This apparent tradeoff between Shevardnadze and Abashidze

provided a balance of power in local Georgian politics and was a phenomenon that

defined Shevardnadze's post-Soviet Georgian leadership where he had to walk a tight

rope to maintain control—even if it was nominal—on Ajaria and avert another separatist

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[109] See "Caucasus-Style Politics: Georgia Finally Becomes a Federation," *CDPSP* 52, no.16 (May 17, 2000): 19. The detailed constitutional amendments states: "1. To the article 3 must be added the following 3rd chapter: the status of Ajara Autonomous Republic is determined by the Constitutional Law of Georgia 'On Status of Ajara Autonomous Republic;' 2. the word 'Ajara' in the 3rd chapter, article 4 must be replaced with the words 'in Ajara Autonomous Republic;' 3. in the first chapter, article 55 the word 'Ajara' must be replaced with the words 'from Ajara Autonomous Republic;' 4. in the first chapter, article 67, the words 'Abkhazia and Ajara' must be replaced with the words "of Abkhazia, Ajara Autonomous Republics;' 5. in the first chapter, article 89, the words 'of Abkhazia and Ajara' must be replaced with the words 'of Abkhazia, Ajara Autonomous Republics' and in the same chapter, 'A' sub-chapter the word 'Ajara' must be replaced with the words 'of Ajara Autonomous Republic.'" See the Web site of Supreme Court of Georgia, http://www.supremecourt.ge/english/constitucia.htm. Accessed on January 19, 2005.

war. On the other side of the spectrum, the fear of Ajaria becoming another separatist

republic aided by Moscow has been repeatedly undermined by Abashidze himself,

claiming on many occasions that Ajaria would never seek independence. In his view,

> Ajaria has been Georgian soil since time immemorial, Georgia took its statehood from
> here, from the south coast. Ajaria has always jealously guarded the unity of Georgia and
> the very best and ancient traditions of our people. Georgia cannot split from Georgia.
> Those who are talking about that have something else in mind.[110]

This statement is also relevant to undermine the religious component separating the Ajars

from the remaining Georgian population. Thus while the Ajars are Sunni Muslims by

religion—as opposed to the Orthodox Christian faith prevalent among Georgians—they

are considered and consider themselves to be Georgians because of linguistic, cultural,

ethnic, and historical commonalities.

Ajaria cooperated with Tbilisi in a number of areas, especially on economic

matters. Oil from Kazakhstan has for some time been exported from Ajaria's Black Sea

port of Batumi, and the region has been a major trading spot between the North Caucasus

(as well as Georgia and Armenia) and Turkey. Furthermore, as a result of Abashidze's

continued support to Shevardnadze, Ajaria also benefited from a multitude of laws passed

by the authorities, the most notable of which was the declaration of Batumi—the capital

of the region—as a free economic zone.[111]

When in 2003 Mikhail Saakashvili came to power in Tbilisi after the Rose

Revolution, Ajaria became the main battle ground for the war of wills between

Saakashvili and Abashidze—and by extension Russia. The war of words between the two

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[110] "Ajaria Parliament Head Affirms Loyalty to Georgia," *BBC SWB (SU/1643/B)*, March 22, 1993.
[111] See "Batumi Declared a Free Economic Zone," *BBC SWB (SU/2192/F)*, January 4, 1995.

leaders did not escalate into a full blown conflict mostly because Abashidze lacked Russian commitment in his struggle against Tbilisi. According to some reports, Moscow's neutral stand and the lack of active support for Abashidze might have been the result of Saakashvili's visit to Moscow and negotiations with Russian President Vladimir Putin to deescalate the tension between the two countries.[112]

Regardless of what—if any—deal was made between Tbilisi and Moscow, the fact remained that Abashidze was forced to "abdicate" and "retired" to Moscow.[113] With Abashidze out of power, Ajaria seemed to have returned into Tbilisi's fold without any fighting and bloodshed. However Ajaria's reintegration cannot be served as a model to resolve the other conflicts in Georgia.

The fact that the Ajars are ethnically Georgians and share an acute sense of belonging to the Georgian nation is something that is absent in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Furthermore, while Russia stood aside and did not support Abashidze in the latter's standoff with Tbilisi, it is almost inconceivable that Russian troops would do the same in Abkhazia or South Ossetia.

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[112] See "Buoyant Georgian President Charms Putin into U-turn," *The Guardian*, March 22, 2004.
[113] See "Former Ajarian Leader Arrives in Moscow," *ITAR-TASS News Agency*, May 6, 2004.

Georgia's Balancing Act with the West

In Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot*, Vladimir says:

> Why are we here, that is the question. And we are blessed in this, that we happen to know the answer. Yes, in this immense confusion one thing alone is clear. We are waiting for Godot to come.[114]

With some modifications, the above quote could be applied to the case of Georgia's long wait for the West in general, and the US specifically, to respond to Tbilisi's overtures for establishing close working relations with the West to counterbalance Russia's influence in the region. One of the first instances of Tbilisi's initiatives to approach the West took place immediately after the presidential elections of May 1991, when Gamsakhurdia came to power. His anti-Moscow rhetoric led many in Georgia to believe that the West would welcome any succession movements by the constituent republics as a way to encourage the spread of democracy and to weaken Moscow's grip over the Soviet Union. This was exemplified when in August 1991—three months after Georgia's independence declaration and two months after Gamsakhurdia's election as Georgia's president— Gamsakhurdia appealed to the West to recognize his country's independence. He announced:

> An unstable situation that may become uncontrollable in the near future has taken shape in the Soviet Union. [...] In the face of such events, a principled position by Western states, an uncompromising assessment of the situation, as well as diplomatic and other activities, acquire decisive significance. The West must not remain a passive observer...
>
> The most important thing for the West to do is to support only that power in the USSR which was elected by the people and the establishment of democracy and pluralism. [...] For that reason, I appeal to Western governments, primarily to the United States of America, to recognize the independence of these republics, including Georgia, de facto

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[114] Eugene Webb, *The Plays of Samuel Beckett*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972), 51.

and de jure and to establish diplomatic relations with them, thereby defending the gains achieved by them through genuinely democratic reforms.[115]

However, European and American responses were not immediate for a multitude of reasons. In September 1991, a US congressional delegation visited Tbilisi and met with Gamsakhurdia. The delegation concluded that Georgia's independence would not be recognized by the US until Tbilisi showed signs of democratic reforms, including freedom of press and religion as well as land reform.[116] While democratization—or the lack of it—was used as one of the reasons for not recognizing Georgia's independence, it was clear that the US was still not ready to bypass Moscow and establish direct relations with those Soviet republics aspiring to become independent.[117] This in turn fueled the conspiracy theories put forward by Gamsakhurdia, speculating that Washington and Moscow have been cooperating with each other to isolate him. In September 1991, he went further and labeled that cooperation as a modern-day "Molotov-Ribbentrop agreement to deny Georgia recognition of its independence."[118]

Nevertheless, US policy was not necessarily directed against Gamsakhurdia as much as it was conditioned by Washington's relations with Moscow and the civil war waged in Georgia between pro- and anti-Gamsakhurdia factions. This became clear when after Gamsakhurdia's ouster the US continued to withhold recognition of Georgia's

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[115] "Gamsakhurdia Appeals to West for Recognition," *BBC SWB (SU/1165/A1/ 1)*, August 31, 1991.
[116] See "U.S. Legislators Say Georgia Must Reform Before Recognition," *The Associated Press*, September 9, 1991.
[117] From the US perspective, Moscow still remained the main power broker in USSR, and in the minds of US policymakers, the recognition of the independence of Georgia could have antagonized the Soviet central authorities. This issue is discussed in detail in Chapter Two of this work.
[118] See "Georgia Chief Alleges U.S.-Soviet Conspiracy," *The Washington Post*, September 11, 1991.

independence, underscoring the continued non-democratic atmosphere prevailing in the country.[119]

The wheels of official recognition by and cooperation with the West started turning only when Eduard Shevardnadze returned to Georgia and assumed the chairmanship of the provisional State Council. Undoubtedly, Shevardnadze's stature as former Soviet foreign minister and his close cooperation with Western diplomats and leaders boosted Georgia's image and facilitated the recognition process. The Shevardnadze factor in Georgia's recognition process becomes clear if one looks at the timing of his return to Georgia (early March, 1992) and the announcements of independence recognition by European Community countries (on March 24) and the US (on March 25).[120] The recognitions were followed by a visit to Tbilisi by the US Secretary of State James Baker who had previously cooperated with Shevardnadze on arms control accords, the reunification of Germany, and other foreign policy issues.[121] The visit signaled the gradual removal of Georgia's diplomatic isolation under Gamsakhurdia's administration and gave Shevardnadze's government more foreign policy options with which to operate. Over the subsequent years, statements from Georgian politicians revealed the level of commitment that the country had towards integration into Western institutions and structures. A sample of these include Georgia's signing of a cooperation and partnership agreement with the European Union (EU) in

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[119] See "Baker Cites U.S. Concerns Over Violent Ouster of Georgian President," *The Associated Press*, February 18, 1992.
[120] See "Shevardnadze Asks West to Establish Diplomatic Ties With Georgia," *The Associated Press*, March 14, 1992; "Europe Ready to Give Georgia Recognition," *The New York Times*, March 24, 1992; and "U.S. Prepared to Open Full Ties With Georgia," *The New York Times*, March 25, 1992.
[121] "Baker Reunited With Shevardnadze," *The Associated Press*, May 25, 1992.

