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NOTE FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Eventful few months in the Caucasus, Russia and wider Eurasia precede our Spring 2010 issue. Of course, the dramatic civic upheaval in Kyrgyzstan, the suicide bomb attacks in the Moscow metro and the victory of a more pro-Russian leader in Ukraine's presidential elections top the list.

In the meantime, the Turkish–Armenian thaw appears to be at the deadlock. Armenia has suspended the process following Ankara's insistence that Yerevan works first to find a sustainable solution to the Karabakh problem, something for which Baku has been repeatedly calling. For its part, Azerbaijan's government has serious concerns that by overemphasizing the protocols and not considering Baku's position, Armenia and the West are thus ignoring the Karabakh issue. At a historic summit in Baku attended by religious leaders from around the world, including Catholicos Garegin II, head of the Armenian Apostolic Church, calls for a peaceful solution have emerged. The need for all nations concerned to heed these calls is great.

Russia's role, as usual, is of utmost interest. Despite the domestic strife, Prime Minister Putin has been busy of late, with trips to Austria and Italy to ensure support for the South Stream gas pipeline project, which could be at odds with the Nabucco one and further increase Russia's influence over supplying Europe with energy. Russia on the rise in Europe perhaps signals greater difficulty for Georgia, particularly in terms of resolving the conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Without measures to fix the internal stalemates, Georgia's westward drive will forever hang in the balance. Perhaps the opening of the Zemo/Verkhny Lars border crossing between Russia and Georgia is a move toward some sort of reconciliation, at least with regard to rebuilding vital trade links if not on initiating dialogue with its northern neighbor.

Our Spring issue includes some topics that offer a slightly different perspective. We look at some of the underlying causes of the significant changes. We display work that keeps the larger picture fully in mind while still offering deeper analyses of political, economic and social issues, many of which have the sort of bottom-up effect that drives large-scale action.

On Russia's political maneuvering, we have one paper that explores the effects of authoritarian tendencies on foreign policy and sheds light on the leadership's calculated drive to remain a major player on the world stage.

As such, Russia's energy politics are as important to counties in the former Soviet space as to those in the EU, and a second paper analyses this issue in view of alternatives to Russian energy resources and warning against overdependence of EU on Russia for energy needs.

Despite all the diversification rhetoric, the EU is still struggling to achieve a unity as far as its energy relations with Russia are concerned. It is widely understood that without a clear-cut strategy and the willingness to implement this strategy, it will be impossible to reach any energy diversification in the EU. We present in this regard a paper that adroitly explains the current situation and assesses the prospects of EU's common energy security policy.

Another paper analyzes the implications of the Georgia-Russia war of 2008 for the region and beyond, and tries to rigorously assess whether it could lead to a new cold war in the region.

New geopolitical realities of the South Caucasus are illuminated by a commentary.

An interview with a recognized expert from the City University of New York examines the pressing issues of state-building in Georgia.

Kazakhstan is also in the spotlight after assuming the OSCE chairmanship, and is now in charge of dealing with the Kyrgyzstan's turmoil. Thus another paper looks at civic nation-building in the country, which speaks to Kazakhstan's drive to show a strong, unified front to the international community.

We hope these contributions cast light on affairs in a meaningful way. Moreover, we thank all of our readers, authors, reviewers and staff once again. Enjoy the Spring 2010 edition!

RUSSIAN ENERGY POLITICS AND THE EU: HOW TO CHANGE THE PARADIGM

Vladimer Papava* & Michael Tokmazishvili**

Abstract

The article discusses Russia's aggressive energy policy towards the EU and the former Soviet republics, with its main goal of reinforcing the country's monopoly over the transportation of oil and, especially, gas to the West. The language of "alternative pipelines" is used by Russia in the context of the "Pipeline Cold War" paradigm which creates significant problems for the energy safety of the EU by increasing the energy dependency of European countries upon Russia. In reality, the energy resource users are interested in a systematic supply of these resources. This can be achieved through the diversified resource producers and development of a mutually supplementary network of pipelines which should minimise the opportunity for using the energy resources for political purposes. This is the idea upon which the "Pipeline Harmonisation" paradigm is founded. The Western countries have a key role to play in the realisation of this idea.

Keywords: *Russian energy politics, EU's energy dependency, alternative pipelines, pipeline cold war, energy supply harmonisation*

Introduction

With the growing demand, the supply of natural gas to the EU countries is becoming a subject of hot debates. More than 80 percent of oil and approximately 60 percent of natural gas consumed in the EU are imported. Furthermore, imports of energy resources have noticeably and steadily increased over the last years. The EU's energy dependency in 2008 accounted for 53 percent.¹ Russia's share in the structure of the EU's growing energy imports has been significant such as, for example, in 2008 when Russian oil imports to EU countries accounted for 33 percent of all EU oil imports and the share of Russian natural gas reached as much as 40 percent of all imports.²

The growth of the EU's dependence on Russian energy resources has been exploited by the Russian leadership as an effective tool for putting political pressure not only upon the EU members but also upon the countries whose territories are crossed by the energy transportation routes such as Belarus and Ukraine.

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¹ Europe's Energy Portal, "Energy Dependency," Europe's Energy Portal, <http://www.energy.eu/#CO2> (accessed February, 25, 2010).

² Ibid.

In this context, searching for and the development of all potential (i.e., not only Russian) sources of oil and natural gas and ways for their supply to EU countries has become an issue of particular importance.³

Paradigm of the “Pipeline Cold War”

One of the most significant deposits of hydrocarbons are those located in the Caspian region and, in particular, the countries of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. It is important to note that any energy resources located beyond Russian territory, which in principle could be supplied to the West, have been modified by adjectives like “alternative.” This kind of language, consciously or unconsciously, presents a reflection of confrontation between Russia and the rest of the world on energy related issues. This very controversy became a starting point for the emergence of “pipeline confrontation”—or even of “Pipeline Cold War”—between different countries of the EU and Russia and even between different countries of the EU itself. The same controversy prompted some countries or groups of countries in the EU to forget and even disregard the interests of the other EU countries and to develop their own individual plans for the transportation of natural gas from Russia.⁴

By means of stereotypical mentality, this very idea of alternativeness has also been extended to the pipelines. In relation to the Russian pipelines of the western direction, the label of “alternative pipelines” has been attached to those which cross the territories of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey; namely, the pipelines Baku-Tbilisi-Supsa (BTS), Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) and the South Caucasian Pipeline (SCP). The accuracy of such an evaluation, however, becomes questionable if one takes into account the fact that the quantity of oil transported through those pipelines does not make up more than ten percent of the oil exports from Russia. With respect to the natural gas transported through the SCP, the situation is even worse. Its capacity accounts for just two percent of the Russian natural gas exports. Consequently, neither the BTS and the BTC pipelines nor the SCP could be regarded as a good alternative to the Russian pipelines.

Russia has done a lot for inciting the “Pipeline Cold War” and its motivation is more than apparent. One expert, for instance, does not exclude the possibility of Russia restoring the empire, although not in the classical way by means of seizing territory, but by using so-called neo-imperialistic mechanisms based primarily upon energy policy.⁵ Here we should also note the interconnection in Russian policy in the post-Soviet expanse between energy dependence and political independence when an increase in the first causes a decline in the second.⁶ The purposeful movement towards creating an energy empire is of particular importance to Russia⁷ which is largely based upon Putin’s myth of Russia’s establishment as an “energy superpower.”⁸ As a result, Moscow’s energy policy is

³ For example, Vladimer Papava, Sabit Bagirov, Leonid Grigoriev, Wojciech Paczynski, Marcel Salikhov and Michael Tokmazishvili, “Energy Trade and Cooperation Between the EU and CIS Countries” (CASE Network Reports no. 83, Warsaw: CASE, 2009), http://www.case.com.pl/upload/publikacja_plik/23703888_CNR_83_final.pdf (accessed February, 25, 2010).

⁴ Jeffrey Mankoff, *Eurasian Energy Security* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2009), 38.

⁵ For example, Jan Künzl, “The Caucasus Needs a Rest After the War, Interview with Alexander Rahr,” *Caucasian Review on International Affairs*, vol. 2:4 (2008): 79, <http://cria-online.org/Journal/5/THE%20CAUCASUS%20NEEDS%20A%20REST%20AFTER%20THE%20WAR.pdf> (accessed February, 25, 2010).

⁶ Keith C. Smith, *Russian Energy Politics in the Baltics, Poland, and Ukraine. A New Stealth Imperialism?* (Washington, D.C.: The CSIS Press, 2004), 5-8.

⁷ Fiona Hill, *Energy Empire: Oil, Gas and Russia’s Revival* (London: The Foreign Policy Centre, 2004), <http://fpc.org.uk/fsblob/307.pdf> (accessed February, 25, 2010).

⁸ Lilia Shevtsova, *Russia Lost in Transition: The Yeltsin and Putin Legacies* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2007), 133, 194.

promoting the formation of a new economic imperialism which applies not only to the outside world but also to Russia itself and its domestic economy.⁹ It is also worth regarding Russia's energy strategy in the European vector in this context.¹⁰

Russia has been trying to maintain and strengthen its monopolistic position in a number of directions and, most of all, in relationships with the EU countries.¹¹ Let us recall the events of more than a decade ago when the issue of the transportation of Azerbaijan's early oil exports through Georgian territory was to be decided. At that time, Russia opposed the implementation of the BTS pipeline project and strongly campaigned for dispatching Azerbaijani oil exclusively through the Russian port of Novorossiysk. In view of the limited capacity of this port, owing to harsh climatic conditions as well as the fact that the pipeline route should have crossed the territory or the immediate vicinity of the conflict zone in Chechnya, common sense prevailed and both routes—Russian and Georgian—were chosen as ways for the transportation of early oil exports. As a result, all parties of the project won because the pipelines served as supplements rather than as alternatives of each other. Unfortunately, Russia never admitted this fact and continued its extensive (but abortive) attempts to block the execution of the BTC and the SCP projects.

Not only did the Russian side not want to develop a transportation corridor through Georgia or build pipelines in its territory, it was willing to use every possible means to prevent the implementation of these projects.¹² This evaluation of the Russian position with respect to the transportation of Caspian energy resources through Georgia was confirmed during the Russian-Georgian war in August 2008 when Russian aviation also bombed the direct vicinities of the pipelines which pass through Georgia¹³ and located far from South Ossetia whose protection was supposedly the reason this war was begun. This cast doubt not only upon the security of the transportation corridor through which pipelines pass across Georgian territory¹⁴ but also increased the danger of Azerbaijan losing its economic independence.¹⁵ Fortunately, it did not take long to

⁹ Marshall I. Goldman, "Moscow's New Economic Imperialism," *Current History*, vol. 107:711 October (2008): 322-329; Marshall I. Goldman, *Petrostate: Putin, Power, and the New Russia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 172-176.

¹⁰ Janusz Bugajski, *Expanding Eurasia: Russia's European Ambitions* (Washington, D.C.: The CSIS Press, 2008), 73-80.

¹¹ Janusz Bugajski, "Russia's Pragmatic Reimperialization," *Caucasian Review on International Affairs*, vol. 4:1 (2010): 9, http://cria-online.org/Journal/10/Done_Russias_Pragmatic_Reimperialization_Janusz_Bugajski.pdf (accessed February, 25, 2010).

¹² Steve LeVine, *The Oil and the Glory: The Pursuit of Empire and Fortune on the Caspian Sea* (New York: Random House, 2007); Alexander Rondeli, "Pipelines and Security Dynamics in the Caucasus," *Insight Turkey*, vol. 4:1 (2002); Mamuka Tsereteli, "Beyond Georgia: Russia's Strategic Interests in Eurasia," *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Analyst*, June 11, 2008, <http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/4879> (accessed February, 25, 2010).

¹³ For example, Alexander Jackson, "IA Forum Interview: Vladimer Papava," *International Affairs Forum*, August 14, 2008, <http://ia-forum.org/Content/ViewInternalDocument.cfm?ContentID=6377> (accessed February, 25, 2010).

¹⁴ Stephen F. Jones, "Clash in the Caucasus: Georgia, Russia, and the Fate of South Ossetia," *Origins: Current Events in Historical Perspective*, vol. 2:2 (2008), <http://ehistory.osu.edu/osu/origins/article.cfm?articleid=20> (accessed February, 25, 2010); Jad Mouawad, "Conflict Narrows Oil Options for West," *The New York Times*, August 13, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/14/world/europe/14oil.html> (accessed February, 25, 2010); and John Roberts, "Georgia Falls Victim to Pipeline Politics," *BBC News*, August 12, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/7557049.stm> (accessed February, 25, 2010). It should be noted that one of the goals of the Russian aggression was to create doubt in the security of the pipelines passing through Georgia (Pierre Hassner, "One Cold War Among Many?," *Survival*, vol. 50:4 (2008): 250).

¹⁵ Svante E. Cornell, "War in Georgia, Jitters All Around," *Current History*, vol. 107:711 (October, 2008): 312, <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/publications/2007/0810CH.pdf> (accessed February, 25, 2010); Fariz Ismailzade, "The Georgian-Russian Conflict through the Eyes of Baku," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation, vol. 5:154 (August 12, 2008), http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=33881 (accessed February, 25, 2010).

restore confidence in transporting energy resources through Georgia.¹⁶ In addition, the fact that Moscow was unable to realise its goal of establishing control over these pipelines by military means¹⁷—that is, to fully monopolise the transportation routes of energy resources from the former Soviet Union in the westerly direction¹⁸—prompted the Americans and Europeans to step up their efforts even more in order to find ways to develop alternative routes for transporting oil and gas by circumventing Russia.¹⁹ Ankara, Brussels and Washington, therefore, are particularly interested in raising the security of the existing pipeline system in Azerbaijan and Georgia.²⁰ It is also important that Kazakhstan, despite its close relations with Russia, is also very interested in the security of the transportation corridor passing through Azerbaijan and Georgia.²¹ One way or another, the Caucasian energy corridor is one of the main problems facing the US administration.²² At the same time, many states interested in diversifying the pipeline network have also increased their efforts in this area.²³

Each new gas transportation link can be considered as need of the growing EU market but, at the same time, there is a fear that European energy security will be affected for years to come if Russia builds a strategic new pipeline to Europe; that is, the North European Gas Pipeline (NEGP).²⁴ It will make Russia even more powerful and strengthen its hold over the European gas market. It has the potential to increase the dependence of the EU upon Russia if any other pipelines are not promoted. The key problem for the EU, therefore, is to design more pipelines to meet the countries' permanently growing requirements for energy. In this respect, any debates in the context of the alternative pipelines means a prioritisation of any of them and a refusal from others.

A rival alternative route has been accredited within the Nabucco project. With the promotion of the Nabucco pipeline, Iranian gas became the fuel of choice²⁵ although it does not make for rival non-

¹⁶ Vladimir Socor, "Business Confidence Returning to the South Caucasus Transport Corridor," Eurasia Daily Monitor, The Jamestown Foundation, vol. 5:186 (September 29, 2008), http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=33978 (accessed February, 25, 2010).

¹⁷ Ariel Cohen and Lajos F. Szaszdi, "Russia's Drive for Global Economic Power: A Challenge for the Obama Administration," The Heritage Foundation, Background no. 2235 (2009), <http://www.heritage.org/research/RussiaandEurasia/bg2235.cfm> (accessed February, 25, 2010).

¹⁸ Sophia Dimitrakopoulou and Dr. Andrew Liaropoulos, "Russia's National Security Strategy to 2020: A Great Power in the Making?," Caucasian Review on International Affairs, vol. 4:1 (2010): 39, http://cria-online.org/Journal/10/Done_Russias_National_Security_Strategy_To_2020_A_Great_Power_In_The_Making_Dimitrakopoulou_Liaropoulos.pdf (accessed February, 25, 2010).

¹⁹ Ivan Krastev, "Russia and the Georgia War: the Great-Power Trap," Open Democracy News Analysis, August 31, 2008, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/russia-and-the-georgia-war-the-great-power-trap> (accessed February, 25, 2010).

²⁰ Jon. E. Chicky, *The Russian-Georgian War: Political and Military Implications for U.S. Policy* (policy paper, February. Washington, D.C.: Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, Johns Hopkins University-SAIS, 2009), 12, <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/Silkroadpapers/0902Chicky.pdf> (accessed February, 25, 2010).

²¹ Nargis Kassenova, "Kazakhstan and the South Caucasus Corridor in the Wake of the Georgia-Russia War," EUCAM, EU-Central Asia Monitoring Policy Brief, no. 3, January 29, 2009, http://shop.ceps.eu/BookDetail.php?item_id=1786 (accessed February, 25, 2010).

²² Svante E. Cornell, "Pipeline Power. The War in Georgia and the Future of the Caucasian Energy Corridor," *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 10:1 (2009), http://www.isdp.eu/images/stories/isdp-main-pdf/2009_cornell_pipeline-power.pdf (accessed February, 25, 2010).

²³ Paul Goble, "Nabucco After Budapest: Old Problems, New Challenges and a Changed Role for Azerbaijan," *Azerbaijan in the World. The Electronic Publication of Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy*, vol. 1:3 (February 1, 2009), <http://www.ada.edu.az/biweekly/issues/164/20090329011708234.html> (accessed February, 25, 2010).

²⁴ Hydrocarbons-Technology.Com, "Nord Stream Gas Pipeline (NSGP), Russia-Germany," Hydrocarbons-Technology.Com, <http://www.hydrocarbons-technology.com/projects/negp/> (accessed February, 25, 2010).

²⁵ At present the Turkish-Iranian gas relationship is commercially problematic. See, for example, Elin Kinnander, "The Turkish-Iranian Gas Relationship: Politically Successful, Commercially Problematic," (Oxford Institute for Energy Studies NG 38, January 2010), <http://www.oxfordenergy.org/pdfs/NG38.pdf> (accessed February, 25, 2010).

Russian options to the EU gas market. Accordingly, the “Pipeline Cold War” is identifiable only for the justification of Russia’s energy policy and aggravated by the fact that Russia has hitherto not ratified the Energy Charter. This treaty would require Russia to allow other participant countries direct access to its excess pipeline capacity. This would effectively break up Russia’s monopoly upon gas pipelines to Europe. Russia is still an independent player in the energy market. Russia has been trying to maintain and strengthen its monopolistic position in a number of directions and, most of all, in relationships with EU countries. Any attempt to integrate Russia’s policy into the EU energy formation has been predestined to fail.²⁶

Russia, being guided by a so-called energy egoism—as a component of the traditional Russian nationalist view of the world²⁷—is trying in every way possible to dominate the energy sphere in the Caspian basin.²⁸

From “Alternatives” to a “Harmonisation” of Energy Supply

The time has come to shift from the paradigm of “Pipeline Cold War” with the language of the “alternative pipelines” to an essentially new one in the form of “mutually supplementary pipelines” or a so-called “Pipelines Harmonisation.”²⁹ In that case, all of the pipelines which have hitherto been considered as alternatives to each other will present themselves in quite a different context in which they will be regarded as distinct components of the same organic whole or as a system of pipelines serving one common goal; that is, to provide an uninterrupted and consistent supply of energy resources to their customers.

The purpose of the “Pipelines Harmonisation” is to develop a partnership mechanism to facilitate and harmonise support given to energy suppliers in response to the identified needs of individual countries. The harmonisation of routes is about resolving alternative plans through respectful dialogue. It is about taking into account each country’s concerns and elaborating plans and solutions which deal fairly with all those concerns. It is about reaching a consensus for multiple pipelines. Within the framework of this new paradigm of “Pipelines Harmonisation,” the issue of the transportation of the Caspian energy resources to the West could also be reconsidered in a new context. Specifically, the BTC and SCP could play an important role in the harmonisation of oil and natural gas supplies to the EU countries in addition to the Russian pipelines.

In this connection, one should mention two important agreements which were reached in 2007 and which should be regarded in the context of the “pipelines harmonisation” rather than “alternative pipelines.” Specifically, on 24 January 2007, Kazmunaygaz and the contractors in charge of development of the Kashagan and Tengiz oil fields signed a Memorandum of Understanding on building the Kazakhstan Caspian Transportation System aimed to ensure transportation of the

²⁶Boyko Nitzov, “Eurasia Gas Paradox,” Atlantic Council, August 5, 2009, http://www.acus.org/new_atlanticist/eurasia-gas-paradox (accessed February, 25, 2010).

²⁷Vladimir Milov, *Russia and the West. The Energy Factor* (Washington D.C.: CSIS, 2008), 18, http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/080731_milov_russia&west_web.pdf (accessed February, 25, 2010).

²⁸For example, Sergei Blagov, “Russia: Moscow Seeks Improved Ties with Caspian Basin Neighbors,” Eurasia Insight. Eurasianet, October 9, 2008, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/rp100808a.shtml> (accessed February, 25, 2010).

²⁹Vladimer Papava and Michael Tokmazishvili, “Pipeline Harmonization Instead of Alternative Pipelines: Why the Pipeline “Cold War” Needs to End,” *Azerbaijan in the World. The Electronic Publication of Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy*, vol. I:10 (June 15, 2008), <http://www.ada.edu.az/biweekly/issues/150/20090327030535315.html> (accessed February, 25, 2010).

growing amounts of oil exports through the Caspian Sea.³⁰ Under this agreement, oil would be transported through the route of Eskene-Kurik-Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and which further implies the building of the Eskene-Kuryk oil pipeline. The Trans-Caspian Transportation System would include oil discharge terminals along the Caspian coast of Kazakhstan, a tanker fleet, oil-loading terminals at the Caspian coast of Azerbaijan and integration with the BTC pipeline infrastructure.

On 15 March 2007, Russia, Bulgaria and Greece signed an intergovernmental agreement to build the Trans-Balkan Oil Pipeline, Burgas-Alexandropolis, which would begin in the Bulgarian Black Sea port of Burgas and end at Alexandroupolis on the Greek Aegean coast.³¹

Both projects may be regarded as examples of the harmonisation of oil transportation in the Western direction. The EU should focus attention upon considering the above projects not as alternatives but, rather, mutually supplementary ones.

The problem looks to be even more pressing as far as the transportation of natural gas to the EU countries is concerned. The Russian giant Gazprom has by all means tried to achieve the approval of the pre-Caspian gas pipeline construction project for the transportation of natural gas from Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to the West.³² The efforts of Russian political circles to this end have been hitherto quite successful. Key agreements with the political leaderships of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have already been accomplished. The key obstacle in the way of the realisation of this project might be the fact that it is still unclear whether or not the Russian gas transport system will have an adequate spare capacity to receive new volumes of Central Asian gas. The existing Russian gas transport system is inadequate even for exporting larger volumes of domestically produced Russian gas.

As to the Trans-Caspian pipeline, which later could be connected with the SCP, the potential for the implementation of this project remains unclear not only because of the well-known political problems³³ but also the fact that the relevant countries have not yet achieved any agreements with respect to the legal status of the Caspian Sea. Moreover, a decision as to the potential investors of the Trans-Caspian pipeline project has hitherto not been made.

The Trans-Caspian gas pipeline is associated with the Nabucco gas project. This is the route Turkey-Bulgaria-Romania-Hungary-Austria. Potential gas volumes for Nabucco could come from Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan as well as Russia, Iran, Iraq and, potentially, other Persian Gulf producers. In this case, Kazakhstan will be the key onshore harbour for Central Asian gas supplies for the updated Trans-Caspian gas pipeline.³⁴

³⁰ News Bulletin of the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the USA and Canada, "New Export Route for Kazakh Oil Gets Closer to Reality," January 25, 2007, <http://prosites-kazakhembus.homestead.com/012507.html> (accessed February, 25, 2010).

³¹ Vladimir Socor, "Agreement Signed on Trans-Balkan Oil Pipeline, Rival to Trans-Caspian Project," Eurasia Daily Monitor, The Jamestown Foundation, vol. 4:53 (March 15, 2007), http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=32596 (accessed February, 25, 2010).

³² Gazprom, "Pre-Caspian Gas pipeline," Gazprom, <http://old.gazprom.ru/eng/articles/article29535.shtml> (accessed February, 25, 2010).

³³ Lindsey Alexander, "Seeking a Way Forward on Trans-Caspian Pipeline," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, September 2, 2008, http://www.rferl.org/content/Seeking_Way_Forward_On_TransCaspian_Pipeline/1195765.html (accessed February, 25, 2010); Steve LeVine, "Nabucco and Trans-Caspian: Times Change, Pipeline Politics Goes On," A Blog on Russia, Energy, the Caspian and Beyond, July 30, 2009, <http://www.oilandglory.com/2009/07/nabucco-and-trans-caspian-requiem-for.html> (accessed February, 25, 2010).

³⁴ Robert M. Cutler, "Kazakhstan Looks at the Trans-Caspian for Tengiz Gas to Europe," Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Analyst, January 28, 2009, <http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/5023> (accessed February, 25, 2010).

Nabucco's main competitor and, at the same time, that which is "mutually supplementary," is the South Stream gas pipeline.³⁵

Along with Nabucco there are two other projects proposed to convey Caspian gas to European markets. The first concerns the Turkey-Greece-Italy (TGI) pipeline, which is a win-win project between Turkey and Greece delivering Azeri gas to EU markets,³⁶ and the second is the White Stream gas pipeline.³⁷ Both of these projects can also be considered as "mutually supplementary" to Nabucco.

The issue of the harmonisation of gas supply to Europe requires the EU to take all possible efforts for the realisation of the Trans-Caspian and the Nabucco projects which, together with the other existing and potential gas pipelines, will lead to the substantial mitigation (if not removal) of the problem of the monopolistic gas supplier and also ensure a stable and balanced flow of natural gas to EU countries.

Obstacles for the Harmonisation of Gas Supply

As far as Nabucco will provide a gas supply for Europe through the Trans-Caspian gas pipeline, bypassing Russia, it is not surprising that the activation of the Nabucco project encounters major difficulties from Moscow through attempts to prevent the project by exerting pressure on Azerbaijan and Central Asian countries.

Russia needs the EU as an importer as much as the EU needs Russia as an exporter. This interdependence might be used to enhance the EU's ability to secure greater Russian compliance with the rules and norms of the global energy market. Putting an end to the "Pipeline Cold War" and ensuring the harmonisation of the energy supply is essential for market stability.

The EU is looking to transport natural gas from the Caspian Basin and Central Asia but these regions are still marked with high levels of political instability and, therefore, are less reliable as suppliers. Russia's geopolitical interest and influence in these regions prevails over those of the EU and this creates a very advantageous position for Russia to capture the lion's share of the European gas market with projections of increasing its share to roughly 60 percent by 2030.³⁸

Russia continues to express its interest in keeping the Caucasus, as a main energy root for the EU, a zone of frozen conflicts. Russia's war in Georgia in 2008 also created the fear of political complications between Russia and the EU.³⁹ Any attempt to unfreeze the conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh is a risk which would enable Russia to gain even more military power in this region.

³⁵ Jurgita Laurinėnaitė, "'South Stream' versus 'Nabucco': GEOPOLITIKA, Pipeline competition," January 14, 2010, <http://www.geopolitika.lt/?artc=3770> (accessed February, 25, 2010).

³⁶ Cambridge Forecast Group, "The Turkey-Greece-Italy (TGI) Pipeline," Cambridge Forecast Group, February 10, 2008, <http://cambridgeforecast.wordpress.com/2008/02/10/turkey-greece-italy-gas-pipeline/> (accessed February, 25, 2010).

³⁷ Nino Patsuria, "White Stream: Georgia's Ticket to the Pipeline Big Time?," Eurasia Insight. Eurasianet, April 22, 2009, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav042209b.shtml> (accessed February, 25, 2010).

³⁸ Jeremy Page and Anthony Browne, "Summit Set for Angry Clash over Energy," Times Online, May 25, 2006, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/europe/article725755.ece> (accessed February, 25, 2010).

³⁹ James Sherr, "The Implications if the Russia-Georgia War for European Security," in *The Guns of August 2008: Russia's War in Georgia*, eds. Svante E. Cornell and S. Frederick Starr (Armonk, New York & London: M.E. Sharpe, 2009), 196.

Taking into account that Western countries have only partially supported Georgia's desire to integrate into Euro-Atlantic structures and allowed Russia to break its sovereign territories and increase its military influence, Azerbaijani officials have chosen to implement a prudent national policy of not aggravating its relations with Russia which has a strong influence upon the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In addition, Russia, has attempted to force Azerbaijan to sell all its extra gas to Russia at European prices. A more dramatic aggravation of the situation will lead Azerbaijan to export its gas in the Russian direction which can be more politically secure and economically attractive as well.

At the negotiations between the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan (SOCAR) and Gazprom in January 2010, heads of these companies agreed to double the amount of gas which Azerbaijan exports to Russia instead of the previous agreement of October 2009 for the delivery of only 500 million cubic metres. SOCAR has already been contracted to deliver one billion cubic metres of gas to Gazprom in 2010 according to global market prices and under the newly signed deal whose amount will increase to two billion in 2011.⁴⁰ Azerbaijan's decision to increase gas exports to Russia stems from SOCAR's plans for a diversification of export routes.

At the same time, Azerbaijan has negotiated a long-term contract with Iran to increase Azerbaijani gas sales to the country and upgrade the existing pipeline which is another way to diversify Azerbaijani gas supply.⁴¹ In both cases, the question arises as to exhausting the future importance of the Caucasian transportation routes.

The key for safety and security in the Caucasus as concerns energy transport lies along the relationship between the West and Russia. There are many things which should be done by the EU towards seeking an increased self-confidence and cohesion of its policy with Russia. At the moment, however, no concrete steps are being taken to this end.

The future of pipelines which will supply Caspian energy to the EU is still unclear.⁴² The design of each new pipeline is considered as being a rival to Russia and a challenge which makes for serious pressure being exerted upon supplier and transit states—especially countries like Georgia and Azerbaijan—and aggravates “Pipeline Cold War” and hampers any attempts at harmonising gas supply to the EU.

Conclusion

The “Pipeline Cold War” is only a reflection of the contradiction between Russia's desire to have influence upon the former Soviet territories and the EU's wish to have more oil and gas from these countries. The EU still designs new pipelines without any real actions to prevent Russia's aggressive energy policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Currently, the need to say no to the “Pipeline Cold War” paradigm and yes to an introduction of the “Pipeline Harmonisation” paradigm is more than apparent. The language of “alternative pipelines” also needs to be replaced with the language of “pipeline harmonisation.” Only the “harmonisation” paradigm secures that the interests of all producer, transit and user countries of oil and gas be

⁴⁰ Robin Paxton and Vladimir Soldatkin, “Gazprom Aims to Double Azeri Gas Purchases in 2011,” Reuters UK, January 21, 2010, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/idUKLDE60K19620100121> (accessed February, 25, 2010).

⁴¹ Faik Medzhid, “Azerbaijan and Iran Sign Contract on Gas Supplies,” *Caucasian Knot*, January 13, 2010, <http://georgia.eng.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/12206/> (accessed February, 25, 2010).

⁴² Mamuka Tsereteli, “New Strategic Realities in the Black Sea/Caspian Region,” *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Analyst*, February 17, 2010, <http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/5270> (accessed February, 25, 2010).

protected to the maximum extent possible. In view of this, the efforts of the West to persuade Russia of the necessity of replacing the language of “alternatives” with that of the language of “harmonisation” acquires a special significance.

AUTHORITARIANISM AND FOREIGN POLICY: THE TWIN PILLARS OF RESURGENT RUSSIA

Luke Chambers*

Abstract

The direction in which Vladimir Putin has taken Russia over the past decade has led a number of analysts to express concern about the health of the country's democratic transition and its increasingly assertive behaviour on the global stage. While it is clear that Putin has undermined the liberal developments of the 1990s, however superficial, and reversed Russia's international gravitation towards the West, however incoherent, the linkages between these two developments are still unclear. This study examines the nature of authoritarianism in Russia and its relationship to the strategic imperatives of the Kremlin's foreign policy, with reference to Russia's great-power ambitions for a post-Atlantic, multipolar order.

Keywords: *Russia, authoritarianism, foreign policy, great power, Putin*

Introduction

In the decade since the arrival of Vladimir Putin to executive office in Moscow, Russia has entered a period of consolidation. The political disorganisation of the 1990s has been replaced with something more resembling relative order; the economy has transformed from a chaotic theatre of criminality, backwardness and instability into a prototype for a more stable, conventional system; fractious elements within the Russian state, though still a threat, have been subject to better control; a sense of Russian national pride is returning; and the Kremlin has shown more assertiveness on the world stage, as both a constructive and destructive agent. Despite the wealth of remaining problems, Putin has pulled Russia out of a self-destructive cauldron in which its very existence as a functioning state was at risk.

Particularly observable in the past decade, however, has been the sense of totality in Russia's transformation. Putin's impact has been of profound measure in both domestic affairs and foreign affairs; indeed, an intriguing development has been the blurring of these two theatres of policy-making. The internal context has undergone what some have regarded as an "authoritarian turn",¹ by which the liberal-democratic developments of the 1990s, however superficial, have been sharply reversed. Not only has this involved the relationship between the individual and the state, importantly, it has also altered the distribution and concentration of political power in Russia, resulting in a highly centralised polity, void of the necessary accountability, institutional power balances and relationships for the functioning of a durable federation. In short, Putin has attempted

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¹ Vitali Silitski, "Tools of Autocracy", *Journal of Democracy*, 20:2 (2009): 42

to improve and consolidate the same Russian state as Yeltsin; however, his methods have been qualitatively different and relied on replacing superficially developed ideational importations from the Atlantic powers with an organizational design reflective of the specificities of Russia and Russian interests.

