South Caucasus, Russia, and the EU: Forging an Efficient Over-Arching
Cooperative Regional Security Scheme

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Abstract

The end of XX century was marked by an increase in the number of ethnopolitical conflicts throughout the world. The redrawing of the political map of the world in the last century, following the results of world wars, the elimination of the colonial system and the collapse of empires, has affected the growth of ethnic confrontations in modern society.

In view of the fact that any conflict inside the state is always detrimental to socio-economic and political development of the country, and the world is full of polyethnic states, the birth of new interethnic contradictions, can affect the stability and security of the entire world community.

In this regard, particular importance in the policy of each state, is the deep study of the characteristics of ethnic clashes, for the subsequent development of mechanisms for their forecasting, regulation and prevention. In this thesis I will try ty examin the connflicts of South Caucasus: Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Naghorno-karabakh.

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Introduction, Methodology, and Structure

The relevance of the topic of dissertation

The choice of the central research topic (South Caucasus, Russia, and the EU: Forging an Efficient Over-Arching Cooperative Regional Security Scheme) was made for at least two reasons.

First, for personal reasons, in the August of 1993, started the war between Georgia and Abkhazia, so me (3 years old that time) and all my family were obliged to live our homes in Abkhazia and we became IDP (Internally Displaced Person). Till today we can't go back to Abkhazia and the conflict between Georgia and Abkhazia is not still resolved.

Second reason is that the topic is greatly popular in the context of the transformations experienced by today's international system and the redistribution of power among the actors in the system, all against the background of an increase in the insecurity and multidimensional threats boosted by globalization.

The end of the twentieth century, was marked by a series of development of conflict situations, on the basis of ethnic and national identity. The modern world too, being under the influence of various political, social, cultural, economic and other processes, threatens to exacerbate the problem of ethnic self-awareness and self-identification.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the collapse of the bloc of socialist states, Europe has in fact become a new epicenter of the confrontation of various ethnic groups, including in the context of this struggle, not only national and ethnic factors, but also political interest. But the countries of the post-Soviet space are not the only examples in the European region of confrontation on the ethnopolitical component. The ancient history includes an ethnopolitical conflict in Northern Ireland, the Cyprus problem is no less acute.

Many countries in the modern period are multiethnic, which leads to the need for constructive interethnic dialogue, not only at the international and regional levels, but also at the local level of a single state. Thus, the topic of ethnopolitical conflicts and their

resolution is popular today, which justifies the need for studies and development of knowledge in this field. The problems of ethnopolitical conflicts become an object of study of many researchers, both in the West, and in the post-Soviet space.

The events of the end of the last century, also affected the lives of the peoples of the former Soviet Union. Ethnic conflicts that arose during the formation of the Soviet state, ceased to be controlled by the authorities at the time of the collapse of the USSR, which led to bloodshed and destabilization of the situation in the countries of the post-Soviet space.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, 15 independent states were formed on the world map. Despite the fact that the creation of post-Soviet states took place under the sign of the right of ethnic self-determination of peoples, the leadership of the newly-formed countries, began to conduct an ethno-nationalist policy, that only complicated interethnic contradictions within states and in many cases led to armed actions. Seven interethnic conflicts in the post-Soviet space have evolved into an open armed clash, five of them occurred in the Caucasus region: the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, the Georgian-Ossetian and Georgian-Abkhaz conflicts, as well as the Ossetian-Ingush and Russian- Chechen conflicts.

However, before the events of August 2008, when there was a change in the political situation in the region, only three conflicts were finalized in the South Caucasus: the Nagorno-Karabakh, Georgian-Ossetian and Georgian-Abkhazian. The main feature of the interethnic conflicts of the post-Soviet space is, that, all of them became a consequence of the policy of the leadership of the USSR.

The Caucasus region was always the center of intersection, of interests, of many countries of the world, in this regard, an analysis of the current state and trends in the development of interethnic conflicts in the region, is a priority not only for domestic but also for foreign researchers.

At a time when Russia's policy towards the countries of the South Caucasus was passive and contradictory, the US and European Union governments successfully implemented the tasks set in the region, increasing their influence and authority. However, the events of August 2008 changed the geopolitical position of the countries, but they did not defuse the situation in the region. In view of the continuous emergence of new and aggravation of old conflicts on the basis of ethnicity, a deep study of the

problem of inter-ethnic clashes is beyond doubt. The uniqueness of the issue under investigation is also, due to the fact that, in connection with the growing interest of the world powers towards the South Caucasus, and the ethnic contradictions that have been preserved, the region has become a center for the clash of interests not only of regional, but also of extra-regional states, which adversely affects stability and security in the Caucasus.

Transportation of the Caspian energy resources, through the Caucasian corridor, as well as track streams from Europe to Asia and back, takes the interest of the world's leader countries, which makes the strong influence on the model of the regional relationship. Such "ambivalence" and attempt are share and make modeling the existed reality in Caucasus. Unregulated conflicts in Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia are beyond the regional limits and they are making the negative influence on many country's state interests. It depends on us how we will make the relationships in the new future which is orientated on the 21st century. Consolidation of the regional security in Caucasus does not present the problem of the one country, or of the one nation.

Our aim is analyzing security's risk factors of national and regional, the origin of which relates to ethnopolitical conflicts. As well as specifies of conflicts existed in Caucasus, original and political aspects of decision, as well as the geopolitical security problem in relation with it and the analysis of the approach of the world's leading countries in this issue and it will be able to develop some approaches for providing the regional securities. We can clear how realistic perceive regional states such dangers and risks which relate to the existence of the conflicts from identification of the regional risk factors, evaluation of the risks, views of the regional countries and strategies toward the countries safety. How to coincide these risks and causing's formulation and is it possible to create state's security system with the state documents to provide peace and development in the Caucasus region.

I tried to present the scientific analysis which gives us the possibility to create complete imagination on the model of the South Caucasus security. In our foregoing thesis is suggested the argument that in the security conceptions of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia the more emphasis is made on the political posts, than on strategic analysis, nevertheless the fact that there are not mentioned many important issues, some risks are not contemplated by the national security's conception, or some risks are not mentioned

clearly, or the part of the dungarees are not defend correctly. The main orientation of the conception (integration in EU and NATO) ignores many serious limitations. The country has not the created united view regarding the existed dangers and they also have not the will to overcome the challenges first, which causes the conflicts in the region.

The object of the research is modern ethnopolitical conflicts in the South Caucasus, history of formation and development of interethnic conflicts in the South Caucasus and methods for their settlement.

The subject of the study is the activities of regional and international players for the settlement of ethnopolitical conflicts in the South Caucasus (from 1992 to the present).

The aim of the study is to identify the nature of ethnopolitical conflicts in the South Caucasus, analyze activities of regional and international players in terms of their political settlement, determine the ways and methods of its intensification and activation, considering regional peculiarities and specific features of the conflicts under investigation. In this connection, it is necessary to formulate the following research tasks:

Conduct a theoretical analysis of existing scientific views on the topic under study and determine the author's attitude to the problem of the emergence, development, and resolution of ethnopolitical conflicts;

To identify trends in the development of a system of actions for the settlement of ethnopolitical conflicts from the standpoint of modern science and analyze them considering domestic and international experience;

To consider the nature, causes and trends in the development of ethnopolitical conflicts in the South Caucasus;

To analyze possible options for resolving (settling) the conflicts in question;

Investigate the mechanisms of political influence on the conflicting parties, analyze their explicit and latent goals;

To assess the activities of regional and international representatives and organizations aimed at the settlement of ethnopolitical conflicts in the South Caucasus and to give their suggestions on improving the effectiveness of such activities.

The chronological framework of the study - During the beginning of the XX centuries, important historical events took place, which affected the fate of the conflicts we are examining. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the "parade of sovereignties" led

not only to territorial and status changes, but also to destabilization in the regions and armed clashes of the warring sides. Originating at the end of the 20th century, interethnic conflicts in the South Caucasus remain unresolved (Nagorno Karabakh, despite 20 years of experience in building a democratic state, is not recognized by the international community, and Abkhazia and South Ossetia are only partially recognized states).

The geographic scope of the study covers the countries of the South Caucasus: recognized states (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia) and the unrecognized republics of the region (Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and South Ossetia).

Degree of knowledge of the problem. Despite the urgency of the problem, the aggravation of the old and the emergence of new ethnic confrontations, we can state that the issue has not been sufficiently studied in terms of history and new trends. In the domestic and foreign historiography, a large number of works are devoted to the analysis of the aspects of the development of interethnic contradictions in the South Caucasus, but there are no studies entirely devoted to the methods of settling conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and South Ossetia and the problem of the independence of the republics.

