

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Nasimi Aghayev, LL.M.Eur.

It is with great pleasure that I present the Autumn 2008 issue of the *Caucasian Review of International Affairs* (CRIA).

Since the publication of our Summer 2008 issue, the Caucasus has recaptured the consciousness of the international community, most vividly through the Russian invasion of Georgia in August and the subsequent illegal recognition of the so-called independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia by Russia. As a result, the United States and the European Union are reformulating their policies in and commitment to the region, to say nothing of Russia's new regional policies. Additionally, there have been increased efforts to improve the erstwhile difficult relations between Turkey and Armenia, which could possibly have a lasting impact on the ongoing crisis in the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Perhaps now, more than ever, the international attention that has been thrust upon the region will determine whether the Caucasus will rise up and emerge as an important centre and corridor for energy and transport or whether it will be mired in instability and ethnic conflicts.

While providing an all-encompassing analysis of the Caucasus in this issue, a particular emphasis has been placed on Georgia in light of its recent war with Russia, and as an expression of the renewed international attention to the Caucasus, the CRIA is proud to present in this issue two interviews from respected regional experts (from USA and Germany) as well as papers that touch on a wide range of regional issues, such as the impact of the Russian invasion of Georgia on Israel and the Middle East, the 1992-1993 Georgia-Abkhazia war, the role of external forces in abetting ethnic separatism in Azerbaijan, the European Neighborhood Policy in the South Caucasus and geopolitical implications of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railroad for the South Caucasus, to name but a few of the points addressed. Additionally, in an attempt to cover the important processes going on in the neighboring region we are publishing a paper on the normative suasion and political change in Central Asia. Two topical book reviews are also published in this issue. I thank all the contributors for both their time and their interesting analyses.

Remaining true to the goal of the CRIA to promote a better understanding of events in the Caucasus by providing relevant background information and analysis, we have started since the beginning of September 2008 the publication of the **Caucasus Update** which analyzes the major events taking place in the region on a weekly basis. The Update can be subscribed free of charge on our webpage www.cria-online.org.

Each issue of the CRIA, which is a free and non-profit online publication, is the result of voluntary and hard work of the affiliated persons. Therefore, I'd like to express my deep gratitude to all the members of the Editorial Board, editorial assistants, other staff members and all online interns of the CRIA for their consistent and profound engagement.