Crucially, Russia's external context represents a major theatre of these interests, and the Kremlin's behaviour in various dimensions of its foreign relations has been measurably bolder since 2000. The Estonian government has complained of cyber attacks from Russian state servers in the wake of a dispute concerning a Soviet memorial in Tallinn; Moscow has undermined the economic integrity and energy independence of Ukraine; and, perhaps most notably, Russian troops invaded Georgia proper in August 2008 as a culmination of fifteen years of military tension in separatist regions. While each of these instances of bellicosity on the part of the Kremlin possesses its own modalities and deserves analytical nuance, what is distinctive about Putin-era Russian foreign policy is the presence of a willingness to undermine a fragile regional security balance in order to pursue an enigmatic national interest.

This paper will suggest that endogenous and exogenous behaviour and processes in the last decade relating to Russia should not be viewed as discrete; instead, there is analytical value in evaluating the Kremlin's domestic and foreign agendas as part of a wider, unitary strategy to restore Russia's role as a global actor. The design pursued domestically exerts a strong influence on foreign policy; accordingly, the long-term goals of Russian foreign policy are located within the Russian state as well as without.² What makes Russia such an interesting case, however, is the real nature of these domestic and foreign agendas, which still confound much neat political-scientific theorizing. Internally, Putin's quest to restore the supremacy of the state, the central authority of Moscow and the dictatorship of the law have led some to accuse him of authoritarianism, statism and, indeed, of undermining Russia's democratic transition for the purposes of power for its own sake.³ Externally, the Kremlin's behaviour appears at times expansionist and neo-imperialist, particularly if we limit our analysis to the geopolitics of Eurasia. But these internal and external designs can be traced to a number of important factors, including the intellectual disposition of the Russian leadership, the contextual distribution of power in Russia when the current regime entered office, the fundamental internalized and externalized interests of the Kremlin and the external political and strategic context in which these factors operate.

The tangibility of this nexus of domestic and foreign interests provides a distinct analytical challenge to how we conceptualise foreign policy and the characteristics of agency in the international system. One of the major challenges to scholarship of foreign policy has been to determine how much influence, and what kind of influence, the domestic political context exerts on a state's behaviour towards the international.⁴ Analyses of foreign policy that do not take into account the domestic sphere, particularly relating to matters of agency and constraint, run the risk of incompleteness and oversimplification, not to mention of providing little use to the domain of policy-making.⁵

² Jeffrey Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy: The Return of Great Power Politics* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009), 55.

³ Edward Lucas, *The New Cold War: How the Kremlin Menaces Both Russia and The West* (London: Bloomsbury, 2008), 1-5.

⁴ Christopher Hill, *The Changing Politics of Foreign Policy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 219.

⁵ Barbara Farnham, "Impact of the Political Context on Foreign Policy Decision-Making", *Political Psychology*, 25:3 (2004): 441.

Regime Type and Foreign Policy

If it can be empirically supported that a state's internal political context – or, indeed, the internal power structure and distribution of any international actor – is a formative aspect of how its foreign relations are conducted, there are significant ramifications for our inferences in a wide range of preoccupations in international relations. The conceptual dividing lines between domestic and foreign affairs – entrenched in the bureaucratic structures of all states – would become pervious, or blurred. Although very few contemporary schools of thought completely disregard the domestic sphere of foreign policy in international relations, such a stipulation would undermine the various fragmentations of realist theory, whose preoccupations with power and structures, and whose reliance on rational choice models of behaviour, afford little importance to an actor's internal characteristics.⁶

There are a number of self-defining linkages between the domestic and the foreign. In the domestic domain of decision-making, borrowing a conceptual model from a one-level game rather than the two-level game represented by foreign policy decision-making, a number of scholars have rightly noted that acceptability is the most basic and fundamental prerequisite for the successful formulation, adoption and implementation of any policy.⁷ In any context, a decision must command a minimum of acceptability from interested parties if it is to be adopted. While this may influence foreign policy decision-making in different ways – some states may have a larger foreign affairs “constituency” in the domestic sphere than others – it does not require extreme cases to show that foreign policy decisions can have major effects on the domestic context and are therefore bound by co-decision-makers whose own interests are located primarily in the domestic sphere. This is where regime type may be of decisive importance: if a state's decision-makers are democratically elected officials, their domestic interests in re-election will bind their foreign policy decision-making; if a decision-maker has no domestic constituency, their decisions will, theoretically, be less constrained.

Theories of bureaucratic politics have asked the legitimate question of whether, in policy-making of any kind, the tail wags the dog. In other words, where is the essence of decision located? It seems appropriate that we should be cognisant of the monopoly of expertise and, in some cases, control of information, held by administrative individuals and groups over their political bosses,⁸ because this exposes the hierarchical gulf between foreign policy decision-makers and the body of human capital supplying them with necessary information. In the bureaucratic architecture of a number of states, namely Britain, the pool of human capital remains the same, regardless of the government. In others, namely the United States, the physiognomy of human capital resources changes with the government, inevitably creating a different context for the flow and nuance of information to foreign policy decision-makers. It would be difficult, under such circumstances, to suggest that such a bureaucratic shift would have no effect on the design and implementation of foreign policy. For example, one of the most visible characteristics of the Putin era, in administrative terms, has been the widespread appointment of figures with a force-structure background, and a number of scholars have interpreted this as indicative of the value afforded to a particular kind of expertise in Putin's

⁶ Michael W. Doyle, “Liberalism and Foreign Policy” in *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*, ed. Steve Smith et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 59.

⁷ Farnham, “Impact of the Political Context on Foreign Policy Decision-Making,” 443; also see A. George, “Domestic Constraints on Regime Change in US Foreign Policy” in *Change in the International System*, ed. O. R. Holsti (Boulder: Westview, 1980) 233-262; and Henry A. Kissinger, “Reflections on Power and Diplomacy” in *Dimensions of Power and Diplomacy*, ed. E. A. J. Johnson (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1964) 17-39.

⁸ Hill, *The Changing Politics of Foreign Policy*, 95.

Russia, and raised the question of whether this helps explain the recent assertiveness in Russian foreign policy.⁹

At the international level, however, these rational conclusions do not translate neatly. Although decision-makers in whatever kind of state have no formal responsibility for external actors, and while it may seem elementary that decision-makers in non-democratic states will have fewer constraints on their actions, this does not necessarily translate into foreign policy prescriptions and pursuits that are fundamentally more adventurous or more aggressive. Correlative studies between regime type dichotomised into “liberal” and “non-liberal” states and the propensity towards war yield interesting results. Between the Congress of Vienna and the beginning of the Reagan administration in 1981, liberal states were responsible for starting 24 of the 56 wars they found themselves in: 43 per cent of culpability. Non-liberal states fought in 187 conflicts and were responsible for the outbreak of 91: 49 per cent of culpability.¹⁰ It is perhaps not fair, therefore, to suggest that non-liberal states cause significantly more wars. The evidence above merely suggests that non-liberal states are more war-prone, even if they do not directly light the fuse. This raises questions, however, about the nature of culpability and the triggers of war, for different interpretations of history will place blame at the doors of different agents, or even structures. Despite this, an interesting statistic adds more fuel to this analytical challenge: in the quarter century following the Second World War, the United States intervened militarily in the Third World twice as often as the Soviet Union.¹¹

Theoretically, domestic factors undoubtedly have an influence on the nature of foreign policy, but apart from a number of assertions – namely that democracies constrain their decision-makers and that liberal democracies do not end up at war with one another – the linkage remains distinctly difficult to define satisfactorily. However, an interesting point of which we should be consistently aware is that the domestic and the foreign each possess little meaning except in reference to one another; moreover, in the age of globalization – loosely defined – whatever real or imagined divisions between these two theatres of policy-making are steadily eroding.¹² Additionally, in the relationship between a state’s domestic politics and its foreign policy, much will also depend on intervening variables, namely its own history, the intermediate- and long-term goals of the leadership and the power projection capability of the state’s military, economic, diplomatic and ideational instruments. In the case of Russia, these factors contribute to the staggering complexity of both domestic political, and foreign strategic, contexts.

Dimensions of Authoritarianism in Russia

The vast majority of analysts would agree that Russia is not a liberal state; perhaps fewer would agree that Russia is not a democracy; perhaps fewer again would agree that Russia is an authoritarian state. It is arguably more appropriate to evaluate the Russian polity as being in possession of elements of authoritarianism, rather than considering it a fully consolidated authoritarian state. There are four major attributes of authoritarianism visibly present in Russia: firstly, power structures are super-centralised, and regional authorities are subordinated to the centre. Secondly, the electoral practices for executive positions are illiberal, and no real arena exists

⁹ Nikolai Petrov, “Seven Faces of Putin’s Russia: Federal Districts and the New Level of State-Territorial Composition,” *Security Dialogue*, 33:1 (2002): 73; Olga Kryshchanovska and Stephen White, “Putin’s Militocracy,” *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 19:4 (2003): 289.

¹⁰ Doyle, “Liberalism and Foreign Policy,” 54.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Hill, *The Changing Politics of Foreign Policy*, 220-21.

for the equitable contestation of political, economic or social interests. Thirdly, jurisprudence functions in a context of legal relativity; in other words, the rule of the law is secondary to the rule of men. Fourthly, there is consistent use of coercive institutions and measures, reinforcing the power of the state over the power of individuals, groups or competing interests.¹³ In general, therefore, authority is valued more than freedom or equality. International organizations corroborate these assertions. In 2007, Russia's grades for accountability, public voice, civil liberties, the rule of law and transparency were below 50 per cent of the highest possible score, according to Freedom House.¹⁴ Each of these figures was a regression of the 2005 figures; overall, Freedom House regards Russia as "not free".¹⁵ In the same year the Economist Intelligence Unit placed the quality of Russian democracy 102nd among 167 countries, describing it as a hybrid regime.¹⁶ While Russia is clearly not a totalitarian dictatorship, therefore, it is not liberal.

Early hopes that Putin might engender the democratic Russia many had been expecting – as an improvement on the Yeltsin era's largely failed attempts – were dashed by the time his second term came around. His re-election in 2004 barely involved a campaign. His position had become such that he was being praised for aspects of his tenure that had little to do with his own leadership, most notably the improvements in Russia's economy. Moreover, the Yukos affair and the imprisonment of Mikhail Khodorkovsky exposed, for the first time for many Western observers, a darker, coercive nature in the Russian leadership that pointed to worrying prospects for the fragile and (by this stage) superficial Russian democracy.¹⁷ The murder of Anna Politkovskaya, the trial of the suspects, and subsequent streak of murders of activists illustrated the murky nature of the rule of law in Russia. Today, the state still interferes with NGOs and routinely undermines the work of human rights organizations and independent activists.¹⁸

These aspects are worthy of charges of creeping illiberalism under Putin. However, the shrinking of political space over the past decade – visible in the erosion of accountability at all levels and the narrowing of the circle of elite decision-making – is perhaps a more measurable and distinctive dimension of authoritarianism in Russia, and more relevant to the nexus between state power and the projection of power abroad. The so-called *vertical vlastii* and Putin's bold recentralisation of the nation's regional politics has done more to undermine the fragile and superficial democracy inherited in 2000 than erratic instances of opposition suppression. A major federal reform instigated by Putin has been the creation of the federal "super-districts". Instead of each regional subject in the Russian Federation possessing a presidential representative, Putin abolished the post and shifted power to the head of each super-district. The political presence of the regions has therefore been drastically reduced, their power diluted and marginalized.¹⁹ Administrative centres are often hundreds of miles from regional capitals, and therefore rarely govern with attention to local interests. The territorial composition of the super-districts has also helped to undermine the political weight of the regional units; instead of recognising territorial and ethnic demarcations, each super-

¹³ Anna Politkovskaya, *Putin's Russia* (London: Harvill Press, 2004), 284-85.

¹⁴ Kathryn Stoner-Weiss, *Countries at the Crossroads, 2007. Country Profile: Russia* (Washington DC: Freedom House, 2007), 1.

¹⁵ Freedom House, "Map of Freedom," Freedom House, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/fiw09/MOF09.pdf> [all sites accessed 26 April 2010].

¹⁶ Laza Kekic, *The Economist Intelligence Unit's Index of Democracy* (London: Economist Intelligence Unit, 2007), 4.

¹⁷ Alex Pravda, "Introduction: Putin in Perspective" in *Leading Russia: Putin in Perspective*, ed. Alex Pravda (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 23.

¹⁸ See Human Rights Watch, *An Uncivil Approach to Civil Society* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2009), <http://www.hrw.org/en/node/83737/section/2>.

¹⁹ Andrew Konitzer and Stephen K. Wegren, "Federalism and Political Recentralization in the Russian Federation: United Russia as the Party of Power," *The Journal of Federalism*, 36:4 (2006): 503.

district contains a soup of various kinds of subjects, fostering weakness and subjugation to Moscow.²⁰ Importantly, as will be examined later, the constitutional claims of many republics are a key source of potential instability to the Russian state, and the redistribution of power from the federal level to Moscow has removed the institutional and procedural space for these claims to acquire much potency.²¹ The ethno-territorial asymmetry of the Yeltsinite federation, by which Moscow was on course to develop bilateral arrangements with nearly all the regional subjects, has therefore been subverted and replaced with a Moscow-knows-best design. In addition to their functional role in subordinating regional power to Moscow, the drawing of the super-districts also exposes a murky aspect of the authoritarian turn, and while ignorant of ethno-territorial particularism, the super-districts are not entirely arbitrary: they reflect Russian military districts, and five of the seven presidential representatives at the inception of the reforms possessed a military or security services background, rendering them loyal to Putin and his agenda.²²

Authoritarian tendencies can also be detected within the chief executive's prerogative in removing and appointing governors. This has enabled Putin and Medvedev to entrench affiliation with United Russia within regional elites and to undermine dissenting agendas.²³ The Kremlin's interests are thus secured across the country. A further indicator of the authoritarian turn in Russia is Putin's demand that regional law be brought into line with federal law. This forms part of the "dictatorship of the law", by which a unified legal space is created, thus enhancing Moscow's command over regions of Russia where different aspects of jurisprudence are desirable and even necessary, due to religious, ethnic, social or cultural asymmetry.²⁴

These measures paint a clear picture of the authoritarianism at work in Russia. Whether we choose to focus on the quality of democracy, the coercive methods used by the state in suppressing dissent or the erosion of accountability and the restructuring of power, Russia is clearly an illiberal polity and the authority of the state is valued far beyond the authority of the body politic, or institutions such as the courts or regional polities. State power, according to Robert Service, has become the "shibboleth" of the Putin regime.²⁵ The domestic sphere of a resurgent Russia is defined, therefore, as a theatre of building and consolidating the power of the state and restructuring the nation's political and legal institutions in a way that entrenches the ubiquitous centrality of the Kremlin. But for what purpose? These developments are not occurring in a vacuum. Internal consolidation is only one pillar of resurgent Russia. Due to many factors – recent history, geographical size, the estranged Russian diaspora, civilizational identity – Russia's renaissance cannot be contained within its own borders. The international still beckons the Kremlin in a volume perhaps only heard by post-imperial centres of power whose former global status has vanished. The internal is defined against the other pillar of a resurgent Russia: the unerring aspiration, once again, to rise to great-power status.²⁶

²⁰ David Cashaback, "Risky Strategies? Putin's Federal Reforms and the Accommodation of Difference in Russia," *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe*, 3 (2003): 22.

²¹ Viktor Mart'ianov, "The Decline of Public Politics in Russia: From Public Politics to Political Administration," *Russian Politics and Law*, 45:5 (2007): 68.

²² Matthew Hyde, "Putin's Federal Reforms and Their Implications for Presidential Power in Russia," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 53:5 (2001): 724; and C. Ross, "Putin's Federal Reforms and the Consolidation of Federalism in Russia: One Step Forward, Two Steps Back!," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 36 (2003): 35.

²³ Konitzer and Wegren, "Federalism and Political Recentralization in the Russian Federation," 503.

²⁴ Cashaback, "Risky Strategies?," 22.

²⁵ Robert Service, *The Penguin History of Modern Russia: From Tsarism to the Twenty-First Century*, 3rd ed. (London: Penguin, 2009), p. 550.

²⁶ Janusz Bugajski, "Russia's Pragmatic Reimperialization," *Caucasian Review of International Affairs*, 4:1 (2010): 9.

The Twin Pillars of Resurgent Russia

Any state with aspirations towards great-power status must first satisfy a minimum of requisite criteria. In some states, these criteria are fulfilled automatically by the nature of the regime, but in most, decision-makers need to forge the particular foundations of a great power in order for aspiration to become reality. All major great powers and empires in modern history have satisfied most of these criteria. First, the executive must possess *legitimacy* to rule: there must be no or few question marks surrounding its presence or its nature. Second, great powers require *security*: a severe deterioration of internal law and order or a perpetual desecuritization of border regions, for example, will hinder the centre's potential international reach, essential for any major power. Third, a great power should possess a clear *identity* or have clearly defined measures for ameliorating identity-related cleavages within the state if it is to project its power internationally. Fourth, all great powers possess *gravity*: the geopolitical weight and indispensability to be treated as an equal among other great powers, through the development of military, economic and ideational strength.

A resurgent Russia poses an interesting challenge to how we understand these concepts. In liberal states, while controlling for the inevitable nexus between the internal and the external, most of these issues can be ascribed to either domestic or foreign policy, and do not require a twin pillar imperative. Legitimacy, in liberal states, is acquired by default in domestic constitutional designs and practices. In establishing the legitimacy of the executive, foreign policy is, unsurprisingly, an externality. In non-democratic states, however, foreign policy can be a useful theatre in which a potentially illegitimate government can legitimise itself: a resounding victory in a foreign war, for example, can assuage opposition to a non-elected executive. Security in democracies is provided by non-corrupt professional and public agencies loyal to the executive and political institutions. In non-democratic states, this kind of integrity and loyalty is often difficult to achieve. In the securitization of borders there are, admittedly, externalities to be considered for both kinds of states. Though there are occasional examples of its occurrence, democracies are less likely to invoke national security threats due to the nature of the regime alone, or the kinds of personalities in power. Identity is often a prerequisite for democratic survival or for the success of democratic transition.²⁷ Coherent national identities are internalized and allow for liberal institutions and norms to be created and consolidated, employing national identity as a lowest common denominator. It would be unfair to suggest that authoritarian states do not possess coherent national identities – many do – but in the case of Russia, the formulation of identity places demands on domestic and foreign theatres.²⁸ As with many illiberal states, identity can be forged by what it is not and by whose values it does not share – the West, primarily the United States. Gravity is the one aspect of great-power status where, *ex vi termini*, the domestic and the foreign usually constitute two pillars of the same design. A severely weak state cannot project power abroad in either hard or soft terms. Conversely, there are examples of states whose gravity has developed not as a consequence of foreign adventures and displays of power, but rather through domestic consolidation.

Russia desires to be treated as an equal, in power-political terms, by global hegemons such as the United States, and the Kremlin's intermediate- and long-term foreign policy ambitions centre on the aspiration for great-power status in a multipolar world.²⁹ The original Foreign Policy Concept, published in June 2000, stated that Russia aimed “to achieve firm and prestigious positions in the world community, most fully consistent with the interests of the Russian Federation as a great

²⁷ See Dankwart A. Rustow, “Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model,” *Comparative Politics*, 2:3 (1970).

²⁸ Andrei P. Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006), 2.

²⁹ Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 14-15.

power, as one of the most influential centers of the modern world.”³⁰ Such a project demands a strong nexus of coherent and complementary domestic and foreign policies and, as such, demands both pillars to be facing towards the same goal. According to the revised 2008 Foreign Policy Concept, “Differences between domestic and external means of ensuring national interests and security are gradually disappearing. In this context, our foreign policy becomes one of major instruments of the steady national development.”³¹

The first major roadblock to any great-power aspirations is an illegitimate executive. A leadership whose grip on power is perpetually unstable cannot hope to guide a nation to prominent global status, as uncertainty concerning a state’s future – internally and externally – begins with the health of the political status quo. As with liberal states, executive leadership is central to a state’s development. In Russia, however, the physiognomy and capability of leadership has proven more enduringly reflective of how the Kremlin can project its power both within the Russian polity and into the international. As Alex Pravda suggests, the nature of the handover to Putin in 2000 and the recovery of presidential leadership in the wake of the Yeltsin period is suggestive of the potency of the Russian presidency even after a period of deep incoherence and weakness in the 1990s.³² The overwhelming popularity enjoyed by Putin is testament to the support for the statist, authoritarian direction in which he has led the country and the foreign policy he has pursued. During the Yeltsin period, poll figures suggest that few Russians harboured any real trust in the presidency or the government. While 28 per cent of Russians claimed they had trust in Yeltsin in 1993, only 2 per cent did in late 1998. Correspondingly, the government’s approval ratings fell consistently through the 1990s from 18 per cent in 1993 to a mere 8 per cent in 1998.³³ Measurements of democratic culture suggest around half of all Russians believed they had no real input into the governance of the country.³⁴ What is perhaps most compelling about these figures is that they must be evaluated in tandem with polls that indicate a high level of support for the ideals of democracy among the Russian public.³⁵ Additionally, loyalty to the government among civil servants was undermined by the state’s inability to collect and redistribute taxes in the form of wages. These factors suggested a serious need, in 2000, to restore the respectability of the Russian leadership. Putin has largely succeeded, if his glittering public image and approval ratings are to be taken at face value; in short, statism and authoritarianism has, ironically, won over the public, despite their support for nebulous concepts of democracy.³⁶

Foreign policy, too, is an important aspect of the restoration of executive legitimacy in Russia. Most recent choices in the Kremlin’s foreign policy decision-making have found consonance, according to poll data, with the average Russian. Though more in the domain of identity than legitimacy, in strictly strategic terms, a number of stances and actions have cemented the legitimacy of the executive because they harmonize with the public’s view of their strategic place in the world, however superficial. Although a majority of Russians feel generally moderate or positive towards

³⁰ The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, President of the Russian Federation, 2000, <http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/econcept.htm>.

³¹ The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, President of the Russian Federation, 2008, <http://eng.kremlin.ru/text/docs/2008/07/204750.shtml>.

³² Pravda, “Introduction: Putin in Perspective”, 23.

³³ Stephen White, *Russia’s New Politics: The Management of a Postcommunist Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 270.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 217.

³⁵ Levada Center, Nationwide Survey, December 2009, http://www.russiavotes.org/national_issues/national_issues_politics.php.

³⁶ Levada Center, Nationwide Survey, February-March 2009, http://www.russiavotes.org/president/presidency_performance.php#202.

the United States, the policy of balancing against the United States has galvanised Putin's support in Russia, largely due to painful memories of junior partnership in the 1990s, but mainly because Russians generally harbour opinions that the two countries' interests diverge on most matters.³⁷ The policy of halting the encroachment of NATO into areas of the post-Soviet space has also chimed with the popular mood: a majority of Russians still believe that Moscow should feel threatened by NATO, and a similar figure is supportive of Moscow forming counterbalancing alliances or remaining a singular bloc against NATO.³⁸ Indeed, if the war in Georgia was part of the Kremlin's strategy to stop the advance of NATO further into the post-Soviet space, the legitimizing effects – though by 2008 there were few question marks as to the legitimacy of the chief executive in the Putin-Medvedev tandem – were significant: 74 per cent of Russians believe that Georgia acquiring NATO membership would constitute some kind of threat to Russia.³⁹

The purpose of this explanation has been to highlight the consonance with the two pillars of Putin's design for Russia among the public. This is important because legitimacy is located in the internal, not the external, and despite the authoritarian nature of the Russian state in the pursuit of great-power status, the executive cannot leave the public behind. Putin's restoration of the presidency from a dilapidated, unpopular shell of an office to the undisputed throne of a resurgent Russia has adopted both domestic and foreign tactics, indicating a distinctive characteristic of the relationship between elites and publics in Russia. Whereas in many states, publics are unmoved by the international, or by their nation's place in the world, many Russians have strong views on the matter, demanding a twin-pillar approach to the restoration of legitimacy at executive level.

The second major roadblock to the acquisition of great-power status lies in the domain of security. A state consistently plagued with desecuritization within, along or across its borders cannot hope to project its power into the international in the manner by which the Kremlin envisions the intermediate-term future. In a number of ways, the aspects of security Putin has striven to improve can be compared with the 1990s in the same manner with which the legitimacy of the executive was compared: in the Yeltsin period it is no exaggeration to suggest that Russia was at risk of falling apart as a polity, and a sizeable portion of Putin's early popularity can be traced to his stance on Chechnya.⁴⁰ But separatist movements in Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia and other political units of the North Caucasus continually represent headaches for the Kremlin and form the primary threat to the tranquillity of everyday life in Russia.⁴¹ The complex nature of these groups in the North Caucasus, and the sketchy intelligence on their links, illustrates the demands for a solid nexus between internal and external designs. Domestically, Putin has lyrically threatened to "drag terrorists from the sewers"; internationally, the Kremlin cannot hope to alleviate such viscous threats to its security alone, and must engage with states under similar pressures, namely the United States.⁴² A majority of Russians believe that the Chechen question should be answered by force, but only around one-tenth feel that this can continue indefinitely.⁴³ Therefore, in percentage terms, the same body of opinion that supports Putin's authoritarian turn also believes in force backed up by an

³⁷ Levada Center, Nationwide Survey, April 2008, http://www.russiavotes.org/security/security_usa_nato.php#541.

³⁸ Levada Center, Nationwide Survey, February-March 2009, http://www.russiavotes.org/security/security_usa_nato.php#541.

³⁹ Levada Center, Nationwide Survey, September 2008; January-February 2010, http://www.russiavotes.org/security/security_usa_nato.php#541.

⁴⁰ Eugene Huskey, "Overcoming the Yeltsin Legacy: Vladimir Putin and Russian Political Reform" in *Contemporary Russian Politics: A Reader*, ed. Archie Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 85.

⁴¹ Michael Stuermer, *Putin and the Rise of Russia* (London: Phoenix, 2008), 110.

⁴² Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 97.

⁴³ Levada Center, Nationwide Survey, September 2004; December 2007, http://www.russiavotes.org/security/security_chechnya.php.

internationalization of the threat to Russian security. Importantly, in 2000 Russians held the threats posed to their national security by separatist groups almost equal to that of the United States. By 2004, however, this threat perception had fallen to almost half of that perceived to be posed by the United States.⁴⁴ Putin's toughness appears to have resonated and at least created the illusion of an improved securitization of the southern border.

While a majority of Russians support the use of force in Chechnya and the Russian defence establishment's assertions that terrorism in the North Caucasus is representative of global terrorism, the Kremlin's interpretation of NATO encroachment into regions of the post-Soviet space is considered a similar threat to Russian security.⁴⁵ Here, again, the nexus between the domestic and the foreign is evident. The Kremlin has asserted that internal Russian territorial integrity will not be compromised by terrorism on its southern borders; by the same token, neither will Russian strategic integrity be compromised by the encroachment of the Atlantic powers into its sphere of influence.⁴⁶ The sense of besiegement from external powers along the massive Russian frontier, comprising borders with fourteen states and stretching from Norway to North Korea, has undoubtedly contributed to the project of bolstering the state and centralising the power in the internal dimension. As noted above, Russians do not generally feel that NATO's designs in the post-Soviet space are entirely neutral, equating the Baltic States' membership in NATO and the EU, and talk of Ukraine's gravitation towards NATO, as hostile to Russian security. NATO membership of these states also constitutes serious constraints on Russian domestic policy in oblasts such as Kaliningrad, due to its geographic location, despite NATO assurances.

In general this kind of NATO presence in Russia's immediate neighbourhood undermines Russia's ability to act as a great power or, more specifically, to establish indivisible hegemony over its Eurasian sphere of interest. A major imperative of the Russian strategy in Georgia was to secure itself against NATO expansion into the Caucasus, ensuring a continuing context of instability in Georgia, thereby dissuading the Atlantic powers from viewing Georgia as fertile territory for inclusion. In short, the Kremlin ensured Tbilisi would simply come with too much baggage for NATO.⁴⁷ This strategic design relates to the Russian domestic sphere in many important ways, but most particularly in the kind of establishment Putin has engineered among senior reaches of the Russian government. Security service personnel and serving or retired military personnel are generally known to harbour strong views on Russian foreign policy, where a priority theatre of strategy is considered to be the Near Abroad: Eurasianism, dominant among the military and *siloviki* elite, can help to explain the general hostility towards any type of incursion into the post-Soviet space, whose underlying manifesto can be traced to the worldwide process of globalization and not necessarily a strategic threat to the Russian state.⁴⁸ Overall, securitization is of prime importance for Russia's great-power aspirations, and securing the state against internal and external threats demands a nexus of internal and external instrumentation. Much of Putin's attitude, and that of his militocracy, has harmonized with the public sentiment, and his strong stance on separatist terrorism and the encroachment of Atlantic institutions into Russia's neighbourhood are two sides of the same coin: only by strengthening the state at home can Russian power be used to stem separatism and dissuade Western "besiegement" abroad; correspondingly, only by deflecting foreign threats can the process of strengthening the state be continued.

⁴⁴ New Russia Barometer VIII-XV, 2000-07, http://www.russiavotes.org/security/security_russia_place.php.

⁴⁵ Levada Center, Nationwide Survey, September 2008, http://www.russiavotes.org/security/security_russia_place.php.

⁴⁶ Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 241.

⁴⁷ James Sherr, "The Implications of the Russia-Georgia War for European Security" in *The Guns of August, 2008: Russia's War in Georgia*, ed. Svante E. Cornell and S. Frederick Starr (London: M. E. Sharpe, 2009), 209-10.

⁴⁸ Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 241.

Thirdly, few great powers have maintained their status in international affairs under the weight of identity crises and the consequential, more tangible effects of these crises. This does not necessarily imply that the citizens of great powers must possess a homogenous, unitary identity shared by all in order for it to project its power; however, great powers rarely ignore questions of identity and usually confront them if potential fissures emerge. Since the mid-nineteenth century, national awakenings have constituted the largest share of the causes of imperial or state fragmentation, instead of conventional military defeat.

Russia is a multiethnic and multiconfessional state and, particularly since the collapse of the Soviet Union, has experienced difficulty in establishing a neat national identity, at home and abroad.⁴⁹ There are three major channels for the epic questions of civilizational identity in Russia. The first guides Russia towards Europe, claiming common ancestry of Christendom and disqualifying the Asiatic identity along the fault-lines of Eurasia. In this school of thought, Russia is a different, exotic Europe, historically influenced by a multitude of non-European cultures; however, Russians are fundamentally still Europeans.⁵⁰ The second guides Russia towards Asia, marking a similar fault-line division in great-power geopolitical identity. Culturally, this sentiment can be traced to the divergent paths Russia and Europe have traversed in modern history and the Asian influences in Russia's national story.⁵¹ The third channel does not guide Russia anywhere except back to Moscow: according to this school, Russia is special. In matters of politics, religion and ethno-cultural pluralism, Russia is distinct from West and East and, crucially for this study, should design political architecture that is best suited to Russia, and should carve out a role in the world best suited to Russia.

This desired international identity will only be forged and consolidated if the domestic machinations of identity politics correspond. If Russians identify with Europeaness, eventually the state will have to change to reflect this. Similarly, the state would have to adapt to reflect a politico-cultural gravitation towards Asia. But these sentiments are not resigned to vague discussions on ethno-cultural identity, and the poll figures are telling. A majority of Russians still prefer a unique political system tailored to the perceived specificities of Russian identity and the Russian psyche; furthermore, this system is imagined to occur endogenously and autonomously, without external interference.⁵² More specifically, Russians are understood to be in favour of some kind of concept of democracy, but what is often forgotten is that, when asked about what kind of democracy they would prefer, an overwhelming majority indicated that Russia should have its own particular brand, following its national traditions, not that espoused by the West.⁵³ Russians are reasonably clear on their desire to be regarded as unique. But when asked to explain what was special about Russia, and why it should possess a *sui generis* political representation of their special identity, the respondents pointed to a plethora of things that might characterise it. Economic development where people mattered more than profit and values distinct from the West garnered the most popular choices by slim margins, ideas which are not exactly unique cultural or ethnic artefacts.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy*, 179.

⁵⁰ Vladimir Baranovsky, "Russia: A Part of Europe or Apart from Europe?," in *Contemporary Russian Politics: A Reader*, ed. Archie Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 430.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Levada Centre, Nationwide Survey, December 2009, http://www.russiavotes.org/national_issues/national_issues_politics.php#615.