In the domestic literature, the problems of ethnic conflicts began to be intensively studied at the beginning of 90-ies. XX century, in view of the existence of opinion in the Soviet Union on the absence of problems in the sphere of interethnic contradictions. Proceedings of Russian scientists VA. Avksent'eva, V.A. Tishkova, LM Drobizhevoy, M. M. Lebedeva, V.V. Amelina, Yu. V. Harutyunyan, AG Zdravomyslova and other authors made it possible to single out the main aspects of ethnic conflicts, the problems of their settlement and conduct an analysis of the consequences. It is worth noting that most of the domestic research in this area is based on the concepts of foreign historical and social schools.

The ethnoconflictological trend in foreign historical literature began to develop late in comparison with other disciplines, only in the second half of the 20th century. A special role in the study of ethnopolitical conflictology as a separate subject is assigned to Works of such foreign authors as G. Simmel, K. Marx, M. Weber, J. Burton, E. Elmer and other researchers.

The theories of ethnopolitical conflict and technologies for resolving conflicts are devoted to the works of such authors as J. Rodshild, M. Esman, D. Horowitz, E. Azar and others.

Studies of the nature of interethnic conflicts in the South Caucasus are devoted to the works of such Russian authors as A. G. Areshev, V. A. Zakharov, A.V. Karavaev, K. Myalo, S. Lezov, A. Vasilevsky, V.F. Pryakhin.

Particulary interesting are the works: G. Hakobyan, S. Minasyan, V.Artsruni, T.M. Shamba, S. Lakoba, T.A. Achugba, V.D. Dzidzoeva and K.G. Dzugaeva.

The opposing positions are taken by Azerbaijani and Georgian researchers: M.J. Gasimli, A.Yunusov, A.Rasizade, M. Kupreishvili, based their work on the principle of territorial integrity of the state and consider the actions of the leadership of the former autonomies illegal and historically unjustified.

Significant for the research work, are the works of AA. Yazkova, M.A. Suchkova, M. Lapenko and Y. Arshinova, devoted to the role of global players in the region and their impact on conflict resolution, as well as the analysis of the impact of energy resources on the outcome of an ethnic confrontation. This subject has also received a lot of attention from the researchers of the post-Soviet space: RN. Musabekova, A. Shakaryants, V.G. Kardumian, N.Gegelashvili, A. Magomedov and R.Nikerov, and others.

For deep study of the problem,there are several interesting works of historians and political scientists, which describe the events of August 2008, which changed the entire political system in the South Caucasus. In the works I. Jadan, R. Dzarasova, A. Tsyganok, Z. Albarova, K. Dzugaeva, L. Tania, they reveal the events of the summer of 2008: military actions against the people of South Ossetia; Inaction of international organizations and Russia's entry into the course of the war to "protect" its citizens.

In view of the unsettledness of the ethnic conflicts under investigation, particular attention is paid to the studies of S. Minasyan, S.I. Chernyavsky, A. Vermishev, devoted to the analysis and formation of ways out of the current confrontation. The joint work of A. Abasov and A. Khachatryan, in which the authors project the existing methods of settling ethnic disputes on the conflict in Nagorny Karabakh, is also devoted to this topic. The uniqueness of this research work lies in the fact that the researcher represents conflicting side, as she is IDP from abkhazia, after the war in 1993, but this fact did not prevent the

objective analysis of the existing situation and the development of possible options for settling the ethnic conflict.

The aim of the dissertation is to identify the nature of ethnopolitical conflicts in the South Caucasus for the development of ways and methods for their peaceful settlement.

To achieve this goal, it is necessary to solve a number of important tasks:

1) Give a detailed theoretical description of interethnic conflicts; to Analyze the historiography of the study of ethnopolitical conflicts.

2) To   Define the main theoretical approaches to the study of contemporary ethnopolitical conflicts, their types and subjects, as well as the causes and dynamics of development. To study the basic concepts, methods and forms of settlement of ethnopolitical confrontations; to establish the reasons for the emergence of interethnic confrontations in the South Caucasus;

3) Reveal the constitutional and legal relations of the conflicting parties in the pre-war period and the role of the mediator in the process of peaceful settlement of the clashes;

4) To identify possible options for the settlement of ethnic conflicts in the South Caucasus, based on historical experience in resolving such disputes;

5) Determine the methods of political and economic impact on the conflicting parties;

6) To uncover the reasons for the growing interest of the international organizations of the countries to the Caucasus region and their role in resolving the existing contradictions; To identify the role of international organizations in the settlement of ethnopolitical conflicts;

7) To Analyze the prospects for the resolution of the Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Naghorno-kharabagh conflicts; to establish the prospects for conflict resolution in the South Caucasus in the context of changing world politics after August 2008.

The theoretical and methodological basis of the thesis is the principles of historicism, scientific objectivity, system approach, content analysis, comparison method, and also the forecasting method. The principle of historicism made it possible to reveal the nature of ethnic conflicts in the South Caucasus and trace the course of events during

the period under investigation. The main special methods used in the work were: a historical approach that made it possible to identify the sources of tension in the South Caucasus and a certain chronology of the course of ethnopolitical conflicts in this region; Comparative (comparative) method, which helped to compare various conflict situations, manifestations, models of conflict dynamics and ways of conflict management in order to identify both their typical features and differences, which allowed to determine the most effective forms of conflict management and actions to regulate and resolve them. In addition to the set of general scientific principles and approaches, the main methods are: methods of analyzing specific historical phenomena, that affect the formation and development of statehood in Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh.

Methods of research

Along with the abovementioned, the methods of empirical research were also used: the method of "included observation", the content analysis of the press and statistical data, the method of expert interviews and the method of legal analysis, which emphasizes the study of the norms of Soviet, Russian, and international law. In general, the work has applied a comprehensive approach, which included various scientific methods.

The empirical base of the research was made up of sources reflecting the problems of origin, flow and settlement of ethnopolitical conflicts in the South Caucasus, including: official regulatory documents of state authorities and international organizations; Materials of conferences and symposia; The results of referendums, political science and sociological research; Express analysis of periodicals and resources of the global Internet; The results of the included observation of the author, taking part in the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, within the framework of "people's diplomacy".

The source base of the research consists of types of sources that reveal the problems of the origin of ethnic conflicts, their development and settlement. An integrated approach to the subject of research required the involvement of documents that can be classified as follows:

1. Normative documents of an international legal nature: resolutions and statements of the Presidents of the UN Security Council, the resolutions of the European Parliament, the decision of the Council of the Heads of State of the CIS on measures to

resolve conflicts in the Caucasus. This group includes reports of non-governmental organizations on the analysis of problems of ensuring the rights of ethnic minorities.

2. Normative-legal documents of the Soviet period: "the law on the procedure for resolving issues related to the withdrawal of the union republic from the USSR", the resolutions of the XIX All-Union Conference of the CPSU, resolutions of the plenums of the regional committee of the Communist Party of autonomies, which allowed us to better understand the historical component of the state and legal relations of the republics and autonomous regions .

3. Legislative acts, state-legal and office documents in the post-Soviet period:

- The Constitution, declarations, resolutions, agreements, etc. of the Russian Federation;

- Constitutions, declarations, memorandums, resolutions, agreements and other documents, investigated by us of the conflicting countries.

4. Materials of the fund 64 of the Russian State Archive of Social and Political History (Caucasian Bureau of the Central Committee of the RCP (B) 1920-1922), the study of which allowed us to analyze the issues of nationalism in the 1920s. in USSR.

5. Published a collection of documents published on the basis of the Center for Caucasian Studies at MGIMO (U) of the Russian Foreign Ministry - "Conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia: Documents of 1989 - 2006". The collection is thematically divided into six parts, which allowed to analyze the positions of the states and international organizations involved in the conflict (Abkhazia, Georgia, Russia, UN, OSCE, CIS).

A special group is represented by collections of documents - Documents and Materials on the Foreign Policy of Transcaucasia and Georgia, which cover the history of the development of Abkhazia's relations And Georgia as independent subjects in the integration education.

Collection of documents "Abkhazia in the Soviet era. Abkhazian letters (1947-1989) ", contains letters, resolutions, minutes of meetings of the Abkhaz scientific intelligentsia, addressed to the Central Power. The study of materials made it possible to establish the dynamics of the development of the national movement in Abkhazia during the Soviet period.

An important role in the study of the problem and the formation of independent conclusions on contentious issues, is played by the analysis of the periodical press, the outcome of referenda.

The presented collections of documents reflect important historical aspects of building statehood in the region under study. Analysis of their materials allows you to explore the positions of the parties to the conflict on political and socio-humanitarian issues, not only in the post-war, but also in the pre-war period.