1996, its ascendancy to the Council of Europe in 1999, and its increased cooperation with NATO's PfP program.

The Westward drive in Georgia's foreign policy has not been smooth due to continued Russian pressure to keep Tbilisi within Moscow's orbit. However, despite these strains, Georgia has been able to develop strong working relations with the West, mostly within the parameters of cooperating in regional and international organizations. This cooperation encompasses economic, political, and security spheres and makes it possible for Tbilisi to counterweigh Russia's influence on the country.

Pipeline politics

With the fall of the Soviet Union, one major issue that needed to be addressed was the transportation of Caspian energy resources (oil and gas) to the international market.[122] In October 1995, it was announced that a pipeline connecting Baku to the Georgian Black Sea port of Supsa would be used to carry Azerbaijani oil to the international market.[123] That announcement could be considered the beginning of Georgia's involvement in the energy transport game. What followed was an agreement by an international oil consortium (comprising mainly Western oil companies) to lay the foundations for an oil pipeline, connecting Caspian oil to the Turkish Mediterranean port of Ceyhan, passing

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[122] In the early 1990s several plans were proposed for the transfer of Caspian oil. These included the utilization of the already existing Russian oil pipelines in the north, the building of a new pipeline through Iran, or the building of a pipeline through Turkey. The option of using Russia and Iran as transit countries were dropped mostly because of opposition to the former by Azerbaijan and Georgia and to the latter by the US.

[123] See "Winners and Losers in the Great Pipeline Route Tussle," *Inter Press Service*, October 9, 1995.

though Georgia and known as Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline.[124] Inaugurated on May 25, 2005, the opening of the pipeline marked the beginning of oil flow from the Caspian to the West. This pipeline has surly been the largest investment in Georgia to date, and it has brought to the country much needed foreign direct investments (FDI).[125] However, its political benefits outweigh the economic ones, and Georgia has been able to integrate itself in some Western structures within the context of cooperation in the pipeline construction.

Georgia's most important cooperation is with the US through American oil companies that have a substantial stake in the construction of the BTC pipeline. Thus, Georgia is finally able to achieve its goal of becoming a partner—even if a minor one— in a venture overseen by the US. Furthermore, Georgia stands to gain from the construction of the oil pipeline and a parallel gas pipeline in that it will have a choice to import Caspian gas to partially replace—up to one third—its current dependence on the Russian gas company GazProm, which currently has a monopoly over the Georgian gas market.[126]

In 2005 the energy component of Russian-Georgia relations took a new turn when GazProm announced its interest in buying the Georgian gas pipeline network with the

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[124] The issue of Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline is discussed in chapter two. For a more detailed view of the various implications of the pipeline on Georgia in particular see Vladimir Papava, "The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline: Implications for Georgia," in *The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline: Oil Window to the West*, eds. S. Frederick Starr and Svante E. Cornell (Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program: Uppsala University Press), 2005.
[125] See Jonathan Elkind, "Economic Implications of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline," in *The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline: Oil Window to the West*, eds. S. Frederick Starr and Svante E. Cornell (Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program: Uppsala University Press, 2005), 50.
[126] Elkind, "Economic Implications," 51.

plan of using it to transport natural gas to Armenia and Turkey via Georgia.[127] While the deal was being negotiated, the US expressed deep concerns, considering it to be the beginning of the end for Georgia's energy independence, but most importantly because such a deal would undermine the building of east-west energy pipelines. The US also believed that if the Russian company decides to go ahead with its plans to export gas to Turkey via Georgia, then that would rival with the US-backed plan to transport gas from Baku to Erzerum in Turkey.[128] American concerns were realized when on January 22, 2006 pipelines providing gas to Georgia from Russia were blown up in North Ossetia leading Georgian President Saakashvili to blame Russia for intimidation and declare that Moscow was trying to pressure Tbilisi into subordination by cutting gas and electricity supplies to Georgia in the middle of a harsh winter season.[129] The fact that the pipelines passed through North Ossetia and that Russia was slow in repairing the damage increased the mistrust that the Georgian public and policy makers had towards Russia.

Thus it becomes clear that the already completed energy networks as well as the ones that are under construction have alleviated Georgia's energy dependence on Russia and have established opportunities to cooperate with Azerbaijan, Turkey, and above all, the US. While Georgia remains a transit country with a comparatively smaller share in revenues of energy transit tariffs, the long-term inclusion of Georgia in this and similar

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[127] See "Gazprom Exec to Discuss Russian Gas Supplies, Transits in Georgia," *ITAR-TASS News Agency*, December 13, 2005.
[128] Stephen Mann, the advisor to the US President on Caspian energy issues has expressed these concerns throughout the negotiations and over a period of two years from 2003 to 2005. See for instance "US President's Advisor Concerned about GazProm's Appearance in Georgia," *RIA Novosti*, June 4, 2003 and "US Opposes Georgia Possible Sale of Gas Pipeline," *ITAR-TASS News Agency*, February 28, 2005.
[129] "Blasts on Russian Pipelines Cut Gas Supplies to Georgia," *The Associated Press*, January 22, 2006.

projects increases Tbilisi's ability to move away from Moscow's shadow and find

Western partners.

Turkey: Georgia's outlet to the West

Since Turkey seems to be the only useful land link between Georgia and the

West, Georgian-Turkish cooperation acquires strategic importance for both countries.

The link to Turkey is pivotal since Georgia tries to counterbalance the influence of its

northern neighbor Russia by forging close relations and cooperation agreements with as

many Western institutions and governments as possible. Georgian-Turkish relations,

which has been passive following the fall of the Soviet Union, became more cordial when

Turkey realized that its main access to Azerbaijan and Central Asia would have to be

through Georgia because of the closed border with Armenia. Furthermore, after the idea

of Caspian oil transport to the West through Georgia and Turkey emerged, those two

countries, along with Azerbaijan, viewed themselves as strategic partners and allies,

receiving substantial support and encouragement from the US.[130]

In July 1992 and only months after Shevardnadze's return to Tbilisi, Turkish

Prime Minister Suleiman Demirel paid an official visit to Georgia and signed a treaty of

friendship, cooperation, and good-neighborly relations, along with agreements on trade

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[130] See Sergej Mahnovski, "Natural Resources and Potential Conflict in the Caspian Sea Region," in *Faultlines of Conflict in Central Asia and the South Caucasus. Implications for the U.S. Army*, eds. Olga Oliker and Thomas S. Szayna (Santa Monica: RAND, 2003), 116-117. For a discussion on Turkey's policies concerning the Caucasus within the context of oil transport, see Michael Bishku, "Turkey, Ethnicity, and Oil in the Caucasus," *Journal of Third World Studies* 18, no. 2 (Fall 2001): 13-23; Alan Makovsky, "The New Activism in Turkish Foreign Policy," *SAIS Review* 19, no. 1 (1999): 92-113; and Cengiz Candar and Graham Fuller, "Grand Geopolitics for a New Turkey," *Mediterranean Quarterly* 12, no. 1 (Winter 2001): 22-38.

and economic cooperation, on encouragement and protection of investments, and a number of other accords.[131] This was followed by Shevardnadze's visit to Ankara in January 1994 where he signed a series of economic and trade agreements with Demirel.[132] Over the next several years, Georgia's cooperation with Turkey increased in many spheres but most importantly on the economic level. Turkey became Georgia's second largest trading partner allowing Tbilisi to gradually use it to counterbalance its economic dependence on Russia. As a manifestation of deepening Georgian-Turkish relations, Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz paid a two-day official visit to Tbilisi in 1998 where he signed agreements entrenching the cooperation between Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey.[133] The agreements stipulated the building of an electric network in order to bring Azerbaijani electricity to Turkey via Georgia, the establishment of a rail link between the cities of Kars in eastern Turkey and Akhalkalaki in southern Georgia, and the modernization of Georgia's road network. These were clear signs that the countries were preparing for increased trade and the development of stronger bilateral ties, considering that the BTC pipeline was becoming more realistic.

Even before the development of strong bilateral relations between Turkey and Georgia, the two countries cooperated within the parameters of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) Organization.[134] Georgia's participation in the BSEC could be

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[131] "Georgia and Turkey Sign Treaty of Friendship," *BBC SWB (SU/1448/A1/ 1)*, August 1, 1992.
[132] "Shevardnadze Signs Cooperation Declaration with Turkey," *BBC SWB (*SU/1896/F*)*, January 15, 1994.
[133] "President Shevardnadze Says Turkish Premier's Visit 'Historic'," *BBC SWB (SU/D3176/F)*, March 16, 1998.
[134] The BSEC was a Turkish initiative and was set up in 1992; eventually it developed into a collective project including Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Turkey, and Ukraine. In 1998 it was transformed into a regional organization, which enabled it to intensify cooperation with other regional and international organizations.

explained by Tbilisi's desire to promote itself as an independent and sovereign actor in regional and international affairs. Simultaneously, Georgia targeted the BSEC and similar organizations to create multilateral ties with neighboring countries and to pave its way towards closer cooperation with the West.[135]

As previously mentioned, economic relations between Turkey and Georgia developed early on; however, it was not until the late 1990s and early 2000 that military cooperation between Ankara and Tbilisi began taking shape. In March 1999, Turkey and Georgia signed a military cooperation agreement based on the provision of which of the military establishments in the two countries were to cooperate over a period of five years. Turkey would provide training, equipment, and loans to Georgia for the latter to upgrade its army.[136] More importantly, cooperation between the two countries included the renovation of an airport in Georgia's Marneuli region, in the hope of servicing both military and civilian flights.[137]