⁵³ Levada Centre, Nationwide Survey, January 2008, http://www.russiavotes.org/national_issues/national_issues_politics.php#615.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

Putin's statist authoritarianism appears to have succeeded in rescuing Russian identity from the triangular trap of European-Asiatic-*sui generis* characterisations. Between 2000 and 2004, Russians who "often" considered themselves European remained at relatively constant rate, hovering around 19 per cent.⁵⁵ Russians who said they would "never" consider themselves European shot up from 19 to 46 per cent. Most compelling, perhaps, is poll evidence that suggests the middle ground in identity politics has shifted under Putin.⁵⁶ While in 2000 a vast majority of people were ambivalent or undecided about whether or not they felt European, those who "never" or "rarely" felt European had become the majority by 2004.⁵⁷

This identification with *sui generis* status is important, particularly when we consider the linkages between national identity and foreign policy. By formalising its status as a nation of unique identity – neither European nor Asiatic – Russia can export identity to the level of geopolitics, where it also hopes to forge a unique character and sphere of influence. This partly explains the Kremlin's long-term strategy to balance against the Atlantic order and help shape a post-Atlantic power distribution resembling nineteenth-century Europe, where no one power had the capability to establish total hegemony and foreign policy was conducted on a strategic chessboard with zero-sum calculations. The same logic prevails, only on a grander chessboard; instead of states, players are civilizations: Russian identity is, therefore, of paramount importance. Indeed, the Foreign Policy Concept clearly stresses that the international order should be more reflective of wider "civilizational" identities and not, presumably, merely the dominant Western civilization.⁵⁸ Recent developments in Russian foreign policy – notably the war in Georgia, the gas disputes with Ukraine and an increasingly assertive attitude in Central Asia – are less about imperialization for its own sake as they are about drawing lines in the sand behind which the Kremlin can be confident of hegemonic status.⁵⁹ *Sui generis* status in its immediate neighbourhood – the non-EU post-Soviet space – is pivotal to the Kremlin's global aspirations. An identity of depth and durability is a prerequisite for the formulation and stabilization of a post-Soviet sphere of influence and, consequently, the instrumentalization of this sphere of influence in a post-Atlantic order of multipolar power distribution and great-power balancing. Imperialism, therefore, is concerned with gathering the post-Soviet space into a civilizational bloc in preparation for a post-Atlantic order, and not merely a short-term, insidious pursuit of power. This categorical uniqueness, combined with a statist project whose stipulations value the state's ability to exercise power over the state's ability to guarantee rights, leads us to the fourth aspect of Russia's resurgence; it is this dimension where the twin pillars of internal authoritarianism and external great-power posturing are perhaps the most visible.

Gravity, or more fundamentally, geopolitical power, is the final and perhaps most important attribute of a great power. Gravity can be characterised in many ways but there are a number of criteria that must be met for a state to project force, hard or soft. Firstly, a great power cannot exert force on the international system without a strong central state. There should be no or little constitutional or political relativity, and executive power must be indivisible. Stability should be the norm and credible threats to the executive and its design should be non-existent or extremely rare. In short, the state as a unit should resemble as much as possible the unitary actor described by neorealists. Secondly, gravity originates in some key characteristic that renders a state indispensable to the international balance of power, be it geographic location, military strength, economic power or the possession of natural resources, or ideational messianism. A distinct, durable centrality to

⁵⁵ New Russia Barometer XV-XIII, 2000-2004, http://www.russiavotes.org/security/security_russia_place.php#nr2.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Foreign Policy Concept, 2008, <http://eng.kremlin.ru/text/docs/2008/07/204750.shtml>.

⁵⁹ Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 242.

international relations will ensure a state's role as a shaper of the global order, and not a follower. In other words, a power with a prominent role as a centre of gravity will be a subject, not an object of international order and in many contexts, such a power will have the capability to ensure that the international order is designed to harmonize with its national interests. As with large centres of gravity in the physical world, a great power is, *ceteris paribus*, immovable. Indeed, the emergence of a new world order, consisting of an increasing number of "poles", or centres of gravity, is a primary concern in how Russian foreign relations are conducted, and the imperative behind much of the Kremlin's vision of the Russian state's domestic consolidation. According to the Foreign Policy Concept: "Russia attaches great importance to improving the manageability of the world development and establishing a self-regulating international system."⁶⁰

In order for the Kremlin to guarantee its survivability in such an international order, consolidating the state's power is of utmost importance. Russia is no longer a source of global ideational strength and Moscow's image as moral artefact has been severely tarnished for the foreseeable future. Russia is not constructed on the basis of values exportable to other theatres, unlike the United States or Europe; therefore, Putin's authoritarian statism is the most potent alternative to guarantee the entrenchment of Moscow as a global centre of gravity. In a global order the likes of which the Kremlin longs for, Moscow would be an immovable centre of power, not unlike the status it enjoyed at the height of the Cold War.

Injecting democratic culture into Russian politics would certainly undermine this project. Not only would liberal norms take time to entrench themselves in Russian society and diffuse into the political process, or vice versa, undermining the immediacy of Russian great-power aspirations; increasing the volume of political space in Russia would risk the ascendancy of a different kind of foreign policy elite: Westernizing or, worse, more combative and ideology-driven elements.⁶¹ Apart from a few exceptional instances, the course of Russian foreign policy in the last decade has been remarkably pragmatic and has steered a middle course between engagement with the Atlantic powers on key matters of mutual concern, namely terrorism and economic cooperation, and a geopolitical assertiveness reminiscent in some cases of neo-imperialism. The human capital behind the decision-making that has generated this course is distinctly thin and centrally located, and this is another facet of the *vertical vlastii* by which Putin has moved the country in an authoritarian direction.⁶² By consolidating the power of the core, and through a firm grip on foreign policy elites, Putin has entrenched a perception of the world as one of waning US dominance and growing multipolarity. The course resulting from this is one of pragmatism and opportunism, safe from the dangerous extremes of Yeltsin-Kozyrev-era integrationism or nakedly imperialistic, anti-Western, neo-Soviet revanchism.

Interestingly, while this statist project will weigh down Moscow's status as a centre of gravity in a global order of whatever character, the more dynamic attributes of the Russian state, if suitably instrumentalized, already render Russia an indispensable centre of gravity in the world.⁶³ The sheer size of the Russian nation and the multitude of borders it shares with other states presents it with a more natural, immediate and diverse wealth of bilateral relationships than most other states. Its imperial past also guarantees it a particular kind of role in the affairs of Soviet successor states,

⁶⁰ Foreign Policy Concept, 2008, <http://eng.kremlin.ru/text/docs/2008/07/204750.shtml>.

⁶¹ Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy*, 129.

⁶² Bugajski, "Russia's Pragmatic Reimperialization," 9.

⁶³ Celeste A. Wallander, "Russian Transimperialism and Its Implications," *The Washington Quarterly*, 30:2 (2007): 109.

though this theatre of its foreign relations has different characteristics across the region.⁶⁴ The extremely favourable distribution of hydrocarbons within its territory and its indispensability as a transit agent for Central Asian energy supplies anoint it with both economic power and a high degree of responsibility for European energy security, as witnessed in Ukraine throughout the Putin presidency.⁶⁵ In international terms, Moscow's identity as a citadel of ideational-moral messianism, as noted, has disappeared, thus the other attributes of gravitational supremacy are enhanced. Given these factors, the Kremlin's opportunistic tactics should come as no surprise.

Clearly the importance of geopolitical power is incorporative of both the internal and external directions of policy-making. According to the Kremlin's statist project, a strong state at home will engender a strong international status; at the same time, an effective, durable posture in the international arena will empower the state at home, as Russians tend to regard Russia's place in the world as a major source of national pride and as a yardstick by which to evaluate the performance of the president and government. The international gravitational power of the Kremlin, in the minds of the Russian foreign policy elite, is drawn from the legitimacy of the chief executive, the security of the state and a strong sense of the uniqueness of Russian national identity. But these things are disparate when isolated; adopted together as part of the twin pillar project of a resurgent Russia, they form the basis for Russia's quest to restore itself as a great power from within and without.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the dual paths pursued by Putin since 2000 – of strengthening the state at home and reasserting Russia's role abroad – should not be regarded as discrete agendas or as coincidental parallel developments. The re-emergence of Russia from the humiliation and degradation of the 1990s owes as much to both theatres of the Kremlin's vision for the country. The strategy pursued internally fuels the strategy pursued internationally, and the strategy pursued internationally acts as legitimation for the strategy pursued internally.

This study has taken care not to suggest that illiberalism should be considered a general prerequisite for aggression in foreign policy, or that we should expect all authoritarian states to act irresponsibly towards other international actors. The normative discretion of the individual observer will command whether illiberal practices within the Russian polity are viewed as being directly responsible for the expansionist tendencies observable in some – not all – dimensions of Russian foreign relations. However, the Putinist manifesto is holistic; therefore, the empowerment of the state through legitimization, securitization and the consolidation of identity provides the Kremlin with more gravity and a wider array of options to pursue internationally. With all the above-mentioned imperatives, democracy is incompatible, not because the Russian public would necessarily guide a meeker foreign policy towards important strategic subjects like Ukraine, Georgia, Europe, China or the United States, but because etched into the Russian foreign policy decision-maker's psyche is the memory of the 1990s, when democracy, neoliberal economics and a relegation to the role of a defeated shell of an empire were all part of the same stark reality. Russia's internal health determines its destiny among the nations of the earth. In the decade since Putin's ascendancy, it should come as no surprise that this imperative still guides the Kremlin's hand.

⁶⁴ Alexander J. Motyl, "Why Empires Reemerge: Imperial Collapse and Imperial Revival in Comparative Perspective," *Comparative Politics*, 31:2 (1999): 137.

⁶⁵ Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 246-255.

THE GEORGIA CRISIS: A NEW COLD WAR ON THE HORIZON?

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Abstract

After the Russia-Georgia war, tensions grew in the relationship between Russia and the West. These tensions have occasionally led some to argue that a New Cold War may be on the horizon between Russia and the West. Others have even claimed that the Old Cold War has not really ended. This work investigates such arguments by examining Western ties to Georgia, Russia's power resurgence, and Georgia's role in that war. The authors claim that those, who interpret the Russia-Georgia war within a Cold War paradigm, neglect the complexities of that conflict. During similar conflicts, the Cold War is an easily comprehensible and adoptable paradigm for the West, particularly the US. Adopting a Cold War perspective, however, ignores that Tbilisi had a significant role to play in defining the 2008 war. Russia versus West tensions can no longer be characterized by the ideological rivalries of the Cold War. Moreover, the Russia-Georgia war appears to indicate a return to older forms of international rivalry.¹

Keywords: *New Cold War, Georgia, Russia, US, EU, South Ossetia, Abkhazia*

Introduction

Since the conclusion of the Cold War, there have been repeated efforts to derive a new paradigm for the understanding of international relations.² Proposals have ranged from Fukuyama's *The End of History* to Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations*.³ Now this debate has come full circle. Due to the 2008 Russia-Georgia war, tensions between Russia and the United States rose markedly – sparking fevered discussion of a possibly emerging “New Cold War.”

International attention was focused on the 2008 Olympics when the Georgian military, in a surprising move, invaded the separatist region of South Ossetia. Russia responded to the crisis with overwhelming

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² For a comprehensive analysis of the Caucasus region from this perspective, see Houman A. Sadri, *Global Security Watch: The Caucasus States* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2010).

³ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997).; Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006).

military force, sending troops across the Georgian border and rapidly routing Georgian troops.⁴ The weight of the Russian counter-offensive, and the duration of the Russian military operations, caused the West (particularly the U.S.) to clamor for a halt to the violence. While the US refrained from direct intervention, it dispatched naval ships to the Black Sea and mobilized humanitarian aid for Georgia.⁵ In the following days, a chill settled on the US-Russian relationship that was reminiscent of the Cold War.

The purpose of this work is to explore whether or not the Russia-Georgia war was really a conflict between Russia and the West that is indicative of an “unfreezing” of the old Cold War or a possible New Cold War.⁶ This examination will begin with an investigation of Western ties with Georgia in the post-Cold War era, and then will turn to Russia’s resurgence under Putin’s leadership. Finally, Georgia’s role in the lead up to the 2008 war will be examined. This approach will illuminate the nature of the conflict and measure the implications of tensions between Russia and West since the conclusion of hostilities.

The West & Georgia

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the South Caucasus opened up, as former Soviet republics gained independence. The political opening of the Caucasus allowed an opportunity for Western states to develop political and economic ties in a region that had been almost solely Russian-dominated space since the Tsarist Russian Empire forced Persia to sign the Treaty of Turkmenchay in 1828. As Russia’s economy imploded in the early 1990s, its influence waned, and the influence of the Europeans and Americans grew.

US, NATO, & Georgia

Diplomatic relations between the US and Georgia were officially established in 1992. Since that time, Georgia has come to view the US as “one of the main international guarantors of Georgia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.”⁷ The US has consistently backed Georgian efforts to settle its separatist disputes without loss of territory, and the US has provided Georgia with military training, economic aid, and diplomatic support in the international community.

Energy, security, and democracy constitute the three major US priorities in its relationship with Georgia. Georgia is a critical state for the establishment of East-West export routes from the energy-rich Caspian Sea basin. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline and the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE) natural gas pipeline have opened this basin up to the West since the end of the Cold War. While US companies have profited from involvement in the Caspian energy sector, the US does not really need Caspian energy for consumption. It does, however, have a strategic interest in weakening Russian monopolization of this energy sector. Such monopolization has two negative consequences from the

⁴ Michael Schwartz, Anne Barnard, and C.J. Chivers, “1,500 Reported Killed in Georgia Battle,” *New York Times*, August 10, 2008, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed May 12, 2009).

⁵ Tara Bahrapour and Phillip P. Pan, “U.S. Military Ship Delivers Aid to Georgia; Vessel Shifts Course, Avoids Port Where Russians are Posted,” *Washington Post*, August 28, 2008, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed May 12, 2009).

⁶ Vladimer Papava, “The End of the Frozen Cold War?,” *Caucasian Review of International Affairs*, vol. 3:1, (Winter 2009): 98-102, http://cria-online.org/6_9.html (accessed May 12, 2009); Thomas L. Friedman, “The New Cold War,” *The New York Times*, May 14, 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/14/opinion/14friedman.html?_r=1 (accessed May 12, 2009).

⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, “Relations Between Georgia and the United States of America,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, http://www.mfa.gov.ge/index.php?sec_id=337&lang_id=ENG (accessed May 12, 2009).

US perspective. The first is that Moscow might gain an OPEC-like ability to manipulate market prices, and the second is that Russian energy dominance translates into political dominance in its former Soviet republics. Georgia is a critical state in regard to energy, for if Russia can dominate Tbilisi, it can control both the BTC and BTE.⁸

Following 9/11, security considerations assumed the greatest priority for the US, however. Together, Georgia and Azerbaijan formed an air corridor through which NATO aircraft could reach Afghanistan, with nearly all air NATO air traffic to Afghanistan taking this route.⁹ This has only recently begun to change with Russia's agreement to allow NATO to use its territory to supply Afghanistan.¹⁰ In addition to Georgia's over flight cooperation, the Washington and Tbilisi initiated two major programs to improve Georgian defense forces, the Georgia Train and Equip Program (GTEP) and the Sustainment and Stability Operations Program (SSOP). Established in 2002, GTEP invested \$64 million in developing Georgia's military capabilities, primarily for counter-terrorism. That year, the US also sent 200 Special Forces to train Georgian troops.¹¹ For Georgians, it was another successful step toward escaping Russia's long shadow.¹² Eager to cooperate further with the US on security matters, Georgia reciprocated by participating in the US-led war in Iraq. In fact, Georgia actually committed the third largest body of foreign troops in that war, which is remarkable for such a small country.¹³

The real watershed moment in US-Georgia relations, however, came with the democratic Rose Revolution, which swept President Shevardnadze from office.¹⁴ The 2003 election of Mikheil Saakashvili was hailed as a great democratic victory in the West, presenting Saakashvili with an opportunity to further ties with the US and Europe. Security cooperation was soon joined by economic aid, and in 2005, the US initiated the Millennium Program to encourage international investment in Georgia, committing \$295 million to the development of infrastructure and the private sector.¹⁵ Around this time, US-Georgian trade also began to reach levels comparable to Georgian trade with the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Russia. (See Tables in Appendix 2 & Graphs in Appendix 4.) Furthermore, the US increased support for Georgia politically, pushing hard for Georgian membership in NATO against European opposition.¹⁶

⁸ Elkhan Nuriyev, *The South Caucasus at the Crossroads: Conflicts, Caspian Oil and Great Power Politics* (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2007), 243-259

⁹ Svante E. Cornell, "War in Georgia, Jitters All Around," *Current History*, vol. 107:711 (October 2008): 312.

¹⁰ Roman Muzalevsky, "NATO-Kazakhstan Transit Agreement: Unleashing the Potential of Northern Supply Route," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, vol. 7:37, (February 24, 2010).

http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=36080&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=71b31768ff (accessed April 14, 2010).

¹¹ Alexander Cooley, "How the West Failed Georgia," *Current History*, vol. 107:711, (October 2008): 342-344.

¹² Irakly G. Areshidze, "Helping Georgia?," *Perspective*, vol. xii:4 (March-April 2002),

<http://www.bu.edu/iscip/vol12/areshidze.html> (accessed May 12, 2009).

¹³ Cornell, 313.

¹⁴ Lincoln A. Mitchell, *Uncertain Democracy: U.S. Foreign Policy and Georgia's Rose Revolution* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 114-115.

¹⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, "Relations Between Georgia and the United States of America," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, http://www.mfa.gov.ge/index.php?sec_id=337&lang_id=ENG (accessed May 12, 2009).

¹⁶ Joshua Kucera, "NATO: Bush's Support for Georgia, Ukraine is No Pose," *Eurasianet.org*, April 2, 2008, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav040208.shtml> (accessed May 12, 2009).

When Saakashvili gained the presidency, Georgia had already been participating in NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) program since 1994.¹⁷ PfP emerged after the Cold War as a flexible option for new states to become partially integrated into the NATO security mechanism. Through this program, states may design Individual Partnership Action Plans (IPAPs) for membership. Under the PfP, all three states of the Southern Caucasus (Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan) have opted for some level of cooperation with NATO. Georgia, though, is by far the most involved in NATO cooperation, and its coordination with NATO accelerated under Saakashvili.¹⁸

In October 2004, NATO approved an IPAP for Georgia. Georgia's progress led NATO to then invite Georgia to join in Intensification Dialogue in 2006.¹⁹ In April of 2007, the US backed the further integration of Georgia into Western institutions when it endorsed the NATO Freedom Consolidation Act, which proposed the admission of Albania, Croatia, Georgia, and Macedonia as member states.²⁰ On the doorstep of NATO membership, however, the issue of Georgia's separatist problem came to the fore. The disputes with Abkhazia and South Ossetia have involved direct confrontation with Russian forces. Therefore, if granted NATO membership, Georgia would be able to call on Western military intervention in its disputes under Article 5 of the NATO Charter, and war with Russia is not a prospect that other NATO members desire to risk. As a result, Georgia's membership process stalled in 2007, while NATO sought the resolution of Georgian territorial disputes.²¹

Despite US commitment to Georgia and the expansion of NATO into post-Soviet space, European objections to Georgian membership halted Georgia's integration into the Western security apparatus. Shortly after the recognition of Kosovo's independence in 2008, a NATO summit was held in Bucharest. Knowing Russia's displeasure with the possibility of NATO's expansion Germany and several other European states opposed further integrative steps, and debate over granting Membership Action Plans (MAPs) to Georgia and Ukraine stalemated. Instead, NATO leaders made the weak pronouncement that Georgia would inevitably be admitted to NATO at some point in the future.²² This opened the door for Russia to continue to dominate Georgia while also providing incentive to take action against Georgia's NATO membership before that hypothetical point in the future.

EU, OSCE, & Georgia

Like the US, the EU member states share an interest in Georgia because of energy, security, and democracy. Unlike the US, however, the EU states require Caspian energy for their domestic consumption and have an even greater interest in trade. Even before the Soviet Union's collapse, Europe had become reliant on Russian energy. By 2006, 33% of the EU's oil imports and 40% of its gas imports were imported from Russia.²³ The BTC and BTE pipelines, then, are essential to Europe's

¹⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, "Information on NATO-Georgia Relations," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, http://www.mfa.gov.ge/index.php?sec_id=337&lang_id=ENG (accessed May 12, 2009).

¹⁸ Alberto Priego, "NATO Cooperation Towards South Caucasus," *Caucasian Review of International Affairs*, vol. 2:1 (Winter 2008): 1-2, http://www.cria-online.org/2_7.html (accessed May 12, 2009).

¹⁹ Georgeta Pourchet, *Eurasia Rising: Democracy and Independence in the Post-Soviet Space* (Westport: Praeger Security International, 2008), 114.

²⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, "Relations Between Georgia and the United States of America," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, http://www.mfa.gov.ge/index.php?sec_id=268&lang_id=ENG (May 12, 2009).

²¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, "Information on NATO-Georgia Relations," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, http://www.mfa.gov.ge/index.php?sec_id=337&lang_id=ENG (accessed May 12, 2009).

²² Cooley, 342-344.

²³ Energy.eu, "Energy Dependency," Energy.eu, <http://www.energy.eu/> (accessed May 12, 2009).

energy security, providing energy import routes not under Russian control. This diversification is a strategic objective for the EU, and it is pursuing plans to extend the BTC and BTE pipeline network across the Caspian Sea, to access Central Asian oil and gas.²⁴

In regards to international trade, the EU has found Georgia to be a ready market, and EU imports offer a strong alternative to Russia and other Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) members. (See Appendix 1 tables.) The EU has also offered Georgia an alternative market for its exports, which has become increasingly more important as Russia-Georgia relations have worsened (See comparative trade statistics in Appendix 4). Indeed, since the end of the Soviet Union, Georgian trade with the West has grown significantly, particularly if one includes Georgia-Turkey trade in the balance against Russia and former CIS states (See Appendices 3 and 4 for graphs of trade volume and percentages).

The first EU-Georgia pact was signed on April 22, 1996. That pact, the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, addressed measures to strengthen political and economic freedoms in Georgia, and was in force by July 1, 1999. Also in 1999, Georgia was admitted to the European Council and the World Trade Organization, both with the backing of the EU. In 2001, the EU Cooperation Coordination Council was created to guide the Georgia-EU relationship. Similarly to its membership in NATO's PfP program, Georgia's EU integration process accelerated under Saakashvili, and Georgia became a member of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) in 2004. That year, the EU began a Rule of Law Mission to Georgia (EUJUST THEMIS), signaling a new phase of cooperation within the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) structure.²⁵

Once Georgia was an ENP member, the EU began to exert itself more in regard to Georgia's separatist problem. On February 21, 2006, the Presidency of the European Union announced that it recognized the territorial integrity of the Georgian state and voiced support for Georgia's attempts to find a settlement for its disputes with the enclave of South Ossetia. In 2007, the EU launched a fact-finding mission to determine the feasibility of implementing the EU-Georgia ENP Action Plan in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. This was seen as a first step toward implementing effective border control, establishing a foundation for mutual ties, and an eventual peaceful settlement.²⁶

In regard to security cooperation and dispute resolution outside of NATO, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) was central to European-Georgian relations. From 1992 until 2008, the OSCE has had a Mission to Georgia, committed to resolution of the separatist conflicts with Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Since 1993, the OSCE played a role in monitoring the Georgia-Abkhaz border under the UN led peace process. The Mission to Georgia also monitored the Joint Peace Keeping Forces (JPKF) in the Georgia-Ossetia conflict area.²⁷ But the OSCE has neither the ability or will to influence Russia's role in preserving these "frozen conflicts." Vladimir Socor has stated that the OSCE "can either function as a 'community' in consensus with Russia and remain irrelevant, or give

²⁴ Cooley, 1181.; Andrew E. Kramer "Putin's Grasp of Energy Drives Russian Agenda," *New York Times*, January 28, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/29/world/europe/29putin.html?_r=1&scp=2&sq=putin&st=cse (accessed May 12, 2009).; Johannes Rau, *The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan: A brief historical outline* (Berlin: Verlag Dr. Köster 2008), 56.

²⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, "Chronology of Basic Events in EU - Georgia Relations," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, http://www.mfa.gov.ge/index.php?sec_id=337&lang_id=ENG (accessed May 12, 2009).

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ OSCE, "OSCE Mission to Georgia," Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, <http://www.osce.org/georgia/13199.html> (accessed May 12, 2009).

up on the consensus with Russia and risk ceasing to function at all.”²⁸ This limit to European commitment to Georgia was demonstrated in 2008 as, despite new levels of EU and OSCE intervention, the crisis in South Ossetia spiraled out of control. After the war, Russia stood in the way of any further continuation of the Mission to Georgia, leading to its termination.²⁹

Western Role in the Russia-Georgia Crisis

The weakness of Western multilateral institutions in opposition to Russian aggression was apparent even before the Russia-Georgia War in August of 2008. In 2007, there were two incidents in which unmarked Russian military aircraft penetrated Georgian airspace and fired air-to-surface weapons. The first incident, on March 11th, involved at least one Russian Mi-24 HIND-E helicopter. The second, on August 6th, involved at least one Russian airplane, which was identified to most probably be a Russian Su-24M fighter jet. An international team sent to investigate the incident by the OSCE and the JPKF supported Georgian claims that the aircraft originated from and returned to Russian airspace, as well as corroborating that the Georgian air force does not have aircraft that fit the profile of the intruding fighter or the capacity to launch that specific Kh-58 missile. After these incidents, however, an OSCE spokesman would only say, “The [OSCE] report is not going to point the finger at one side or another. The report is forward-looking with the aim of building confidence between both sides and avoiding similar incidents in the future. We hope to find not just dialogue but a mechanism between these two countries.”³⁰

In addition to being unwilling to confront Russia, the West also complicated Georgia’s territorial disputes with its recognition of Kosovar independence in early 2008. Moscow had already warned that Kosovo’s independence would set a precedent for the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia by supporting self-determination over territorial integrity. Not unexpectedly, then, Russia responded by accelerating its recognition of those separatist republics. Until that point, Moscow had been pursuing what might be called “creeping annexation” by providing Russian passports to the inhabitants in these two territories.³¹

During 2008, it also became increasingly obvious that Georgia’s integration into NATO had reached its limits. Yet, while the NATO countries would not approve a MAP for Georgia, they continued to insist that Georgia would inevitably receive NATO membership. It was clear by this point that Russia would not stand for Georgia’s full membership in NATO, and suspending Georgia’s membership process gave Russia a window to act. On April 16, Moscow announced that it would open direct trade, transportation, and political ties with both Abkhazia and South Ossetia. This was followed by the deployment of Russian paratroops and artillery in Abkhazia, as well as the repair of the railway between Russia and Abkhazia by Russian troops.³²

²⁸ Vladimir Socor, “Moscow Pleased with OSCE’s Response to Missile Drop on Georgia,” *Eurasian Monitor*, September 11, 2007.

²⁹ Matt Robinson, “UN Monitors Leave Georgia, OSCE Missions Shuts,” Reuters, June 30, 2009, <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE55T3OR20090630> (accessed April 14, 2010).

³⁰ Svante E. Cornell, David J. Smith, S. Fredrick Starr, “The August 6 Bombing Incident in Georgia: Implications for the Euro-Atlantic Region,” *CACI & SRSP Paper* (October 2007): 10-11, 14, and 17, <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/Silkroadpapers/0710Georgia.pdf?> (accessed May 12, 2009).

³¹ Cooley, 343.

³² Cornell, 310.

This build-up of Russian forces coincided with increasing tensions in Georgia. Finally, on August 7, the Georgian military responded to shelling by the South Ossetians. By the next day the Georgian military was engaged with Russian forces in the city of Tskhinvali.³³ Because of Georgia's relationship with the West, it found a surge of international sympathy in the wake of the ensuing Russian invasion. The presidents of several Eastern European countries (Ukraine, Poland, and Latvia) urged the UN to stand against Russia's unimpeded manhandling of Georgia and the US and EU led international objections to the prolonged Russian action in Georgia.³⁴

By August 11th, the UN Security Council was considering a French resolution for a ceasefire, while the Group of 7 (US, UK, Italy, France, Germany, Canada and Japan) continued to urge Russia to immediately initiate a ceasefire and to accept international intervention in the crisis. The next day, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev agreed in principle to the six components of the French ceasefire, but while he announced that Russia would cease military operations, he stated that Russian forces would hold their positions. On the 15th, Georgia and Russia would sign a ceasefire, but the Russians would draft their own resolution regarding the conflict, countering the proposed French resolution.³⁵ The US took one of the most proactive stances, airlifting Georgia's troops from Iraq and returning them to Georgia, as well as mobilizing humanitarian aid, and warships to deliver that aid in the Black Sea.³⁶ Yet, though Russia may have received a great deal of international criticism, it suffered few punitive actions from the international community and the West in particular. Interestingly enough, despite the Great Powers involvement, the nature of the Georgian-Russian conflict was not an indicator of a New Cold War. Moreover, this conflict did not enjoy the same urgency level of the Berlin Airlift which had signified the Old Cold War.

Russia's Resurgence

In order to understand Russia's resurgence and its subsequent war with Georgia, it is helpful to recognize Russia's historical role in the Caucasus. Russian expansion into the region began in the 16th century under Tsar Ivan IV. Between 1722 and 1723, Peter the Great seized even more of the Caucasus. Though these gains would temporarily be lost, by 1774, Kabarda and North Ossetia were once again in Russian hands, annexed to Russia after the Russo-Turkish wars. In 1783, the Orthodox-Christian people of contemporary Georgia chose to embrace Russian rule, rather than submit to the Turks or the Persians. Georgia's incorporation into the Russian empire, would position Russia to dominate the rest of the Southern Caucasus.³⁷ After forcing the Persians to sign the Treaty of Turkmenchay, the remainder of the South Caucasus was gained by the Tsarist Russian empire. When the Tsarist Russian empire collapsed and gave way to the Soviet Union, the Caucasus experienced its first brief taste of independence. But once the Bolsheviks had consolidated their power, they quickly

³³ Ibid., 311.

³⁴ Neil MacFarquhar and Thom Shanker, "Russian Neighbors Urge U.N. to Stand Against Kremlin Aggression," *The New York Times*, September 25, 2008, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/> (accessed May 12, 2009).

³⁵ RIA Novosti, "US Warship Leaves Sevastopol After Protests," *RIA Novosti*, September 2, 2008, <http://en.rian.ru/world/20080902/116477984.html> (accessed May 12, 2009).; Michael Hoffman, "US Takes Georgian Troops Home from Iraq," *Air Force Times*, August 13, 2008, http://www.airforcetimes.com/news/2008/08/airforce_georgian airlift_081108w/ (accessed May 12, 2009).; UN Security Council, "Georgia-Russia Historical Chronology", *UN Security Council Report*, August 27, 2008, <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/site/c.glKWLeMTIsG/b.2703511/> (accessed May 12, 2009).

³⁶ Cornell, 313.

³⁷ Ole Høiris and Sefa Martin Yurukel, *Contrasts and Solutions in the Caucasus* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1998), 36.

turned toward restoring Russian dominance over the Caucasus.³⁸ The collapse of the Soviet Union was an even more disintegrative force, and left Russia struggling to pull itself back together politically and economically. Today, as Russia recovers its economic might, it is not surprising to see Moscow reaching once again for the reins of power in the Caucasus, because the Kremlin sees this area as its natural sphere of influence.

Indeed, it appears that Russia never intended for its former republics to become completely autonomous from Russia's national interests. After the dismembering of the Soviet Union, Russia founded the CIS in an effort to provide a mechanism for the continuation of its relationships with its former republics, as the British had earlier done with the Commonwealth of Nations to maintain solid relations with their former colonies. The CIS is an example of how Russia has attempted to maintain political proximity to its Near Abroad. While the CIS is supposed to protect national sovereignty of member states while providing mutually beneficial cooperation, the organization has come to be perceived as a mechanism manipulated by Russia. As Putin centralized power in his new Russia and began to pursue aggressive new policies in its foreign affairs, some members of the CIS began to discuss the possible necessity of a "dignified divorce."³⁹ In 2006, Georgian President Saakashvili took a step in this direction, requesting that the government reassess its CIS membership.⁴⁰ After the 2008 war with Russia, Georgia finalized its withdrawal from that international institution.⁴¹

Domestic Changes

Russia's resurgence on the international stage has its roots in domestic politics and economics. The critical moment came on March 26, 2000, when Vladimir Putin won an astonishing victory in his bid to become the President of Russia. Formerly the Federal Security Service Chief for Yeltsin, Putin was tough. He had been appointed by the ailing Yeltsin as acting president in January of 2000, and immediately launched an attack on government corruption before his election. In his campaign, he exhibited shrewd political tact, avoiding association with the unpopular Yeltsin and positioned himself as a strong leader. Once elected, he then began to centralize the power of the national government. He weakened the autonomy of regional governments and restricted the power of political parties within the Duma. Under his presidency, the freedom of the Russian press has also been restricted.⁴² While these moves may prove to be detrimental to democracy in Russia, Putin has remained immensely popular. He was a leader, providing a firm new vision for Moscow. Russia's new political environment under Putin, however, did not signify a new ideological superpower aimed at fighting the West in all matters.

Nevertheless, the core reason for Putin's success and popularity was economic. Under his leadership, the Russian economy took an upward turn, largely driven by increasing oil revenues. In 2003, the profits of Lukoil (a major oil exporting firm) rose by a startling 38%. Within the space of the first four months of that year, the Central Bank's currency levels rose by \$4.8 billion (10%).⁴³ This economic

³⁸ Nuriyev, 44-54, 74-86.

³⁹ Pourchet, 105.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁴¹ Radio Free Europe, "Georgia Finalizes Withdrawal from CIS," *Radio Free Europe*, August 18, 2009, http://www.rferl.org/content/Georgia_Finalizes_Withdrawal_From_CIS/1802284.html (accessed April 14, 2010).

⁴² Milton F. Goldman, *Russia, the Eurasian Republics, and Central/Eastern Europe*, 11th ed. (Dubuque: McGraw-Hill, 2008), 26.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 35.

turnaround made Putin's dreams of a new Russia a possibility. For Putin and his successor, Dmitry Medvedev, a unipolar international system dominated by a hegemonic US has become unacceptable, and much of the Russian population appears to have embraced the Russian vision of a multipolar world.⁴⁴ This new vision, however, did not imply opposing the nature of Western economic and political systems, as the Kremlin had done during the Cold War.