The **system approach** is a set of general scientific methodological principles and research methods, which are based on the orientation toward disclosing the integrity of the object as a system. This approach will be used to demonstrate the need to examine the ethnopolitical conflict as a complex phenomenon. The systemic approach provides an opportunity to review and analyze the elements that constitute the basis of the conflict, i.e. Approaches to the definition, causes, subjects, types, dynamics, etc.

Content analysis includes analysis of the contents of documents in order to identify or measure the various facts and trends reflected in these documents. It is proposed to use this method in the process of studying theoretical sources devoted to the study of the conceptual foundations of ethnopolitical conflicts and official documents, as elements of practical achievements in the field of conflict resolution in Northern Ireland, Transnistria, and Cyprus. The method of comparison is a comparison of the studied data and facts in order to determine the common features or differences between them. With the help of this method, various and similar points will be revealed in the proposed ethnopolitical conflicts for consideration. Forecasting is a special scientific study of specific prospects for the development of the studied object. The given method will allow to assume the further development of process of settlement of conflicts in the Transnistrian region, Northern Ireland and on Cyprus.

The scientific novelty of the dissertation research is as follows

1. A comprehensive study of the origins of ethnopolitical conflicts and the dynamics of their development was carried out, which made it possible to reveal the features of ethnic contradictions in the South Caucasus.

2. It was revealed that the main reasons for the ethnic contradictions in the South Caucasus are the discriminatory policy of the Soviet leadership towards small ethnic

groups and the illegal actions of the governments of the newly-formed republics to autonomies.

3. Various possible options for solving ethnic conflicts in the South Caucasus were studied on the basis of a thorough analysis of historical experience in regulating such disputes.

4. The official positions of the conflicting parties and their options for resolving disputes are determined.

5. The specifics of the recognition of independent republics in 2008, based not only on the right of the nation to self-determination, but also on the economic and political objectives of certain states, are established.

6. The role of regional and extra-regional players in the Caucasus, as well as their influence on the outcome of ethnic contradictions, is revealed.

Provisions to be protected:

1. The process of the emergence of new interethnic contradictions is an endless phenomenon, based on the desire of the ethnic group to preserve its culture and unity through political self-determination.

2. The key to success in preventing interethnic contradictions is the prevention and timely response of the government to the revival of nationalism in the social environment. In view of the fact that the unfinished solution of ethnic disputes can lead to the resurgence of new clashes, and conflict relations always adversely affect the development of the socio-economic and political situation of the entire state, the study of the features of interethnic conflicts and methods of their settlement is the key to the security and successful development of the entire world community.

3. The investigated conflicts in the South Caucasus, in spite of their commonality, entities, origins and ultimate goals, based on the principle of the right to self-determination, have different specifics. Thus, the conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh and South Ossetia are ethnoterritorial disputes related to the restoration of the unity of the ethnic group. The conflict in Abkhazia has a status character and is created by the desire to create its own independent state.

4. The negotiating process in the modern world is the most popular and effective method of solving ethnopolitical conflicts. However, a study of the dynamics of the development of ethnic contradictions showed ineffectiveness of the method due to the

lack of interest of the parties in the compromise outcome of the talks. In the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the negotiation process affected only the cessation of hostilities, freezing the contradictions for many years and creating a situation of "neither war nor peace." In the Georgian-Abkhaz and Georgian-Ossetian conflicts, the negotiation process could not prevent the outbreak of hostilities in August 2008.

5. Russia's active policy in the conflict resolution process in the South Caucasus is caused by historical, political and economic aspects. However, if Moscow's mediation in signing a peace treaty between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh was connected with the desire to establish stability in the region, in time, due to the growing influence of extra-regional countries in Transcaucasia, Russia's participation in the Georgian-Ossetian war (August 2008) And in the subsequent - the recognition of the republics is associated not only with the elimination of tension near its southern borders, but also with the desire to maintain its influence in the region.

6. The prospects for the settlement of conflicts in the South Caucasus depend, first of all, on the will of the opposing sides. However, in view of the fact that in modern politics the recognition process depends on the geostrategic and economic goals of specific countries, the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the recognition by the world community of the independence of the Republic of Abkhazia and the Republic of South Ossetia will largely depend on the strategic interests of states.

The theoretical significance of the results of the study is a comprehensive study of the features of interethnic conflicts in the South Caucasus and deepening of the notions of effective mechanisms for their forecasting, regulation and prevention. The materials of the dissertation study complement and deepen the theoretical understanding of the role of political settlement and its separate components in the structure of the settlement of ethnopolitical conflicts. Theoretical significance is the conclusions of the thesis on the differential use of strategies / regulation depending on the form, specifics, and stage, ethnopolitical conflict, as well as a comprehensive scientific analysis of the essence of the conflicts in the South Caucasus.

Practical significance of the study. The main provisions and conclusions of the dissertation research can be used in the practical activities of the authorized bodies on the settlement of ethnopolitical conflicts in the South Caucasus region, as well as in the

conduct of mediation by non-governmental organizations, associations, and private individuals. The results of the research can be useful in forecasting the development of the situation not only in the South Caucasus, but also in other conflict zones of the CIS. The results of the study will also be useful for many multiethnic states in the prediction and prevention of interethnic conflicts. The results of the research will be useful in the educational process, in conducting lecture courses and special courses on the new and modern history of the countries of the South Caucasus, as well as on international security in the region.

Structure of the dissertation. The purpose, tasks and logic of scientific research determined the structure and content of the work. The thesis consists of an introduction, four chapters, conclusion, list of sources and literature.

Chapter Outline

In the introduction, the relevance of the research topic is substantiated, the object and subject of the study are identified, the chronological framework, the degree of study of the problem, the goals and objectives of the study, the theoretical and methodological and source base, scientific novelty, the provisions put forth for defense, theoretical and practical significance and approbation of work are identified. The thesis contains four chapters.

The first chapter is devoted to the analysis of the history of the development of ethnic clashes, their existing classifications and methods of regulating interethnic conflicts.The need to study conflicts, with the development of mechanisms for their prevention, does not cause doubts either from Russian or in foreign researchers, because, according to rough estimates, in the 20th century, due to conflicts over 300 million people died. The origin of the conflict begins with the actions of one participant, aimed at achieving the desired goals, by causing damage to the interests of the other participant. Escalation of the conflict is a tense confrontation between the parties, when negative emotions take precedence and the desire to inflict maximum harm to the opponent, stands above reason and logic. The final stage in the development of the conflict is its ending, which manifests itself in the form of a settlement of the conflict, damping or development into another conflict.

The second chapter is devoted to the analysis of the causes of the emergence of interethnic opposition in South Caucasus. The events of the late XX and early XXI centuries. Became a stage not only of profound changes in the political system of the world, but also the emergence of a new social thinking and world outlook. Analysis of inter-ethnic clashes has shown that the emergence and development of conflicts are a complex process based on the struggle of objective and subjective contradictions, competition between two international legal principles: the right of nations to self-determination and the territorial integrity of states. In view of the multi-ethnicity of the countries of the modern world and the threat of escalation of ethnic contradictions, the international community for many years adhered to the principle of the territorial integrity of the state in its policy.

Third chapter "Interests of regional and extra-regional countries in the South Caucasus and their impact on the development of the conflict" reveals the motives and forms of expression of the parties to the conflict. The Caucasus region has always been the center of the intersection of interests not only of regional but also world powers. Bloody wars in the eyes of the international community created the image of the region as a center of instability and ethnic conflict. An important factor in solving regional conflicts today is the energy resource factor, which is most evident in the Azerbaijani-Karabakh conflict. Due to the availability of energy resources in the Caspian basin, the world powers use the policy of maneuvering, which only delays the process of resolving the issue. However, we should not underestimate the actions of a number of states that played a major role in ending the war and preserving peace in the region, despite the unsettled issue began to be sharply manifested in the period 1993-1994. It was at this time that the struggle for leadership grew into a desire to play a major role in the peace process. The main task that Washington set for itself in the process of settling the conflict - to prevent the strengthening of Russia's influence in the South Caucasus and its superiority in mediation, in turn, Moscow could not allow the growth of US and Turkish influence in the region.

Last chapter deals with the system analysis of ethnopolitical conflicts in the South Caucasus, taking into account the growing interest of international organizations and World powers in the region, general conclusions have been drawn up for developing methods for their conflict resolution and the scientific results have been obtained.

Chapter One

History and Typology of Ethnic Conflicts

The end of the twentieth century was marked by a succession of conflicts based on ethnic and national origin. The modern world is also under the influence of a variety of political, social, cultural, economic and others type of conflicts. Processes endangers acute problems of ethnic consciousness and identity. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the collapse of the socialist bloc, countries in Europe has become the new epicenter of the confrontation, but the post-Soviet countries are not the only examples in the European region, Northern Ireland has a long history of ethno-political conflict, also Cyprus problem is not less acute.[1]

Nowadays Many countries are in the need for a constructive inter-ethnic dialogue, not only at the international and regional levels, but also on local level of individual states. Thus, the theme of ethno-political conflicts and their resolution is urgent today and needs a deep studies and development of applied knowledge in this field.