After the terrorist attacks on the US on September 11, 2001, Georgian-Turkish cooperation took another turn when in November 2001, Turkish President Ahmet Necdet Sezer, while on an official visit to Tbilisi, proposed the creation of a trilateral—Turkey, Georgia, and Azerbaijan—anti-terror grouping. However, the most interesting development in Georgian-Turkish military relations was the announcement in 2002 of the

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[135] For a detailed discussion about the development of BSEC as a regional organization and the role of Georgia—among other states—see Yannis Valinakis, "The Black Sea Region: Challenges and Opportunities for Europe," *European Union Institute for Security Studies* Chaillot Paper 36, 1999.
[136] See "Georgia, Turkey Sign Protocol on Military Cooperation," *BBC SWB (SU/D3475/S1)*, March 5, 1999.
[137] See "Turkish Defense Minister at Opening of Renovated Georgian Military Airfield," *Anatolia News Agency*, January 28, 2001.

allocation of Turkish military aid to modernize the Vaziani air base.[138] Its significance

laid in the fact that up until 1999, the base had belonged to Russia, and the substitution of

Russian aid by Turkish was a clear sign of the shift in Tbilisi's security orientation. It is

quite possible that the military cooperation between Georgia and Turkey was triggered by

concerns to provide security for the BTC pipeline, but another incentive could also have

been the gradual inclusion of Georgia in Western—and mostly US-led—security

institutions and military alliances.[139]

The symbiotic relationship between Georgia and Turkey is based on Tbilisi's

need to develop its economy and establish closer ties with the West, which Ankara is

more than happy to accommodate in return for Georgia's continued cooperation as a

linkage state between Turkey and Azerbaijan—and by extension to Central Asia.

Turkey's role as a reliable partner for Georgia was reinforced in 2005 when a draft

version of the Georgian national security concept characterized Turkey as Georgia's

"leading regional partner" and their relations as being a "strategic partnership."[140]

One other component of Georgian-Turkish bilateral relations is Tbilisi's ability to

transcend the burden of history and that of religion in its relations with Ankara.

Throughout its history, Georgia has suffered in the hands of Ottoman armies and rule;

however that memory, while still present and popular, seems to have faded away to give

its place to more pragmatic political relations.[141] Turkey's bid to become a member of the

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[138] See "Turkey Gives Military Aid to Georgia," *Turkish Daily News*, June 12, 2002.
[139] Georgian-Turkish military cooperation is discussed below within the larger context of Georgia's military cooperation with the West.
[140] See "National Security Concept Finalized," *Civil Georgia*, May 15, 2005.
[141] For an account of Georgian-Ottoman relations refer to Allen, *A History of the Georgian People*, 142-181.

EU is yet another factor that has made bilateral relations more reliant on geopolitics rather than history. Thus, Turkey's EU membership could boost Georgia's aspirations to be integrated with European institutions by acting as a conduit for Tbilisi to have a physical land border with an EU member state.

Security through cooperation

It is not surprising that security is one of the major tenets of Georgia' foreign policy doctrine, as the country witnessed two secessionist wars and a civil war. Achieving security through military agreements has defined Tbilisi's relations with both Russia and the West. During the period immediately after Shevardnadze's return to Georgia, it was apparent that the central authorities were incapable of controlling the Zviadist insurgencies in the west of the country as well as the escalation of tension with Abkhazia. Ever the pragmatic leader, Shevardnadze had to turn to Russia and enrolled Georgia first in the CIS and then in the CIS Collective Security agreement.

The CIS Collective Security Treaty was signed in May 1992 by Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan in Tashkent, while Georgia signed the treaty in December 1993. According to it, member states were not able to join other military alliances, and aggression against one signatory would be perceived as aggression against all. In April 1999, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan signed a protocol renewing the treaty for another five-year period. However, Georgia chose not to join and withdrew from the treaty that same year, signaling Tbilisi's increased independence from Moscow and its attempt to integrate into

Western security structures.

To help the process of drifting away from Moscow's orbit, Georgia pursued a policy of loose cooperation first with former Soviet republics and then increasingly with Western institutions. Within the context of cooperating with other CIS countries, Georgia has been one of the founding members and a major driving force behind the alliance known as GUAM.[142] Formed from the initials of the four countries comprising it— Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova—GUAM has been one of the networks through which the member countries have been able to counterbalance Russian influence in the former Soviet space. In April 1999 the organization changed its name to GUUAM after Uzbekistan joined the alliance. Over the following several years, GUUAM has been a very loose, mostly inactive alliance based on fears of antagonizing Russia; however, the international "War on Terror" and subsequent international developments jump-started GUUAM and gave it a new direction.[143] The first shock given to GUUAM was the "colorful" revolutions that took place in Georgia and Ukraine in 2003-2004. Thus after the Rose Revolution in Georgia and the Orange in Ukraine, GUUAM suddenly looked more and more like an alliance of states with strong Western orientations. In an April 2005 meeting of the alliance in Chişinău, Moldova, two major events defined the organization's orientation and even its future. The first event was the attendance—by

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[142] The foundations of GUAM were placed in 1996 during talks on the treaty of Conventional Forces in Europe. The major issue of concern was finding ways to counterbalance Russia's attempts to stretch its influence in neighboring countries. For details see Tomas Valasek, "Military Cooperation between Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Moldova in the GUUAM Framework," *Policy Brief 2* (Cambridge, MA: Caspian Studies Program, December 2000).

[143] Even before the September 11 attacks on the US, GUUAM tried to institutionalize itself. In the June 2001 meeting of the alliance in Yalta, Ukraine, the presidents of the member countries signed a new charter for the organization giving the alliance a formal structure.

invitation—of the OSCE Secretary General Jan Kubis and US Department of State

representative Steven Mann to the meeting along with observers from Rumania and

Lithuania, while Russia was not invited.[144] The absence of Uzbekistan—the newest

member of the alliance—was also a new development. Several weeks after the Moldova

summit it became clear that Uzbekistan was withdrawing from the alliance altogether on

the pretext that the organization had changed its initial strategies, becoming instead an

instrument to push for revolutions in the CIS and to support anti-Russian sentiments.[145]

Soon after Uzbekistan's withdrawal, the organization announced that it would change its

name to "Commonwealth for the Democracy and Development," signaling a shift in

direction, reflecting the organization's continued orientation to form alliances with

countries having Western rather than Russian orientation.[146] Regardless of GUUAM's

future, the alliance has been one of the venues through which Georgia has been able to

expand cooperative relations with other former Soviet republics, and while originally the

alliance was viewed as a structure parallel to CIS structures, it has gradually developed

into a coalition aiming at containing Russia's influence in the member countries.

The integration of Georgia into Western institutions is best illustrated by Tbilisi's

cooperation with NATO. Thus starting as early as 1992, Georgian relations with NATO

and its affiliated structures have been on the rise. In 1994, Georgia signed a Partnership

for Peace Framework Document with NATO, and under the auspices of another NATO

member—Turkey—it has been involved in various NATO peacekeeping activities, the

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[144] See "USA, OSCE to Attend, Uzbekistan to Skip GUUAM Summit," *ITAR-TASS News Agency*, April 21, 2005.
[145] See "Uzbekistan Quits Five-Nation ex-Soviet Grouping," *Agence France Presse*, May 5, 2005.
[146] See "GUUAM to be renamed into Commonwealth for Democracy and Development," *Interfax News Agency*, May 19, 2005.

most notable being the one in Kosovo in 1999. Tbilisi's increased interest in joining

NATO stems mostly from the belief that integration into Western institutions and

organizations will provide the necessary tools for Georgia to solve the conflict in

Abkhazia and guarantee the country's territorial integrity. This is apparent when one

looks at a speech given by the former Georgian Defense Minister David Tevzadze in

1999 at a Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council meeting in Brussels, where he said:

> We strongly believe and hope that the vast experience gained in Bosnia and Kosovo can
> be used in the solution of other existing conflicts in the Euro-Atlantic area, namely in the
> Georgian region of Abkhazia.[147]

In September 2002, the Georgian parliament passed a resolution assigning the relevant

government agencies the task to actively pursue integration with and membership to

NATO.[148] This materialized two months later in the November 2002 meeting of NATO

members in Prague, when Georgia officially announced its bid to join the alliance.[149]

However, regardless of Tbilisi's aspirations, the road to become a full fledged

NATO member is still long and hard, and while optimists mention 2007 or 2008 as a

target-date for Georgia's membership, the reality remains that the country is not ready to

meet NATO standards.[150] This, nevertheless, does not stop the country from being

involved in various NATO structures and activities. For instance, Georgia has been very

active in the PfP program and within that context has received technical, hardware, and

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[147] Statement by Lt. Gen. David Tevzadze at the EAPC meeting in Defense Ministers session, December 3, 1999. Found at http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/1999/s991203b.htm.

[148] For the full text of the announcement see the official Georgian parliament Web site at http://www.parliament.ge/statements/2002/resolution_13_09_02_en.htm.

[149] See "Georgia to Seek NATO Membership," *ITAR-TASS News Agency*, November 22, 2002.