Global Resurgence & Regional Assertion

While placing Russia on a trajectory to return to global power, Putin did not initially set out to oppose the West at every turn. Instead, he initially focused on promoting stability along Russia's borders, a move that promoted both security and economic growth. Putin's handling of the Chechen conflict erased the Russian military failures of the first Chechen war and reduced that continuing threat to Russian security and territorial integrity.⁴⁵ Russia also reached out to its neighbors under Putin, including Cold War allies of the US, Turkey and Japan.⁴⁶

Putin's cooperation with the US-led War on Terror demonstrates the evolution of Russia, becoming increasingly assertive until cooperation with the US began to break down. Initially, cooperation with the US allowed Russia political cover for its war against Muslim Chechnya as well as providing for the removal of the anti-Russian Taliban in Afghanistan. But it did not take very long for Putin's attitude to change. The War on Terror threatened to place US troops in the post-Soviet space for the long-term. Russia, together with other members of the Shanghai Co-operation Organization (which also includes China, and Central Asian states), has called for the US to leave its bases in the region. This unprecedented US military presence threatened Russia's role as the security provider for its post-Soviet republics.

More importantly, however, Russia's turn from the West may be seen as a function of its energy interests. Like the US, Russia does not necessarily need energy from Central Asia or the Caucasus to satisfy domestic consumption. Russia possesses the world's largest gas reserves and the world's eighth largest oil reserves. Russian oil production in 2007 was roughly 9.87 million barrels per day (mbd), and sometimes even surpasses Saudi Arabia. Domestic consumption of oil is only around 2.85 mbd, allowing Russia to export around 7.01 mbd in 2007. Its gas production also far surpasses domestic consumption, as Russia consumed only 16.6 trillion cubic feet (tcf) of the 23.17 tcf that it produced in 2006.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ President of Russia: Diplomacy and External Affairs, "Beginning of the Meeting with President of Venezuela...", President of Russia: Diplomacy and External Affairs, November 27, 2008, http://president.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2008/11/27/1641_type82914_209832.shtml (accessed May 12, 2009).; Pravda.ru, "Foreign countries think of Russia as Global Empire of Good, Many Russians Believe," Pravda.ru, April 22, 2009, <http://english.pravda.ru/russia/history/22-04-2009/107439-russians-0> (accessed May 12, 2009).; Tatiana Shakleina, "Post-Georgia World Order, or a Global Order Under Obama," *International Trends*, vol. 6(3) (September/December 2008) <http://www.intertrends.ru/eighteenth/002.htm> (accessed May 12, 2009).

⁴⁵ Anna Matveeva, "Chechnya: Dynamics of War and Peace," *Problems of Post-Communism*, vol. 54:3 (May/June 2007): 3-17.

⁴⁶ Robert O. Freedman, *Russia, Iran and the Nuclear Question: the Putin Record* (Carlisle: The Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College, 2006), 3, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/> (accessed May 12, 2009).; Andrew Kuchins, "Japanese-Russian Relations and Northeast Asian Security," Carnegie Endowment, January 16, 2003, <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/events/index.cfm?fa=eventDetail&id=569&&prog=zru> (accessed May 12, 2009).

⁴⁷ EIA, "Russia Energy Profile," Energy Information Administration, http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/country/country_energy_data.cfm?fips=RS (accessed May 12, 2009).

Central Asian energy is strategic, enabling Russia to expand its economic gains in the energy market. Russia's gas and oil fields are aging and production is slowing. Bringing additional reserves online will take both significant time and investment.⁴⁸ In order to maintain its position in energy markets, then, it is estimated that Russia might require around 3,531 bcf of Central Asian gas per year, for some years. If Russia can secure Central Asian energy, it can profit from transit fees, sustain its energy exports to Europe, and even supply China's growing energy consumption. At the same time, Russia stands to lose political and economic ground if foreign companies are allowed to continue to encroach on the region. In the Caspian Sea basin, Western companies already account for roughly 70% of oil production.⁴⁹

The primary threat to Russian energy dominance originates in the Caucasus. The Western energy corridor through Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey offers the opportunity for the West to break Russia's grip on Caspian and Central Asian energy. While the BTC and BTE already allow Caspian oil and gas to flow west along this corridor, it might be expanded by trans-Caspian pipelines to tap Central Asia's large deposits. Though such a pipeline route would be a feat of both engineering and politics, it is a possibility that Russia appears to view as a serious threat.⁵⁰

In order to secure its future as a global energy superpower, Russia needs to reassert itself in the former Soviet regions of Central Asia and the Caucasus and Georgia provides a strategic chokepoint. If Georgia could be brought in line, Moscow could use its political dominance to cut the NATO air corridor into Central Asia, the Western energy corridor, and reduce the negative consequences of Russia's declining economic importance for Georgia and the former CIS. The problem for Moscow is that Tbilisi has been anything but pro-Russian, particularly since Saakashvili's election in 2003.⁵¹ The Rose Revolution and other democratic color revolutions, like Ukraine's Orange Revolution, have unsettled the Kremlin. These democratic movements brought pro-Western leaders to power in Russian geopolitical space, and those leaders sought membership in the EU and NATO in order to escape their historical domination by Moscow.

Not only is energy a source of economic wealth, but also it translates into political power. In 2006, Putin ordered a re-evaluation of the old Soviet energy distribution and pricing system. Under that system, former Soviet republics were receiving gas prices significantly lower than the prices paid by European consumers. Austria's payments for natural gas at the time were priced around \$221 per thousand cubic meters of gas per year, while Germany was paying \$217, and Turkey \$243. Former Soviet republics, on the other hand, were paying only \$50-80 per thousand cubic meters. Subsequent adjustment of gas prices for former republics like Georgia, then, might merely be seen as an attempt to develop even gas pricing that would deliver greater financial gain to Moscow. However, the timing of Russia's price hikes raised suspicions that new gas prices were also designed to punish former republics for seeking greater autonomy from Russia. Gazprom announced these changes in price

⁴⁸ Boris Rumer, "The Search for Stability in Central Asia," in *Central Asia: A Gathering Storm?*, Boris Rumer, ed. (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2002), 56.

⁴⁹ Dmitri Trenin, "Russia and Central Asia: Interests, Policies, and Prospects," in *Central Asia: Views from Washington, Moscow, and Beijing*, Eugene Rumer, Dimitri Trenin, and Huasheng Zhao (New York: M.E. Sharpe 2007), 106-108.

⁵⁰ Alman Mir Ismail, "Is the West Losing the Energy Game in the Caspian?," *CA-CI Analyst*, May 6, 2009, <http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/5100> (accessed May 12, 2009).

⁵¹ Nuriyev, 82.

structure just before the beginning of winter, placing many consumer states in a budgetary crisis over energy supply to their citizens.⁵²

Coercive energy diplomacy is not the only source of leverage that Russia has in the case of Georgia, however. Having assumed responsibility for mediating Georgia's separatist conflicts with Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Moscow has the ability to manipulate these internal disputes for political gain.⁵³ The Georgia-Russian war may be seen as a culmination of Russian opposition to Tbilisi's Western stance, but a deeper understanding of that conflict may be achieved when Georgia's role is also examined.

Georgia – Victim or Villain?

In order to understand the roots of separatist conflict in Georgia, one must at least return to the Soviet era. When Georgia emerged from the Soviet Union, its territory incorporated three different separatist-minded regions: Abkhazia, Adjara, and South Ossetia. All three regions were historically distinct due to ethnic and/or religious differences. In accordance with Lenin's policy of national self-determination, Georgia originally joined the Soviet Union as a part of the Transcaucasus Federated Soviet Socialist Republic (TFSSR) which included Armenia and Azerbaijan. Abkhazia was originally federated with Georgia as an autonomous republic, Adjara was a sub-national autonomous republic, and South Ossetia was granted the status of an autonomous district.⁵⁴

This encouragement and protection of national identity allowed the Soviets to curry favor with the local people but also led to the fragmentation of the Caucasus, creating political sub-groups that could be played off one another. The political autonomy and nationalist identities that were encouraged under the Soviets made it difficult for Georgia to create a new, unified nation-state. Georgian nationalism was fostered and encouraged under the first Georgian President, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, who ran his election based on the slogan, "Georgia for Georgians!"⁵⁵ Nevertheless, Georgian nationalism sparked, in turn, Abkhaz, Adjarian, and Ossetian nationalism, as all three minority groups moved to protect their political autonomy.

The first fighting broke out in South Ossetia. When Gamsakhurdia moved to strengthen Georgian control of the region and declared an end to Ossetian political autonomy, the South Ossetians declared their own independence. The ensuing violence was only stopped by Russian intervention on behalf of South Ossetia. Gamsakhurdia's decision to champion Georgian nationalism had not only alienated domestic minorities but also Russia. He refused to join the CIS and his dislike of the Western darlings, Gorbachev and Shevardnadze, did little to endear him to the West. Soon Georgians began to oppose Gamsakhurdia as well. Several warlords, with possible backing from the Russian military, organized an opposition force that prompted Gamsakhurdia to flee Tbilisi on January 5, 1992. Shevardnadze

⁵² Pourchet, 80-81.

⁵³ Konstantin Preobrazhensky, "South Ossetia: KGB Backyard in the Caucasus," *CA-CI Analyst*, vol. 11:5 (March 11, 2009): 3-5, <http://www.cacianalyst.org/files/090311Analyst.pdf> (accessed May 12, 2009).

⁵⁴ Thomas Goltz, *Georgia Diary: A Chronicle of War and Political Chaos in the Post-Soviet Caucasus* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2006), 26 and 33.

⁵⁵ Monica Duffy Toft, "Multinationality, Regions, and State Building: The Failed Transition in Georgia," in *Ethnicity and Territory in the Former Soviet Union*, James Hughes and Gwendolyn Sasse, eds. (London: Routledge, 2002), 133.

returned to Georgia, and was elected president on October 11, 1992, in an election that was boycotted by the Abkhazians, Ossetians, and supporters of Gamsakhurdia.⁵⁶

After fleeing first to Azerbaijan, then to Armenia, and finally to Chechnya, Gamsakhurdia organized his supporters in a rebellion against Eduard Shevardnadze. As Shevardnadze's forces moved against Gamsakhurdia's supporters, Abkhazia made its bid for independence. Unlike the Ossetians, who were the majority in their small district, the Abkhaz were only 17% of the population in the autonomous region of Abkhazia. Shevardnadze and the Georgians were unwilling to let Abkhazia depart, and Georgian forces initially gained the advantage in the conflict. However, the Abkhaz found Russian support as well as fighters from Chechnya. During the conflict, there were several reports of fighter/bomber attacks on Georgian positions, and the Abkhazians had no air force. Even when Georgians managed to down a Russian MIG 29 with a fully uniformed Russian pilot, Russia continued to deny its involvement. After several halted advances, Abkhaz forces managed to expel the Georgians after defeating them in the siege of Sukhami. Shevardnadze's defeat gave Gamsakhurdia an opportunity to oust him. It was only by turning to Moscow and joining the CIS that Shevardnadze was able to cling to power, receiving Russian tanks with which he could suppress the Georgian rebellion. When the dust settled, Russia had troops in both Abkhazia and South Ossetia and Georgia had become a CIS member.⁵⁷

While Georgian ultra-nationalism may be blamed for Georgia's territorial disintegration in the 1990s, it had already inherited a splintered foundation from the Soviet Union. From the beginning, Russia also demonstrated little regard for the sovereignty of Georgia, which it considered as a natural part of its sphere of influence. While nearly every side in the early stages of Georgia's conflicts received some aid from the Russian military, it appears that Moscow played an important role in preventing the defeat of Abkhaz and Ossetian forces. Russian intervention preserved the separation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, resulting in de facto independence that has been accompanied by perpetual conflict. In 1998, Georgian militias operating within Abkhazia stirred up violence again, provoking a reaction from Abkhazian forces that led to the killing of around 200 Georgian guerillas and perhaps as many as another 50,000 Georgians forced from their homes inside Abkhazian territory.⁵⁸

When further skirmishing flared up again in 2001, Shevardnadze's apparent inability to protect Georgians in Abkhazia took its toll on his approval.⁵⁹ During Shevardnadze's 11 year presidency, the economy suffered, poverty spread, and corruption ran rampant. Shevardnadze's inability or unwillingness to affect any significant reforms also contributed to his increasing unpopularity. When his party committed electoral fraud in the parliamentary elections of 2003, Shevardnadze's unpopularity peaked and he was forced out of office by yet another popular revolt –the Rose Revolution.⁶⁰

The Rose Revolution shook Georgia, and led to the election of Mikheil Saakashvili. In 2004, Saakashvili demonstrated a new assertiveness in regards to Georgia's territorial integrity and challenged South Ossetian separatists in a crackdown on smuggling and the drug trade. Saakashvili

⁵⁶ Goltz, 5-10, 50, and 86.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 52, 141, xxi, and 196.

⁵⁸ Goltz, xxi.

⁵⁹ UN Security Council, "Georgia-Russia Historical Chronology," *UN Security Council Report*, August 27, 2008, <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/site/c.glKWLeMTIsG/b.2703511/> (accessed May 12, 2009).

⁶⁰ Pouchet, 69.

also managed to bring Adjara back under Georgian administration.⁶¹ In 2006, Georgia also regained control of the Kodori Gorge in upper Abkhazia, defeating the local warlord. Still, under Saakashvili Georgia also reversed its policy of isolating Abkhazia and South Ossetia and began to seek economic engagement in order to bring them back into consideration of federation with the Georgian state.⁶²

In 2005 and 2006, the Georgian government also began to pressure Russian forces to leave Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Moscow showed no interest in removing its troops, however, and both Abkhazia and South Ossetia remained hostile toward Tbilisi. In both 2006 and 2007, there were several reports of violence between Abkhaz and Georgian forces along the border, including several rocket attacks by Abkhazians. By that time, both Putin and leaders of the separatist republics were comparing their situation to that of Kosovo, warning that Kosovo's independence would be perceived as international legal precedent for their own independence.⁶³

By 2008, Abkhazia and South Ossetia had experienced de facto independence for roughly one and a half decades. Abkhazia reiterated its call for the UN, EU, and OSCE to recognize its independence, and Moscow strengthened its support for both of these republics. Russia withdrew CIS sanctions which had been placed on Abkhazia and the Russian Duma encouraged the recognition of both republics as independent. Additional Russian troops were also deployed in Abkhazia, and a military unit sent to repair the Russian railway with Abkhazia.⁶⁴

Even before 2008, Russia had already begun a process of "creeping annexation." Russian passports have been distributed to locals in the separatist regions, effectively creating Russian Federation citizens where there had been none. Additionally, Russian officials have also been appointed to serve as military leaders of separatist forces. Russian general Sultan Sosnaliev has served as Abkhazia's defense minister, and Major General Vasily Lunev as South Ossetia's.⁶⁵ Thus, when Georgian troops entered South Ossetia in response to rocket attacks in August of 2008, Russia could claim that its "peace keepers" and citizens had been attacked. It also helped that both Abkhazia and South Ossetia issued calls for Russian intervention.⁶⁶

Conclusion

To address the initial question, our discussion clearly indicates that the current politics of the Caucasus region, particularly Georgia, is much more complex and sophisticated than the binary politics of the Cold War era when there were only two major political players. By using a Kenneth Waltz's methodological perspective, we summarize that there were active political actors at System level-of-analysis (e.g., Great and Regional Powers), State level-of-analysis (e.g., Russian Duma and Georgian ultra-nationalism), and Individual level-of-analysis (e.g., each Georgian President) involved in the process of contributing to the rise of this conflict by their decisions. Nevertheless, the 2008 Russian-

⁶¹ Vladimer Papava and Michael Tokmazishvili, "Becoming European: Georgia's Strategy for Joining the EU," *Problems of Post-Communism*, vol. 53:1 (2006): 30.

⁶² Cornell, 309.

⁶³ UN Security Council.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Cornell, 309-310.

⁶⁶ Vzglyad, "Georgia attacks," *Vzglyad*, August 8, 2008, <http://vz.ru/politics/2008/8/8/194400.html> (accessed May 12, 2009).

Georgian war did not have the characteristics and conditions that are often associated with conflicts of the Cold War era. Thus, we conclude that the 2008 War neither signifies the start of a New Cold War, nor it suggests that the (old) Cold War did not really die.

In this light, despite Georgia's ultra-nationalistic treatment of its own ethnic minorities, the Russia-Georgia war appears to be a conflict in which Georgia was provoked into military action. The decision to invade South Ossetia was certainly a strategic mistake, inviting a Russian invasion which led to the further loss of Georgian autonomy and the destruction of its military.⁶⁷ Yet it is not difficult to imagine how 2008 may have been perceived in Tbilisi as the critical moment to act decisively. With OSCE talks producing few results and Moscow tightening its hold on Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Georgia had few options to bring about a resolution to the separatist question. Tbilisi had hoped to be eligible for NATO membership in 2008, and instead, Georgia's membership process stalled as NATO members talked about the need to resolve the separatist conflicts.⁶⁸

It is clear, then, that the separatist movements of Abkhazia and South Ossetia had become central to the strategic, and diametrically opposed, strategic goals of both Georgia and Russia. For Georgia the independence of its separatist territories was politically unacceptable. Russia's growing role in those regions threatened not only to permanently establish Abkhaz and Ossetian independence, but also to sink Georgia's chances at NATO membership. For Russia, the separatists offered an excuse to exert leverage on Georgia, in order to counter the manner in which Georgia was undermining Russia's security buffer through NATO and Russian energy interests through East-West pipelines.

Given the strategic goals of the West, particularly the US, it is not surprising that the resultant Russia-Georgia war aroused anti-Russian feeling in the West (and vice versa). So, is all of this indicative of an "unfreezing" of the old Cold War or a New Cold War? The challenge in answering this question lies in how the Cold War is defined. The current rivalry or conflicts between Russia and the West are no longer about ideology, nor are they necessarily about bringing down free markets, although Moscow appears to be taking a mercantilist approach toward energy. Moreover, such rivalry and conflict do not appear to be as bifurcated as the Cold War, with the free world facing Moscow and its satellites. Rather, they appear to be a return to something more akin to the sort of competition for spheres of influence that Russia participated in during the era of the Great Game in the 19th Century. This is an older pattern of behavior, a more mercantilist pattern, and one which indicates geopolitical thinking that precedes the Cold War.

In sum, for Georgia, the conflict with Russia boils down to a fight for national sovereignty, policy independence, and territorial integrity. For Moscow, it is the preservation of traditional spheres of influence in its surrounding geopolitical space that the Russian leaders call the Near Abroad. For the US and Europe, it is primarily a struggle to spread their own democratic values as well as maintain an energy and security corridor that reaches into the Caspian basin. The energy resources of this geographic region are to diversify the fossil fuels imports of many Western nations, especially in the EU.

⁶⁷ Alexander Jackson, "Russia and Georgia: Not Back to War," *Caucasus Update CRIA*, 25, March 16, 2009, http://cria-online.org/CU_-_file_-_article_-_sid_-_26.html (accessed May 12, 2009).

⁶⁸ Ghia Nodia and Alvaro Pinto Scholtbach, eds., *The Political Landscape of Georgia* (Delft, Netherlands: Eburon Academic Publishers, 2006), 36.

Yet Europe and the US perceive the 2008 conflict and their natural rivalry with Russia differently. Europe has had a long history as a neighbor to Russia; and it has participated in rivalry and competition for spheres of influence with Moscow for centuries. However, the US is a rather newcomer to this “old game” with Russia; and it primarily recalls a recent memory of the Cold War paradigm through which it perceives its rivalry with Moscow. Thus, it seems rather natural for some scholars and policy corners in Washington to perceive major Russian moves as aggressive behavior and reminiscent of the Cold War days which they recall so well.

For those with a short memory, it is rather difficult to conceptualize the 21st Century political challenges in the context of an older game--a 19th Century game. For such actors, it is equally challenging to consider a common or traditional pattern of state rivalry and competition similar to the Great Game, for which Washington has no historical experience as a Great Power.

ANNEXES

Appendix 1: Georgian Export & Import Volumes

GEORGIAN EXPORT VOLUME

SOURCE: IMF'S DIRECTION OF TRADE STATISTICS

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
US	13.91	16.27	7.14	9.05	13.98	15.36	21.23	26.75	58.86	172.00	221.64
EU	69.12	109.73	76.39	61.89	65.53	81.64	111.37	165.22	188.49	415.45	611.37
Japan	0.60	1.34	0.38	1.04	0.69	0.22	0.63	1.44	0.52	0.50	3.17
China (m)	1.46	1.36	0.91	1.05	1.18	1.17	3.31	5.60	10.35	13.22	10.43
Russia	57.56	45.29	68.61	74.40	60.96	83.94	104.53	153.93	75.66	53.55	52.90
CIS (8)	30.44	45.18	27.31	47.84	58.11	97.32	143.37	130.65	153.29	184.62	216.22
Iran	0.00	0.00	6.80	4.31	3.32	3.43	4.50	4.68	2.70	4.02	5.08
Turkey	82.73	84.81	74.50	68.57	53.74	82.55	118.61	121.81	124.92	199.54	476.77
Azerbaijan	22.91	8.62	20.08	9.98	29.25	16.63	25.33	83.45	92.17	92.22	105.28
Armenia	24.39	24.41	13.63	12.51	20.99	30.76	54.46	39.93	73.62	72.87	60.96
Georgia Subtotal	303.11	337.02	295.74	290.62	307.74	413.01	587.32	733.45	780.57	1207.97	1763.82
World Subtotal	330.80	361.04	325.99	317.35	349.41	465.27	644.82	850.99	980.90	1498.08	2497.87

(m) = mainland

CIS (8) = Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan

GEORGIAN IMPORT VOLUME

SOURCE: IMF'S DIRECTION OF TRADE STATISTICS

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
US	150.15	73.04	69.60	63.99	68.04	90.77	110.91	148.31	129.76	267.04	645.15
EU	374.29	229.32	188.44	240.85	231.32	430.78	617.57	671.50	947.90	1260.94	1489.72
Japan	3.60	7.58	7.32	3.18	3.95	2.49	5.93	8.34	39.54	97.63	251.10
China (m)	6.74	2.46	2.91	3.83	8.72	23.17	28.90	46.71	103.33	203.87	314.70
Russia	112.85	63.51	98.79	93.47	121.62	161.10	257.77	384.35	558.77	655.03	758.45
CIS (8)	57.32	92.23	66.54	77.33	80.10	103.24	215.14	336.65	480.55	671.59	768.29
Iran	0.00	0.00	5.88	6.32	8.10	7.00	15.16	26.00	40.30	48.96	64.35
Turkey	180.51	125.62	111.47	107.14	89.68	112.14	202.09	283.01	522.56	746.08	1096.21
Azerbaijan	84.61	78.90	56.69	73.19	79.89	93.79	156.40	233.42	318.53	355.79	406.19
Armenia	10.53	12.21	15.81	10.29	8.57	11.20	26.23	39.29	40.25	82.06	99.81
Georgia Subtotal	980.60	684.86	623.44	679.58	699.98	1035.66	1636.11	2177.58	3181.48	4388.98	5893.97
World Subtotal	1230.78	859.41	727.75	755.92	794.10	1143.52	1848.04	2490.76	3677.61	5291.91	7218.63

(m) = mainland

CIS (8) = Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan

Appendix 2: Georgian Export & Import Percentages

GEORGIAN EXPORT PERCENTAGE

SOURCE: IMF'S DIRECTION OF TRADE STATISTICS

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
US	4.20%	4.51%	2.19%	2.85%	4.00%	3.30%	3.29%	3.14%	6.00%	11.48%	8.87%
EU	20.90%	30.39%	23.43%	19.50%	18.75%	17.55%	17.27%	19.41%	19.22%	27.73%	24.48%
Japan	0.18%	0.37%	0.12%	0.33%	0.20%	0.05%	0.10%	0.17%	0.05%	0.03%	0.13%
China (m)	0.44%	0.38%	0.28%	0.33%	0.34%	0.25%	0.51%	0.66%	1.06%	0.88%	0.42%
Russia	17.40%	12.54%	21.05%	23.44%	17.45%	18.04%	16.21%	18.09%	7.71%	3.57%	2.12%
CIS (8)	9.20%	12.51%	8.38%	15.07%	16.63%	20.92%	22.23%	15.35%	15.63%	12.32%	8.66%
Iran	0.00%	0.00%	2.09%	1.36%	0.95%	0.74%	0.70%	0.55%	0.28%	0.27%	0.20%
Turkey	25.01%	23.49%	22.85%	21.61%	15.38%	17.74%	18.39%	14.31%	12.74%	13.32%	19.09%
Azerbaijan	6.93%	2.39%	6.16%	3.14%	8.37%	3.57%	3.93%	9.81%	9.40%	6.16%	4.21%
Armenia	7.37%	6.76%	4.18%	3.94%	6.01%	6.61%	8.44%	4.69%	7.51%	4.86%	2.44%
Georgia Subtotal	91.63%	93.35%	90.72%	91.58%	88.08%	88.77%	91.08%	86.19%	79.58%	80.63%	70.61%

(m) = mainland

CIS (8) = Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan

GEORGIAN IMPORT PERCENTAGE

SOURCE: IMF'S DIRECTION OF TRADE STATISTICS

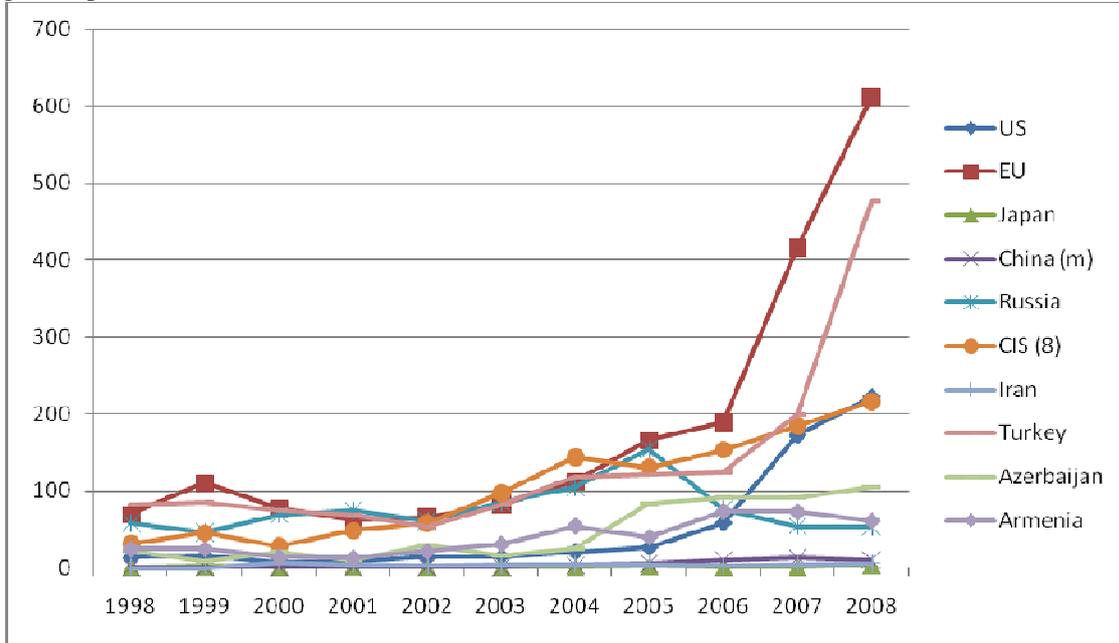
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
US	12.20%	8.50%	9.56%	8.47%	8.57%	7.94%	6.00%	5.95%	3.53%	5.05%	8.94%
EU	30.41%	26.68%	25.89%	31.86%	29.13%	37.67%	33.42%	26.96%	25.77%	23.83%	20.64%
Japan	0.29%	0.88%	1.01%	0.42%	0.50%	0.22%	0.32%	0.33%	1.08%	1.84%	3.48%
China (m)	0.55%	0.29%	0.40%	0.51%	1.10%	2.03%	1.56%	1.88%	2.81%	3.85%	4.36%
Russia	9.17%	7.39%	13.58%	12.36%	15.32%	14.09%	13.95%	15.43%	15.19%	12.38%	10.51%
CIS (8)	4.66%	10.73%	9.14%	10.23%	10.09%	9.03%	11.64%	13.52%	13.07%	12.69%	10.64%
Iran	0.00%	0.00%	0.81%	0.84%	1.02%	0.61%	0.82%	1.04%	1.10%	0.93%	0.89%
Turkey	14.67%	14.62%	15.32%	14.17%	11.29%	9.81%	10.94%	11.36%	14.21%	14.10%	15.19%
Azerbaijan	6.87%	9.18%	7.79%	9.68%	10.06%	8.20%	8.46%	9.37%	8.66%	6.72%	5.63%
Armenia	0.86%	1.42%	2.17%	1.36%	1.08%	0.98%	1.42%	1.58%	1.09%	1.55%	1.38%
Georgia Subtotal	79.67%	79.69%	85.67%	89.90%	88.15%	90.57%	88.53%	87.43%	86.51%	82.94%	81.65%

(m) = mainland

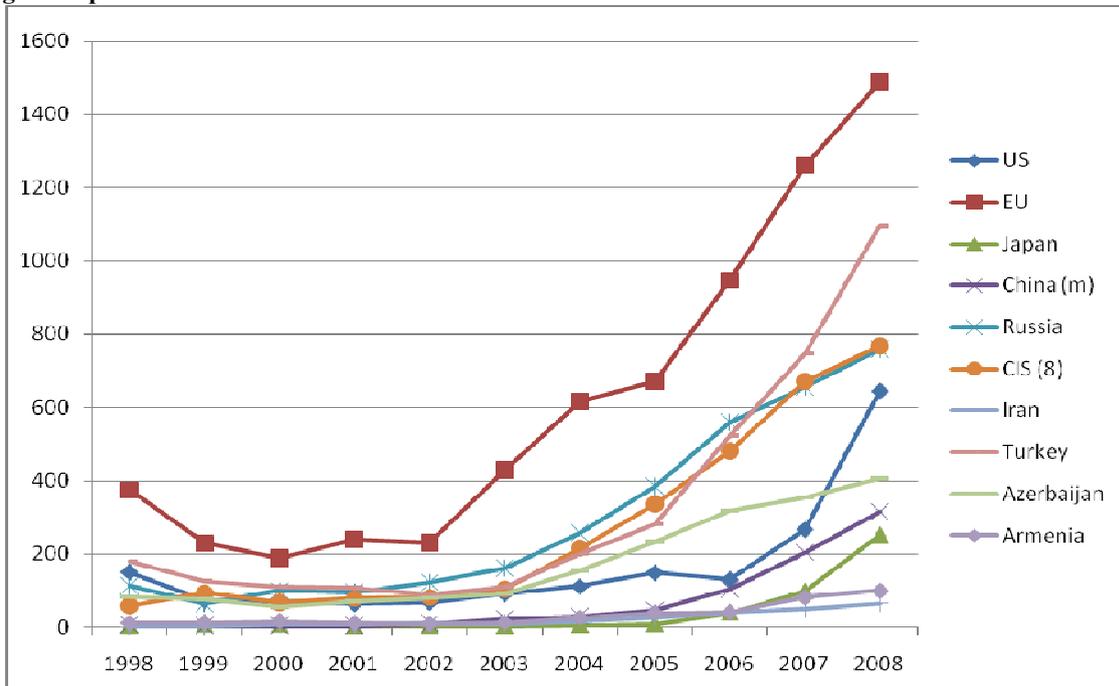
CIS (8) = Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan

Appendix 3: Georgian Volume Graphs

Georgian Export Volume

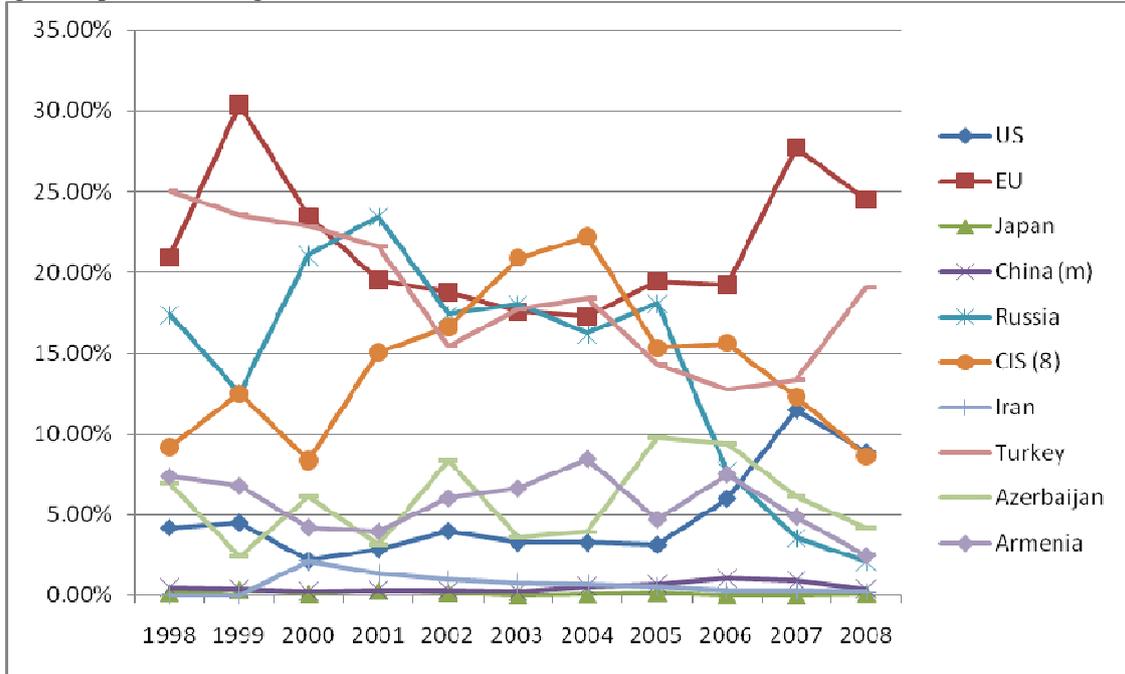


Georgian Import Volume

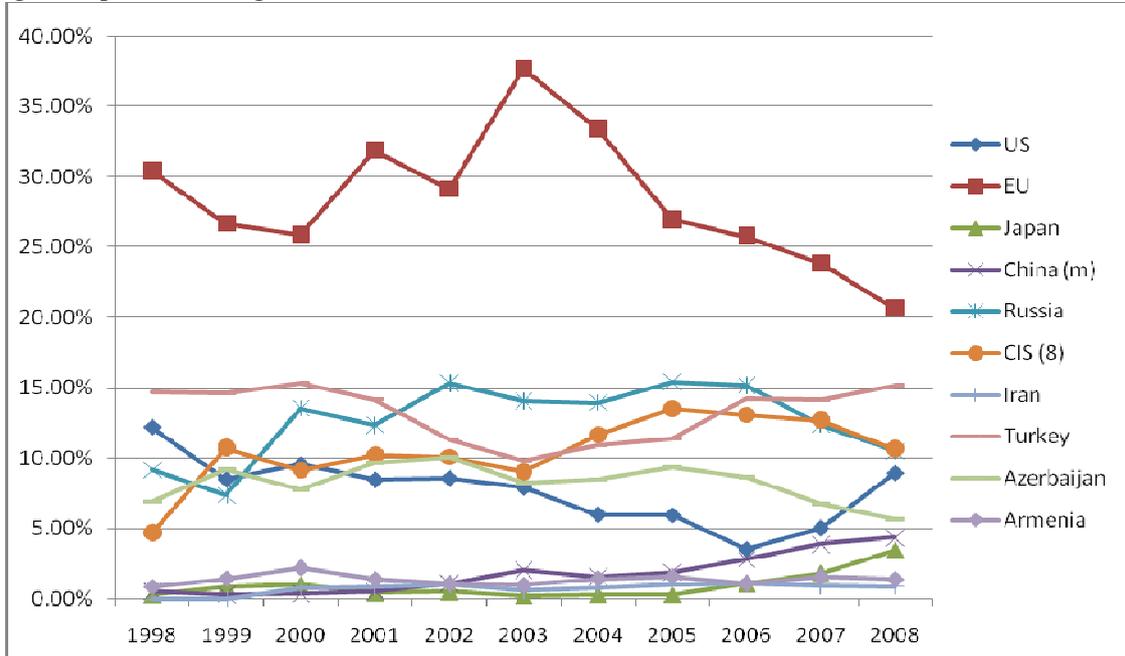


Appendix 4: Georgian Percentage Graphs

Georgian Export Percentage



Georgian Import Percentage



ENFORCEABILITY OF A COMMON ENERGY SUPPLY SECURITY POLICY IN THE EU: AN INTERGOVERNMENTALIST ASSESSMENT

Eda Kusku*

Abstract

The central aim of this paper is to present an intergovernmentalist evaluation of the prospects for the European Union (EU) member states to pursue a common energy security policy at the supranational level. Particularly, the analysis seeks to address the demands for a common EU stance concerning the issue of energy supply security. Thus, the paper leaves aside other cornerstones of a common EU energy policy, namely the issues of environmental protection and liberalization of the electricity and gas markets.