The degree of knowledge of the topic.

The problem of ethno-political conflict is becoming the object of study of many researchers, both in the West and the former Soviet Union. On this basis, the problem of thesis requires the study and analysis of the various works of a scientific nature.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the problem of the development of regional security is becoming increasingly important in everyday international politics. It especially concerns the post-Soviet countries, which remain in an ongoing difficult process of transformation; conflicts and local wars together with the economic crisis are signs that the situation is affecting these territories. We should note that over the last decade, there have been many studies on the South Caucasus conflicts.

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[1] Michael E. Brown: Ethnic Conflict and International Security, p: 12

However, it seems that the authors of most of them prefer a chronological description of events to the detection of possible future scenarios. It is our conviction that we should now leave the past behind us and focus on the future. We are going to do this by analysing the origins and background of the conflict – which has still not been deeply analysed – and by focusing on the possible transformations of the ongoing conflict. [2]

It is obviously impossible to rely on transformation or conflict resolution when there is no clarity about the nature and origin of the conflict. Each side has its own interpretation of past events and their own visions for the future. These views often conflict with each other.

There are many reasons for including South Caucasus conflict among the "intractable conflicts" that require study.[3] The following factors all indicate that conflict transformation is necessary: the asymmetry of the parties; the deep historical roots of the conflict; the scale of human loss experienced by the parties during military operations; the high levels of involvement by the entire population of South Caucasus; the sharp polarisation of the positions of the parties; and the presence of an "enemy image" in descriptions of the counterpart.[4]

The purpose of the present work is to further transform the relationships, interests, and goals of the different groups involved.

The geopolitical processes that are associated with increased inter-ethnic confrontations, and which are taking place all over the world, complicate the development of modern civilisation and increase the vulnerability of all members of the international community, creating threats to their security.[5]

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[2] Christoph Zurcher. The Post-Soviet Wars: Rebellion, Ethnic Conflict, and Nationhood in the Caucasus. (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 13.

[3] Svante E. Cornell, Small Nations, and Great Powers: A Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus,
Ricmond, Curzon Press, 1999.

[4] See James Hughes, "Managing Secession Potential   in the Russian Federation", in James Hughes and Gwendolyn Sasse (eds), Ethnicity and Territory in the Former Soviet Union: Regions in Conflict (London: Frank Cass, 2002), pp. 33-43

[5] See, for instance: Fiona Hill, Report on Ethnic Conflicts in the Russian Federation, and Transcaucasia,
Harvard University: Cambridge, Mass., 1993; Suzanne Goldenberg, Pride of Small Nations: The Caucasus
and Post-Soviet Disorder, Zed Books Ltd.: London, 1994;
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In this respect, it is very important to conduct analytical research in this area because it contributes to the development of best practice in conflict resolution, which undoubtedly entails replicating power scenarios.

Features of studying ethnic conflicts

Ethnopolitical conflict, as a phenomenon of social life, has been studied in domestic and foreign science in some detail. This is due to the fact that conflicts of any kind are mainly determined by a whole complex of economic, social, religious, and cultural problems and presents an increasing threat to the human community.

The study of various types of conflict, is currently one of the most important directions in the development of social knowledge. In the context of the conflictological approach, theoretical grounds for studying conflicts in various spheres of public life are developed, as well as various methods for managing these conflicts. Conflict relations are recognized as inevitably inherent in society, unavoidable from social life.

Therefore, the problems of studying the role of conflicts in the processes of forming and developing public relations, minimizing their negative consequences, and using positive functions come to the fore. Today it is quite possible to talk about the fact that, conflictology becomes one of the leading scientific disciplines in the twentieth century, there is "a rapid flowering of conflictological research in the second half of the century." There are certain theoretical preconditions for such a flowering.[6]

These or other aspects of conflict relations, are touched upon in the works of many outstanding thinkers of the past: Aristotle, F. Bacon, T. Hobbes, G. Hegel. The role of the driving force of social development was assigned to the conflict in the sphere of material production by K. Marx and F. Engels. The conclusions drawn in the Marxist concept remain important for conflictology. The conflicts are of a very important nature in the sociological concepts of M. Weber and E. Durkheim. At the beginning of the 20th century, the conflict was the focus of research of V. Pareto, G. Mosca, F. Oppenheimer.

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[6] See, for instance Saideman, Stephen M. 2001. The Ties That Divide: Ethnic Politics, Foreign Policy, and International Conflic. New York: Columbia University Press.

Gradually an understanding is developed that conflicts can perform some positive functions in public life.

One of the first grounds for this was given by G. Simmel, who wrote that "no conflict existed in vain." The identification of the conflict in a special subject of scientific analysis, and thus the formation of the basics of conflictology, is usually associated with the name of the biggest German sociologist Georg Simmel, who at the beginning of the 20th century Introduced the concept of "sociology of conflict" into scientific circulation and, thus, constituted a section of sociology focused on the study of social conflicts.

However, the realities of social life proved that these so-called "deviations", are encountered too often to be an annoying exception to the rules or "abnormality." The tradition of studying conflicts, refining the structural and functional model of society, R. Merton first criticized the idea of a "functional unity of society", during which not homogeneity and unanimity, but conflict of values and collisions of cultures are typical of modern society [7]. Thus, the idea of "social equilibrium" was opposed to the idea of "social change",[8] which in literature is also often called a "conflict" model, or "The theory of conflict." Basic theses of the conflict theory of Darendorf:

1. The main distinguishing features of any society are dominance, conflict, and subordination.

2. The social structure is based on the power of certain groups of people over others, for example, employers over workers, officers over soldiers, teachers over students, etc.

3. Each of these groups has common interests, regardless of whether they are aware of those entering such groups or not; The interests of members of different groups are different and opposite. For example, there may be a conflict between business people seeking to increase their incomes, and environmental activists who are fighting for the purification of the environment Spirit and water.

4. When people realize their common interests, they form a social class that can find itself in the form of a trade union movement, a lobby of a political party, etc.

5. Class conflict is exacerbated if:

A) Almost all power is concentrated in the hands of several people, while the rest are almost completely deprived of it;

B) Those who are deprived of power do not have the opportunity to receive it;

C) People can freely organize political groups [9].

Thus, for functionalists, society is a stable, unified whole and main element of which is the agreement of its members with respect to common values. Supporters of the theory of conflict, on the other hand, proceed from the assumption that there are constant changes and conflicts in the society, including those related to the suppression of some members of society by others.[10]

The conflict model and the consent model were initially value-marked. Even the social Darwinists, who recognized the "natural" nature of the origin of conflicts, disagreed as to whether conflicts were "an inevitable evil" or "a positive factor in natural selection" [11]. In the same time for most sociologists, the prospect of eliminating tense situations from the life of society seemed undeniably much more attractive, and therefore conflicts were considered mainly as negative phenomenon, caused by "irregularities" in the public device. The efforts of scientists were focused on finding, opportunities for avoiding conflicts. The conflicts themselves were of much less interest to them. [12]

K. Marx and G. Simmel: sociology of conflict

The strongest spokesmen of the oppositional point of view were Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Georg Simmel (1858-1918), whose ideas developed followers and in fact laid the foundation of modern conflictology. The initial formation of the theory of conflict as a definite system of views on the nature of society, its organization and development

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[9] See, for instance Darendorf, 1959, cited by Smelser, 1994, p. 26.

[10] See James Hughes, "Managing Secession Potential   in the Russian Federation", in James Hughes and Gwendolyn Sasse(eds), Ethnicity and Territory in the Former Soviet Union: Regions in Conflict (London: Frank Cass, 2002), pp. 42-43

[11] Michael E. Brown, "Causes and Implications of Ethnic Conflict", in: Michael E. Brown, ed., Ethnic
Conflict and International Security (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1993), p. 4.

[12] See, for instance: Catherine Dale, Development and Implications of the Conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, in: "Conflicts in the Caucasus", Conference Proceedings, International Peace Research Institute: Oslo, 1995; Alexei Zverev, "Ethnic Conflict in the Caucasus 1988-94," in Bruno Coppieters, ed., Contested Borders in the Caucasus, VUB University Press: Brussels, 1996.

occurred, admittedly, under the direct influence of the works of Karl Marx. K. Marx is an established predecessor of modern conflictology, his ideas are largely shared by most conflictologists.