[150] See for instance Robert Larson, "Georgia's Search for Security: An Analysis of Georgia's National Security Structures and International Cooperation," *Occasional Paper #1:2003* (Tbilisi: The Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies), 59-60.

training assistance from NATO, the US, and Turkey. Georgia's cooperation with NATO intensified in 2004 with several joint military exercises conducted with the organization as well as individual members in it.[151] On October 29, 2004, Brussels approved Georgia's Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) with NATO. The plan—only segments of which are disclosed—sets out the requirements that Georgia needs to fulfill in order for NATO membership to go ahead. Some of these requirements include the need to work out a national security concept, protect the environment from radioactive substances, reinforce border control, and fight terrorism as well as drug and arms trafficking. The NATO partnership plan also obliged Tbilisi to ensure the security of oil and gas pipelines, ratify the convention on national minorities, pass an anticorruption law, draw up a list of companies which cannot be privatized, improve the trade balance, define the status of the autonomies, and develop an air defense system.[152]

While NATO membership for Georgia remains unclear, increased bilateral military cooperation between Tbilisi and Washington has helped the country's quest for more integration with the West a possibility. One of the most important and visible components of Georgian-US military cooperation has been the Georgia Train and Equip Program (GTEP). Announced in April 2002 by the US Department of Defense, the GTEP aimed at enhancing Georgia's counter-terrorism capabilities by training Georgian border

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[151] For instance in April 2004, the Georgian and Turkish navies conducted joint exercises in the waters off Poti, see "Georgian, Turkish Navies Conduct Joint Training," *Rustavi-2 TV reported by BBC Monitoring International Reports*, April 13, 2004.

[152] An abridged version of the IPAP could be found at the Web site of the Georgian Ministry of Defense at http://www.mod.gov.ge/?l=E&m=4&sm=2.

troops as well as four battalions of almost 1,700 soldiers.[153] The bilateral military

cooperation between Tbilisi and Washington intensified further after the 2003 war in

Iraq, during which Georgia sent troops as part of the US-led coalition.[154] The Georgian

military participation in Iraq resulted in the three-year extension of the GTEP, the aim of

which was to help Georgia develop necessary capabilities to combat international terror

and to continue to take part in various US and NATO missions.[155] In late 2004, the GTEP

was replaced with the Sustainment and Stability Operations Program (SSOP) which is a

US military assistance program, designed to assist the Georgian armed forces sustain

their military participation in coalition efforts in Iraq by providing training and other

support.[156]

     With the increased cooperation between Georgia on the one hand and US, NATO,

and Turkey on the other, it seemed that by 2003 Georgia was finally getting the attention

that it always sought from the West. While there are many indicators that US and Turkish

interests in Georgia stem mostly from their concerns to guarantee the security of the

energy pipelines transferring Caspian oil and gas to the West, the increased interaction

and cooperation with the US—even if it is mainly in the security sphere—could raise

Georgia's stature as an important US ally and, by extension, help the country's bid for

Western integration. The views that the energy corridor passing through Georgia could

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[153] "Georgia 'Train and Equip' Program Begins," *US Department of Defense News Release no. 217-02*, April 29, 2002. Found at http://www.dod.mil/releases/2002/b04292002_bt217-02.html.

[154] See "Georgian Troops Leave for Iraq," *Agence France Presse*, August 3, 2003.

[155] While at the beginning of the GTEP the main goal of the program was to train border guards and light infantry units with approximately 1,700 troops, the program later expanded to include upgrading the Georgian army staff, training an additional 3,000 troops, and restructuring the Georgian army according to US and Western military standards. See "U.S. Boosts Successful Military Cooperation with Georgia," *Civil Georgia*, August 5, 2004, http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=7556.

[156] For more details see United States European Command Web site at http://www.eucom.mil/english/GSSOP/index.asp

act as a binding force for the country to be integrated in Western political, economic, and

security structures, as well as the usage of the GTEP to protect the energy routes, have

been considered by many Georgians as being inevitable. This was best expressed by

Giorgi Chanturia, the President of the Georgian International Oil Corporation:

> Provision of energy corridor security is one of the imperatives of such [US-Georgian] a
> cooperation. It is therefore very logical that the "Georgia Train and Equip Program" can
> incorporate the pipeline protection and security training as one of its essential elements.
> All of this will give Georgia better chances for a speedier integration into the Euro-
> Atlantic space. And, we are already moving in this direction.[157]

Parallel to increasing Georgia's importance as a link between the East and the West,

Georgian Defense Minister Giorgi Baramidze expressed hopes, as did many political and

military figures, in 2004 that the GTEP would create a well-trained Georgian army that

will in time "promote the restoration of the country's territorial integrity."[158] While the

same figures have also confirmed that the newly trained Georgian troops will never be

used against Abkhazia or South Ossetia, with the start of the 21st century Georgia found

itself firmly looking towards the West, as it is heading towards the long-desired

integration into Euro-Atlantic structures and institutions. It seems that Godot had finally

arrived!

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[157] Presentation by Giorgi Chanturia at the Washington Business Forum, "East-West Energy Corridor: a
Reality," February 25, 2003. Found at http://www.georgiaemb.org/DisplayDoc.asp?id=118&from=archive.
[158] See "U.S. Boosts Military Cooperation with Georgia," *Civil Georgia*, September 29, 2004. Found at
http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=7933.

Georgian-Armenian Relations between Old and New

Relations between Armenians and Georgians predate the relations between the two states and extend to historical times. Throughout the centuries, both nations have had cordial relations and at certain points in their history even formed united kingdoms under the leadership of Georgian or Armenian kings.[159] Over subsequent centuries, closer ties developed between the two countries, which resulted in the ascension of the same noble family, the Bagratuni (Bagrationi in Georgian), to the thrones of the two countries.[160] The Bagratuni dynasty ruled Georgia until 1801, long after its Armenian counterpart lost power in 1045.

Both countries had their share of domination and occupation by foreign empires, starting with the Romans and the Persians, all the way to the Arabs, Ottomans, and Russians. However, Georgia's geographic location outside the main routes between east and west gave it an opportunity to develop its statehood with fewer interruptions, resulting in independent Georgian kingdoms that lasted until the early 19th century. As a result Georgian rulers, such as David II the Builder and Queen Tamara, were able to unite the various independent as well as quasi-independent principalities and fiefdoms in the two countries and establish a relatively stable kingdom in Georgia and northern Armenia. Many Armenians settled in Georgia, either driven by fear and escape from their war-torn lands or encouraged by Georgian monarchs, who needed an Armenian labor force as well as merchants to strengthen their kingdoms.[161]

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[159] Suny, *Georgian Nation*, 23 and Allen, *Georgian People*, 77.
[160] Ibid, 29-31.
[161] Toumanoff, *Studies*, 83 and Suny, *Georgian Nation*, 41, 46.

Until the Russo-Ottoman War of 1829, most of the Armenians in Georgia lived in the capital, Tbilisi. When the southern provinces of Georgia came under Russian rule, many Armenians migrated from the Ottoman Empire and settled in the districts of Meskheti and Javakheti, forming at first a plurality, then a majority, of the population in those districts. The overwhelming majority of the remaining Armenian settlers in Javakheti trace their roots to Erzerum in modern day Turkey, which they left after the 1879 Russo-Ottoman War.[162]

After the Russian occupation of Georgia in the 19th century, the Georgian landed aristocracy began to lose its economic influence. Either through planned Russian policies or because of the changing nature of power which became more dependent on capital rather than land, Armenian merchants and artisans began to occupy the middle and upper classes of Georgian society.[163] Some scholars consider this social restructuring the basis of modern Georgian-Armenian rivalry, on the grounds that Georgians (whether aristocrat or peasant) resented the concentration of capital in the hands of Armenians, and as a result social grievances and rivalries developed between the two nations. This rivalry was reinforced by ethnic boundaries, leading to inter-ethnic distrust and the creation of stereotypes.[164] The rivalry was also reinforced by the growing sense of nationalism in

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[162] See Voitsekh Guretski, "The Question of Javakheti," *Caucasian Regional Studies* 3, no. 1 (1998).
[163] Suny, *Georgian Nation*, 63, 86-95, 115-121, 139-145 *passim*.
[164] See Stephen Jones, "Georgian-Armenian Relations in 1918 to 1920 and 1991 to 1994: A Comparison," in *Transcaucasia, Nationalism and Social Change: Essays in the History of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia*, ed. Ronald Suny (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 446-448.

both groups, especially in the late 19th century, and by the fact that Armenians constituted

a plurality in Georgia's capital that remained unchallenged until the early 20th century.[165]

Inter-nation relations in an inter-state context

With the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, the Russian Empire collapsed and

component nations declared independence. Both Georgia and Armenia officially declared

themselves independent republics within days of each other in May 1918, and the

relations between the two people entered a new phase within the context of international

and regional politics. From the beginning, Georgia-Armenia inter-state relations were

tense. In December 1918, the two states were engaged in a brief war over the mostly

Armenian-populated border regions of Akhalkalaki—in Southern Georgia—and Lori—in

northern Armenia.[166] It was only through the interference of the British Expeditionary

Force in the Caucasus that the parties agreed to a ceasefire and arbitration to resolve their

dispute. However, the independent inter-state relations between the two countries did not

last long. Deserted by the West, both republics had to once again accept Russian, albeit

Soviet, control, and for the next 70 or so years, both were merely administrative units in a

larger, multiethnic empire in which the central authorities in Moscow dictated the terms

of interaction between them.

When Georgia and Armenia regained their independence, the pre-Soviet rivalry

between the two states was reanimated. Such a pattern in relations may be explained by

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[165] Suny extensively talks about the Armenian presence in Tbilisi and the ethnic tension surrounding it in *Georgian Nation*, 86-95, 116-121, 139-140, 153.