Keywords: *European Union, intergovernmentalism, supranationalism, energy supply security, gas, oil*

Introduction

The ever-changing geopolitics of energy supply to Europe has currently led to the escalation of discussions at the EU supranational level about the necessity to define a common EU external energy policy. From the viewpoint of intergovernmentalism¹, a collective EU stance towards the countries which export energy to Europe depend primarily on the benefits that a united attitude will provide to individual member states in the event of a crisis of energy supply. Intergovernmentalists assert that cooperation is possible among sovereign states as long as their interests converge.² Beyond question, there are divergences in the concerns of and options available to different EU member states as regards the issue of energy supply security. Not only their diverging energy situations, interests and demands, but also various distinct webs of relations between the individual member states and energy exporting countries hitherto hampered the formulation of a common EU external energy policy.

The paper first elucidates the evolution and maturation of energy security debate in the EU parallel to the progress of the EU integration project. It analyzes the prime rationale for the European Commission's efforts to formulate a common external energy policy and seeks to comprehend the issues that gave rise to frictions among the member states. The paper addresses the conditions that have so far necessitated transfer of competencies regarding external energy policy from member states to the EU supranational level.

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¹ Intergovernmentalism is one of the grand theories about the EU integration process and the theory provides explanations for why and how the EU integration proceeds.

² See for instance Andrew Moravcsik, "The Choice for Europe," in *The European Union: Readings on the Theory and Practice of European Integration*, ed. Brent F. Nelsen and Alexander Stubb (USA: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003).

The aim to understand the limits of policy convergence in the sphere of energy necessitates identification of the member states that are involved in the discussions over security of energy supply, and parallels as well as divergences in their interests, mainly concerning their relations with the non-EU energy suppliers. The paper addresses these issues and proceeds with reasons for the European Commission's incessant promotion of an integrated response to common challenges. It concludes with a discussion of the Commission's limited capacity to further integration in the absence of collective member state interests.

Historical Evolution of Energy Dependency in the EU

The original design of the European integration project was based on cooperation in the area of energy. The establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951 was followed by the signing of the Euratom Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC) in 1957. Specifically, the focus in these founding treaties was on energy. Yet the centre of attention has gradually shifted to economic integration after the signing of the Merger Treaty in 1965 which created the European Community (EC) incorporating ECSC and EAEC under the control of the same set of institutional structures and additionally creating the European Economic Community (EEC) to initiate economic integration. Thus, after the creation of the EEC the member states rather began to concentrate on closer cooperation in the area of economy. Concerning energy security, they soon began to follow different paths which led energy to remain as a state competency. Yet, in the following decades threats to the energy security of the EU have escalated tremendously, as the member states were becoming gradually more dependent on oil and gas imports.

The risks of excessive reliance on the non-EU energy exporters first became clear after the 1973 oil shock, when the members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries decided to radically increase the oil prices. As a result, the economies of the oil-dependent countries within the EU were deeply damaged. This incident signified the necessity for new initiatives to contain the EU's systematic dependence on oil exporting countries. Moreover, the gradual replacement of the traditional private energy companies once known as the "Seven Sisters" with the National Oil Companies has led politically unstable countries to steadily become dominant in global oil and gas production, and eventually constituted an additional threat to energy dependent Europe.

The oil shock led the Commission to advocate the precaution that "to reduce the risk of failure of certain streams of supply, sources must be sufficiently spread and none must occupy a too exclusive place."³ Yet, the member states responded separately to these recommendations and the Commission's role remained limited, as the member states were extremely reluctant to cede sovereignty to a supranational authority - despite the realization that they were vulnerable to blackmail from the energy providers. Some of the member states opted for going nuclear (especially France), whereas others chose to start diversifying their imports.

From the 1990s onwards, the Commission has underlined the cost-effectiveness of harmonizing energy supply security policies at the supranational level instead of administering them nationally.⁴ The Commission has addressed the issues of "strategic oil reserve, strategic gas storage capacity, emergency sharing arrangements, and trade and aid deals with foreign producers."⁵ But ultimately,

³ Keith Fisher, "A Meeting of Blood and Oil: the Balkan Factor in Western Energy Security," *Journal of Southern Europe & the Balkans* 4, no: 1 (2002), 77.

⁴ John Surrey, "Energy Policy in the European Community: Conflicts between the Objectives of the Unified Single Market, Supply Security and a Clean Environment," *The Energy Journal* (1992), 27.

⁵ Ibid.

the Energy Chapter was dropped from the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 leaving the Commission yet again dramatically constrained in terms of its scope of action.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Commission has sought to integrate energy sectors of the former Soviet Union and Eastern European countries into European markets, and tried to achieve these objectives with the signing of the Energy Charter Treaty which entered into force in 1998. The treaty obliged signatories not to raise difficulties about energy transits across their territory and to secure the safety of flows from the established lines. Russia did not ratify the treaty due to the rationale that third parties would have access to Russian pipelines. Russia's decision to refrain from signing the charter was basically an outcome of its concern to maintain a dominant position in energy transit to Europe, through keeping open its option of arbitrary control over the amount of energy supply. The European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee has countered the Russian position about the charter with the suggestion that the EU should not support Russia's World Trade Organization membership unless Russia ratifies the charter.⁶ Yet the ability of the EU level institutions to put pressure on Russia remained very limited. These limits were proved when, in January 2006, Russia halted the distribution of gas to a host of East European countries and also to Germany, France and Italy.⁷ This event was followed by waves of supply disruptions from Russia to transit countries and thus automatically to Europe, including the January 2007 crisis with Belarus and also in January 2009 when Russia suspended gas deliveries to Ukraine. Russia has underlined its independence from Europe in this regard: in the summer of 2009 Russian Prime Minister Putin proclaimed that Russia will not sign the Energy Charter Treaty.

All of the above strategies of Russia have demonstrated that Moscow is resolute to preserve its power to arbitrarily administer the supply and transit of energy to Europe. Thus, lately Russian energy policy strategies have become the most pressing challenge to the energy security of the EU. Excessive dependence on Russian supply (more than 50% of overall EU energy imports) and the energy policy strategies of Russia makes it clear that the EU should reconsider its links with Russia in the formulation of a future common external energy policy.

Definition of a Common External Energy Policy: A Conceptual Clarification

The energy policy of the EU is an integral part of its foreign policy and there are three main aspects to it: environmental protection, competitiveness in the internal energy market and diversification of the security of supply. Both the issues of environmental protection and the liberalization of the European energy market, although indirectly, constitute parts and parcels of the energy security of the EU member states. The most immediate risks, however, originate from the problem of ensuring the security of energy supply from the key energy providers.

Energy dependency is a fact of life for the EU and most of its energy comes from within the neighborhood. In particular, the supply of gas has become increasingly vital to the energy security of the member states. As Umbach puts it, "the future new capacity will be predominantly generated still by fossil resources with a rising percentage of gas, while the number of oil and solid-fuel power stations will continue to decline" and already being the largest gas importer of the world, the EU will continue to be the prime gas importer till 2030.⁸

With respect to the security of gas supplies there are a number of critical issues that the EU needs to consider. The necessary infrastructure for the transport of natural gas is a profound burden that EU

⁶ Honor Mahoney, "MEPs Link Russian WTO Membership to Energy Rules" (2007), <http://euobserver.com/9/24687>.

⁷ Pamela Ann Smith, "Energy Becomes an EU Election Issue", *Middle East* 365 (2006), 36.

⁸ Frank Umbach, "Global Energy Security and the Implications for the EU," *Energy Policy* 38 (2010), 1236.

energy consumers have to undertake. For the transport of fossil fuels the transit countries play an important role. In order to cope with the threat of energy cuts by key suppliers, it is in the vital interest of the EU countries to look for pipelines which would diversify the supply of oil and gas through multiple sources, if not substitute for the existing ones. The dialogue between the EU member states and the key suppliers is another central aspect of the EU's energy supply security. A joint policy stance towards the main producers is progressively becoming a necessity. However, this aspect of energy security remains the source of some friction among the member states, as they are unwilling to shift the administration of energy security to EU-level institutions, and often prefer to engage in independent energy deals. In the face of these reservations, the Commission strongly promotes a concerted position towards the non-EU countries that export energy to Europe. According to the Commission's view such a collective stance would enhance the member states' ability to tackle the risks of energy cuts from the key suppliers.

The issue of 'external energy policy', thus, includes the diversification of energy sources, and the security of transportation routes, and it calls for a better system to respond to crises that emerge from the unstable nature of the international market for fossil energy.

The Main Energy Suppliers: Dependency on Russia, Algeria and Norway

It is estimated that the energy dependency of the EU will increase from current 50% to 70% in 2020, as the EU became the largest energy market through its enlargement to Eastern and Central European countries in 2004.⁹ According to the European Commission, dependence on gas imports will also increase tremendously: it is estimated to reach 80% in 2030.¹⁰ However, most experts emphasize the uncertainty of mid-term challenges till 2030, due to the optimism with respect to energy security beyond 2030, based on the expectation that future utilization of renewable energy sources and techniques would decrease reliance on fossil fuels.¹¹ Nevertheless, dramatic dependence on non-EU suppliers persists, thus making the dialogue between the EU-27 and the energy exporting countries an integral part of a common external energy policy.

The nature of the existing deals between the individual member states and the energy exporting countries could either foster or discourage the formulation of a common stance in the EU with respect to security of supply. The EU could support initiatives in its discussions with the key suppliers to the extent that the interests of the individual member states converge. But above all else, the level of dependence of the EU as a whole to individual energy exporting countries would determine the initiatives at the supranational level that call for adoption of a common external energy policy. Thus, the levels of energy contributions of key suppliers to the EU energy market are decisive in shaping the efforts of the supranational institutions, such as the European Commission, and ensuing debates about the common EU external energy policy.

Although the EU has a complex network of energy flows from multiple suppliers, Russia, Norway and Algeria account for almost half the EU's current gas consumption.¹² Russia is the leading energy supplier for the EU market. Thus, energy dialogue between Russia and the EU represents one of the fundamental aspects of a common external energy policy. As Beyli argues, "the ongoing

⁹ Andrei V. Beyli, "New Dimensions of Energy Security of the Enlarging EU and Their Impact on Relations with Russia," *Journal of European Integration* 25: 4 (December, 2003), 352.

¹⁰ European Commission, "An Energy Policy for Europe, Communication from the Commission to the European Council and the European Parliament" (European Commission, Brussels, January 10, 2007).

¹¹ Umbach, 1234.

¹² According to figures provided by Umbach, Russia accounts for 23 percent of the EU's gas imports, whereas Norway's and Algeria's contributions are 14 and 10 percent respectively. See Umbach, 1236.

EU enlargement to countries historically dependent on Russia for their energy supply introduces significant modifications to the EU-Russia relationships.”¹³ Hence, the enlargement of the EU to Central and Eastern Europe is expected to considerably alter the economy and geopolitics of energy links with Russia in the near future. A gradual increase in Russian dominance over the supply of energy to European markets would force the EU member states to reconsider their energy relations with Russia.

Issues of contention between Russia and its neighbors – Belarus and Ukraine - and a Russian strategy to periodically put hold on its gas and oil deliveries to Europe hugely contribute to the EU’s energy security vulnerability. Ukraine, for instance, is tremendously dependent on Russia for its energy supply, and is a key transit country and an important strategic partner for the EU. According to 2004 figures, more than 80% of Russian natural gas was transported through Ukraine to Europe thanks to Ukraine’s pivotal geographical position.¹⁴ So any conflict between Russia and Ukraine in terms of the delivery of natural gas would greatly endanger Europe’s security of gas supply.

Similarly, Belarus is another key transit country for Europe and from time to time political stalemates between Russia and Belarus culminate in conflicts about energy delivery. As Bruce notes, Russia’s suspension of gas supplies to Belarus in January 2004 “...was the first time in Gazprom’s¹⁵ 30-year history of gas exports that total cut-off had occurred on a key transit country.”¹⁶ Another crisis hit when Belarus rejected higher Russian prices for 2007’s gas supplies and Gazprom responded by threatening to halt gas deliveries to Belarus.

In addition to the challenges that originate from near-continuous strife between Russia and the transit countries, Russia also threatens the EU’s security of energy supply through a strategy of dominating pipeline projects, which raises concerns in the EU about the Union’s future bargaining power vis-à-vis Russia. To reduce its overall energy dependency on Russia, it is in the best interests of the EU to engage in the construction of alternative pipeline projects to cut the Russian monopoly on natural gas deliveries from Central Asia to Europe. One such project is the Nabucco natural gas pipeline, which was conceived in 2002 and expected to become operational by 2015. The pipeline will carry mainly Azerbaijani gas all the way to Austria, via Turkey. Yet, there are reservations about the viability of supplies, as the main supplier will be Azerbaijan and the sustainability of gas delivery from this pipeline depends primarily on the Azerbaijani reserves, on the nature of cooperation between Turkey and Azerbaijan and finally on possible contributions from other countries involved in this project, including Turkmenistan, Iraq and Egypt.

Russia, in response, assertively seeks to fortify its cartel of energy transport to Europe both from Central Asia and from other energy suppliers in the Middle East. To counter the Nabucco project and to fortify its position as the main gas supplier to Western Europe, Russia has begun the construction of two pipeline projects. In 2005, it started the construction of a gas pipeline across the Baltic Sea, the Nord Stream pipeline. In 2007, it announced the start of the construction of the South Stream pipeline which will provide a new channel for Russian natural gas transports to Western Europe under the Black Sea and through the Balkans.

¹³ Beyli, 351.

¹⁴ Jonathan Stern, “Russian-Ukrainian Gas Crisis of January 2006” (working paper, Oxford Institute for Energy Studies, January, 2006), 2, retrieved from http://www.oxfordenergy.org/pdfs/comment_0106.pdf.

¹⁵ Gazprom is a Russian state-owned gas supplier.

¹⁶ Chloë Bruce, “Fraternal Friction or Fraternal Fiction? The Gas Factor in Russian-Belarusian Relations” (working paper, Oxford Institute for Energy Studies, March, 2005), 17, retrieved from <http://www.oxfordenergy.org/pdfs/NG8.pdf>.

These acts of Russia demonstrate its determination to remain the EU's main energy supplier. According to Zeyno Baran, the lack of cohesion among the EU member states to develop a common energy policy towards Russia "...allowed Moscow to preemptively block European attempts to construct transport routes for Caspian and Central Asian oil and gas that do not involve Russia."¹⁷ Once completed, the new Russian energy routes will supply the EU with increased amounts of natural gas. However, the reliance on these routes will increase the EU's energy dependence on Russia and the risks that emanate from lack of diversity of supply. To eliminate these risks, a concerted approach towards the threat of Russian monopoly and EU-wide determination to diversify energy routes to Europe is central to the Union's future energy supply security.

Algeria represents another important energy supplier and the EU is the prime energy market for Algeria since, as the Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs stated, "...90% of its crude oil exports come to Western Europe."¹⁸ Algeria accounts for 10% of the EU's gas imports and constitutes the prime supplier for the south-Western Europe. As Piebalgs underscored, investment by the EU in the Algerian energy sector is critical to upgrade the Algerian energy transport infrastructure (through investment in planned gas pipeline projects of Medgaz, GALSI and a trans-Saharan natural gas pipeline) and to facilitate energy exports from Algeria.¹⁹

Norway, which is the fifth largest natural gas producer (and third largest exporter) in the world²⁰, also greatly contributes to the EU energy supply mix and will continue to do so. However, some analysts argue that in the long run Norway's contribution to the European energy mix will be unpredictable, given its relatively scarce reserves compared to Russia and other worldwide reserves.²¹ The current high energy production rates in Norway leads to the forecast that its exports will decrease within about 30 years.²² According to Söderbergh et al., by 2030 Norwegian gas deliveries to the EU may "even be 20 bcm/year lower than today's current level". Thus, the EU will have to resort to and become further dependent on other key energy exporters to meet its rising demand for gas imports which "must increase by almost 90% by 2030."²³

Energy Reviews and Energy Security Concerns of Actors within the EU

The EU currently satisfies most of its energy need from the above-discussed non-EU suppliers, Russia, Norway and Algeria. Increasing energy requirements bring up the issue of enhancing the export capacities of these multiple suppliers and routes. However, member states adopt different measures while dealing with energy exporting countries and they have different stances concerning the issue of whether to support investments in certain pipeline projects.

The member states' positions on a common external energy policy towards the non-EU suppliers are shaped by deviations in their energy needs and energy mixes, by the variations in their alternative sources of energy (mostly given their geographical closeness to different suppliers), and

¹⁷ Zeyno Baran, "EU Energy Security: Time to End Russian Leverage", *The Washington Quarterly* 30: 4 (2007), 131.

¹⁸ Andris Piebalgs, "EU-Algeria Energy Challenges," (Speech at the 5th International Conference on Investment Opportunities in Algeria's Energy Sector, Oran, Algeria, November 26, 2006) 4, retrieved from <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/06/752&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>.

¹⁹ Ibid, 3-4.

²⁰ Bengt Söderbergh, Kristofer Jakobsson and Kjell Aleklett, "European Energy Security: The Future of Norwegian Natural Gas Production," *Energy Policy* 37 (2009), 5038.

²¹ Mathias Reymond, "European Key Issues Concerning Natural Gas: Dependence and Vulnerability," *Energy Policy* 35 (2007): 4170-7.

²² Ibid.

²³ Söderbergh et al., 5053.

by the preexisting independently concluded energy deals that they have concluded with the energy providers.

This paper mainly limits itself to the discussion of the energy interests of France, Germany and the UK, which constitute the most influential actors within the EU. The paper also narrowly refers to the common interests of the Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries which became members of the Union with the 2004 enlargement, which is widely considered to have notably altered the energy dependency rates of the EU. The paper discusses the interests of the above-mentioned member states with respect to their resources and energy requirements and their relationships with the exporting and transit countries.

Coby van der Linde, Director of the Clingendael International Energy Programme argues that “energy supply could not just be left up to the markets as Member States were unlikely to hand responsibility for security of supply policies over to the EU given their differing foreign and security policies.”²⁴ In order to understand the reasons why the EU member states chose to follow diverse foreign and security strategies in the field of energy, one should primarily analyze their distinct energy situations. The level of import dependence varies considerably among member states. Moreover, natural gas is not easily available to all consumers in the European market because of the geographical pattern of pipelines and distribution systems. Northern Europe has greater access to natural gas whereas countries such as Portugal, Spain and Ireland will remain outside the European pipeline system until it is extended to supply them²⁵ or until the alternative routes from Algeria become operational.

France, although conservative on its current energy supply mix, pushes for a European Energy Policy (EPP).²⁶ Its energy profile is rather mixed, since it exports large amounts of electricity to neighboring countries and also to Spain and Italy, relies heavily on nuclear energy and imports oil and gas from both European and external energy providers. Its oil imports come from a number of suppliers, namely the Middle East and North Africa (51%), North Sea (32%) and Russia (only 23%).²⁷ France has also diversified its gas imports which come from Russia (22%), Algeria (16%), Norway (35%) and the Netherlands (21%). According to these figures, France is a net importer of natural gas (95% of France’s gas consumption is supplied through imports).²⁸ However, as already mentioned it supplies its energy need from various energy providers and the sources of energy that France utilizes vary to a great extent. Nuclear energy is a key source for France’s consumption and accounts for 41% of its total energy supply.²⁹ This heavy investment in nuclear energy differentiates France from other EU members and since the first oil shock in 1973 France continues to advance its nuclear capability in order to be able to respond to possible future cuts from energy exporters. In the face of challenges such as Russian gas supply cut-offs to transit countries and consequently to the European markets, different French governments refuse to shut down the existing nuclear stations in France and resolutely seek to preserve advances in nuclear power. Germany relies mostly on Russia for energy resources (one third of its oil and 35% of its gas). In order to reduce its imported energy

²⁴European Policy Centre, “The New EU Energy Policy: Balancing the Internal Market and External Security of Supply” (Event Report, January 29, 2007), 3, retrieved from http://www.euractiv.com/29/images/EPCenergypolicy_tcm29-161816.pdf.

²⁵ Surrey, 5.

²⁶ Oliver Geden, Clémence Marcelis, and Maurer Andreas, “Perspectives for the European Union's External Energy Policy: Discourse, Ideas and Interests in Germany, the UK, Poland and France” (working paper, FG 1, SWP Berlin, December 17, 2006), 4, retrieved from http://www.swp-berlin.org/common/get_document.php?asset_id=3521.

²⁷ Source: International Energy Agency (IEA).

²⁸ Jacques Percebois, “The Supply of Natural Gas in the European Union—Strategic Issues,” *OPEC Energy Review* 32 (2008): 35.

²⁹ Oliver Geden et al., 7.

consumption, it continues to invest in coal-based electricity generation (24% of its total consumption).³⁰ Additionally, around 12% of Germany's total energy consumption is supplied by nuclear energy generation within the country.³¹

However, due to environmental concerns there is currently a very controversial discussion going on within the country about withdrawing from the nuclear industry in the long run. Different governments, however, proclaim different policies with respect to phasing out the use of nuclear energy. In 2000, the governing coalition (the Social Democratic Party of Germany together with the Greens) decided to gradually withdraw from nuclear energy and some nuclear reactors in Germany were shut down. However it seems likely that the current coalition government (consisting of the Christian Democratic Union and Free Democratic Party) would delay phasing-out nuclear power production.

If Germany totally withdraws from nuclear energy, the country will become more dependent on energy imports, which will be reflected in its stance towards a common EU external energy policy. In particular, the special partnership between Germany and Russia in terms of energy trade, and Germany's attempts to enhance this partnership³², reveal the tendency to further develop its independent long-term contracts with Russia, despite the resulting reliance on Russian energy exports previously

In the past, The UK has been a self-sufficient country in terms of energy and is a net exporter of oil. The UK also exports gas to other EU member states and some UK governments have supported the nuclear option. However the problem for the UK is the sustainability of its production, since its oil resources are increasingly becoming exhausted. Similarly, its indigenous gas resources are running out which forced the UK to start importing natural gas. Thus, through a set of pipeline projects, the UK has sought to increase its access to gas fields in Norway and continental Europe. "By 2020 it would be importing as much as 90% of its gas"³³ and it will become dependent on multiple suppliers. These considerations have led to the understanding that the continuation of the current energy policy would threaten the UK's energy security and force it to revise its stance toward a concerted EU-wide external energy policy.

CEE countries continue to depend on Russia for their energy imports, since Russia provides natural gas to these countries (especially the Baltic States) at much lower levels than the international gas markets. However, Russia's decision to apply different price increases to these countries has annoyed those that have had to defray the cost of this Russian policy. It is widely argued that the harsh price increase for Ukraine has economic reasons, but was also made intentionally to pressure Ukraine politically.³⁴ The successive clashes between the two countries have led to a decrease in gas supplies to Europe, since Ukraine is the most prominent transit country between Russia and the EU countries. Energy disputes between Russia and transit countries noticeably brought to the surface the exposure of the EU and CEE countries to supply security threats. The disputes between supplier and transit countries and the fact that the gas demands of the EU will rise drastically in the upcoming years can be taken as indications that some member states will reconsider the Union's current levels of dependence on Russia.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² For instance, in the energy field the bilateral relationship between Germany and Russia has further developed with the jointly launched Nord Stream pipeline project.

³³ Oliver Geden et al., 7.

³⁴ See for instance Miklós Losoncz, "Analysis: Energy Dependence and Supply in Central and Eastern Europe", (May 15, 2006), retrieved from <http://www.euractiv.com/en/energy/analysis-energy-dependence-supply-central-eastern-europe/article-155274>.

Recent Debates and Calls for a Single Voice on the Supply of Energy

According to the estimates of International Energy Agency, the energy import volumes of the EU will increase by 87% between 2006 and 2030.³⁵ Apart from the increasing demand in the EU for energy imports, with the rise of new economic giants like China and India there is also a growing demand in the global energy market which would become 40% higher than it was in 2007.³⁶

Thus, “Europe is being exposed to increasingly intense competition for global energy resources from other countries, and is becoming ever more dependent on oil and gas imports from geopolitically uncertain regions.”³⁷ As a result, besides the existing problem of unpredictability of energy suppliers, the EU member states have to deal with rising global competition for access to energy resources.

These considerations have led the member states to take a number of steps towards cooperation in the area of energy. The idea of a common energy policy was approved at the Hampton Court summit in London in October 2005.³⁸ It was stated at the summit that “the EU needs to diversify its sources of energy and approach its current energy suppliers in a more coherent manner.”³⁹ Following the Hampton Court summit, the European Commission published a Green Paper on March 8, 2006, which aimed at identifying the potentials for energy cooperation within the EU.

The main purposes that were enumerated in the paper were: completing the internal energy market; security of supply in the internal energy market; sustainable, efficient and diverse energy mix; common external energy policy; an integrated approach to tackling climate change; and the deployment of a Strategic Energy Technology Plan. At the European Council summit of March 2006, it was decided that to avoid the negative implications of energy stoppages from main suppliers, the EU should strengthen its solidarity and assistance mechanisms. However, member states chose to preserve their sovereignty over some key aspects of their energy policies, particularly the kind of energy they will resort to and the suppliers they will choose to contract with. It was agreed in the European Council’s Presidency conclusions of March 2007 that “...as regards to security of supply the European Council stresses the importance of making full use of instruments available to improve bilateral cooperation of the EU with all suppliers and ensure reliable energy flows into the Union. It develops clear orientations for an effective European international energy policy speaking with a common voice.”⁴⁰ The Presidency conclusions also underscore the importance of “...member states’ choice of energy mix to have effects on the energy situation in other member states and on the Union’s ability to achieve the objectives of the European Policy of Energy.”⁴¹ Finally, in the Presidency conclusions of December 2007 it was stated that “with respect to energy and climate change, the European Council reiterates the importance of implementing, in line with its March 2007 conclusions, all aspects of the comprehensive 2007-2009 Action Plan endorsed last spring with a view to taking forward the three

³⁵Söderbergh et al., 5038.

³⁶IEA, “World Energy Outlook 2009 Fact Sheet: Why is Our Current Energy Pathway Unsustainable?” retrieved from http://www.worldenergyoutlook.org/docs/weo2009/fact_sheets_WEO_2009.pdf

³⁷ José Manuel Durao Barroso, “Speaking with a Common Voice: Energy Policy in the 21st Century” (Speech at the Honorary Degree Ceremony, Georgetown University, Washington, DC, February 9, 2006), <http://www.eurunion.org/News/speeches/2006/060209jmb.htm>.

³⁸ The Hampton Court summit was an informal meeting under the UK’s presidency where the EU heads of State acknowledged the need for a more sound European Energy Policy.

³⁹ Oliver Geden et al., 10.

⁴⁰ Presidency Conclusions of the Council of the European Union (March 8/9, 2007).

⁴¹ Ibid.

objectives of the Energy Policy for Europe: security of supply, competitiveness and climate change.”⁴²

The 2007-2009 Action Plan, as it was referred to in the Presidency conclusions, outlines a framework of policies and measures for the member states. It underscores a 20% energy saving potential for the EU by 2020, which is intended to facilitate a reduction in the import of fossil fuels. In the Action Plan it was also maintained that the Commission should take the initiative to reach framework agreements with key external trading partners which would cover the transport of energy.⁴³ In 2008, the EU Commission has taken further steps to harmonize the energy policies of the member states through recommendation of initiatives in the 2nd *Strategic Energy Review* and *EU Energy Security and Solidarity Action Plan*. The implementation of the recommendations in these documents is intended to diminish and freeze the EU’s external energy dependency at the current levels.⁴⁴

Yet the ability and willingness of the member states to follow the recommendations in these documents depends primarily on their existing energy situations and future energy supply preferences. As Umbach argues, “the EU-27 member states have largely failed to forge a coherent European energy security and energy foreign policy strategy after their Spring summit of 2007 because its declared political solidarity has been still lacking.”⁴⁵

In December 2007 the EU member states signed the Lisbon Treaty, which entered into force in December 2009, amending the Maastricht Treaty of 1992. In its new energy chapter (Article 194), it was stated that the EU energy policy shall ensure a functioning energy market and ensure security of supply to the Union and will also advance energy efficiency and energy saving within the Union.⁴⁶ It was also stated that the energy policy shall promote the development of new and renewable forms of energy; as well as the interconnection of energy networks.⁴⁷ To achieve these objectives, Article 194 also introduced a new legislative procedure whereby the Parliament and the Council will act together after consulting the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Yet “...the Member State's right to determine the conditions for exploiting its energy resources, its choice between different energy sources and the general structure of its energy supply, without prejudice to Article 192(2)(c)”⁴⁸ remained intact once again, leaving major aspects of the energy supply policy as a member state competence.

An Intergovernmentalist Reading of the Steps towards Common External Energy Policy

Most of the EU member states resolutely guard their sovereignty over their energy policies, declaring it a sensitive decision to be taken at the national level. Today supply security is still an unsettled issue, as demonstrated by the low level of convergence in the field of energy given the asymmetrical risk perceptions and energy mix preferences of the member states. As Stanley

⁴² Presidency Conclusions of the Council of the European Union (December 14, 2007).

⁴³ European Commission, “Action Plan for Energy Efficiency: Realizing the Potential” (Communication from the Commission, Brussels, November 10, 2006).

⁴⁴ Umbach, 1229.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ See Article 194 of the Lisbon Treaty, retrieved from <http://www.lisbon-treaty.org/wcm/the-lisbon-treaty/treaty-on-the-functioning-of-the-european-union-and-comments/part-3-union-policies-and-internal-actions/title-xxi-energy/485-article-194.html>.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Hoffmann argues, self-interested states are quite obstinate in the face of European integration.⁴⁹ Classical intergovernmentalists like Hoffmann would argue that it is the divergences in the interests of the member states which hitherto prevented the formulation of a concerted approach towards the energy suppliers. However, in recent years the heads of governments began to accept the above-discussed Commission proposals, which some analysts deem as steps towards the eventual realization of a European-wide energy policy.