His main theses that influenced the emergence of a "conflict" model of society, are associated with postulating the inevitability of the class struggle, that arises in society due to its division into warring classes, and the class struggle between them becomes the main driving force of history. Conflicts are associated with the opposite interests of social groups and originate in property relations and its distribution. K. Marx did not consider himself a "pioneer" Phenomena of the class struggle: " I do not own the merit that I discovered the existence of classes in modern society, nor that I discovered their struggle among themselves. Bourgeois historians long before me laid out the historical development of this class struggle, and bourgeois economists - the economic anatomy of classes "[13](Marx, 1962, pp. 424-427). And although K. Marx himself limits the novelty of his proof of many provisions connected with the existence of classes and their gradual destruction, the completeness and depth of his description and analysis of the class struggle provided him with a priority in many researchers on this topic. Even in the 70's and 80's of our century K. Marx continued to be considered not just a famous, but the most significant theorist of the conflict, and his ideas had and continue to have an impact on many ideas of modern conflictology. As N. Smelser points out, "the theory of conflict was formed mainly based on the works of Karl Marx" [14].

The merits of K. Marx are seen not so much in the nomination of any specific ideas or solutions to problems, but in creating the "sociology of the class struggle" [15], that his ideas "throw a direct challenge to the assumptions attributed to functionalism, and serve as an intellectual springboard for a conflict alternative to sociological theorizing "[16].

Another classic, whose name in the history of conflictology usually adjoins the name of Marx, is the German philosopher G. Simmel, whose scientific heritage is so highly valued that he is sometimes considered one of the founders of modern sociology.

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[15] B. Coppieters, "Conclusions: The Caucasus as a Security Complex", in: B. Coppieters (ed.), Contested Borders in the Caucasus, op.cit., p. 196
[16] Svante E. Cornell, "The Unruly Caucasus", Current History, October 1997

G. Simmel like Marx, believed that conflict in society is inevitable, and considered one of its main forms of conflict between the individual and society [17](The Sociology of Georg Simmel, 1950). Simmel is credited with the authorship of the term "sociology of conflict", and the priority in its foundation. In contrast to Marx, Simmel showed an interest in a broader spectrum of Conflict phenomena, describing conflicts between ethnic groups, between different generations of people and cultures, and between men and women, etc. But the main difference between the sociology of the Simmel conflict, from the ideas of Marx, is the belief that conflict can lead to social integration and, providing a way out of hostility, strengthen social solidarity. Conflict, according to Simmel, is not always and does not necessarily lead to destruction; On the contrary, it can fulfill the most important functions of preserving social relations and social systems.

Simmel formulated several provisions related to the functions of the conflict relating to the parties to the conflict, as well as the social whole, within which the conflict is developing. Despite the "sociological origin" of Simmel's ideas, the conflict is understood, not just as a clash of interests, but more psychologically, as an expression of hostility inherent in people and their relations. Attraction to hostility Simmel considers, in turn, as a pair opposite of the need for sympathy. He speaks of "natural hostility between mankind", which is "the basis of human relations, along with another - sympathy between people."

Simmel attributes the instinct of the struggle to a priori character, referring to the ease with which, in his opinion, there is animosity between people, which grows into a struggle in its most destructive manifestations. During the consideration of historical facts and ethnographic". It seems that people never loved each other because of things so small and insignificant as those for which they hate one another"[18]. Thus, Simmel is called an idealist, who assesses social life, including its conflictual forms, in positive tones.

Although many scholars were inclined to view the conflict as one of the central phenomena characteristic of social systems, the priority in attempts to understand its positive functions in the life of society is traditionally given by Simmel. It is believed that Simmel's ideas had a huge impact on American sociology and, first of all, on the work of

[17] Robert O. Freedman, "Russian Policy-Making and Caspian Sea Oil", Analysis of Current Events, vol. 9, no. 2, February 1997, p. 6

L. Cozer. Despite the above-mentioned leading role of Marx and Simmel in creating the basis of sociological conflictology, thanks to which they are deservedly called the first generation of its classics, their ideas and developments are not limited to the actual phenomenon of the conflict and rather belong to the general field of conflict problems. [19]

Marx writes about the contradictions and confrontation of parts of the social system, about the inevitability of struggle, doom class society on the confrontation, which for the time being, can be hidden. In this context, many of Marx's provisions correspond more to the concept of struggle than conflict in its modern sense. (However, Marx himself, is recognized by Western sociology as an outstanding theoretician in the field of conflict, writes precisely about the struggle - class, economic, political, etc.).

What has been said to a large extent applies to the ideas of Simmel. The affirmation of the priori character of the struggle brings his position closer to the ideas of the social Darwinists, with their central concept of struggle. Simmel's descriptions, based on concrete historical, ethnographic, and political facts, often use the concept of conflict, rather in a metaphorical sense. It is important, however, to note that Simmel introduced a distinction between the concepts of struggle and conflict. According to J. Turner on the basis of the analysis of Simmel's numerous statements, the latter views the conflict as a kind of variable whose intensity forms a continuum with poles "competition" and "struggle", and "competition is associated with a more orderly mutual struggle of parties, leading to their mutual isolation, and struggle means more chaotic, direct battle.[20] Simmel believes that the conflict can change its severity and therefore have different consequences for the society social whole. Thanks to the novelty of Simmel's ideas, his work proved to be a significant step forward in the development of the proper conflict problem.

R. Darendorf and L. Cozer: The beginning of conflictology

Followers of Marx and Simmel and modern "classics" of conflictology are the German sociologist R. Darendorf and the American scientist L. Cozer, whose ideas have

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[19] Samuel Huntington "The Clash of Civilizations", Multipolar, Politicized World, source: http://lib.rus.ec/b/79038

[20] Jared Feinberg, "GUAM: Creating Perceptions in the Caucasus", Summer Digest, Weekly Defense Monitor, Center for Defense Information, 1998

become the conceptual basis of modern Paradigms of conflict. According to J. Turner, they continue to develop two main directions, set by the "ancestors": Darendorf represents the dialectical theory of conflict in the tradition of the dialectical approach of Marx, and Cozer - the conflict functionalism that develops Simmel's ideas.

The most prominent contemporary sociologist, who adheres to the dialectical theory of conflict is Ralph Dahrendorf. According to Darendorf, social conflict has always been and will be inherent in any society by virtue of inevitable difference of interests. However, in a post-industrial society, which was investigated by Darendorf, the main contradiction of social systems is moving, in his opinion, from the economic plane, from the sphere of property relations to the domain of domination-subordination relations, and the main conflict is associated with the redistribution of power. At the same time, the dynamics of its emergence in essence repeats the logic of Marx's arguments about the dialectics of the development of the conflict: the objective opposition of the interests of the parties, the realization of this opposition, the emergence of social organizations, etc.

Darendorf analyzes in detail the conditions for the emergence of conflicts, the factors that determine their severity, Possible consequences, etc. The work of Darendorf rightly allows us to consider it as one of the modern classics of conflictology. At the same time, according to critics, the concept of "conflict", along with such basic concepts for Darendorf as "violence", "domination and submission" and "dialectics", is used rhetorically [21]. (We should say that this is a common reproach addressed to conflict experts.) Darendorf tries to apply his arguments to a wide range of social conflicts. In his texts, "the conflict between entrepreneurs and trade unions" is adjacent to the conflict "between East and West"[22], regarding which he notes: "At this point the meaning of the taken as the basis for a broad definition of the conflict. The form of the collision, which in everyday language is called "conflict" (however, as the so-called "class struggle"), is here only one form of a wider phenomenon of conflict, namely, the form of extreme or significant violence (and perhaps also intensity). "

Although Cozer's first works are imbued with a protest against the discrimination of the conflict as a phenomenon neglected by traditional functionalist constructs, he subsequently carefully places the conflict in his scheme of the organization of society.

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[21] Neal Ascherson, Black Sea, Hill and Wang: New York, 1995, p. 245
[22] Terry D. Adams. Caspian Oil and Gas Development and the Black Sea Region: An Overview. In: Europe's Black Sea Dimension. Brussels, CEPS, 2002, pp. 47-52, 60-68.

L. Cozer: the image of society

1. The social world can be viewed as a system of differently interrelated parts.

2. In any social system in various ways, there is a lack of balance, tension, and conflicting interests.

3. The processes occurring in the component parts of the system and between them, under certain conditions, contribute to the preservation, modification, increase or decrease of the integration and "adaptability" of the system.

4. It can also be imagined that many of the processes that are commonly believed to destroy the system (for example, violence, disagreements, deviations, and conflicts), under certain conditions, strengthen the foundations of system integration, as well as its "adaptability" to environmental conditions [23].