[166] Richard Hovannisian, *The Republic of Armenia*, vol. 1, *The First Year, 1918-1919* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1971) 66-78; Kazemzadeh, *The Struggle for Transcaucasia*, 174-183.

the fact that both are small countries, competing for recognition and attempting to assert their identity in an uncertain and changing world. There is also a duality regarding the foreign policy orientations of the two countries. Whereas Georgia pursues an aggressively pro-Western policy, Armenia has chosen to develop its ties with the West at a more cautious pace while considering Russian interests in the region. The existence of large Armenian communities in Georgia has also been a point of contestation, especially considering the multiethnic composition of Georgia.

I say Javakheti, you say Javakhk

The Samtskhe-Javakheti region (known as Javakhk in Armenian), which comprises the southern flank of Georgia, is populated mostly by Armenians.[167] Since 1991, Javakheti has been viewed by many analysts as a possible threat to Georgia's territorial integrity and hence a barrier to the transportation of oil pipelines from the Caspian to the Black Sea.[168] While the possibility of Javakheti to turn into another Abkhazia or Nagorno-Karabakh is very limited, the possibility of socio-economic grievances of the Armenian population of Javakheti to be transformed into outright conflict is not excluded. Thus the lack of transport, communication, and other infrastructure systems in the regions—including those areas with Georgian populations— could be interpreted as a deliberate policy by Tbilisi to undermine the non-Georgian regions of the country. Although the socio-economic and political grievances are usually

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[167] Estimates of the percentage of Armenian population in Javakheti vary from 92-98 percent of the total population (with the lower figure given by Georgian sources).
[168] For a general overview of the region see Guretski, "The Question of Javakheti."

manifested along ethnic lines, the authorities in Tbilisi and Yerevan have done their best

to diffuse the tension by trying to alleviate the dire socio-economic conditions through

collaborative projects and by encouraging foreign investments in the region.[169]

The concerns over Javakheti play a major role in Georgia's relations, not only

with Armenia but also with the ever-present Russia. As in Abkhazia and Ajaria, a

Russian military base exists in Akhalkalaki, which provides a source of employment for

many Armenians who have taken temporary Russian citizenship to qualify for work. At

the moment, Russia is viewed as the sole guarantor of the region economically as well as

politically. The announcement in 2005 that Russia would vacate its base in

Akhalkalaki—along with the one in Batumi—by 2008, would have a dual impact on the

region.[170] The first consequence would be economic since the Russian base in

Akhalkalaki employs over 500 local Armenians and provides livelihood for many

families in the region.[171] The second issue the Russian base closure raises is the fear that

with the Russian withdrawal from the region, the Turkish military would fill in the

vacuum—based on the close cooperation existing between the Georgian and Turkish

armies—whihct feeds into the Armenian historic mistrust and fear of Turkish massacres

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[169] Some of the projects included the distribution of Armenian language textbooks in the Armenian populated regions of southern Georgia, the export of electricity to Javakheti and southern Georgia, and the investment by international organizations in the regions. For instance in January 2003, the UNDP and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) announced that they would provide $4.7 million for a five-year program intended to develop social and economic infrastructures in the region. See "Armenia is Ready to Support Georgia," *Georgian Times News*, June 30, 2003.

[170] "Russia and Georgia Agree to Bases Withdrawal," *Agence France Presse*, May 30, 2005.

[171] Apart from the civilian population benefiting from the Russian base in Akhalkalaki, there are reports that over half of the 3,000 Russian servicemen stationed in the area are local Armenians who have been given Russian citizenship. Also, local businesses profit from the base. For a detailed description on this issue see David Darchiashvili, "The Army and Society in Djavakheti," *The Army and Society in Georgia* (May 1998). Found online at http://www.cpirs.org.ge/Archive/AS_05_98.pdf.

of the local Armenian population.[172]

Both Armenian administrations of Levon Ter-Petrossian and Robert Kocharian

have tried very hard to diffuse the tension in the region by reiterating their respect for

Georgia's territorial integrity and have opted to provide social, cultural, and economic

assistance to the Armenians in the region to alleviate existing tensions. However,

Armenian official declarations often do not coincide with reality on the ground. A

regional Armenian political organization called "Virk"—the historical name of Southern

Georgia in Armenian—is an influential and well organized group in Javakheti that has

been very vocal in its calls for autonomy to the region.[173] Also one of the more nationalist

Armenian organizations—the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF)—views

Javakheti as historic Armenian land and has repeatedly called for Tbilisi to grant

autonomy to the region.[174]

The possibility that Javakheti might become another Nagorno-Karabakh remains

in check as long as both Georgian and Armenian governments continue to pursue policies

based on mutual respect of sovereignty and self-determination. For Georgia, that means

paying more attention and consideration for the economic, social, and cultural needs of

the Armenian population in southern Georgia, for Armenia it means curbing nationalist

sentiments amongst the public in Armenia as well as political spheres and assisting the

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[172] During 1917-18 when the Russian troops withdrew from the region, the Ottoman Army briefly occupied Southern Georgia and committed atrocities against the local Armenian population. The withdrawal of the Russian military personnel in 2008 has brought analogies of what happened in 1918 with what could happen in 2008.

[173] "Armenian separatists threaten Georgians," *Georgian times*, October 1, 2002.

[174] A survey of ARF-sponsored media in Armenia and the Armenian Diaspora revealed an increased attention to Javakheti and the demands of autonomy for the local population. For instance, in October-November 2003, the ARF official newspaper in Lebanon—*Aztag*—ran a series titled "Javakhk: The Wonderful Homeland of an Agonized Nation." The series was published prior to a variety of events that took place under the title "Days of Javakhk." The series could be found on www.aztagdaily.com.

Javakheti region while respecting Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. One example of such a policy became apparent when in April 2002 an Armenian delegation paid a fact-finding visit to Javakheti in the company of Georgian officials. The delegation recommended to Javakheti Armenians to not request autonomy, but self-administration within Georgia.[175]

When Mikhail Saakashvili came to power in 2003, almost immediately he started addressing the issue of Armenian population of Georgia. In March 2004 Saakashvili paid an official visit to Yerevan where he discussed—among other issues—cooperation of Armenian and Georgian governments to alleviate the dire socio-economic conditions of the region.[176] Another important development for Armenians in Georgia has been the broadcast of Georgian television in Armenian, which began in December 2004 and showed the goodwill that the new Georgian administration had towards its Armenian population.[177] During the same month, Saakashvili visited Akhalkalaki, where after meeting with local families, he declared:

> Next year we are starting the implementation of a big project, the construction of the Tbilisi-Akhalkalaki road. [...] It will be one of the main projects of my presidency. This region needs to be integrated and linked to the main transit routes, to the capital of Georgia. People should be integrated into Georgia both economically and politically.[178]

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[175] "Armenia Adjusting Regional Politics," *Jamestown Foundation's Eurasia Monitor* 8, no. 72 (April 12, 2002).

[176] "Presidents Discuss Problems of Georgia's Armenian Community," *Arminfo News Agency*, March 14, 2004.

[177] "Georgian Television Starts Broadcast in Armenian," *Arminfo News Agency*, December 23, 2004.

[178] "President Saakashvili Visits Ethnic Armenians in Southern Georgia," *Imedi TV reported by BBC Monitoring International Reports*, December 28, 2004.

While these and similar steps taken by Saakashvili have diffused tension for the short

run, the fate of the region remains in the balance and attached to the long-term policies of

Tbilisi, not only towards the region but also the overall development of the country.

Armenians in Abkhazia: Between a rock and a hard place

Abkhazia hosts a large Armenian population that has considered the region home

for over a century.[179] With the outbreak of the Abkhaz-Georgian conflict in 1992, the

Armenian population of Abkhazia mostly chose to remain and was integrated into the

political process of the separatist Abkhaz Republic.[180] Even though Armenians in Tbilisi

called on their ethnic kin in Abkhazia to refrain from fighting against Georgia, many

ethnic Georgians—especially refugees from Abkhazia—harbored anti-Armenian

sentiments because they regarded the Armenians of Abkhazia as supporting the separatist

Abkhaz.[181]

The countries faced a major crisis over Abkhazia in October 2000, when an

Armenian foreign ministry delegation visited the breakaway republic to conduct talks

with Abkhaz officials concerning the condition of over 70,000 Armenians living there.[182]

The visit raised concerns in Georgia and became a diplomatic row between the two

countries when Georgian government officials and parliamentarians claimed that they

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[179] While estimates vary and demographics is a highly politicized endeavor, it is widely believed that the Armenian community of Abkhazia is the second larges group after the Abkhaz numbering about 60,000.
[180] An Armenian military battalion named "Marshal Baghramian" was in operation during the initial years of the conflict. Eventually, in 1996, the battalion was disbanded. Subsequently, the main organization representing the Armenians in Abkhazia has been a charitable organization named "Krunk."
[181] "Armenians in Tbilisi Appeal to Armenians in Abkhazia," *BBC SWB (SU/1019/B/ 1)*, March 13, 1991.
[182] See "Delegation visits Abkhazia to Discuss 'Working Issues'," *BBC SWB (SU/D3996/F)*, November 13, 2000.

were not notified of the visit, while the Armenian side asserted that it had.[183] While this

visit showed the extent to which Tbilisi was sensitive about its territorial integrity and

that it would not accept that Armenia—or for that matter any other country—bypass

Tbilisi to interact with Abkhazia, it also revealed Yerevan's interests in looking after the

Armenian communities of Georgia.[184] In recent years, however, the Armenian presence

in Abkhazia has taken a new turn. Local Abkhaz sentiments have gradually begun to turn

against the Armenian population for various reasons. As a result of a demographic shift

in the breakaway region where, according to several figures, the Armenian population

outnumbers the Abkhaz, apprehension was created in some Abkhaz circles and mistrust

in others.[185]

Setting aside the issue of the Armenian community in Abkhazia, Armenia's

interest in the breakaway republic remains high because of its Soviet-era rail link that

connects Armenia with Russia. The economic and transport importance of this railway

are tremendous, since its operation could significantly decrease transportation costs of

goods to and from Armenia. However, if one looks at this issue within the context of the

Georgian-Abkhazian conflict, the reopening of this rail link is dependent on many

factors. On one hand, a reason for Georgia to not be enthusiastic about this link is the

possibility that it might enable the Russian army to transport personnel through Georgian

territory, while on the other hand the opening of the railway could be a medium for

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[183] Ibid.