A simple explanation that the intergovernmentalists would give for the recent level of integration in the area of energy is that there is a potential for cooperation among sovereign states, but only up to a point where they would disagree about the best course of action. As Hoffmann suggests, when there is a surge of nationalism in one important issue and when there are also differences in assessments of the world role of the new supranational whole, the integration process is destined to fail.⁵⁰ Some analysts argue that the EU heads of state adopted the series of Commission proposals with the expectation of outlining the groundwork for an “Energy Policy for Europe.”⁵¹ However the path to endorsement of a common foreign policy on securing energy supplies is complicated, since such a policy will require political partnership between the EU as a whole and the energy suppliers. The EU member states rather chose to pursue diverse paths to safeguard their energy situations from risks. Some member states have established long-term energy contracts with non-EU energy exporters. For instance, Germany and Italy have independent bilateral agreements with Russia in order to guarantee the safety of supply in the near future. These member states will not be willing to give up their individual rights to practice autonomous external energy relations. On the other hand, CEE countries have long experienced Russian dominance in the energy sphere. Nonetheless they benefited from the Russian policy of keeping the energy prices at lower levels for these former Soviet satellites. Recently, as they face the challenge of soaring prices, these countries will call on the EU to curb Russia’s established power over the issue of energy.⁵² Hence, some CEE countries criticize the states which rely on supplies coming from Russia, arguing that this increases the leverage of Russia over EU decision-making policies.

France responds to the risks of Russian gas supply cut-offs with a determination to continue investing in its own nuclear capacity. The UK also went for the nuclear option, but its governments will be forced to further reconsider the issue of supply diversity because of the fact that the UK’s resources, other than nuclear energy generation, will wear out in the near future. Countries such as Spain and Portugal, which fall outside the European pipeline system, do not have easy access to natural gas. Hence, it is expected that their position with respect to a coordinated policy on the external energy supply security will greatly diverge from the other member states.

Thus, the varying energy demands and mixes of the member states, their different levels of self-sufficiency, political problems between the transit and supplier countries, divergences in terms of demand for and availability of alternative routes for different member states, existing energy deals, and finally the political risks associated with alternative suppliers obscures the realization of a common external energy policy at the EU level.

Given the divergent energy interests of the member states, the bargaining among them in the Council heads-of-states meetings will result in the approval of the lowest common denominator:

⁴⁹ See Stanley Hoffmann, “Obstinate or Obsolete? The Fate of the Nation-State and the Case of Western Europe”, in *The European Union: Readings on the Theory and Practice of European Integration*, ed. Brent F. Nelsen and Alexander Stubb (USA: Lynne Reiner, 2003).

⁵⁰ Hoffmann, 169.

⁵¹ Paul Belkin, “The European Union’s Energy Security Challenges” (Congressional Research Service report, May 7, 2007), 7, retrieved from <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33636.pdf>.

⁵² Belkin, 9.

that is, the least objectionable alternative for all the players, as in these meetings every major policy has to be decided unanimously. The recognition of a common external energy policy does not seem agreeable under the current state of affairs, basically since most of the member states perceive it as a threat to their national interests and sovereignty. This tendency of the member states to keep their sovereignty over decisions concerning energy supply is reflected in the energy chapters of EU treaties, including the final amendments introduced with the Lisbon Treaty. These reservations show that member states are not yet prepared to adopt a common position in their deals with energy providers. Hence, as an intergovernmentalist analysis would argue, the integration in the area of energy is doomed to freeze unless the national preferences of the member states converge.

The first question that liberal intergovernmentalists raise is, what best explains these national preferences and why do national preferences vary greatly among the member states? According to liberal intergovernmentalists, pressures from interest groups within the member states put constraints on the policy choices of their governments. This process of national preference formation at the domestic level is the demand side of international co-operation.⁵³ Parallel to the demands coming from the domestic energy consumers and producers, states articulate their energy policy objectives. Hence, the cooperation among politicians does not reflect the pursuit of geopolitical goals such as containment of Russia from controlling the EU energy markets but their policies represent the aim to guarantee maintenance of least costly supply for their domestic consumers or the aim to protect their domestic producers from the risks of competitive energy markets.

Compared to previous theories of the EU, adherents of intergovernmentalism offer a distinct model for European integration, consisting of the view that international relations is a bargaining game between the states, all of which seek to fulfill the purpose of preserving their national self interests. Hence, according to intergovernmentalist accounts, the EU integration process does not require a *sui generis* theory and can be explained with reference to general theories of international relations.⁵⁴ Intergovernmentalists criticize neo-functional theory for its emphasis on the *sui generis* nature of the EU, according to which national sovereignty is “chewed up leaf by leaf like an artichoke”⁵⁵; that is to say, every collective EU level decision would lead to unintended consequences and inadvertently help the supranational institutions to integrate further. Instead, intergovernmentalists draw attention to treaty revisions as critical junctures without which the integration process is meaningless.

Thus, liberal intergovernmentalists also underscore the importance of these junctures when member states debate and decide about how integration will proceed. States bargain amongst themselves in an attempt to realize the interest of their constituencies and this bargaining process is the supply side of international cooperation. These intergovernmental bargains set the agenda for the prevailing periods of consolidation⁵⁶ and therefore, the bargaining outcomes help one develop predictions in the evolution of the EU. In this context a critical question arises: what best explains the outcomes of the interstate bargaining? This is the second key issue that liberal intergovernmentalism addresses.

⁵³ Andrew Moravcsik, “Preferences and Power in the European Community: A Liberal Intergovernmentalist Approach,” *Journal of Common Market Studies* 31: 4 (December, 1993), 481.

⁵⁴ Moravcsik, 1993, 474.

⁵⁵ See Hoffman for more detailed analysis, 171.

⁵⁶ Moravcsik, 1993, 473.

Moravcsik argues that the bargaining in the EU is pareto-efficient: that is the gains from the outcome of bargaining favors one country over the other.⁵⁷ Hence, governments that gain most from a common policy will be more inclined to offer concessions in order to have their interests realized. Based on this assumption, it is expected therefore that the CEE countries will push more for a common external energy policy. Other countries will also be compelled in the near future to reconsider the gains of a common EU stance. Besides, bargaining outcomes are argued to reflect the relative powers of states. Therefore, the success of interstate negotiations in producing a common external energy policy depends largely on the convergence of interests among the most powerful states. In this respect, the concerns of Germany, UK and France will be detrimental.

Although the Presidency conclusions in 2007 stressed the importance of improved bilateral cooperation between the EU and all suppliers to guarantee energy flows into the Union, some states will be reluctant to take any action in the near future which would threaten their previously established deals (especially in the case of Germany) or any action that would add to their costs in their cost-benefit analysis. As Moravcsik argues, “the integration process did not supersede or circumvent the political will of national leaders; it reflected their will.”⁵⁸ Thus, states are still “the controlling agents with an interest in the promotion of degrees of integration.”⁵⁹

What, then, is the scope of action for the Commission and what is the role that it plays in the structuring of the energy choices of the member states? “What best explains the state choices to construct European institutions and transfer sovereignty to them?”⁶⁰ The role of supranational institutions is the third subject that the liberal intergovernmentalism considers. Perspectives on energy security differ among member states and the Commission has its own vision which contradicts the interests of some member states. Given the developments after the adaptation of various Commission proposals, one could prematurely conclude that integration in the area of energy is in full swing. However the elimination of the Energy Chapter from the draft Union Treaty which emerged from the Maastricht summit meeting in December, 1991 demonstrated that it is still the member states’ preferences which are going to shape the future of integration in the area of energy.

This decision also set the parameters for the Commission’s future ability to maneuver on supply security matters. The Commission has made several efforts to achieve progress in energy talks with Russia and other energy-producing and transit regions, and delineates several foreign policy objectives in its Action Plans and Energy Reviews. The new office of the High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy and the individual member states have begun to engage in dialogue with the energy-providing countries in a more explicit manner.⁶¹ Yet, when it comes to taking coordinated action, member states are truly reluctant. Their disinclination to harmonize policies on the issue of energy is also discernible from the amendments made to existing EU treaties. As previously discussed in this paper, the energy chapter of the Lisbon Treaty has additional clauses that provide member states with the ability to keep supply of energy as a state competence. In the Presidency conclusions of the Council meetings, issues related to energy are phrased in such a way as not to intimidate different national interests. It is fair, therefore, to conclude that energy policy is still by and large a realm of the individual states, which is shaped mostly by the interests of the domestic interest groups (domestic energy consumers and producers),

⁵⁷ Moravcsik, 2003, 246.

⁵⁸ Moravcsik, 2003, 243.

⁵⁹ Ben Rosamond, *Theories of European Integration* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 139.

⁶⁰ Moravcsik, 2003, 244.

⁶¹ Belkin, 25.

and to a certain extent modified in the course of bargaining between the asymmetrically interdependent states.

Conclusion

It is natural that each member state will work on its own national supplies but it is also vitally important to maximize coordination for transparency to be achieved in the internal and external energy markets. Speaking with one voice towards the countries that export energy to Europe not only enables the EU to secure supply on behalf of the EU market but it also represents a real opportunity for the EU to present a sustainable vision to the world. However, as this paper shows there are internal discords within the EU concerning a united attitude towards the energy exporters. The disagreement among member states on the issue of external energy policy coordination is mainly the result of different national preferences of the most powerful states and the ensuing nature of interstate negotiations, which produce the least objectionable outcome for all the players. Coordination of the external energy policies of the member states seems unattainable for the time being, as a common external energy policy does not represent the lowest common denominator for all the EU member states.

If key member states relentlessly oppose the formation of a common external energy policy, controversial aspects of the Commission proposals are destined to be turned down. Germany appears reluctant to take any concerted action which would antagonize Russia. The UK and France will be averse to renounce their nuclear activities. These different choices of the powerful states will prevent any radical departure from their current policies, given their bargaining powers under the EU decision making structure.

The need to diversify energy networks is a big challenge for the individual member states in the shadow of risks emanating from the policies of the supplier countries. Russian gas will remain the leading supply source for the European energy markets. Hence, the EU member states will require better mechanisms to respond if another crisis between Russia and transit countries hits Europe. Yet the formulation of a common EU wide external energy policy is a pressing challenge as it threatens state sovereignty and is regarded by the EU member states as a loss of competency to the supranational level. Therefore, integration in the area of energy seems to remain highly intergovernmental in the absence of a collective EU position about a common external energy policy which transcends national interests. As the current levels of integration in the field of energy and continuing divergences in the external energy policies of the member states reveal, there remains the unwillingness to cede sovereignty to EU level institutions regarding the relations with the energy providers. This paper projects that a concerted approach towards the energy exporters is unlikely so long as the energy security interests of the member states diverge.

“ASSEMBLING” A CIVIC NATION IN KAZAKHSTAN: THE NATION-BUILDING ROLE OF THE ASSEMBLY OF THE PEOPLES OF KAZAKHSTAN

Nathan Paul Jones*

Abstract

The countries of the former Soviet Union inherited a unique system for managing the needs of ethnic minorities. The question is how these countries utilize Soviet constructs to develop policies suitable for their distinct political contexts. Kazakhstan’s leaders have chosen to fashion a multiethnic civic nation and established the Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan to oversee the work of creating a uniform national identity. This paper discusses major theories pertaining to civic nation-building, highlights the Soviet approach to building a civic nation, and describes how the ideology, form, and activities of the Assembly contribute to civic nation-building in Kazakhstan. Finally, it describes the author’s own ethnographic research demonstrating how people react to Kazakhstan’s civic nation-building efforts. The paper argues that Kazakhstan’s attempts to create a civic national identity are failing because it has not yet provided a consolidating national discourse as strong as socialism was during the Soviet period.

Keywords: *Kazakhstan, ethnicity, civic nation-building, korenizatsiia, Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan, Soviet minorities’ policies, identity.*

Introduction

As former republics of the Soviet Union, the Central Asian countries have inherited extremely diverse multiethnic populations produced through large-scale forced and voluntary migration. Their Soviet history has instilled their citizens and leaders with a unique way of thinking about ethnic nations, which the communist authorities largely constructed and proliferated from the 1920s until the Union disbanded in 1991. Since independence, Kazakhstan’s and other Central Asian countries’ approaches to nation-building reflect these Soviet constructs, but they have also offered new perceptions and strategies to the concept of the nation.

Kazakhstan is highly multiethnic. According to official statistics, 59.2 per cent of the population is Kazakh, 29.6 per cent is Russian, and 10.2 per cent comprises Germans, Tatars, Ukrainians, Uzbeks, and Uyghurs. The remaining 1 per cent includes members of over 140 other nationalities.¹ Rather than

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¹ These statistics are provided on the Kazakhstan embassy’s website in the United States. “Ethnic Groups” <http://www.kazakhembus.com/index.php?page=ethnic-groups> (accessed April 20, 2010).

constructing a state-sponsored national identity based exclusively on ethnic Kazakh culture to assimilate the large non-Kazakh portion of the population, the leaders of Kazakhstan have opted for a multiethnic civic nation aiming to enfranchise all of its citizens completely, regardless of their cultural identities. This nation-building approach encourages the state's ethnic minorities to preserve and revitalize their own ethnic cultures and languages while it simultaneously characterizes Kazakh culture and language as the instruments of national consolidation. To oversee the work of ethnic minority cultural preservation and participate in the project of civic nation-building, the government established the Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan.

The Assembly is a government-sponsored institution promoting “peace and harmony” among the ethnically diverse population of Kazakhstan. Among the Assembly's tasks are the provision of minority representation in state and local government, the support of national cultural centers mandated to preserve and revive ethnic minority cultures, and the establishment of facilities and forums, such as cultural festivals and Houses of Friendship, for the exercise and performance of ethnic culture. Some of the stated intentions of these efforts include forming a civic Kazakhstan national identity, strengthening multiethnic and multi-religious harmony and tolerance, and countering the appearance of extremism and radicalism in society.²

In the comments that follow, I will examine the process of civic nation-building in Kazakhstan through a focus on the Assembly's underlying ideologies. To do this, I will discuss major theories pertaining to civic nation-building, highlight the Soviet approach to building a civic nation, and describe how the ideology, form, and activities of the Assembly contribute to civic nation-building in Kazakhstan. I will conclude the paper by briefly discussing my ethnographic research in northern Kazakhstan to demonstrate how local populations react to Kazakhstan's civic nation-building efforts.

Theoretical Interpretations of Civic and Ethnic Nations and Nation-Building

The urge to create and maintain a civic nation – an official national identity incorporating all of the citizens of the state regardless of ethnicity, race, or gender – is a prominent strategy for political leaders to establish hegemony in multiethnic states. But what exactly is a “nation,” and what forms its constituent parts? In order to clarify the composition of nations, Anthony Smith differentiates state citizenship from ethnic membership by positing the existence of two nations, a civic nation and an ethnic nation. According to this formulation, people with ethnic ties emphasizing elements of kinship, customs, and languages form the components of ethnic nations, while the formation of states presupposes civic nations created through the administration of capitalism, centralized government, and the secularization of education and culture. According to Smith, therefore, membership in the civic nation relies upon citizenship in the state, while ethnic nations may exist within the civic nation composed of people linked together through culture and kinship. This perception of nations suggests that one may belong to two nations simultaneously – as both a citizen of a state and a member of an ethnic group within the state.³

² Нурсултан Назербаев, «Об Ассамблее народа Казахстана» Казахстанская Правда – October 21, 2008 [Nursultan Nazerbaev, “On the Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan,” Kazakhstan Pravda, October 21, 2008].

³ Anthony D. Smith, “State Making and Nation-Building,” in *States in History*, ed. John A. Hall (Chichester, UK: Chichester, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1986), 228-63.

Others contest the concept of the nation as a civic formation. Walker Connor, for example, disputes discourses on the nation that improperly conflate its members with the citizens of states. While Connor agrees with Smith's understanding of ethnic nations, he argues that the notion of the civic nation inaccurately associates the nation with all citizens in a state whether or not they maintain mutual cultural identifications. "Nation-building" projects among state citizens will therefore inevitably fail because the term nation applies exclusively to populations sharing deep ethno-cultural ties (as in Smith's ethnic nations). Those cultural ties which successfully unify "true nations" are unavailable to create common feelings of togetherness among all state citizens (except of course in instances where the state and nation are truly aligned, such as in World War II Germany and Japan). As a result, nation builders are hard-pressed to create national discourses compelling enough for the population to uniformly pledge its loyalty to the state.⁴ Connor's argument regarding the ambiguity of the term "nation" is certainly valid, and attempts at civic nation-building have undoubtedly failed. As a good deal of research on the nation demonstrates, however, political projects aiming to unify state populations using civic national discourses persist as popular strategies for the powers which govern them.⁵

While Connor and Smith perceive nations, at least in their ethnic form, as cultural formations, constructivist theorists of the nation argue that other forces are at play. According to this body of work, the political, economic, and technological contexts of modernity represent the primary forces constructing the nation, rather than exclusively cultural factors such as languages, traditions and customs.⁶ Ernest Gellner, for example, suggests that the formation of nations occurs under the conditions of social mobility and instability characteristic of early capitalism. Using the industrial revolution in Western Europe as a model, Gellner argues that a nation forms when agricultural societies transform into industrialized states. During the process of industrialization, the development of a highly mobile, educated, and literate society produces nationalism – the organization of human groups in a state into a large, centrally educated, and cultural homogenous unit.⁷ While the constructivist position does not explicitly argue that such modern social organization creates "civic nations," Gellner maintains that when the culture of a society becomes standardized and homogenous (under the conditions of industrialization and technological advance), individuals willingly and often passionately identify with the preexisting political unit. Under these conditions, nations exist through a common material culture and its convergence with the dominant political unit – the state.⁸

Some more recent views characterize the nation as a category of political practice rather than as a concrete community of co-ethnics with a coherent sense of collective identity. Rogers Brubaker, for example, refers to the nation not as a group, but as a category in which political actors practice possible

⁴ Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 97-99.

⁵ See, for example, Mary Crain, "The Social Construction of National Identity in Highland Ecuador," *Anthropological Quarterly*, 631 (1990): 43-59; Dru Gladney, "Representing Nationality in China: Refiguring Majority/Minority Identities," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 53:1 (1994): 92-123; Elizabeth A. Povinelli, *The Cunning of Recognition: Indigenous Alterities and the Making of Australian Multiculturalism*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004); Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 15.

⁶ For the primary constructivist views on nations and nationalism, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, UK: Verso, 1991 [1983]); John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1982); Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Eric John Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric John Hobsbawm, and T. Ranger (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1-14.

⁷ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), 34.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 54.

variants of nationalism to meet political objectives.⁹ For Brubaker, state authorities practice civic nationalism when attempting to assert the status and welfare of the state's citizens for the purpose of legitimizing their authority.¹⁰ By extension, citizens practice civic nationalism simply by recognizing the legitimacy of the regimes authority and policies. Civic nationalism therefore exists through political practices and the naturalization of those practices rather than as discrete movements making it difficult to detect its presence as a political phenomenon.¹¹ Brubaker also recognizes that ethnic nationalism may take place when cultural minorities in the state pursue their own political interests while utilizing "nation"-oriented idioms, practices, and possibilities that are continuously available in modern cultural and political life.¹²

While Brubaker sees the political mobilization of cultural minorities in states as the expression of ethnic nationalisms, others totally reject ethnic nationalism as originating from homogeneous cultural communities. John Breuilly, for example views ethnic nationalism not in terms of cultural minorities, but as the actions of opposition politicians seeking to gain or maintain political privileges by making claims for subordinate groups whom they frame as members of minority cultural polities.¹³ Hence, nations and nationalism, according to these theorists, exist as strategies that political elites institutionalize within the workings of the state system and utilize for the purpose of legitimizing their political authority.

In addition to ethnic nations, Brubaker points to how political leaders might imagine two other variants of the nation in the context of states – nationalizing and civic nations. Nationalizing nations exist when state leaders attempt to establish their territory as a nation-state – the state of and for a particular nation of which they perceive themselves to be part.¹⁴ In this context, Brubaker sharply differentiates the nationalizing or "core" nations from the citizens of states. Political leaders characterize themselves as members of the core nation and promote its language, cultural preservation, economic welfare, and political hegemony as official priorities of political practice. Those who do not belong to the core nation, however, do not share in the "ownership" of the state.¹⁵ By contrast, Brubaker describes civic nations forming when the state insists that both its minority and majority cultural groups belong fundamentally to the dominant nation. In this way, state authorities recognizes the political and cultural claims of ethnic nations, but institutionalizes a more encompassing state-wide sense of national belonging, which only requires citizenship.¹⁶ It is precisely this form of civic nation building that early Soviet leaders selected to consolidate non-Russians into the new socialist multiethnic state and subsequently serves as a model for Kazakhstan's leaders as they attempt to establish a statewide national identity.

Soviet *korenizatsiia*: The "Roots" of Kazakhstan's Nation-Building Project

Rather than alienating the non-Russian populations of the old Czarist Empire through privileging the Russian core as the nationalizing nation, early Bolshevik leaders opted for a civic nation hoping to

⁹ Rogers R. Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 16-17.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 27, 11.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 84.

¹² *Ibid.*, 5-10.

¹³ John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1982), 360-71.

¹⁴ Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 79.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 84.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 3, 27.

consolidate its multiethnic territories into a Soviet state. Beginning in the 1920s, Soviet authorities encouraged, or even helped to create, ethnic nations with corresponding nationalisms. In formulating this policy, Lenin argued that cultural autonomy for non-Russians living in the boundaries of the former Russian empire would signal to these populations that the Bolshevik regime valued their interests. An additional objective was to simplify the available categories of personal identity, granting Soviet officials with greater influence over how non-Russians could identify themselves. Once categories of identity became simplified, institutionalized, and naturalized, Soviet leaders expected that adherence to one's ethnic national identity would wither in favor of one's membership in the Soviet civic nation.¹⁷

Soviet authorities designated this program as an indigenization, or in Russian a *korenizatsiia*. The term *korenizatsiia*, which literally means "rooting" in Russian, implied the attempt to rediscover and utilize the cultures of the populations, which had historically "rooted" themselves into the Soviet Union's territories. *Korenizatsiia* functioned as an affirmative action policy for non-Russians in the Soviet Union emphasizing the use of local languages and cultural traditions, empowering native cadres as regional political leaders, and filling government administrations with members of the regional ethnic nations.¹⁸ To accomplish *korenizatsiia*, Soviet leaders employed ethnographers to survey the entire population and fashion it into groups of ethnic nations. In this way, Soviet authorities asserted the right to determine the size and number of the state's ethnic nations and tightly control the nature of their national character and expression. The authorities required state ethnographers to determine how various linguistic groups, clans, and tribes might best be consolidated into single ethnic nations. Soviet authorities also charged ethnographers with the task of forming national territories, creating linguistic vernaculars, constructing cultural traditions, and writing histories for the newly constituted national groups. They then divided all of the Soviet Union's citizens into the officially established ethnic national categories. Using the newly established or refashioned ethnic national traditions, vernaculars, and histories, the Soviet leadership trained and appointed indigenous Bolshevik cadres as the leaders of the officially designated ethnic nations.¹⁹

Although Stalin officially halted *korenizatsiia* in the late 1930s, the program's lasting effect was a fundamental transformation in how people identified themselves. The ethnographic surveys, territorial mapping, writing of new histories, and the affirmative action policies associated with *korenizatsiia* precluded Soviet citizens from identifying themselves with previous familiar categories, such as religion, locality, or kin. Instead of utilizing such identifications, *korenizatsiia* trained the non-Russian population to identify themselves as members of officially designated ethnic nations. In this way, adherence to ethnic nations served to standardize identity by replacing former localized identities with ways of thinking about oneself that political authorities could easily quantify and manipulate.²⁰

Thus *korenizatsiia* helped to eliminate potential oppositions to state-sponsored identities making the officially sponsored forms of identification tightly linked to life under socialism more tangible. Using socialism in a consolidating role, therefore, the state subjugated national ethnic identity to the

¹⁷ Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 1-20.

¹⁸ Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 15.

¹⁹ Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, 1-20.

²⁰ Kate Brown, *A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 226-40.

preeminence of a Soviet socialist identity, which Stalin expressed through the mantra “national in form, socialist in content.”²¹ This reduced ethnic nationalism to the level of form through the usage of ethnic languages and the performance of cultural traditions, while Soviet citizens practiced “civic nationalism” through a socialist “content” – the daily, lived reality of socialism by participating in labor and other state-influenced activities. The task has now fallen on the Soviet Union’s former republics to create new civic national discourses in the absence of the overriding economic and political ideology which socialism provided for the Soviet civic nation.

Building a Kazakhstan Civic Nation Through Cultural Preservation and Revitalization

Together with the other former Soviet republics, Kazakhstan has inherited the legacy of *korenizatsiia* and subsequently the ethnic national categories perpetuated under socialism. Instead of pursuing a course of nationalizing nationalism privileging ethnic Kazakhs or attempting the wholesale assimilation of the population into a Kazakh linguistic and cultural identity, Kazakhstan’s authorities have chosen to employ the Soviet nationalities’ discourse and thus embrace and further develop the categories created under *korenizatsiia*. Kazakhstan’s government, for example, requires individuals upon reaching their sixteenth birthday to choose an ethnic nation by which to identify themselves on their state identity cards (*удостоверение личности*).²² In addition, the activities of the Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan further naturalize ethnic categories as they strive to preserve and/or revitalize minority languages and other cultural repertoires.

Similar to the prior Soviet nationalities’ discourse, Kazakhstan’s lawmakers argue that encouraging the growth of minority ethnic identities is a viable strategy to strengthen a sense of Kazakhstani state citizenship among these minorities. At a recent parliament-sponsored round table convened to discuss the “the models upon which interethnic harmony can be achieved in Kazakhstan,” participants suggested that the freedom to belong to an ethnic nation and to preserve one’s ethnic language functions as an incentive for the population to identify as citizens of the state.²³ For lawmakers, the freedom to belong to an ethnic nation and exercise a cultural identity corresponding to a chosen ethnic category achieves two primary goals; it provides a motivation to value one’s citizenship in the state and it supports the maintenance of peace and harmony among its ethnically diverse population. This perception suggests, therefore, that a fundamental task of the state is to further entrench Kazakhstan’s citizens into their chosen ethnic categories and through that entrenchment increase the value of their state citizenship. For the time being, the state has chosen the Assembly as the primary tool with which to undertake this task.

A piece of legislation passed in October 2008 entitled *On the Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan*, which was designed to lend constitutional support to the Assembly, clearly demonstrates Kazakhstan’s path of civic nation building. The law states that “the Assembly contributes to the realization of the

²¹ Walker Connor, *The National Question in Marxist-Leninist Theory and Strategy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 202.

²² According to Article 19 of Kazakhstan’s Constitution, every citizen has the right to indicate or to decline to indicate an ethnicity; however, Article 57 (On Families and Marriage) states that children must select the ethnicity of one of their parents. Therefore, technically anyone may refuse to select an ethnicity on applications for state identification cards and passports for international use.

²³ Марьям Турежанова, «Под общим шаныраком» Казахстанская Правда – October 11, 2008 [Maryam Turejanova, “Under a Common ‘Janirok’ (Kazakh: ‘roof’),” *Kazakhstan Pravda* – October 11, 2008].

government's policies regarding nationalities ... [and] to guaranteeing interethnic harmony in Kazakhstan within the process of forming a Kazakhstan state identity and nation ... in relation to the consolidating role of the Kazakh people."²⁴ The law further claims that a primary assignment of the Assembly is to promote the preservation, revitalization, and the development of the ethnic cultures, languages, and traditions of the peoples of Kazakhstan.²⁵ This provision regarding the promotion of cultural preservation and revitalization among Kazakhstan's ethnic nations underlies the primary work that the Assembly actually performs.

Through a structure reaching from President Nazerbaev down to the members of the affiliated national cultural centers of the country's smallest villages, the Assembly and its partners operate as a system of hierarchical councils. The Assembly itself is a state-level organization, led by President Nazerbaev and composed of delegates representing the various officially registered ethnic cultural organizations of the state who meet together at least annually to discuss the Assembly's operating strategy. In addition to the national Assembly each Oblast, as well as the cities Astana and Almaty, has its own "small" Assembly whose composition and operations mirror that of the national structure. The Oblast Assemblies may also maintain filial in the counties (*raioni*) under their jurisdiction – the structure of the *raion*-level institutions again resembles those on the Oblast and state levels.²⁶

The organs which the Assembly utilizes to promote the nation-building ideology among Kazakhstan's population are the numerous national culture centers and unions organized at the state, Oblast, and *raion* levels representing members of the various ethnic nations in the regions where they are organized. The centers, often in cooperation with the Assembly, sponsor ethnic cultural activities for their members including language study, arts and crafts classes for children, social clubs for youth and adults, as well as the preparation and execution of performances involving traditional singing, dancing and dramatic pieces usually in ethnic national costume. According to the legislation passed to support the mission of the Assembly, the primary purpose of these activities is the "preservation and revitalization of the cultures and peoples of Kazakhstan."²⁷

Kazakhstan's lawmakers stress that in addition to the state-supported opportunities to preserve and/or revitalize ethnic national cultures, ethnic Kazakhs and Kazakh culture must play a primary *consolidating* role in developing and sustaining the Kazakhstan civic nation. The authorities have suggested that the primary instrument of culture with which to draw non-Kazakhs into the Kazakhstan civic nation should be the Kazakh language. In recognition of this, federal lawmakers have stated that "knowledge of the Kazakh language is the most important condition to achieve inter-ethnic peace and harmony."²⁸ Concerning the Assembly's role in this project, the head of the presidential administration, Kairat Kilimbetov, stressed that the national cultural centers and the structures of the Assembly must work together to raise the general proficiency of the Kazakh language – "the state language."²⁹

²⁴ Nursultan Nazerbaev, *On the Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan*.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ С. Малдыбаев, «Филологическая Миссия Алаша» Казахстанская Правда – September 13, 2008 [S. Maldibaev, "Philological Mission of Alasha" Kazakhstan Truth – September 13, 2008].

²⁹ С. Горбунов, «Единство Нации – Ключ к Успеху: Консолидирующий Фактор Ассемблеи» Казахстанская Правда – September 13, 2008 ["Unity of the Nation – The Key to Success: The Consolidating Factor of the Assembly" Kazakhstan Truth – September 13, 2008].

State support for the preservation of ethnic national cultures through the activities of the Assembly and its affiliates is thus rhetorically contingent upon the simultaneous adoption of Kazakh language and culture within the official domain of ethnic minority cultural life – the national cultural centers. Hence, Kazakhstan's authorities have chosen Kazakh language and culture to replace socialism as a consolidating civic national discourse. Perhaps this insistence on the inherent primacy of Kazakh culture and language while emphasizing a civic national model indeed represents a counterfeit form of civic nation-building intent on Kazakhification. President Nazerbaev and other officials, however, have strongly asserted otherwise. In October of 2009, the president sponsored the publication of a "Doctrine of National Unity," in relation to which he insisted that "the country had developed to a point where it [is] time for people's identity to be based solely on their citizenship of Kazakhstan."³⁰ In addition to these comments about national identity, the text of the "Doctrine" itself states that favoring a civic rather than an ethnic model of national community is the course upon which Kazakhstan's leaders have chosen to establish interethnic stability in the society.³¹ Whether or not the reality of Kazakhstan's nation-building policies supports the effort to *Kazakhify* rather than *Kazakhstanify*, the state's leadership has publicly conceptualized its efforts precisely as a case of civic nation-building rather than its ethnic alternative.

At question here, however, is not if Kazakhstan's attempts to nationalize its population are genuinely civic or covertly ethnic, but rather what the outcomes have been, and what has conditioned them. In spite of the multiethnic nature of Kazakhstan's civic nationalist rhetoric, the policy still depends upon an ethno-cultural form (the Kazakh language and culture) that is not necessary tangible to a large portion of the non-Kazakh population. In comparison with the Soviet "national in form, socialist in content" model, which completely subjugated ethnic nationality to an official state identity corresponding to the lived reality of socialism, Kazakhstan's authorities have introduced an additional national form rather than a "content" as the consolidating factor. What this form of civic national identity lacks is a comprehensive "content," or a way in which daily activities link the state's citizens into one single national whole as socialism had to an extent accomplished for the citizens of the Soviet Union. The result is that Kazakh language and culture seems to have much less salience as a consolidating discourse in the daily lives of non-Kazakhs in Kazakhstan than socialism had for non-Russians in the Soviet Union. The question remains, however, as to the salience of the ethnic national categories for the identities of Kazakhstanis.

Reactions to Ethnic National Categories and the Assembly's Nation-Building Role

One indicator of the outcomes of Kazakhstan's civic national discourse is the negative reaction from some ethnic Kazakhs. In response to the "Doctrine" published in 2009, a Kazakh group identifying itself as "the National Patriots" has argued that the Kazakh language is losing out to Russian and should maintain even more prominence in the state than Kazakhstan's official policies permit. Following the publication of the "Doctrine," the patriots published their own document entitled "Concept for National Policy" in which the group called for Kazakhs to assume their rightful role as "the state-forming

³⁰ Daulet Kanagatuly, "Arguments over Nationhood in Kazakhstan: Compromise Sought Between American-Style Melting Pot and Monoethnic Kazakh State," Reporting Central Asia, No. 606 (March 19, 2010): http://www.mail-archive.com/reporting_central_asia_english@iwpr.gn.apc.org/msg00161.html (accessed April 20, 2010).