The definition of conflict belonging to L. Coser is one of the most common in Western science: "Social conflict can be defined as a struggle for values or claims to status, power or limited resources in which the goals of the conflicting parties are not only the achievement of the desired, but also the neutralization, damage or elimination of the rival [24]". It is applicable and actually used in relation to a wide range of conflict phenomena - from interstate to interpersonal. As essential for the further consideration of the moments of this definition.

First, the reduction of the conflict to one of the forms of struggle, and secondly, the negative nature of the objectives associated with the impact on the opposing side, the mildest of which is its neutralization. Of all the "classics" of conflictology, Cozer develops the most multifaceted and comprehensive view of conflicts: he writes about the conditions and factors of the emergence of conflicts, their severity, duration, and functions. It was the latter who took the first place in Cozer's theoretical system, giving grounds for the designation of his whole concept as "conflictual Functionalism ".

By developing and refining the ideas of Simmel, Cozer in small measure changed the view of science on conflicts. In his opinion, the recognition of the conflict as an integral characteristic of social relations does not contradict the task of ensuring stability and sustainability of the existing social system. Cozer's interests are focused not so much

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[23] On this, see Ghia Nodia, 'Waiting for the Russian Bear', in: War Report, June 1995, no. 34, pp. 39-40.

[24] Neal Ascherson, Black Sea, Hill and Wang: New York, 1995, p. 245

on analyzing the sources of conflict and their emergence in social systems, as on its functions. His first major work on conflicts was called "The Functions of Social Conflict" (1956). This book truly played a historical role in the design and fate of conflictology, and Cozer's development of Simmel's ideas about the positive functions of the conflict is rightly regarded as one of the highest achievements of conflictology.

The merits of the "second generation" of the classics of conflictology are not limited to the development of the ideas of Karl Marx and G. Simmel and the description of new aspects of conflict phenomenology. The work of R. Darendorf and L. Cozer created an opportunity for scientific study of conflicts primarily due to a more rigorous definition of the problem fields of their research. The concept of conflict begins to separate from the concept of struggle, acquires a more specific content and a more specific description. Conflict ceases to be abstract (as in the descriptions of the "first generation") phenomenon, it acquires specific phenomenology and specific framework of its existence in social space. Ideas about the positive functions of the conflict are opposed to the discrimination of the phenomenon of conflict and its unambiguous interpretation as a harmful, dangerous, evidencing "pathology", "illness" Social organism. They prepared the ground for the establishment of the basic principles of modern conflictology - the recognition of conflicts as a natural and natural characteristic of social relations, the possibility of conflicts in various, including constructive forms, and the assertion of the principle possibility of conflict management.[25]

The Conflict could appear in studies as a starting point for theoretical analysis, an intermediate stage of scientific constructions, illustrative material, etc. Conflictology is a complex scientific discipline that studies nature, essence, the causes of conflicts, the laws of their functioning and development, ways to overcome conflicts. Conflictology cannot be attributed to one block of scientific disciplines, it integrates knowledge from philosophy, history, sociology, law, political science, psychology, ethnology, ethnography, biology, geography, economics, and other disciplines studying various aspects of human activity.

Conflictological studies are also based on mathematical modeling and modern means of information processing. The emergence of conflictology as a scientific discipline

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[25] Samuel Huntington "The Clash of Civilizations", Multipolar, Politicized World, source: http://lib.rus.ec/b/79038

was influenced by the largest sociological studies of the second half of the XIX - first half of the XX century. -TO. Marx, M. Weber, E. Durkheim, philosophical and psychological concepts of Freud, E. Fromm, and others. These thinkers and scholars explained the nature of social processes and the nature of mankind differently, therefore conflictology was initially formed as a set of scientific schools with different philosophical-Methodological grounds.[26]

Ethnoconflictology as a branch of social science with an independent subject of study began to develop quite late. Ethnic conflict attracted the attention of scientists after the investigation of class, labor, and interstate conflicts. One of its leaders, American Donald Horowitz, noted that neither statesmen nor social scientists were ready for the growing role of the ethnic factor. The problem of belated formation of discipline is in many respects in the specifics of the subject of study. So, for example, the specific conditions of conflict are significantly different even in the same (not to mention different) regions. For example, the national liberation struggle against the colonialists is qualitatively different from Inter-tribal clashes occurring in the same geographical area. Different motives may be the mechanisms of participation in conflicts of different ethnic groups.

Therefore, in studies on ethnoconflictology, an analysis of specific conflict situations usually takes place with the study of specific causes, factors, conditions, and mechanisms of conflict. A comparative study of ethnic conflicts shows that in their evolution there are repetitive features and stages, and this allows us to identify certain patterns within similar types of conflicts.

Some researchers believe that social conflicts are a threat, the danger of the collapse of society. Other scholars insist on the conflict contained in the positive social content. Thus, known modern conflictologist Lewis Coser writes: "The conflict prevents the ossification of social systems, causing a desire for renewal and creativity." Another German sociologist Ralf Dahrendorf argues that conflicts are essential as a factor in the overall process of social changes.

Regarding the ethnic conflict, especially its territorial version, more convincing is the position of the structural and functional methodology, which is considering the

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[26] Smith, A. (1993): "The Ethnic Sources of Nationalism", pp. 28-29.

conflict as dysfunctional, adverse event in the life of society, which is a kind of obstacle in solving the problems of social life of people of different nationalities.

These conflicts are not so much "for renewal and creativity" as the cause stasis, cast society back in his development, entail blood, human casualties, destruction, economic decline, poverty, and famine. Redeem broke out of ethnic conflict is extremely difficult, it can last for months, years, be faded out and then flare up with renewed vigor. Different understanding of the phenomenon of ethnicity allows different interpretation of ethnic conflicts. By a multi-ethnic composition of the population of the former USSR and present new states any internal conflict takes an ethnic overtone.

Ethnicity usually serves as a border conflict in situations where there is inequality in the social, political, legal, and cultural spheres. So many conflicts that occurred in the Soviet and post-Soviet periods in the country, are of ethnic character. We should also note that one of the forms of conflicts often includes the other and undergoes transformation, ethnic or political camouflage.[27] V.A Tishkov gives a definition of ethnic conflict: "Under the ethnic conflict we mean a certain level of organized political action, social movements, riots, secessionist speeches and even civil war, in which the confrontation takes place through the ethnic community".

Note that the ethnic and ethno-territorial problems of modern Russia do not represent an exceptional phenomenon. They have numerous counterparts in the modern world, and in the history of mankind. However, in Russia, they have their own specifics, due to both the peculiarities of the present stage experienced by the country and the peculiarities of Russia's geopolitical position in the changing device civilization of mankind.

Studying the nature of ethnic conflicts

Firstly, we should say that, ethnicity is one of the earliest forms of the social organization of society, which appeared long before classes, estates, Political associations,

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[27] Beissinger, Mark, R. Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet Union, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

etc. Ethnic conflicts are the oldest form of social Conflicts that accompany the whole of human history.

Secondly, that ethnicity is not the subject of free choice. In most of cases, people "Chooses" his ethnicity once for a lifetime in the process of socialization, which with rare exceptions is not conscious. Ethnic self-identification, therefore, is an astrictive type of social identification, which significantly increases the emotional saturation of ethnic conflict. It is common for people, when giving themselves over to the power of ethnic feelings, people act in conflict situations contrary to common sense, elementary calculation and not only doesn't improve, but Often aggravate their situation with such actions. In some ethnoconflictological schools, this is treated as an irrational component of ethnic conflict.

Thirdly, as ethnos's act territorially Organized structures, ethnic conflicts are especially acute if their objects are of a territorial nature or territorial origin (possession of territory, land, wealth of its subsoil, territorial structure of the state and Other).

Fourthly, ethnic conflicts have an amazing ability to involve in their orbit a variety of fragments of social reality. Since ethnic conflict can include Objects of other types of conflicts, in an empirical study it is almost impossible to detect it in its pure form. It is common for a conflict that, in the early stages of the conflict, was dominated by economic or other contradictions, and then grew into an ethnic conflict and vice versa.

Theories about ethnic conflicts

Among the most well-known theories of ethnic conflict there are several.