[184] Yerevan's interest in the condition of Armenians in Abkhazia goes back to the early days of the conflict between the Abkhaz and Georgians. See for instance "Yerevan Concerned about Armenians in Georgia," *BBC SWB (SU/1473/C1/ 1)*, August 31, 1992.

[185] For a detailed discussion of local Abkhaz politics and the role of Armenian and anti-Armenian sentiments, see Alexander Skakov, "Abkhazia at a Crossroads: On the Domestic Political Situation in the Republic of Abkhazia," *Iran and the Caucasus* 9, no. 1 (2005): 159-186.

Georgia to increase its presence and influence in Abkhazia through trade and communication. This issue has been on the agenda between Armenia and Georgia for several years now, and in various meetings between government representatives from both countries the reopening of the rail link is constantly discussed but with no headway made.[186]

The Armenian presence in Abkhazia has a dual impact on Armenian-Georgian relations. On the one hand, the continued existence of a large Armenian community in Abkhazia fuels speculation that the Armenians have cooperated with the Abkhaz against the Georgians, which in turn has an impact on the relations between the two states. On the other hand, Armenia is in a unique position to act as a mediator between the Abkhaz and the Georgians to find a compromise that would end the conflict between the two nations. In the unlikely event that Armenian mediation does bear fruit, the possibilities of bilateral state relations developing into levels of close cooperation could increase tremendously.

Geopolitical realities versus the burden of history

After independence, both Georgia and Armenia pursued an active policy of independence, relying on regional and international powers. From the start, it was apparent that both countries were moving in different directions. Whereas Georgia abruptly severed its relations with Russia and pursued a pro-West, anti-Russia policy,

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[186] When in 2004 President Kocharian paid an official visit to Tbilisi, the reopening of the railway was one of the major topics discussed between him and President Saakashvili; however, nothing conclusive was agreed upon. See "Armenian Leader Urges Georgian Counterpart to Open Railway via Abkhazia," *Mediamax News Agency*, October 22, 2004.

Armenia's foreign policy remained confined by Russia's strategic policies in the region and hence conciliatory and appeasing to Moscow's initiatives.

The Russian strategic interests in the Caucasus (both north and south) have led to the creation of a view in Georgia that Moscow is a protector of Armenia in the latter's war against Azerbaijan and that it simultaneously attempts to weaken Georgian statehood by supporting the various separatist movements there. This view of Armenians being Russia's pawns has helped create an atmosphere of mistrust between Georgia and Armenia based largely on the premise that Armenia is a fifth column for the Russians in the region.

Both countries' relations with and attitudes toward Russia have historical roots and can be explained by the burden of history carried by both countries. On the one hand, for Georgia, relations with Russia, especially in the last two centuries, has been full of grievances—beginning with the Russian annexation of the last Georgian Kingdom, down to the Russian discriminatory policies toward the Georgians. On the other hand, Armenians have historically viewed Russia as a savior protecting them from Turkish onslaught.

As for the relations of Georgia and Armenia with their other influential neighbor, Turkey, a dichotomy is also apparent. Turkey represents a link to the West for Georgia, which tries to counterbalance the influence of its northern neighbor, Russia, by forging close relations and cooperation agreements with as many Western institutions and governments as possible. This in turn has raised concerns in Armenia where many politicians view Georgian-Turkish military cooperation as an attempt to isolate Armenia

in the region and has pushed Yerevan to develop closer ties with Russia to balance, what

Armenia perceives as, a shift in the geopolitical equilibrium in the region.

It is apparent that Georgia and Armenia have different, if not contradictory,

foreign and domestic policy priorities. In a multi-ethnic region, already ravaged by war

and regional rivalries, there are possibilities that Georgian-Armenian relations could turn

sour, and both could face a Karabakh syndrome in southern Georgia. While recently there

has been a decrease in the tension level between the two nations, it is apparent that

Georgia does not view Armenia as its main regional partner; rather it regards Armenia as

a country with which it has "pragmatic cooperation in all fields which are of mutual

interest."[187]

For its part, Armenia realizes that it needs to be understanding of the Georgian

government's attempts to extend its authority to the various parts of the war-torn

Republic. Yerevan has shown much tact in dealing with this issue, and bilateral

agreements have provided venues for the Armenian government to supply social,

economic, cultural, and educational assistance to Armenians in Georgia. These steps have

decreased some of the pressure on Tbilisi and rendered it possible for the two

governments to keep open lines of communication.

While Georgia and Armenia stand on opposing sides of many issues and regard

the roles of various countries in the region differently, they have nevertheless developed

cordial relations. Georgian-Armenian cooperation, based on mutual respect and

understanding of each other's priorities, could be a catalyst for regional stability as well

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[187] "National Security Concept Finalized," *Civil Georgia*, May 15, 2005.

as the basis for solving many of the ethnic conflicts and separatist movements in the
South Caucasus. The challenge for both countries is to look beyond the obvious and
transcend nationalist fervor that could easily hold both countries hostage, further
destabilizing the region.

Which Way Now?

Undoubtedly Georgia's "Rose Revolution" had a tremendous impact on the
country not only domestically but also regionally and internationally. After Saakashvili's
ascension to power, Tbilisi showed signs of continuity as well as departure from
Shevardnadze's policies. The Russian factor in Georgia's foreign policy, while always at
the top of Tbilisi's agenda, was handled differently by Saakashvili and his administration.

Shevardnadze—as part of the Soviet-era nomenklatura—had always approached
issues facing Georgia in a conciliatory method, which in turn did not allow him to break
the deadlock within the country—as was the case of Ajaria—as well as with its northern
neighbor. Saakashvili on the other hand has been able to break free from the tit-for-tat
strategies of dealing with Ajaria and Russia. The major impetus that allowed Tbilisi to
remove some of the domestic constraints influencing its foreign policy has been the wave
of popular support through which the new and younger administration of Saakashvili
came to power.

The timing of Saakashvili's election and the standoff with Ajaria—which were in
close proximity—showed Tbilisi's ability to use popular support to bring a defiant region

back under its control. By extension, the standoff in Ajaria was also a litmus test for the views and approaches that Moscow had towards the new Georgian administration. By not supporting the Ajarian leadership, Russia sent signals that it would not interfere in Georgia's domestic issues; at least not as directly or as much as it did in the 1990s with the conflict in Abkhazia.

The change in Georgia's leadership—from Gamsakhurdia to Shevardnadze to Saakashvili—also triggered changes in foreign policy orientation. Thus while the development of anti-Russian sentiments dictated the first post-Soviet Georgian administration, Shevardnadze showed a more balanced approach. Throughout most of the 1990s, Georgia's foreign policy gravitated in the same direction as Gamsakhurdia intended it (i.e., towards the West). However, Shevardnadze's approach was to integrate Georgia with the West without antagonizing Russia, something that the Gamsakhurdia regime was either unable or unwilling to do. With Saakashvili in power, Tbilisi seemed to continue an overall balanced policy but with an increasing Western tilt.

It should be mentioned that the reason why Georgia's Western overtures are being answered is not solely a factor of the individuals making the policies in Tbilisi. A very important aspect for the increased importance that Georgia has been receiving, especially by the West, is the realization of the various regional and international projects pertaining to energy transport from Central Asia and the Caspian to Europe, and the vital link that Georgia plays in that transport. Georgia's geographic location is benefiting the country tremendously, and it is the reason why the West has finally showed keen interest in Georgia. However, Georgia's geography is a blessing mixed with some curse. The

proximity of the country to the troubled regions of the North Caucasus and the continued Russian crackdown on any attempted secession in that region would clearly involve Georgia in one way or another. This in turn has taught the Georgian leadership to oppose but not antagonize Russia.

Regionally speaking, Georgia has already made its strategic priorities clear. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline is very much an Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey alliance with long-term cooperation in mind. This in turn puts Tbilisi in an alliance, which is viewed at best as an opposing camp and at worst an enemy camp, by its northern and southern neighbors. The continued presence of Armenian communities in southern Georgia, Abkhazia, and Tbilisi has made cooperation with Armenia and Armenians in Georgia a "pragmatic" issue. While the two countries have diverging interests and priorities, their leadership has been pragmatic enough to try to diffuse any tension between the two states.