³¹ The Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan, «Доктрина Национального Единства Казахстана», http://www.assembly.kz/index_en.php?ft=10020&type=10070&java_tree=10070 (accessed April 20, 2010).

indigenous nation” and to discard the notion of a Kazakhstani identity completely.³² On the other hand, the population’s non-Kazakhs have tended to express their concerns with nationalization policies with their feet, i.e. through emigration to the Russian Federation and Germany. While non-Kazakh emigration from Kazakhstan has been high, it has significantly decreased since the 1990s, suggesting that attempts to placate non-Kazakhs have experienced at least a measure of success.³³

However significant demographic trends and public political debates are to understanding the impact of Kazakhstan’s civic nation-building program, it is even more significant to ascertain how communities and individuals have reacted to the policies. With this in mind, I have examined the structures, procedures and outcomes of civic nation-building through sixteen months of ethnographic research in villages and urban centers in northern Kazakhstan from 2008 to 2009. My research involved observing and participating in the activities of the German National Cultural Center and other national cultural centers (Ukrainian, Tatar, Chechen-Ingush, etc.) in a rural region in the Pavlodar Oblast. The village in which I conducted the bulk of my study maintains a filial of the Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan, which is affiliated with the oblast level Assembly in Pavlodar City. My primary concern was to ascertain how Kazakhstan’s approach to civic nation building articulates itself within local populations, and to accomplish this I attended national cultural center sponsored club meetings, language classes, performance rehearsals and cultural festivals. During these events, I spoke at length with and interviewed the participants and cultural center workers. I also spent time among the villages’ German, Tatar, and Russian populations to discuss their perceptions of ethnicity and ethnic cultural preservation.

As stated above, the state requires every sixteen year-old to claim membership in an ethnic nation which is then printed on their state issued identity cards. As ethnicity is therefore an official category of identity (as it was under the Soviet Union), I was interested in how substantial such identifications are to peoples lives. The majority of my respondents indicated that possessing an ethnic identity was important to them. Only a small number, however, actually participate in activities contributing to the preservation or revitalization of ethnic cultures, languages, or traditions. Most are unaware of the existence and activities of the Assembly and express ambivalence about the consolidating role of Kazakh culture and language.

If a large number of Kazakhstan’s citizens are unlikely to participate in activities to preserve their ethnic cultures, why does the state rely so heavily on ethnic cultural preservation as a primary tool to create a civic national identity? In her work on ethnicity in Trinidad, Viranjini Munasinghe argues that those who construct ethnic categories design them to reflect a specific social reality, which may or may not conform to actual patterns of daily life. Munasinghe explains that ethnic discourses label and project cultural meaning onto certain practices corresponding to ethnic categories. Once the population becomes familiar with the discourses, individuals tend to imagine a personal and meaningful relationship to the practices even if they take place outside their immediate context of experience.³⁴ The legacy of Soviet *korenizatsiia* policies had already naturalized an ethnic discourse and categories for its citizens, leaving authorities in the Soviet Union’s successor states with an already meaningful mode of identification for

³² Kanagatuly, “Arguments over Nationhood in Kazakhstan.”

³³ Edward Schatz, *Modern Clan Politics: The Power of “Blood” in Kazakhstan and Beyond* (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press, 2004), 82.

³⁴ Viranjini Munasinghe, *Callaloo or Tossed Salad? East Indians and the Cultural politics of Identity in Trinidad* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), 27.

its citizens. Following the collapse of the USSR, these authorities were faced with the necessity to use the Soviet ethnic national discourse to their advantage or have it used against them.

Following Munasinghe's understanding of ethnic discourse, I argue that although the impact of cultural preservation appears to be negligible for most non-Kazakhs, it does preserve the perception among the population that ethnic categories actively exist. The efforts of the Assembly therefore rest not upon the actual preservation work of ethnic cultural traditions and languages, but rather the way in which this work maintains the categories where cultural preservation takes place. My observations indicate that the traces of the Assembly's work, rather than knowledge of the Assembly and its programs, transfer knowledge of ethnic categories to the population through holiday performances, cultural festivals, newspaper articles, and word of mouth. The work of civic nation-building thus depends upon this general recognition that ethnic categories exist, and something is officially being done about them, to raise the value of citizenship in Kazakhstan for non-Kazakhs.

Conclusion: Identity Crisis in the Former Soviet Union?

In spite of the lasting power of ethnic national categories that the Soviet *korenizatsiia* program has inspired, the strength of ethnic nationality pales in comparison to the strength of the Soviet civic nationality based on everyday forms of socialist life as a tangible source of personal identity. While interviewing and discussing ideas about ethnicity with people during my research, many expressed ambivalence about the ethnic categories to which they belonged and identified themselves simply as "Soviet people." Most attempts to replace this lost sense of Soviet socialist identity have failed, and in the worst cases influenced instances of violent conflict. In his study of post-socialist transitions in the Caucasus, Georgi Derluguian notes that while a minority of former Soviet states have successfully replaced the socialist identity with other tangible discourses – like westernization and market orientation in the Baltics – other regions have replaced socialism with tragically destructive forms, such as insurgency along ethnic and religious lines in the south and north Caucasus.³⁵

Certainly, Kazakhstan's civic nation-building strategy's reliance on Kazakh language and culture stands little chance of provoking violent conflict, but as a unifying discourse it has even less of a chance of consolidating its non-Kazakh population into a Kazakhstani civic nation. Now that the Assembly and its programs are backed by the constitution, however, leaders of the national cultural centers are at least optimistic that the work of the Assembly will assume a more prominent role among the population, potentially convincing Kazakhstanis that they indeed belong to a multiethnic civic nation.

³⁵ Georgi M. Derluguian, *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus: A World System Biography* (Chicago, IL: University Chicago Press, 2005), 314-15.

CLIMBING THE MOUNTAIN OF LANGUAGES: LANGUAGE LEARNING IN GEORGIA

Hans Gutbrod & Malte Viefhues, CRRC*

Abstract

In 2008, CRRC-Georgia and the American Councils conducted a small online census among mostly English-native, engaged expatriates who are either currently living in Georgia, or did so in the past. The questions were about attitudes toward and aptitude for learning Georgian or Russian, and the importance of these languages in Georgia. With 90 completed questionnaires the number of respondents was small, and the findings cannot be generalized to cover the whole expatriate community. However, they provide insight into the incentives to language learning, and the importance of Georgian and Russian for foreigners in Georgia. The results show that Georgian is important for daily life in Georgia, while Russian is more useful in a professional context. On average, the respondents have a better level in Russian than in Georgian. In addition, knowing one language did not keep the respondents from learning the other: 87 percent of the respondents with Russian skills also know some Georgian.

Keywords: Georgia, Language, Russian, Georgian, Expatriates, Tbilisi

Introduction: Language Learning in Georgia

In winter 2008, CRRC together with the American Councils conducted a small online census among mostly English-native, engaged expatriates who are either currently living in Georgia, or did so in the past. The respondents were asked questions about their attitudes toward and aptitude for learning Georgian or Russian, and the importance of these languages in Georgia. With 90 completed questionnaires the number of respondents was quite small. The findings can thus hardly be generalized to cover the whole heterogeneous expatriate community in Georgia. However, they provide interesting insights into incentives to language learning, and the importance of Georgian and Russian for foreigners in Georgia.

The data indicates that while Georgian is very important for living in Georgia, Russian is more useful in a professional context. This could explain why, on average, the respondents – many of whom have worked in different countries – have a better level in Russian than in Georgian. As these languages serve in different domains, knowing one did not keep the respondents from learning the other: 87 percent of the respondents with Russian skills know some Georgian as well.

* This report was prepared by the Caucasus Research Resource Centers (CRRC) in Georgia. **Dr. Hans Gutbrod**, CRRC Regional Director, and **Malte Viefhues**, Research Fellow at CRRC-Georgia, have compiled the report. The CRRC would like to thank Dr. Timothy Blauvelt for the original conception of the survey and advice on its analysis, and William Sadd for the opportunity to discuss a draft of the paper as part of the Works-in-Progress series in Tbilisi, Georgia, and the participants of that event for their comments and suggestions.

Which Language to Speak in Georgia?

According to the respondents, knowledge of Georgian or Russian is very important in all aspects of life in Georgia. While they deem basic Georgian to be more useful than Russian in everyday situations, they have a better level of Russian than Georgian, on average. The gap between Georgian and Russian skills was especially apparent in the higher proficiency levels, as very few respondents have advanced Georgian skills, compared with about a third of the Russian learners. The respective language skills also seem to correlate with the amount of time put into studying: those who learn Russian had invested more time in their language studies than those learning Georgian.

Communicating in Georgia

The majority of the respondents constantly or regularly interacts (or interacted¹) with people who do not speak their first language. Therefore, knowing one of the two predominant local languages – Georgian and Russian – is very important for social life and work in Georgia. Moreover, many of the respondents agree that basic proficiency in either Russian or Georgian is very helpful for performing the tasks of daily life in Georgia. Overall, Georgian was perceived to be more useful than Russian in this regard, although around 20 percent think that either way, some difficulties in communicating remain.

While the teaching of English is on the rise throughout the Georgian educational system, Russian is still the predominant second language in society. As of 2009, data from the CRRC's Data Initiative (DI) show that even in Tbilisi – where most foreigners live – a full 60 percent of the population has no English knowledge at all, whereas only 4 percent do not know any Russian. In the coming years, however, these figures are likely to shift, as young Georgians tend to know English better than the older generation: while only 16 percent of all Georgians over the age of 30 know at least elementary English, 54 percent of those between 18 and 30 say the same.² Therefore, the average foreigner still has a strong need for Russian or Georgian if he wants to communicate with the Georgian population.

About 84 percent of the respondents have to communicate in Russian or Georgian frequently. Forty-seven percent of the respondents say that they “constantly” interact with Georgians who do not speak their first language. Another 37 percent say they do so at least “regularly”. Fourteen percent of the respondents say that they only “occasionally” interact with a Georgian who does not know their first language. Only 2 percent say that they rarely or never do.

¹ At the time of the study, 57 percent of the respondents no longer lived in Georgia. For the sake of readability, however, from now on only the present tense will be used. For more information about the census' population, see respective section at the end.

² The Data Initiative (DI) is an ongoing project by CRRC that aims at gathering reliable quantitative data about public opinion on politics, healthcare, economics and other topics throughout the South Caucasus. It is carried out annually in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

About two-thirds of the respondents say that knowing some Russian or Georgian is crucial in Georgia, and it seems that it is even more important in a professional context than for social life. Nine percent think that local languages are essential for personal and recreational activities, and 60 percent say that they are very important. Another 31 percent of the respondents state that some knowledge of Russian or Georgian is at least moderately important for living in Georgia. No respondent said that it was not very important or entirely unnecessary. For the professional context, 25 percent say that knowing Russian or Georgian is essential. Forty-seven percent think that knowing one of the local languages is very important, and 27 percent deem it moderately important. Only 2 percent think that Russian or Georgian proficiency is entirely unnecessary to pursue a professional career in Georgia.

Most respondents thought that without basic Russian or Georgian, performing the tasks of daily life in Georgia is rather difficult. Knowing elementary Russian and especially Georgian, however, makes it much easier to get by.

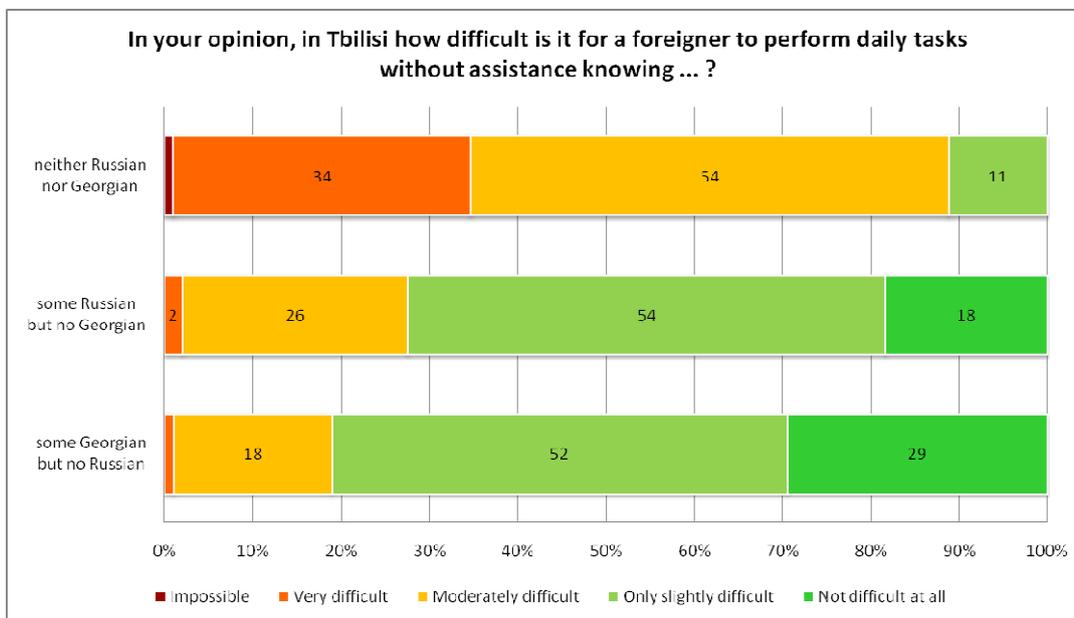


Figure 1: Daily life in Georgia and language abilities

Without Russian or Georgian skills, most agree, daily life in Georgia is difficult. One respondent thinks that it is impossible to get by without any knowledge of these two languages. About a third deem it at least very difficult (34 percent). Fifty-four percent think that it is moderately difficult to perform the tasks of daily life without any Russian or Georgian. About 11 percent of the respondents say that it is only slightly difficult, and no respondents said that it is not difficult at all.

According to the respondents, knowing basic Russian is very helpful when performing the tasks of daily life in Georgia. Eighteen percent think that basic Russian helps to an extent that daily life in Georgia is no longer difficult at all. Fifty-four percent say that it is only slightly difficult. Another

twenty-six percent say that with some Russian, it is still moderately difficult to get by in Georgia. Two percent say that it remains very difficult. No respondent thought that performing the tasks of daily life in Georgia is impossible for those who speak no Georgian, but some Russian.

Basic knowledge of Georgian was perceived to be even more helpful than Russian in daily life, and most respondents think that only some obstacles remain once Georgian basics are acquired. About a third (30 percent) say that for someone who knows some Georgian, there are no more difficulties in getting by in Georgia. Over half of the respondents say that daily life is only slightly difficult under these circumstances. Eighteen percent think that it is still moderately difficult. One respondent says that performing the tasks of daily life is very difficult, even with some Georgian skills.

Most respondents regularly communicate in languages other than English, and Georgian was generally perceived to be more useful than Russian for daily life in Georgia. Does the language learning patterns, and the respondents' achieved proficiencies, reflect this?

Closing the Language Gap

All of the respondents know either some Russian or Georgian, and three quarters have skills in both. About the same number of respondents say they have started learning Georgian (88 percent) or Russian (84 percent), but there are much fewer advanced Georgian than Russian speakers among them. This correlates with the amount of time invested in focused study of the respective language, which is on average much higher for those studying Russian than for the Georgian learners.

While about one third of the Russian learners fall in each of the proficiency categories – beginner, intermediate, advanced – only very few of the Georgian learners have attained the highest level. All of the respondents know either some Russian or Georgian, and 73 percent have at least a basic proficiency in both languages. Eighty-eight percent of the respondents have some skills in Georgian, and 84 percent know some Russian. To make comparisons easier, the respondents were grouped into three proficiency categories, according to their skills in each language:

- **Beginners** are those who have achieved at least an elementary proficiency in either spoken or read Georgian or Russian. Thirty-two percent of the Russian learners and 53 percent of those who are studying Georgian are on this level. Of all participants, 47 percent are beginners of Georgian, and 27 percent are beginners of Russian.
- Respondents qualified as **intermediate** learners of a language if they have at least a limited working proficiency in spoken or read Georgian or Russian. This group makes up 35 percent of all Russian learners and 42 percent of all Georgian learners. Twenty-nine percent of all respondents fall into the intermediate category when it comes to Russian language skills, and 37 percent of them have an intermediate knowledge of Georgian.

- The **advanced** group comprises those who speak or read the respective language at a superior professional proficiency level. While 33 percent of all Russian learners have attained this level, only 5 percent of the students of Georgian can say the same. Of the census population, 28 percent fall into the advanced category with regard to their Russian skills, and 4 percent master Georgian on the highest possible level.

People learning Russian have spent considerably more time on focused study of their language than those studying Georgian, and they are four times as likely to have invested 1,000 hours or more in acquiring their language skills.³ On average, the respondents say they logged 1,446 hours on either self-study or taught courses for Russian (median: 300 hours), compared with an average of 310 hours for those who study Georgian (median: 100 hours). At the top end the difference in investment is especially striking: forty percent of all Russian learners have studied for 1,000 hours or more, and only 9 percent of the Georgian learners say the same.

**How many HOURS in total would you say you have spent studying ... (either taught or focused self-study)?
(One week of intensive full-day study - in places like Indiana or Middlebury - counting as 30 hours.)**

		Georgian			Russian		
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	None	6	7.0	7.0	2	2.5	2.5
	Up to 50	21	24.4	31.4	13	16.3	18.8
	Up to 200	26	30.2	61.6	15	18.8	37.5
	Up to 1000	25	29.1	90.7	18	22.5	60.0
	More than 1000	8	9.3	100.0	32	40.0	100.0
	Total	86	100.0		80	100.0	
Missing	Native speaker	0			1		
	System	27			32		
	Total	27			33		
Total		113			113		

Table 1: Respondents' study efforts for Georgian and Russian

Even though Georgia's national language is Georgian, and it is thought to be more helpful in Georgian daily life, a majority of the respondents seem to have made a greater effort to learn Russian. Which are the factors that facilitate this decision?

³ These numbers are approximate. Due to a configuration error in the survey software, the respondents were not only able to enter numerals, but also strings in response to this question. For more detailed information on the conversion applied, please see the *Methodology* section in the Annex.

The Role of Russian and Georgian for Foreigners

The data indicate that differences in both supply and demand for language skills can explain the respondents' lower levels of proficiency in Georgian. On the supply side, many respondents had prior knowledge of Russian when they came to Georgia. Furthermore, Georgian might be harder to acquire, both in terms of language difficulty and the availability of opportunities to learn in a structured environment. With regard to the demand, it seems likely that Georgian is frequently chosen to improve social and everyday life in Georgia, whereas Russian is often seen as an asset in professional life, and is also valuable outside Georgia.

Acquiring Languages

A majority of the respondents had prior professional experiences in post-Soviet countries before coming to Georgia. Therefore, it is likely that many already had some Russian skills when they arrived, especially since there are numerous programs abroad that teach Russian, but relatively few that teach Georgian. Georgian also seems to be harder to learn than Russian, as learners of Georgian assessed their language skills on average lower than Russian speakers with a comparable amount of prior study.

Throughout the post-Soviet space, Russian is still widely used as a commercial and professional language, and 69 percent of the respondents had prior experiences of living in this region for professional reasons and for more than two weeks. Russia had been the main destination, with 49 percent of all respondents having been there. It is followed by Armenia and Azerbaijan (together 40 percent). Twenty-six percent had been to Central Asia, and 21 percent had experiences in Belarus, Moldova or Ukraine. The Baltic countries were a prior destination for 10 percent of the respondents. Since demand for Russian tends to be higher than for Georgian in the professional world, supply for Russian courses is also much more developed. The teaching of Russian has a long-standing tradition amongst Western universities, even outside linguistics classes, as it is important for a variety of disciplines. Georgian, however, is primarily taught in the context of linguistics or specific language courses. For example, according to the University of Minnesota, there are currently only three US universities (University of Chicago, Indiana University and Columbia University) that offer Georgian courses in the classroom.⁴

Moreover, once someone decides to learn Georgian and finds an appropriate learning environment, it becomes apparent that Georgian can be a difficult language to learn. According to the U.S. Department of State's language service, it is even more difficult than Russian. They classify both languages on the same difficulty level (the second highest), which includes languages that require in average 1,100 hours of class work to attain an intermediate proficiency. Georgian, however, is additionally marked as

⁴ See the University of Minnesota's database at <http://www.carla.umn.edu/lctl/db/?menu=006>. Accessed on April 13, 2010, search keyword: "Georgian".

more difficult than the other languages of this category. Thus, it is effectively placed between the second-highest and the highest difficulty level, which includes languages like Mandarin and Arabic.⁵

Overall, respondents who learn Georgian have less confidence in their language skills compared with those who have studied Russian for a comparable amount of time. While 9 percent of the Georgian learners have invested more than 1,000 hours, none was confident enough to claim an advanced proficiency. Instead, their responses place all of them into the intermediate category. Of those who have studied Russian for 1,000 hours or more, 66 percent claim an advanced proficiency, and a further 31 percent have achieved an intermediate level. One respondent with 1,000 hours or more of Russian studies says he is still on a beginner's level. Among those who have invested between 200 and 1,000 hours into their Georgian studies, 12 percent deem to have achieved an advanced proficiency. Again, those who have studied Russian for a comparable amount of time seem to be more confident in their skills, as 28 percent of them are in the highest category.

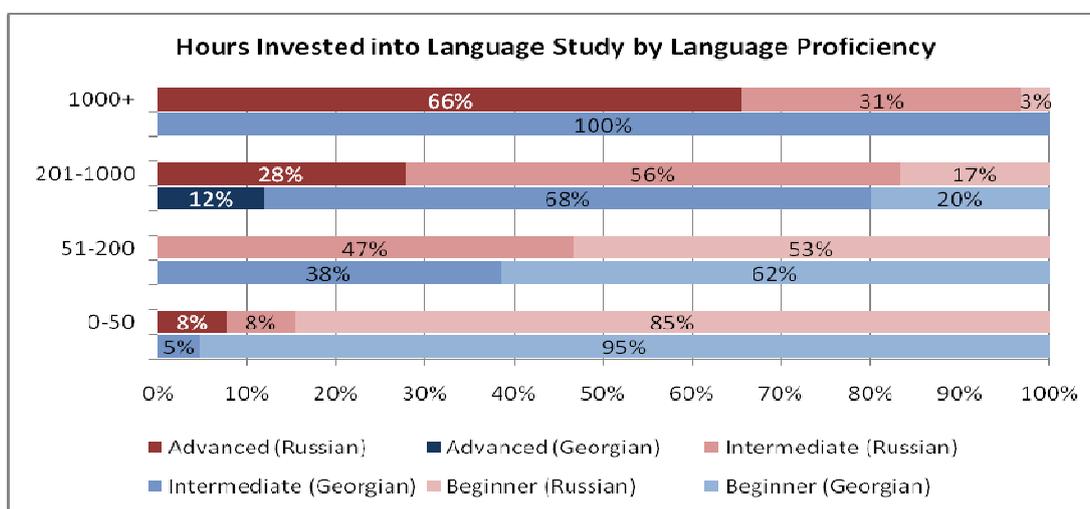


Figure 2: Hours invested into language study by language proficiency

While a high proficiency is rarely attained, some respondents were able to pick up basic Georgian without formal study. About 7 percent of all respondents knowing some Georgian state that they have not invested time into focused study. Learners of Russian arguably do not have equal possibilities to pick up their language in Georgia, and only 3 percent of them said the same.

Many respondents probably knew some Russian when they came to Georgia, and Georgian is more difficult to learn. So what are some of the incentives for studying Georgian nonetheless?

⁵ See the Foreign Service Institute's classification at <http://web.archive.org/web/20071014005901/http://www.nvtc.gov/lotw/months/november/learningExpectations.html>. (Accessed on April 15, 2010).

Incentives for Language Learning

According to the data, Georgian is often chosen to facilitate the daily life in Georgia, and Russian is more frequently seen as a professional asset. While achieving an advanced proficiency for professional and personal use is a goal more common among the Russian learners, those studying Georgian are often satisfied with mastering informal conversations, or have no specific long-term goals at all. Family ties also play a role, as respondents with a Georgian partner have invested more time in their study, have higher ambitions and, overall, a slightly higher level of proficiency. In addition, presumably because they serve in different domains, knowing one language did not prevent respondents from learning the other one as well.

Many of the Georgian learners had no long-term goals with regard to their abilities, or said that mastering informal conversations would be sufficient, whereas many Russian learners intended to achieve higher levels of proficiency. Of those who are learning Georgian, 36 percent said they intend to achieve near-native or an advanced proficiency. Sixty-one percent of the Russian learners said the same. Developing their skills for use in their personal life seemed to be more common among those studying Georgian: being able to have regular informal conversations in public and with friends, co-workers or family was the main goal for 27 percent of the Georgian learners and 17 percent of those studying Russian. A full 30 percent of those learning Georgian said that they have no long-term goals with their language ability, while only 11 percent of the Russian learners said the same.

The data show that respondents with exceptionally strong social ties to Georgia, as indicated by the presence of a Georgian significant other, tend to be more ambitious with regard to their Georgian-language skills. Twenty-five percent of the respondents actually had a Georgian significant other at the time of the study. Thirty-eight percent of them said that they intended to gain an advanced or near-native proficiency in Georgian, compared with 28 percent of those without such a partner. Regular informal conversations were the goal for 33 percent of all those respondents with a Georgian significant other, and for 22 percent of those without one. About 29 percent of those with a Georgian partner either have no long-term goal for their Georgian-language ability or do not intend to engage in more than the occasional interaction in shops and public venues. Amongst those who do not have a Georgian significant other, 50 percent said the same.

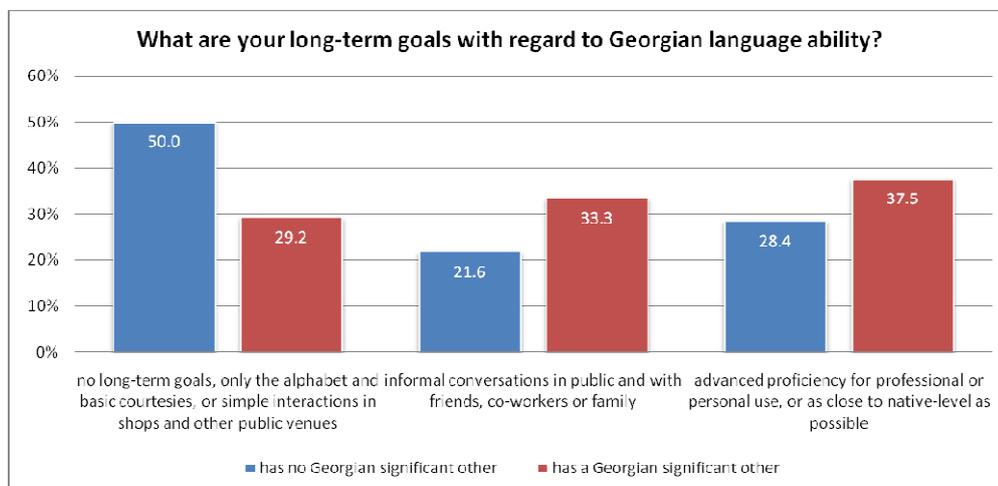


Figure 3: Long-term goals with Georgian abilities by presence of a Georgian significant other

Those with a Georgian partner had also invested more time in their focused language study than other respondents. On average, they had studied Georgian for about 374 hours, compared to 288 hours for those without a Georgian significant other (median: 100 hours for both groups). They were three times as likely to have invested more than 1,000 hours in their language skills (18 percent compared to 6 percent). About 5 percent of those with a Georgian significant other, and 8 percent of those have not engaged in formal study of the language.

The overall higher effort in language learning among those with a Georgian partner compared with the others correlates to a slightly higher proficiency in Georgian. Regarding advanced speakers, both groups (those with Georgian partners and those without) were about the same, with 4 percent falling into this category. About 42 percent of those with a Georgian partner had an intermediate proficiency, compared with 35 percent in the other group. Respondents with at least a beginner's level of Georgian were also slightly more common among those with a Georgian partner, with 50 percent compared with 47 percent of those without one. Furthermore, only 4 percent of those with a Georgian partner had no Georgian skills at all, whereas of those without such a partner, 14 percent said the same.

As there seem to be different incentives for learning Russian or Georgian, knowing either language generally did not prevent the respondents from learning the other one as well. The original assumption had been that some knowledge of Russian would practically eliminate the necessity and therefore the incentives for learning Georgian. Contrary to these expectations, 87 percent of those knowing some Russian had also started learning Georgian. Thirty-five percent of those respondents with intermediate or better Russian skills also had intermediate or better proficiency in Georgian. Even more (49 percent) of the respondents with intermediate or better Georgian spoke Russian on a comparable level.

Russian abilities, categorized * Georgian abilities, categorized - Crosstabulation

			Georgian abilities, categorized			Total
			No knowledge	Beginner	Intermediate or better	
Russian abilities, categorized	No knowledge	Count	1	6	9	16
		% within Russian abilities	6.3%	37.5%	56.3%	100.0%
		% within Georgian abilities	8.3%	12.8%	22.0%	16.0%
	Beginner	Count	2	13	12	27
		% within Russian abilities	7.4%	48.1%	44.4%	100.0%
		% within Georgian abilities	16.7%	27.7%	29.3%	27.0%
	Intermediate or better	Count	9	28	20	57
		% within Russian abilities	15.8%	49.1%	35.1%	100.0%
		% within Georgian abilities	75.0%	59.6%	48.8%	57.0%
Total	Count	12	47	41	100	
	% within Russian abilities	12.0%	47.0%	41.0%	100.0%	
	% within Georgian abilities	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Table 2: Russian abilities by Georgian abilities

Conclusion

The data indicates that for a foreigner in Georgia, there are distinct reasons to learn either Georgian or Russian. The overwhelming majority of respondents agreed that knowledge of one of these languages helps one get by in daily life in Georgia. However, it also became apparent that Russian skills alone are rarely perceived to be sufficient. Apart from being more useful in everyday situations, Georgian seems to be especially important for social and family life. Russian, on the other hand, seems to be the better choice for professionals. Two languages that serve in two different domains – this could explain why 87 percent of the respondents who know Russian still attempted to learn Georgian.

This effort was preliminary research, conducted at short notice as an add-on to another project. There is a rich research field here that could become a comprehensive topic for dedicated researchers or groups, including research students. This research would have significant practical application, both for learners to understand what learning Georgian entails, and for teachers, to better target their efforts. Among questions to be investigated is that of obstacles to learning Georgian – given how highly it is valued, it may be that the supply of teaching right now is not sufficiently flexible to accommodate the demands of learners with complex schedules. Another fruitful field of inquiry, linked to obstacles, is at what specific point students give up actively studying Georgian. Understanding that point better might help learners navigate across and over it. However, these are just some of the potential topics to be explored, since in learning Georgian there are a range of cultural and sociological themes as well.

Annex

Methodology

The population of this census was recruited from the popular, long-running, English-language mailing list “megobrebs” for expatriates who either lived or still live in Georgia, mostly in Tbilisi. Most of the people on this list have deliberately chosen to stay in Georgia, or engaged with Georgia in one way or another, which is reflected by their self-selection for the census. This particular research design has some constraints, but can also provide special insights:

- The mailing list is in English and, therefore, the majority of its participants are either native English speakers or at least expatriates with a strong command of this language. Consequently, the sample does not represent the whole expatriate community in Georgia but only an Anglophone selection.
- People on the mailing list are not necessarily still in Georgia, nor did they in each case stay there for a prolonged time. Instead, the voluntary membership in the list and self-selection for participation in our research is a strong indicator of some kind of personal relationship to the country. Most of the participants, however, have indeed been to Georgia for a long period of time.
- By selecting mainly those expatriates who deliberately chose to stay linked to Georgia, we focus on a special group of people. They tend to have motivation-driven attitudes toward the issue of language learning (as opposed to short-term instrumental attitudes of those on rotating posts), and show different patterns with regard to factors like age and profession.

The link to the questionnaire was sent to 224 e-mail addresses taken from the “megobrebs” mailing list. One hundred twenty-four people, 55 percent of the 224 addressees, viewed the online questionnaire. Two reminders were sent, and in total, 104 individuals started and 90 completed it, accounting for a response rate of 40.2 percent for completed questionnaires. (As some e-mail accounts no longer were active, the real response rate was a little higher.) A log-in process requiring identification with a valid e-mail address helped to avoid double-entries. Given that the survey asked about attitudes to the August 2008 conflict, participation was the criterion for self-selection into the pool of people that feel engaged on Georgian issues.

Converting Prose into Numbers

Due to a configuration error, the participants were able to enter text instead of numerical values in response to the questions on how many hours of focused study they had spent on their Russian and Georgian skills. While some strings were easily converted into numerical values, others had to be estimated.

The following rules have been applied when converting strings to numbers:

- Where a minimum was entered ("1000+"), the value plus one-third was taken ("1333") – 11 instances
- Where “thousands” was entered, a numerical approximation was calculated, based on the minimal value semantically associated with the expression plus one-third (“thousands” becomes “2000+” becomes “2667”) – 2 instances
- One year was calculated as 51 weeks times 6 hours – 3 instances
- Where a range was entered ("30-50"), the average was taken ("40") – 2 instances
- One respondent with high proficiency in Russian entered “many”, the same calculation as for “thousands” was applied – 1 instance

The Census Population

The respondents are predominantly male (57 percent) and tend to be rather young: 78 percent are in between 20 and 39 years of age. Only 21 percent are older than 40 years. Eighty-nine percent said that English is their first or native language. The second sizable language group consisted of native German speakers (5 percent). Dutch, Danish, French or Russian speakers, and people with one of the Scandinavian languages as their native tongue, accounted for the remaining 7 percent.