The ethnic stratification theory. J. Rothschild was asked to consider the ethnic group and the state as a subject of ethno-political conflict. According to the scientist, progress and activity of ethno-political movements depend on the economic, political, and ideological resources that can handle group. In addition, the group must be considered with its social and cultural characteristics. The socio-psychological theory of ethnic conflict by D. Horowitz is focused on the social and psychological dynamics. In his understanding, ethnicity has a special dynamic in view of the fact that it is associated with

the collective emotions.[28] This leads to the fact that rational political and economic interests of the group can retreat into the background, and a crucial role in provoking the escalation of the conflict and begin to play the emotional factors. In the dynamics of the ethnic conflict can be traced the action of two mechanisms of behavior-: socio-psychological and institutional. Ethnic conflict is due to a group of emotional response, which is based on group solidarity as members of the group trying to protect some common values, often have a symbolic character. Then an emotional response and group solidarity transformed into a public activity, furnished positions, and claims, which are created for the implementation of the relevant structures.[29]

The large-scale attempt to analyze the ethnic conflict was made by T. Gurr in the work of "Minorities as a risk group." [30]This Work was based on the study of political behavior of ethnic groups in the period from 1945 to 1989. The key provisions of Gurr's concept is the assertion that the ethno-political action is motivated by a deep-seated resentment of people, t which is accentuated and promoted by ethnic group leaders and entrepreneurs. [31]Out of this grew the concept theory of "basic human needs" that supposedly underlies the conflict and among these needs appears the desire to group integrity and to collective self-determination. The critique of these theories and approaches has been given at the time, and none of them we do not consider the universal and even sufficient for the analysis of contemporary conflict difficulties. Ethnic (often used synonymous definition - ethno-political) conflict - is a special form of social conflicts, with ability to engage in its orbit subject areas and objects of other types of conflicts and in its pure form is uncommon.

Meanwhile, the experience of world history has shown that these conflicts could acquire significant and that any one of them at the same time has a political component. According to German anthropologist G. Schlee, the totality of views and positions related

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[28] Tir, Jaroslav. 2010. Territorial Diversion: Diversionary Theory and Territorial Conflict. The Journal of Politics, Vol. 72, No. 2, pp. 413-425.

[29] Smith, A. (1993): "The Ethnic Sources of Nationalism", pp. 28-29.

[30] Coding decisions based on expert analyses found in: Monahan, James. "The Former Soviet Union's Diverse

Peoples: A References Sourcebook." (Santa Barbara:ABC-CLIO), 2004. Gammer, Moshe. "EthnoNationalism, Islam, and the State in the Caucasus: Post-Soviet Disorder." (New York: Routledge), 2008.

[31] Gurr and Harff, 96.

to the definition of ethnicity as a cause of "splits and disintegration" can be reduced to the following statements:

1) Ethnic differences are the root cause of the ethnic conflict;

2) The contradiction between the customs of different nations reflect ancient, inherited and deeply rooted antagonisms;

3) Ethnicity is universal, i.e. Anyone implying for any member of the people;

4) Ethnicity astrictive, i.e., as a rule, a person cannot change his ethnicity;

5) Ethnic communities are associated with a specific territory and seek the national sovereignty.

However, almost any of the following statements can be challenged. Disagreeing with statements about the meaning of ethnic differences in the occurrence and escalation of ethno-political conflicts, attempts to explain their origin deep historically conditioned, Schlee cites the example of Yugoslavia. It is believed that the Yugoslav crisis is a classic example of ethno-political conflict of our time. In this regard, the most important situations is in Bosnia, which Mr. Schlee calls "Yugoslavia in miniature". Studies of pre-war time have shown that the gradual disappearance of Slavic ethnicities, was a process of forming a single Yugoslav people.

This process had a different intensity in different parts of the country, but it was obvious. In Bosnia, most of the population until the 1990s did not give significant importance to the ethnic factor. However, ethnicity per se was imposed on politicians local Serbs, Croats and Muslims, and perceived cultural differences have become the real basis not only to separate communities, but also for their violent confrontation during the civil war. [32]

The underlying causes of today's ethnic conflicts are discrimination and the absence of development of democratic practices and institutions, that would allow to solve the problem through negotiation and compromise, but not less common causes of ethno-political conflicts are ethnic separatism, irredentism, the struggle for the legal status of the group, striving for the attainment of group autonomy, the struggle for the interests of the community or sectarian religious movement. In addition to the manipulation of the cultural differences and political mobilization of ethnicity, which are engaged in fighting

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[32] Tir, Jaroslav. 2010. Territorial Diversion: Diversionary Theory and Territorial Conflict. The Journal of Politics, Vol. 72, No. 2, pp. 250-278.

for power and policy resources cannot lose sight of the ethnic conflict, which feed on the historical memory of past injustices, often mobilized in dramatic form, to become the backbone of modern hatred and readiness to participate in the conflict. The updated memory of Stalin's deportation of the Chechens, as well as the Caucasian war, were the most important mobilizing factor for members of the armed struggle in Chechnya, was a conflict primarily about contemporary issues and at the same time it was an occasion to demonstrate the virtues of modern "freedom fighters ".

Thus, we define the ethnic conflict as a form of civil war in the domestic or trans-levels, in which at least one party is organized and operates based on ethnicity or on behalf of the ethnic community. Under the ethno-political conflict, we understand the struggle of various social groups, which are organized along ethnic lines, and this principle becomes the basis of their ideological and political confrontation.[33]

Each conflict has its own peculiarities, but there are grounds to allow generalizations and typology of existing species. And although we are not supporters of rigid definitions and typologies, considering them as signs of a weak methodology, however, in our opinion, it is possible to identify some types of ethnic conflicts. This is primarily the classification of the spheres of public life, when distinguished political, ethnic conflicts, economic conflicts, ethnic and cultural conflicts, etc. But many of them cannot be unequivocally attributed to an area of social life, as they relate to both the economy and politics, and culture. Possible classification of the subjects or objects in addition to the classification by "areas" and as an independent method of classification, especially in cases where the conflicts were clearly defined by "Intersectoral" character for example, secessionist or irredentist conflicts.

The experience of the USSR and Russia showed that in turning, crisis era old ethnic hierarchy is crumbling, and the weakening of the dominant groups allows minority communities, especially ethnic, work to change their status, receive a variety of preferences in the field of culture, access to resources and power. And ethnic elites often try to force these processes under the slogan of "justice", knowing that the time factor can play a crucial need to quickly determine what "piece of cake" they will get.

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[33] See James Hughes, "Managing Secession Potential   in the Russian Federation", in James Hughes and Gwendolyn Sasse (eds), Ethnicity and Territory in the Former Soviet Union: Regions in Conflict (London: Frank Cass, 2002), pp. 42-43

All this leads to the politicization of ethnicity, to the growth of ethno-nationalism and increased conflicts in the sphere of interethnic relations. Actualization of ethnicity in the last period of Soviet history and in the first years of the new Russian state was expressed not only in greatly increased interest in the native language, ethnic culture, the history, but mainly in the requirements to create a state guarantee for the preservation and development of cultural identity of ethnic groups. Expression of these requirements was the main ethno-national humanitarian intelligentsia, which not only gave the ethnic claims argumentation and design in the form of programs, declarations, proclamations, etc., but also was the main organizer of the ethno-political movements that sought implementation of programs put forward in life.

It is important to note that with a few exceptions, national movements and organizations in the former USSR and Russia emerged in 1988-1991 gg., I.e., between the deepest political and socio-economic crisis of the previous social system.

The typology of ethnic conflicts

Each conflict is an independent socio-historical event, it can reveal the properties, traits and signs that are inherent in other ethnic conflicts. Identifying these common signs - an important element of scientific research, allowing to move to more complex stages of scientific search, such as, for example, analogy, prediction, conflict modeling. As the basis for the typology we propose the following.

1. The classification of ethnic conflicts in the spheres of public life is very common in both foreign and domestic science. There are political ethnic conflicts, conflicts in economic life, in the spiritual sphere, etc. "Sphere" typology is not comprehensive and clear, since most Ethnic conflicts have an "interspheral" character.

2. Classification by objects. It can act both as a continuation of the previous classification, and as an independent model, especially when the subjects of conflict have a clearly expressed "intersospheric" character. Such are the conflicts that have developed, For example, around the problem of the state language, territory and its economic resources, domestic ethnic conflicts.

3. Classification by subject-carriers. Highlight the conflict between single-order and different orders. The first type is, for example, Ossetian-Ingush conflict, the conflict

between pro-Russian and pro-Ukrainian citizens of the Crimea, as well as many international conflicts. Another type of conflict involves differently ordered subjects, for example, an ethnic minority or a non-titular people, on the one hand, and the titular people or its state structures, on the other. Typical examples of such conflicts are the Russian-Chechen and Georgian-Abkhaz conflicts. Relativity of this classification is obvious, nevertheless, it is quite often found in studies on ethno-conflictology.

More meaningful is the classification of the subjects of the conflict from the point of view of their institutionalization. There are times when both parties to the conflict institutionalized, i.e. State or otherwise politically framed, and in this case the interethnic conflict acquires the features of the international.[34] As H. Elmer rightly notes, "ethnic relations within the country have much in common with international relations." Some similarities can be seen in the ways violent actions. War often resembles an extended ethnic conflict, and ethnic conflict is a local war.