Although major changes and promises have raised hopes for this South Caucasus Republic to become part of Western institutions and structures, such as NATO or the EU, Georgia's trek westward is a long one and full of surprises. The fine balance of power in the region could be easily disturbed, and Georgia might suddenly find itself left alone. In order to avoid that, it is of paramount importance for Georgians to remember the past but not be influenced by it, and look at the future with renewed sense of pragmatism.

EPILOGUE

The examination of foreign policy strategies of Armenia and Georgia in this work has focused mainly on their security issues. However in an ever-changing international system, the concept of security is also in flux. Security in the late 20th and early 21st centuries is not defined exclusively by military, but also economic, cultural, and social security-cornerstones of small-state nationalism.

Since independence in 1991, the basic parameters defining both Armenia's and Georgia's foreign policies have been conditioned by an obsession to preserve and strengthen their sovereignty. This task, however, has been seriously undermined by the fact that both countries are surrounded by larger countries whom they perceive as enemies. In a situation such as this, bearing in mind that small states are unable to influence regional and international political changes, alliances offer the best alternative. Nevertheless alliances themselves can be multifaceted and offer different dynamics; they can be symmetrical where the allies are of equal strength, or asymmetrical where one of the allies dominates the partnership.

In the case of symmetrical alliances, the chances of state sovereignty remaining intact are better since the strength of the allies is equal. While in the case of large state-small state alliances, the smaller partner almost always loses at least some of its sovereignty, the added value for a small state aligning with a stronger neighbor is the security provided by the alliance. For many small states, especially ones in a state of war or surrounded by enemies—perceived or real, guarantees of survival are more important

than sovereignty. Thus alliances are often based on a tradeoff or exchange of security and sovereignty. It is such a tradeoff that accounts for a prevalence of asymmetric alliance ties involving states of different power status than symmetric alliance bonds involving states of similar power. Thus, an asymmetric alliance is a contract in which a major power, or superpower, takes the responsibility for a minor power's security by pledging support in the event of military conflict. In return, the stronger power gains influence over the minor power's foreign and economic policy decision-making processes.[1]

As argued in chapter three Armenia's alliance with Russia conforms to the classic understanding of why small states seek alliances with greater powers. The alliance exists to increase small state-security on the basis of major power guarantees to protect their territories and populations against aggression. By contrast, major powers, find interest in alliances with minor powers not so much to defend their own territories and populations but to expand their foreign policy influence or deny such influence to other states; hence, Russia's desire to protect its backyard from Western, Iranian or Turkish influence and penetration.

In the case of Georgia, chapter four argues that seeking alliances with Western powers, especially with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), offers better chances for Tbilisi to maintain its independence and sovereignty. This view stems from the fact that as NATO's character is more mixed and multilateral, Georgia can preserve its autonomy and exert more influence than if it was in an alliance dominated by a single

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[1] See for instance James D. Morrow, "Alliances and Asymmetry: An Alternative to the Capability Aggregation Model of Alliances," *American Journal of Political Science* 35, no. 4 (November 1991): 904-933 and Scott D. Bennett, "Testing Alternative Models of Alliance Duration, 1816-1984," *American Journal of Political Science* 41, no. 3 (July 1997): 846-878.

great power. In other words, NATO membership can enhance the status of the state's sovereign equality in the international community.

In more pluralistic alliances, such as NATO, a small state commanding more influence is a trend. This is reinforced when the alliance is composed of democratic states reinforcing the peaceful solution of conflicts among member nations. Such alliances offer more deterrence and defense; the possibility that the alliance is little more than a facade for the great power's policies is diminished, while the small power's potential for influencing alliance decision-making is likely to increase in a situation of diffused power. Larger membership means increased bargaining, more compromise, and greater opportunity for the small state to express itself effectively, as well as more opportunity for acting as a balancing force within the alliance.[2] Thus the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is generally dominated by Russia, rendering it almost impossible for Armenia or Georgia—or any other member state—to counterweigh Moscow's predominance in that organization. In the case of NATO, the presence of many countries in the alliance helps neutralize the power of the larger ones, allowing the smaller states more maneuverability in terms of devising and implementing policies within the alliance.[3]

Another foreign policy strategy for small states such as Armenia and Georgia to safeguard their independence and security is participation in international and regional organizations. This strategy has two main components: firstly such structures provide forums for interaction with other states, and secondly—similar to multilateral alliances—

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[2] See Robert L. Rothstein, *Alliances and Small Powers* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 124.
[3] Ibid.

international and regional organizations act as conduits for smaller states to internationalize their security concerns. Hence it is not surprising that international organizations occupy a significant place in the security policies of Armenia and Georgia

Moreover, the role of international and regional organizations has grown since the end of the Cold War due to the rebirth of old organizations and the formation of new ones. As seen in the case of Georgia and Armenia in this work, with the help of international organizations, small states are able to more widely utilize legal and moral norms in order to have an effect on other members of the international system.

There is also an important dilemma facing small states regarding their participation in international organizations. It develops between the organization's effective functioning and the equality of its members. If all states in an organization have equal status, it cannot be expected that it will be strong and vigorous. Likewise a strong and vigorous international organization will be forced not to consider specific interests of its small member states.[4]

Surrounded by larger neighbors in a volatile geographic location, Armenia and Georgia have had to overcome serious challenges to build their state institutions, as noted in chapters 3 and 4. For both countries the trouble of formulating foreign policy has been dictated by a necessity of balancing national interests, regional upheaval, and the burden of history. The "emotional baggage" of collective memory in both countries has had a hand in political struggles reflected in both the domestic and international policies pursued, driving Armenia more towards Russia and Georgia away. Conflict over foreign

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[4] See Niels Amstrup, "The Perennial Problems of Small States: A Survey of Research Efforts," *Cooperation and Conflict* 11, no. 4 (1976): 172.

policy, influenced by history's legacy (oftentimes leading to small-state nationalism) and the demands of realist foreign policy emphasizing security, is reconciled, at least in the case of Georgia and Armenia, in their alliance choices. Armenia's historically positive disposition towards Russia is manifested in its participation in Russian-dominated alliances, ensuring its safety from real and perceived threats to its existence as a state; on the other hand, Georgia's historical weariness of Russia facilitates its overtures to Western institutions and states.

Internal developments in regional players hold the possibility of lessening the burden of memory in Armenian and Georgia, correspondingly leading to the waning of small-state nationalism in those countries and a revision of policy choices. Specifically in mind here is the gradual softening of Ankara towards the 'Ermeni Sorunu,' or the ill-defined Armenian Question, encompassing political, historical, and economic ramifications; the establishment of formal relations with the Republic of Armenia, the possibility of Genocide recognition, and an open border facilitating inter-state commerce between the two countries will go a long ways towards changing mutual perceptions of distrust. Should the above occur, as it must in connection with Turkey's EU bid, the persistent presence of the enemy Turk will not dictate domestic and foreign policy in Armenia, or at the very least diminish the nationalistic hold on. The attempted isolation of Tehran by the United States may also engender domestic changes in Iran, possibly being reflected in future policy directions.

Until that point, entirely likely given the revisionist tendencies of some powerful states, Armenia and Georgia remain hostage to limited and limiting foreign policy

choices. As long as hegemonic power politics and small-state paranoia persist, security

demands will maintain its position atop the priorities list.

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————. *The Survival of Small States: Studies in Small Power/Great Power Conflict.* London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1971.

Wallace, William. *Foreign Policy and the Political Process.* London, Macmillan, 1971.

CURRICULUM VITAE
Asbed Kotchikian

Education

Ph.D. Department of Political Science, 2006
BOSTON UNIVERSITY, Boston MA
Dissertation: The Dialectics of Small States: Foreign Policy Making in the South Caucasus

Masters of Arts. Department of Political Science, 2000
BOSTON UNIVERSITY, Boston MA

Bachelor of Arts in Political Science
Department of Political Science and Public Administration, 1995
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT, Beirut Lebanon

Teaching Experience

Visiting Assistant Professor of Political Science, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Geneva NY, 2005-06
'Politics in the Middle East'
'Introduction to International Relations'
'Introduction to Comparative Politics'
'Small States in the International System'
'Ethnic and Racial Conflicts'

Instructor of Political Science, Wheaton College, Norton MA, 2003-04
'Modern Political History of the Middle East'
'Introduction to Comparative Politics'

Visiting Lecturer in International Relations, American University of Armenia,
Yerevan, Republic of Armenia, Spring 2001
'Historical Developments in International Relations'

Visiting Lecturer in International Relations, Yerevan State University,
Republic of Armenia, 2000-02
'International Political Systems through History'
'Introduction to Comparative Politics'
'History and Development of Parliamentary Systems'
'The Changing Face of Post-Soviet Eurasia'

Visiting Lecturer, Riga Stradina University, Riga, Latvia, Winter 2001
'Competing Theories of International Relations'

Visiting Lecturer in International Relations, Yerevan State Brusov University,
Republic of Armenia. 2000-02
'The Image of American Politics'
'Theories of International Relations'

Instructor. Boston University, Department of political science, Boston MA
Summer 1999 & 2000
'International Political Systems'

Teaching Assistant. Boston University, Department of political science. Boston, MA.
1999-2000
'Introduction to International Relations'

Publications

Book Chapters
'Secular Nationalism versus Political Islam in Azerbaijan.' In *Unmasking Terror*, ed.
Christopher Heffelfinger, 386-390. Washington DC: The Jamestown Foundation, 2005.