Although only about half of the respondents gave information about their professional background, the data shows that the respondents work in a great variety of sectors. Apparently, the answer options were not sufficiently exhaustive, as 44 percent of the respondents did not indicate that they worked in one of the sectors enumerated. Of those who did, the largest group consisted of students, who made up 17 percent of the total number of respondents. They were followed by those working in international, non-governmental or non-profit organizations (14 percent). Thirteen percent said that they are researchers, and 9 percent identify themselves as teachers. The smallest groups were people affiliated with government or diplomatic service (5 percent) and businessmen (4 percent). Consultancy, journalism, medical and legal services were other sectors mentioned by the respondents. Forty-four percent gave no information about their professional background.

Those respondents who identify themselves as students are more proficient and more ambitious than the rest with regard to language learning in Georgia. Students generally have a much higher proficiency in Georgian, and a slightly lower Russian proficiency (see Figure 5: Student hours of focused language study). They have invested more time both in their Russian and Georgian language studies (see Figure 5). Sixty-five percent of the students aim for advanced or near-native proficiency in Georgian, while only 24 percent of those who are not students say the same. For Russian, the

difference is lower: 63 percent of the students want to master this language at advanced or near-native levels, compared with 49 percent of the rest.

Figure 4: Student overall language abilities

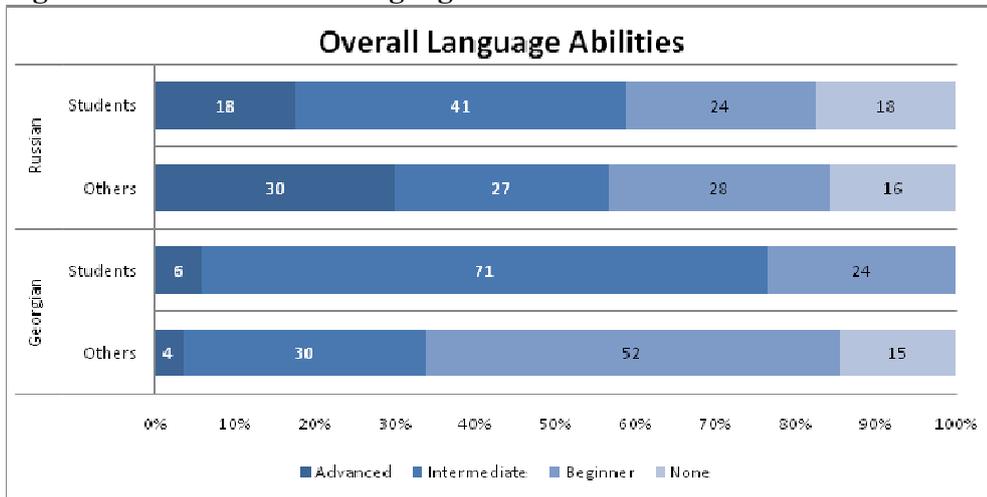
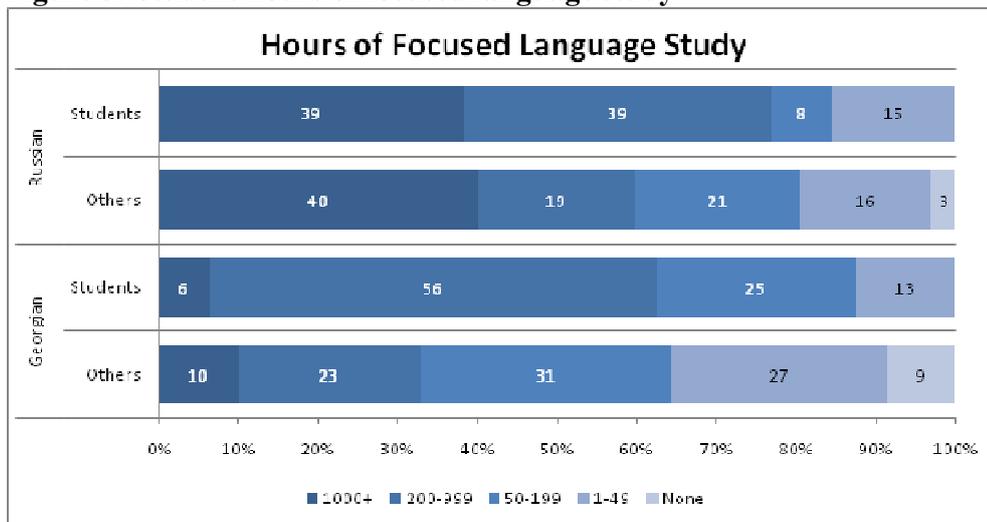


Figure 5: Student hours of focused language study



While in Georgia, the respondents' engaged in a variety of full-time activities, with the most mentioned being NGO work, research and education were the most mentioned. Forty-three percent said that they worked in a non-profit, international or non-governmental organization, while 31 percent were engaged in research. Education was also a major field of activity, with 19 percent of the respondents teaching in Georgia and 13 percent studying there. The smallest groups were journalists

(11 percent), those engaged in diplomatic or government missions (9 percent), doing business (4 percent), or tourism and sport (4 percent). Personal affairs and volunteering were mentioned by less than 2 percent of the respondents. Five percent did not answer the question on their full-time activity while being in Georgia.

At the time of the census, around 43 percent of the respondents were living in Georgia. Thirty-seven percent had moved to North America, and 15 percent were living in the European Union. Four percent of the replies came from non-EU Eastern Europe or CIS countries (without Georgia), and two percent of the respondents were living in other countries.

Many respondents had spent a longer time in Georgia, as two-thirds of them had an experience of more than one year there. Almost a third (32 percent) had lived in Georgia for more than three years. Another 36 percent had been there between one and three years. Respondents who had stayed in Georgia between seven and twelve months accounted for 17 percent of the responses, and those who only visited Georgia for up to six months made up another 17 percent.

Experimental Question and Further Research

In an experimental question, the respondents were asked for how much money they would be ready to sell their language abilities. This “economic value” attached to the respective language skills varied greatly across and within proficiency groups, but those who had achieved an advanced level of Georgian valued their skill overall much higher than their peers with an equivalent proficiency in Russian. The mean for respondents with advanced Georgian skills was 1,836,667 USD (median: 500,000 USD). In the Russian advanced group, it was considerably lower (231,619 USD, median: 70,000 USD). On the intermediate level, the difference was less pronounced, with Georgian scholars averaging at about 176,935 USD (median: 10,000), and Russian learners at 257,394 USD (median: 2,750 USD). In the beginner group, language skills in Georgian were once again higher valued, with the mean at 1.857 USD (median: 100 USD) compared to 827 USD (median: 100 USD) for Russian. A total of 7 Georgian learners said that they would not exchange their language abilities for money, and 5 Russian learners said the same.

Please note that the data on this question was at times inconsistent, and many respondents chose to enter extremely low or extremely high numbers. In order to calculate meaningful means, it was decided to cut two outliers: a Georgian intermediate speaker who valued his language skills at 10 million USD, and one Russian intermediate speaker, who said he would sell his abilities at 1 billion USD.

Possible hypotheses:

- The higher averages among the Georgian speakers indicate a higher emotional attachment to the language skills, which is very difficult to measure in monetary terms.

- The higher averages among the Georgian speakers indicate a higher economic value of the language skills, presumably because there are so few others who can field such skills.
- The categories of Georgian language ability represent real-life proficiencies that differ from the Russian ones: the Georgian speakers are generally more advanced than their Russian peers in the same group. This could be due to extensive everyday training as opposed to the effort of focused, formal studies. Furthermore, the ubiquitous comparison to native speakers in Georgia might lead to an underestimation of language proficiency, compared to Russian speakers who often compare their abilities with other non-native speakers.

NEW GEOPOLITICS OF THE SOUTH CAUCASUS

COMMENTARY BY

Fareed Shafee*

Abstract

The article examines new trends and development in the South Caucasus. The author identifies five factors which affect the foreign policy of regional countries as well as regional powers. These factors are the Georgian-Russian war of 2008, the US-Russian “reset”, the global financial crisis, the political transformation in the countries which have undergone “color revolutions”, and the Armenian-Turkish rapprochement. The author believes that the change in the geopolitical layout of the region will turn the countries of the South Caucasus further from the West. At the same time, they are not going to be fully embraced by Russia. A balancing act between the US, EU and Russia will be most likely their policy choice.

Keywords: *South Caucasus, geopolitics, US, Russia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine*

Introduction

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the South Caucasus region was opened up for the global market as well as competition among global powers. The dominance of Russia which had lasted for 200 years was questioned by new actors, primarily the United States, Turkey and Iran. The South Caucasus, with its vital links to the Black Sea, Central Asia and Middle East, and its rich natural resources (primarily oil and gas in the Caspian Sea) became a complex battleground aggravated by internal problems such as the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan due to territorial claims of the former with regard to the latter’s Nagorno-Karabakh region.

While the geopolitical conditions of the 1990s were defined internally by ethnic conflicts, the creation of statehood, and the transition from communism to a market economy, external factors were connected with the arrival of the new powers – the US, EU, Turkey, Iran on one side, and efforts by Russia to maintain control on the other. A wave of “colour revolutions” in 2003-2005 further changed the political landscape of the regional states and increased the possibility of ending Russian influence in post-Soviet space. However, despite losing its influence in the 1990s, Russia, due largely to enormous profits from oil, gained the momentum to strengthen its position by 2008.

New Geopolitical Factors

The last three years have brought forth a new set of conditions which is likely to affect the states of the region and their foreign policy agenda. Domestically the states of the region continued to suffer from ethnic conflicts, but they managed to build viable statehood, and make progress on market reforms with

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Azerbaijan as the leading economic power. However, internationally, five major developments have been reshaping the region:

- Georgian-Russian War, 2008
- US-Russian Reset, 2009
- Global Financial Crisis, 2009
- Decolourization of Colour Revolutions, 2010
- Armenian-Turkish Rapprochement and its impact on Azerbaijan-Turkey and Azerbaijan-US relations, 2009-2010

The Georgian-Russian War had adverse effects on the image of the West in the region. The verbal support from the US, EU and NATO was not enough to counter the Russian offensive. Russia showed assertively that it would resort to force rather than yield its influence in the South Caucasus. Accordingly, attempting to secure NATO membership by regional countries has posed a direct threat to their sovereignty and territorial integrity. Post-Soviet countries realized that Russia is still a mighty power, and the West is not willing to confront her for the sake of small post-Soviet states.

Further, *the US-Russian “reset”* declared by the Obama administration sent a clear message that relations with Russia are much more significant for the American administration and its Western allies than relations with other former communist states. However, many experts might not agree with that conclusion as they point out that the West continues to boost its relations with post-Soviet countries through the EU’s new Eastern Partnership initiative, NATO’s Partnership for Peace program and other political and economic channels, the treatment of US allies like Azerbaijan and Georgia in regards to the April 2010 Washington Nuclear Security Summit speaks for itself.

On the other side, Russia’s bold foreign policy in its so-called “near abroad”, in various political and economic manifestations, was seriously damaged by the *global financial crisis*. The Russian economy endured great losses which affected its ability to sponsor its allies or show its influence as an economic power. Thus, the former Soviet countries appreciated the importance of economic relations with the West and the need for reform of their economies. Exclusive reliance on Moscow proved to be shaky. Even the new president of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovich, a staunch Russian ally, paid his first foreign visit to Brussels, exhibiting the desire of the new Ukrainian leadership to move closer to the West in terms of its economic preferences.

The victory of Yanukovich in the latest elections in Ukraine changed the colour of the 2004 “Orange Revolution” which brought his predecessor, Viktor Yushchenko, to power. A similar development took place in Kyrgyzstan, which has recently seen the overthrow of the victor of the “Tulip Revolution”, Kurmanbek Bakiyev. Though it would be an overstatement to assert the failure of the “colour revolutions” - since the elections in Ukraine manifested the democratic changes in the country - nevertheless, we can speak about, at least, the *decolourization or change of colour of past revolutions*. The latest trend shows that post-Soviet countries cannot be reformed quickly, and a change is not simply about the removal of one leader for the sake of another. The process of democracy requires a profound transformation of all layers of society, the gradual modification of political and social institutions, and comes with generational shifts.

Last, but not least, the South Caucasus is knotted in a web of territorial, ethnic and identity conflicts, which have to be dealt in a complex manner. These problems have a new buzz word - protocols. The

desire of the Obama administration to disconnect the *Turkish-Armenian rapprochement* from the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict has already damaged the relations between Azerbaijan and the US and affected Azerbaijani-Turkish relations, and might have an effect on energy projects between Azerbaijan and the West. The disappointment in Azerbaijan regarding the US policy on the Turkish-Armenian protocol is not only about the prospect of the resolution of the conflict with Armenia – it is also about disillusionment with Western democracy where powerful lobbies like the Armenian Diaspora seriously affect the countries' decision making.

Moreover, it is about a widening gap between Christians and Muslims, as almost every Western news agency in its description of the Armenian-Azerbaijani-Turkish conflicts emphasizes the religious affiliation of the relevant ethnic groups. However, these conflicts have no religious connotations.

For two decades Azerbaijan has been conducting a pro-Western foreign policy both politically and economically. Though subjected to criticism on human rights, the country's leadership declares that it envisions a better future but through gradual reformation and improving economic well being, rejecting foreign recipes and revolutions.

Over the last decade the country has manifested more balancing acts by promoting better relations with its immediate neighbours, first of all, with Russia and Iran. Azerbaijan has concluded important security and energy agreements with these countries. However, both countries – Russia and Iran - have close links with Armenia which outweigh their relations with Azerbaijan. It is no accident that during a trip to the occupied Azerbaijani territories in April 2010, the new Russian mediator for the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict Igor Popov discussed with Armenian separatists the possibility of constructing of a new airport in Nagorno-Karabakh. The historical Russian-Armenian alliance will not be affected by Russia's renewed interest in Azerbaijan.

Conclusion

A number of the above-mentioned factors and developments make a balanced foreign policy a viable choice for regional states. The experience of post-Soviet countries proved that blatant pro-Western or anti-Russian stances or vice versa (as the Serbian experience taught us) does not produce positive results. This is a new reality of the geopolitics of the South Caucasus.

“DRAMATIC CHANGES IN THE POLITICAL ORDER ARE TYPICALLY NOT THE PROVINCE OF DEMOCRACIES”

Interview with Dr. Julie A. George*

Conducted by Jesse Tatum, Associate Editor of CRIA

CRIA: *Can you summarize the main findings from your book, *The Politics of Ethnic Separatism in Russia and Georgia (2010)*?*



George: My book examines separatist politics, looking for explanations for the outbreak of conflict in some post-Soviet autonomous republics and oblasts and not others. It also examines the waxing and waning conditions of conflicts over time, trying to nudge out similarities and differences in experiences to explain stability or absence of stability. So it looked at the politics of Chechnya, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia and their respective relationships with the Russia and Georgia from 1990-2008. (It actually looked at a broader swath of cases to include non-conflictual republics: Achara, Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Ingushetia, and Dagestan.) I'm particularly interested in the effects of state weakness and regional wealth on bargaining over autonomy. I started with the argument that state weakness in both Russia and Georgia after the Soviet collapsed created conditions for regional actors – particularly in

the so-called ethnic republics – for bargaining for greater position in the new political environment. In Georgia, this enhanced bargaining position was true for Achara as well as South Ossetia and Abkhazia, even though Achara might not be construed as an "ethnic" region.

I found further that, in part because of the devastation of the Georgian state after the civil war, the bargaining infrastructure between region and center was quite tenuous and therefore was more likely to rest on interpersonal ties and mutually beneficial payoffs of critical actors. While Russia had an elaborated and relatively institutionalized administrative structure for managing ties between region and center, the Georgian structure was much more vulnerable and personalized. So Aslan Abashidze in Achara could use the implication of separatism to his advantage to secure a privileged position

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for Achara as a zone for Georgian Muslims. This sort of politics was quite common throughout the former Soviet Union and is also common in many ethnically diverse democratizing states. In Georgia, autonomy politics got blended with state building and cooptive structures as Shevardnadze sought to stabilize power. Georgia was too weak to create formal institutions to govern those issues, so Shevardnadze used informal means. In Achara, this meant tax breaks and loss of customs revenue for the central government. In South Ossetia, it meant the acceptance of a smuggling zone from Russia into Gori. So, in a way, cooptation – some would say in some cases, corruption, helped construct stability – albeit a short-term and fragile one. But what also happened – in both Russia and Georgia – is that the benefit of these co-optive structures created incentives NOT to reform the system. So the creation of formal institutions with enforcement mechanisms to adjust relationships between center and periphery either never developed or did so in a lopsided way. This weak process was due not only to state weakness but also to disinterest by politically important parties.

The book also looks at how the politics of state-building alters these informal and personalized structures. The presidencies of both Vladimir Putin and Mikheil Saakashvili brought about a renewed vigor in creating formal institutions and attention to resolving territorial conflicts. Their policies and leadership styles have clear differences, but they also have similarities. The outcomes of the policies of both have contributed to a resurgence of violence in Chechnya (Putin) and South Ossetia and Abkhazia (Saakashvili). I say “contributed to”, because those conflicts and their resurgence are due to external pressures as well as internal ones. But individualized bargains like the one that existed between Shevardnadze and Abashidze would have had to be revisited with any change of presidential power in Georgia. Once Shevardnadze resigned and it was clear that Saakashvili would succeed him, few were surprised by Abashidze's exodus to Moscow. An explicit promise of Saakashvili's message during and after the Rose Revolution was that anti-corruption and state-building would attract South Ossetia and Abkhazia back to Georgia; yet the anti-corruption campaign and state-building in Georgia helped destabilize conditions between Tbilisi and Tskhinval(i) and Sukhum(i).

CRIA: In an article (2008) you discussed the negative aspects of President Saakashvili's focus on (i) anti-corruption campaigns and (ii) his choice to strengthen the central state at the expense of a more federal-style devolution of power to regional-local levels. Do you see any positive effects as well, or any steps the president should take in the near future?

George: Lately, my focus has been the negative consequences of state policies that are popularly considered beneficial. The West and its allies often applaud and encourage policies of anti-corruption and democratization, but often ignore or disregard some negative outcomes of the politics that come in the short term. For example, the anti-corruption in Georgia had some immediate positive and negative outcomes. For the positive, the traffic police force actually began earning meaningful salaries. The job was no longer a way for someone to collect bribes, but rather to enforce the law. Customs checks were put into place and the government began to collect the millions that they had lost through smuggling and contraband. On the negative side, those living in the border areas who had operated in that illicit but accepted economy lost their livelihoods, which led to some unrest. Georgia's geography meant that this destabilization would be likely where there are clusters of ethnic minorities.

My message in writing is not that anti-corruption programs are not beneficial, but that policy makers should anticipate the destabilization and create innovative programs to address the population's needs, to open doors even as they close others. Moreover, I think that Western countries should be careful and pragmatic in their policy stances toward countries like Georgia because societies that follow the path

that the West encourages will doubtless meet obstacles that they did not expect and that will challenge the further implementation of the long-term programs.

The story of centralization and devolution, particularly for local governance, has been a nuanced one under Saakashvili. On the one hand, the local government legislation did streamline bureaucracies that were riddled with nepotism, redundancy, and corruption. But in the process of streamlining, the government ended the *temi* system, the lowest layer of governance that served single villages or village clusters. Jonathan Wheatley has argued that the *temi* were the most decentralized administrative form in Georgia and also the most meaningfully representative and accountable. So while the 2005 Local Governance law promised devolved power, it actually eradicated the most localized administration in favor of the more political laden *sakrebulo*s [local councils] and *gamgeobas* [local mayors]. On the other hand, the local governance reform also brought about more meaningful power to local governments: taxation rights and oversight over local budgets. This certainly was not the case previously.

CRIA: On local governance, can you describe the roles of the *gamgebeli* (local mayor, or chief executive) and the *rtsmunebuli* (regional governor, or chairperson) in terms of increasing or limiting citizen participation?

George: The influence and position of the *gamgebeli* and the *rtsmunebuli* vary with the region and the town in which they operate. Moreover, different areas of Georgia are governed quite differently than others. Both positions are appointed, although the *rtsmunebulis* owe their allegiance to the central government (being presidentially appointed), while the *gamgebelis* operate at the behest of the local *sakrebulo*s. So there is some question of accountability, although notably neither of these positions are directly accountable to a voting population (although there is talk of having locally elected *gamgebelis* in addition to Tbilisi). And currently, all of the local governments in Georgia are dominated by the ruling party, which will heighten the president's influence over the *gamgebelis*, even though he (arguably) does not directly select them.

What this means in terms of citizen participation: There's participation and then there's *participation*. What I mean by that: there will be pressure on local leaders to bring out voting numbers during election time, but that local leaders need not dominate all participation in the locality. Given the ruling party dominance at the local level, the electoral mobilization will be robust but also partisan toward the UNM. Some opposition parties have regional strongholds that can change this up a bit, for example the Labor party in Dusheti and the Republicans in Achara, but this strength has not translated into large numbers of actual seats in local *sakrebulo*s.

Other sorts of participation besides voting are more important for increasing accountability of political leaders to the population. Such activity is difficult to muster at the elite level, and it is most effective and unencumbered if it happens not at the behest of the local government actors, but because of civil society at the ground level.

Much hinges on the access of opposition parties. The UNM (United National Movement) has an interest in party dominance in order to secure its position as a winning political party. Other parties have had some traction in the regions, but have not been able to build enough of a constituency support. This might be due to the dominance of the UNM folks (maybe because of a legitimate constituency, although there have also been instances of coercion), but also might be due to a broader gap between

political party leadership and the local populations. Some political parties are very much oriented around personalities based in Tbilisi and do not build comprehensive regional bases. Others are unable to, lacking funds and access. But the lack of winning opposition parties means that the local and regional representatives are going to be more oriented toward the UNM – which will stifle party competition and perhaps citizen participation outside of the ballot box.

CRIA: *Can you summarize the current standing of the minorities in Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli vis-à-vis the central government, especially concerning political rights at local and national levels? What kind of roles do Yerevan and Baku play with regard to these regions in Georgia?*

George: There are multiple layers of relationship between the government and the Armenians in Javakheti and the Azerbaijanis in Kvemo Kartli. One is legislative. Another is executive. There are also inter-elite ties that are not transparent and that are difficult to measure accurately.

In terms of the legislature, the number of ethnic minorities in the Georgian parliament has declined from 1992 to 2010. However, where the representation used to be somewhat diversified (Russians, Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Ossetians), all are now either Azerbaijani or Armenian. This representation is not proportional to the 7 percent and 6 percent that those groups have, respectively, in the Georgian population. What that means is that while minority representation has declined in Georgia, that representation has flattened to two particular groups. This emphasis on Armenian and Azerbaijani interests could increase the standing of those groups, but perhaps to the detriment of others.

There have been complaints from some civil society groups, however, about the minority representatives in the legislatures. The criticism is that those minorities elected (all from the ruling party in the 2008 elections) rarely attend sessions and almost never speak. So while there might technically be minority representatives, the amount of minority *representation* that enters into the public policy dialogue at the legislative seems negligible. (The civil society actors who raised these concerns speculated that linguistic difficulties might contribute to the problems here.)

At the executive level, though, the Ministry of Civil Reintegration has added administrative offices in both Kvemo Kartli and Samkhe-Javakheti, staffed by ethnic Azerbaijanis and Armenians. Interestingly, these officials are impressively proficient linguistically, speaking their native languages as well as Georgian, Russian, and often English. This executive action increases the linkages between the central government and the minority areas; it also centralizes that relationship.

There is also a multilayered international interest in these two regions, which will influence Georgian policy. One is from the Armenia and Azerbaijan themselves, and also from Western states and international NGO's. In terms of Azerbaijan and Armenia, I think that both countries have adjusted their foreign policies to pursue interests vis-à-vis Saakashvili. The Armenian policy must be nimble – their trade interests need the Georgian border with Russia. They are allied with Russia, but also rely on Georgia. Interestingly, whatever support for Javakheti separatist groups that existed in the 1990s seems to have waned. Azerbaijan's policy was once quite overt, with suggestions for voting alternatives for Georgia's Azerbaijani community. I understand that policy has been less pronounced in recent elections. In terms of the West, it seems the international community has discovered these areas, particularly Javakheti. The U.S.-funded Millennium Challenge has devoted its only regional-specific program to Javakheti.

CRIA: Do you think the May 2010 mayoral elections in Tbilisi will signal any significant change in the political order?

George: Contested elections are important for transitioning states. I think the May 2010 elections will tell us a great deal about the future trajectory of Irakli Alasnia, whether he wins or not. I think they will tell us a great deal about Georgia and its electoral system, particularly if they are held fairly and openly.

As to bringing about "significant change in the political order," I have a difficult time with this question. Dramatic changes in political order are typically not the province of democracies. By design, democracies bring incremental change. Georgia is a country that has experienced periods of incredible upheaval, followed by stagnation/stability, followed by upheaval. Events like the Rose Revolution, the November 2007 crackdown, and the 2008 war draw attention and scrutiny. I have some optimism about Georgian democracy: the population seems to prefer elections as a mechanism of choosing leaders and holding them accountable. I think that the tradition of electoral politics is gelling in Georgia, and that is an incremental development that few remark upon. But the conduct of campaigning, the role of civil society, popular participation – these are things to watch as well. I think the campaign and election-day conduct will speak much more about the political order than the outcome will.

BOOK REVIEW

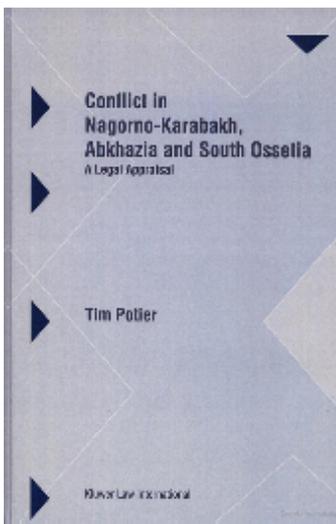
CONFLICT IN NAGORNO-KARABAKH, ABKHAZIA AND SOUTH OSSETIA

A LEGAL APPRAISAL

BY TIM POTIER

(The Hague; Boston: Kluwer Law International, 2001, pp. 314, ISBN: 90-411-1477-7, € 102)

*Review by Lala Jumayeva**



The book under review was the author's dissertation paper submitted in 1998 and later published as a book in 2001. In order to make it more appropriate for publishing, Potier improved it by adding a one-page preface and a short additional final section under the heading "Since submission", which covers the period September 1, 1998, to April, 30, 2000. Some syntax and grammar corrections have also been made. The book, therefore, consists of a preface, an introduction, thirteen chapters, a conclusion and a final addition.

The book presents a legal analysis of the conflicts in the South Caucasus region by focusing on the future constitutional status of the three conflicts in the region: Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan, Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia.

Through the whole book, Potier discusses the international law and constitutional law dichotomy, where he believes that international law plays a significant role in conflict resolution process. He emphasizes, however, that this role should not be limited to constitutional law. He discusses how constitutional law constitutes a useful mechanism for conflict settlement within the framework of autonomy and, furthermore, argues that autonomy can assist enormously in the settlement of the "three".¹

The research question reflects on how constitutional settlement in Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and South Ossetia can be reached. This issue is mainly discussed in chapters eight and nine; thus, I would argue, they are the most important parts of the book. In these chapters he gives his detailed recommendations for a constitutional settlement in Azerbaijan and Georgia and he evaluates his ideas

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¹ The author refers to the three conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and the South Ossetia as the 'Three'.

on those recommendations.

Potier's suggestions, based on his main findings, do not reflect the interests and demands of the parties in the "three", and while looking at the current status of these conflicts, we can conclude that they have failed, even though his research at that time intended to provide "advice" for real world policy-makers. For example, Potier suggests the Azerbaijani government to concede the Lachin corridor to the "Nagorno-Karabakh Republic", which has not even been recognized by Azerbaijan. Further, he offers the conflict parties to solve the dispute by granting autonomy to Nagorno-Karabakh that is unacceptable to Armenia that demands independence for the "Nagorno-Karabakh Republic".

Another example is a suggestion to establish a United Republic of Georgia that will consist of four Republics and two Regions, which means, literally, the division of Georgia into small pieces, which the Georgian Government would deem unacceptable. In addition, the author himself accepts that those recommendations have no chance of being implemented, and later he stresses that the main function of the recommendations is to inspire debate and discussion on conflict resolution in the region.

Potier draws attention to the three concepts within international law: the concept of self-determination, the concept of autonomy and the concept of minority. He dedicates three chapters of his book to the aforementioned concepts in which he tries to examine them. He argues that self-determination as a norm of international law has a vague and imprecise content. Potier does not define the concept of self-determination. He just satisfies the reader's curiosity by referring to the four points from the UN Charter, which do not give a precise definition of the concept, and emphasizes that self-determination has proved to be impossible to define.

Potier refers to the "forgotten" autonomy aspect that he considers as one of the "many faces of self-determination". Dissatisfied with the definition of the autonomy concept, Potier gives his own definition: "the means whereby an authority, subject to another superior authority, has the opportunity to determine, separately from that authority, specific functions entrusted upon it by that authority, for the general welfare of those to whom it is responsible"². Later, Potier argues that the international community has also failed to agree on a standard definition of the concept of minority.

The noteworthy point is that while he is trying to define all of these concepts, within the context of concepts, he is trying to connect the concept definition or debates around those concepts' formation with real cases, in other words he relates the theory/concepts to the case study of the "Three".

The author is carrying out a qualitative, empirical research that is based on an observable process and engages in a real-world comparison. One of the weaknesses of the book, which I consider to be an important flaw, is that Potier, even though he is taking a legalistic approach, does not outline the theory, which the research is based on.

Vennesson refers to Bennett and stresses that case studies are used by a researcher for developing and evaluating theories, for formulating hypothesis or for explaining some certain phenomena by

² Tim Potier, *Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and South Ossetia: A Legal Appraisal* (The Hague; Boston: Kluwer Law International, 2001), 54.

applying theories and causal mechanisms.³ While comparing three conflict cases and focusing on their constitutional settlement, Potier does not explain the reason why he chose these three specific conflicts. The author does not develop any theory, does not explain any particular phenomena and also fails to formulate any hypotheses. Though he indirectly implies the probable success of the autonomy factor in conflict resolution, he does not have any clearly stated hypotheses.

Potier mostly uses a descriptive case study where he brings in only one new idea on how to develop the current situation of the “three” by highlighting the autonomy factor in constitutional settlement. The author, however, does not discuss what makes these three cases comparable for the research. The only explanation he gives regarding the particular case selection is when he stresses his interest in the region, and states that “being unable to condense the work about the minority rights in the USSR into a manageable work” he decided “to concentrate on the future constitutional status of the three cases”. He also mentions that the Caucasus was the region where he had traveled a lot and where he had many contacts, which he believed would help him with his research.⁴ The above-mentioned facts do not explain why he chose these three conflicts, and what makes these cases special for the research in which he is involved.

The work is conceived as a small N research design with a cross-sectional case study, since the author focuses on three case studies and conducts research across units - ethnic conflicts in Azerbaijan and Georgia - without time variation for three cases, i.e. all three conflicts were investigated for a period of time from 1993 to 1998.

The work contains extensive data from the BBC Monitoring Service’s Summary of World Broadcast Daily Report on the Former Soviet Union and the US Government’s Foreign Broadcasting Information Service report on Central Asia, as well as a number of journals, books, reports, research bulletins, interviews and encyclopedias.

In addition, while reading the book in some parts of it, one senses that the author was rather biased, as he references sources from only one party. For example, in the first chapter on the history of the region regarding Nagorno-Karabakh, he used the USSR encyclopedia and more Armenian documents than Azerbaijani ones.

Another weakness of the work is that regardless of the grammar and syntax corrections that have been made, it still contains some grammatical mistakes and the bibliography should have been designed according to the more usual chronological principle.⁵

A noteworthy point in this work is that while comparing cases to others, Potier tries to stress that each case is unique and needs a special approach. From his point of view, therefore, the autonomy approach to the constitutional settlement of the “three” could be the best solution to the conflicts in

³ Pascal Vennesson, “Case Studies and Process Tracing: Theories and Practices,” in *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences. A Pluralistic Perspective*, ed. Donatella D. Porta and M. Keating (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 223-239.

⁴ Tim Portier’s Web site, Articles / Op-Eds,

<http://www.timpotier.com/default.aspx?articleID=14617&heading=Articles%20/%20Op-Eds#Conflict>

⁵ George Hewitt, Review of *Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and South Ossetia: A Legal Appraisal*, by Tim Potier. Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, Vol. 64, No. 3, 2001, 416.

the South Caucasus.

Regardless of the author's findings, the book has weaknesses in the research design that makes it to some extent incomprehensible. I attribute this to the fact that the book is based on his PhD thesis work, and it was not written with the aim of being published as a book afterwards. Of the thirteen chapters, only two are particularly important, since they bring new ideas and discussion to the legal debate over the ethnic conflicts in the South Caucasus region. The author stresses that it is difficult even for him to construct a conclusion for his work, as he thinks that there are many points that remain to be clarified.

About the author

Dr. Tim Potier specialises in the field of conflict/the consequences of constitutional settlement in post-conflict societies. His work in this area began in the mid-1990s in the countries of the former Soviet Union, where he lived and conducted research for two years. Dr. Tim Potier is currently Associate Head of International Law Department at the University of Nicosia, Cyprus.