'Between (home)Land and (host)Land: Armenians in Lebanon and the Republic of
Armenia.' Forthcoming 2006-07

In Journals
'The Dialectics of Smallness: State-Making in the South Caucasus,' *The Armenian
Journal of Public Policy* 3, no. 1 (September 2006). Forthcoming

'From Post-Soviet Studies to Armenianology,' *Demokratizatsya* 14, no.2 (Spring 2006).

'The Perceived Roles of Russia and Turkey in the Georgian Foreign Policy,' *Insight
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'Georgian-Armenian Relations: Between Old and New,' *Central Asia and the Caucasus*,
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Articles in Newspaper and Online Publications
'Politics in Armenia: A Thorny 'Revolution' in the Making?' *Armenian News Network*,
April 5, 2004.

'Election Turmoil and Post-election Trauma in Georgia,' *Armenian News Network*,
November 24, 2003.

'Academia and National Interest: Can They Be Reconciled?' *Armenian News Network*, September 1, 2003.

'Armenian Socialism: Which Way Now?' *Armenian Weekly* 69, no. 34 (August 23, 2003): 2.

'Armenian Foreign Policy: Between State and Nation,' *Armenian News Network*, August 12, 2003.

'Remembering the Past, Inventing the Future: Armenian Political Parties in Search of Doctrines,' *Armenian Weekly* 69, no. 32 (August 9, 2003): 2.

'Armenia: The Post-2003 Elections Trauma,' *Armenian Freedom Network*, July 23, 2003.

'The Power of Small (Georgia) Over Smaller (Armenia),' *Armenian News Network*, July 15, 2003.

'Neither Friends nor Enemies: Armenian-Georgian Relations,' *Armenian News Network*, July 7, 2003.

'The Armenian Diaspora: In Search of a New Outlook,' *Armenian News Network*, July 1, 2003.

'Crime without Punishment: The Case of the Russian Mafia,' *Armenian Weekly* 66, no. 1 (January 1, 2000): 8.

'Is Russia Different?' *Armenian Weekly* 66, no. 5 (January 29, 2000): 8-9.

Encyclopedia Entries
Entries on historic events and people in Armenia and Georgia, *Modern Encyclopedia of Russian, Soviet, and Eurasian History*, Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press. 2003-2004. (2-3 pages each)

Country reports for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Lebanon, and Syria. *World of Information*, London. September 2003. (4 pages each)

Book Reviews
Caucasus Chronicles: Nation-Building and Diplomacy in Armenia, 1993-1994 by Leonidas Chrysanthopoulos. *Journal of Armenian Studies* 8, no. 1 (Fall-Winter 2004).

Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan Through Peace and War by Thomas de Waal. *Journal of Armenian Studies* 8, no. 1 (Fall-Winter 2004).

Small Nations and Great Powers: A Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus by Svante E. Cornell. *Journal of Armenian Studies* 8, no. 1 (Fall-Winter 2004).

Conferences

'Analyzing the Foreign Policy of Small States,' 4th annual conference of Armenian International Policy Research Group, World Bank, Washington DC, January 16-17, 2006

'Iran in Regional and International Context,' 13th International Conference on Central Asia and the Caucasus, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, November 7-8, 2005

'Between (home)Land and (host)Land: Armenians in Lebanon and the Republic of Armenia,' Haigazian University 50th anniversary conference, Beirut, Lebanon, September 13-15, 2005

'Border Politics: The Political implications of Opening the Turkish-Armenian Border,' 3rd annual conference of Armenian International Policy Research Group, World Bank, Washington DC, January 14-15, 2005

'Small and New States in the Post-Soviet Space: The Caucasus in a New World Order,' Armenia/South Caucasus and Foreign Policy Challenges Conference, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, October 21-24, 2004

'The Making of Foreign Policy in Post-Soviet Armenia and Georgia,' International Research and Exchange Board (IREX), Caucasus Regional Policy Symposium, Washington DC, March 25-28, 2004

'One Country's Enemy is Another One's Ally: The Perceived Roles of Russia and Turkey in Georgian and Armenian Foreign Policies,' Graduate Student Colloquium in Armenian Studies, University of California Los Angeles, February 18-21, 2004

'The Domestic and Regional Dynamics of Georgian Foreign Policy,' Central Eurasian Studies Society Conference, Harvard University, October 2-5, 2003
'The Geopolitics of the Caucasus in a New World Order,' Central Eurasian Studies Society Conference, University of Wisconsin, Madison, October 17-20, 2002

'The Caucasus between East and West,' Caucasus: Ethnic Relations, Human Rights, Geopolitics, Tbilisi, Republic of Georgia, October 20-22, 2001

'Issues of National Identity in the Countries of the Caucasus,' Europe 1000–2000: A thousand years of civitas, communitas et universitas, Central European University, Budapest, Hungary, April 27-29, 2001

Guest Lectures

'Armenia and Armenians: Modern Challenges,' Hoosk Armenian Center, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, November 9, 2005

'Georgian-Armenian Relations through the Prism of their Foreign Policies,' Haigazian University, Beirut Lebanon, January 12, 2004

'Armenian-Georgian Relations: Between Old and New,' National Association of Armenian Studies and Research, Belmont MA, December 4, 2003

'Making Sense of the Current Crises in Georgia,' Harvard University's Central Asia and the Caucasus Working Group, Cambridge MA, November 17, 2003

'Issues of Nationalism and Identity in the Caucasus,' Tbilisi State University, Republic of Georgia, October 2001

'Lobbying and Lobby Groups in the U.S.,' Hrachya Ajaryan University, Republic of Armenia, April 2001

'The Making of National Identity in the post-Soviet Caucasus,' American University of Armenia, Yerevan, April 2001

'The Czech Experience of Economic Transition and Privatization,' Gumri Institute for Finance and Economy Lecture Series, Republic of Armenia, Fall 2000

Administrative Experience

Conference and Workshop Organization
Organizing committee member. *Central Eurasian Studies Society Annual Conference.* Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. October 2003. In charge of organizing and grouping the conference presentations into panels, reviewing and accepting paper abstracts, and handling logistical issues

Workshop organizer and presenter. *Freedom Support Act Mid-level Educators Program.* The International Research and Exchange Board (IREX), workshop on US academia. Yerevan, Republic of Armenia. February 2002

Workshop organizer. *Freedom Support Act Contemporary Issues Fellowship Program.* IREX workshops on writing résumés and statements of purpose. Yerevan, Republic of Armenia. November 2001

Co-organizer. *Youth Forum of the Caucasus*. Civic Education Project regional conference/workshop. Yerevan, Republic of Armenia. May 3-6, 2001. Assisted in putting together a program on capacity building and youth activism, and dealt with logistics for over 200 participants

Co-organizer. '*Higher Education in the West.*' Workshop on higher education systems and opportunities in Europe and the United States. Yerevan, Republic of Armenia. November 2000

Business Manager. Hairenik Association, Inc. In charge of daily operations for publishing two newspapers, managing a bookstore, and increasing sales. Watertown, MA. 1998-1999

Organizer. *Middle Eastern Student and Youth Organizations' Workshop*. A regional student and youth workshop in the Middle East on political education and activism. Beirut, Lebanon. February 1997

Academic Consultancies and Other
Selection committee member. *Junior Faculty Development Program*. American Councils for International Education ACTR-ACCELS. Yerevan, Republic of Armenia. August 2005

Instructor and coach for Wheaton College. *Harvard National Model United Nations*. Wheaton College, Norton, MA. September 2003-February 2004

Selection committee member. *The International Research and Exchange Board (IREX), Regional Scholar Exchange Program*. Yerevan, Republic of Armenia. March 2002

Selection committee member. *IREX, Alumni Small Grants Program*. Yerevan, Armenia. February 2002

Consultant/interviewer. *Edmund S. Muskie and Freedom Support Act Fellowship Program*. American Councils for International Education ACTR-ACCELS. Yerevan, Republic of Armenia. February 2002

Selection committee member. *Junior Faculty Development Program*. American Councils for International Education ACTR-ACCELS. Yerevan, Republic of Armenia. December 2000

Selection committee member. *3rd Annual Student Conference in the Trans-Caucasus*. Civic Education Project. Tbilisi, Republic of Georgia. October 2000

Honors & Awards

Judge Institute of Management, Cambridge University. Research fellow. Cambridge UK, 2004

Armenian Relief Society Yeremian Scholarship. Tuition award for graduate student in Armenian studies and for services within the Armenian community of Boston, 1999-2000

Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU). Tuition award for most promising undergraduate student in Social Sciences. Beirut Lebanon, 1994-95.

Calousde Gulbenkian Foundation. Tuition award for a promising researcher in social sciences. Lisbon Portugal, 1993-95.

Other Professional Experiences

Book Research Assistant and Indexing. Libaridian, Gerard J. *Modern Armenia: People, Nation, State.* New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2003

Database Management. Mafqud.org. A Web site containing a database of people disappeared in Iraq in the last two decades. Cambridge MA. 2002

Book Indexing. Gerring, John. *Social Science Methodology: A Critical Framework.* Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2001

Book Indexing and Research. Clemens, Walter C. *America and the World, 1898-2025: Achievements, Failures, Alternative Futures.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000

Webmaster. Boston University, Political Science Department. Boston, MA. 1999-2000

Professional Membership

Central Eurasian Studies Society, Cambridge MA, 2000-present
American Political Science Association, 2001-present
Society for Armenian Studies, 2003-present

Language Proficiency

Arabic, Armenian (Eastern and Western): Fluent
French: Intermediate knowledge
Russian, Turkish and Farsi: Basic knowledge