The main difference is that even protracted wars end eventually with a ceasefire and peace talks. Serious ethnic conflicts may not have a solution and continue for hundreds and thousands of years, only for a certain time turning into a stage of respite "

A special and quite common case of such conflict is the institutionalization of one carrier subject and the non-institutionalization of the other. In this case, the struggle of the state against, for example, one of ethnic minorities can be perceived as a struggle of the title ethnos against this minority, there is mutual hatred and alienation, although only a small part of the institutionalized ethnos (for example, the army, the police) takes part in the struggle against another people.[35]

In addition, ethnic conflicts can be classified on such grounds as the distinctive features of the conflict environment, the features of its dynamics and many other features.[36]

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[34] See, for instance, Svante E. Cornell, Small Nations, and Great Powers: A Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus, Ricmond, Curzon Press, 1999

[35] Tir, Jaroslav. 2010. Territorial Diversion: Diversionary Theory and Territorial Conflict. The Journal of Politics, Vol. 72, No. 2, pp. 413-425.

[36] Saideman, Stephen M. 2001. The Ties That Divide: Ethnic Politics, Foreign Policy, and International Conflict. New York: Columbia University Press.

The Ethnic Past and Myths of Ethnogenesis in Transcaucasia

Today on the territory of the former USSR the real and potential ethnic conflicts threaten the existence of nations and give rise to dangerous destructive processes. Emerging conflicts on various occasions consistently take the form of ethnic confrontations.[37]

However, analysis shows that the purely ethnic conflicts at first sight is not always reducible to the real clash of ethnic groups. For example, observers noted with surprise, that the division of the people in the Georgian-Abkhazian events or in Transnistria does not always happen on a purely ethnic line, similarly in the Israeli-Arab conflict on the side of the first volunteers fought the Arabs, citizens of Israel, as a part of the Palestinian delegation were Jews in the peace talks. These facts indicate that the real conflict cannot be reduced to a conflict of nationalities, although perhaps perceived by the parties to them as ethnic. Consequently, demand explanations question: why such conflicts are perceived exactly as ethnic, or anything in the eyes of their members acquire ethnic overtones and their descriptions used ethnic vocabulary? To solve this problem seems important first to consider the concept of "ethnicity".

Human history includes ethnic group as an essential aspect of the development of the nation. The specifics of the ethnic group (as the tribe) is that, people belonging to it see their relationship as natural. Mankind gradually overcomes the limitations of ethnic groups and forms the nation. The last is the result of a new culture, overcoming the idea of naturalness, bringing people together in a common and challenging ideas about determining the value of individual rights, the rule of law, the civil society, which alone can provide rights of the individual.

Historically developed nations can be formed based on the predominance of an ethnic group, but nevertheless they are realized as socio-cultural education such as public as having a common historical destiny. In our popular understanding nation is an ethnic community, formed based on ethnic, tribal values. At the beginning of human

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[37] Charles King, The Ghost of Freedom: A History of the Caucasus. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 235.

history, people have been merged into the local community of different types: clan, tribe, patriarchal family, ethnicity. All of them were a certain unity of the human relations and culture.

It is essential that ethnicity is not strictly identified with the territory, as during historical development, ethnic groups moved and mixed their territories. It is also important to remember that the formation of nations is highly controversial step, which may be interrupted in devastating conflict. The fact of the emergence of the state as a social institution on ethnic, tribal basis carries the risk of outbreaks of inter-ethnic conflicts, both within states and between them.

Ethnicity becomes a private citizen matter. The formation of nations is possible only at a certain stage of development of society, at a certain level of development of cities, urban culture, with the development of not only the market but also abstract thinking, the ability to understand the value of abstract rights, law, money, values of an autonomous personality, self-worth. In particular the situation of the culture of each ethnic group, always carries with it some measure of correlation between the poles of the opposition "ethnic values, national values." It can give rise to crisis situations that "in a society characterized primarily blurring of interests; their uncertainty, on the one hand, and on the other a very complex nature of their understanding and awareness " All of the direct causes and motives of ethnic conflicts, is always clothed in the form of culture relevant stakeholders, in the form of perceptions about the conditions, means, goals, regardless of the nature, content, causes of conflict. Hence, the desire to paint the conflict. in ethnic cultural colors-evidence of the influence of the powerful mass of archaic cultural layers.

Accordingly, the significance of these concepts in the real conflict can be as invalid long-term, apparently normal relations between ethnic groups instantly destroyed in moments of crisis of any kind, since it may be in the corresponding culture of conflict resolution is seen beating on the way, expulsion ethnic group.

Caucasus and "Caucasians": the cultural construction of the region and regional identity

Today, in the territory of the former USSR, current and potential ethnic conflicts are threatening the existence of nations and giving rise to dangerous destructive processes. Constantly-emerging conflicts take the form of ethnic confrontations or, at the very least, show a desire to identify participants as being of a particular ethnicity. The collapse of the USSR and the socialist world system was the most important event of modern times and occurred for several reasons. Ethno-political processes occupy an important place amongst these.[38]

In modern science, it is understood that, in conflict, there is a collision between distinct and sometimes opposing interests, actions, attitudes, political parties, social organisations, and socio-political and socio-economic systems. Conflicts differ from region to region, as well as in level and how relations are managed on an ongoing basis. Factors that vary may be economic, social, political (external and internal), territorial, inter-confessional, and linguistic, etc.

The Caucasus has historically been one of the major regions of the world. Attention is drawn to its unique geographical location, which connects Europe and Asia. Since ancient times, this region has been linguistically, ethnically, religiously, and culturally diverse.

All of this has had an important influence on the social development of the Caucasian people. Many books have been written about the Caucasus and Caucasians and many books will be written in the future. This is because of the linguistic and cultural mosaic of the Caucasus, as well as current events. Historically, the Georgians have always had a great interest in the ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity of their neighbours, and still do today. The Georgian chronicler, Leonti Mroveli, spoke about the common origin of several Caucasian ethnic groups. It is well known that the data about the history of the Caucasian people is mostly gathered from Georgian sources.

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[38] Christoph Zurcher. The Post-Soviet Wars: Rebellion, Ethnic Conflict, and Nationhood in the Caucasus. (New York: New York University Press, 2007), pg 13.

First, we note that the Caucasus is a big region located on the boundary of Europe and Asia. If we create artificial boundaries it amounts to an area today which is more than 467,964 square kilometres. If we add to this the geographical area of the real Caucasus, which is in Turkey and Iran (the north-eastern villages of Turkey and the extreme northern regions of north-western Iran), the area exceeds 580,000 square kilometres. According to modern scientific data, the North Caucasus belongs to Europe, while the South Caucasus belongs to Asia. One very important feature characterises the Caucasus: throughout history, it has remained ethnically and culturally very colourful. We should not forget that, due to its geographical location, the Caucasus was (and still is) of interest to various empires.

When we are talking about Caucasian civilisation, we should understand what is meant by this term. As well as "culture", "civilisation" has many definitions and, in science, there is no generally accepted interpretation of the concept/term. Despite this, the opinion of scientists is consistent on several points about "civilisation." At the heart of this term is the Latin word "civils" meaning "citizen" or "state". Philosophical dictionaries and encyclopaedias usually define the concept of "civilisation" as follows: the unity of the material and spiritual achievements of society. Several factors caused the ethnic diversity of the Caucasus: its location at the turn of Europe and Asia; the movement of people to the north and south; the mountainous nature of the region; and the diversity of the local nature. Some of the ethnic groups were very small and their settlement areas were within one or two villages. Georgians, Armenians, Azeris and even "dvuhtreh" ethnic groups were mostly mountain residents. [39]

The ethnic situation in the Caucasus has changed, especially over the last 200 years, during which Russia has seized the region. The collapse of the Soviet Empire had negative consequences for the ethno-demographic situation of the region. In addition to the autochthonous ethnic groups in the Caucasus, there is a long history of non-native ethnic groups who have migrated there over time, who have turned into indigenous Caucasians and still live there.

Therefore, the Caucasus is one of the most multi-ethnic regions of the world: small territories, consisting of ethnic groups of different origins, exist side by side; most

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[39] See, for instance Svante E. Cornell, Small Nations, and Great Powers: A Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus, Ricmond, Curzon Press, 1999

are the oldest indigenous people of the Caucasus, while others migrated to the region at different periods in history.

The multi-ethnic Caucasus has been conditioned by its geographical location, climatic conditions, and its capturing of different empires of the region. Even though there are many works on the history of Caucasian ethnicity, the issue is undeniably still relevant and requires further research, especially since the collapse of the Soviet Empire, and other political world events have led to a new migratory movement of ethnic groups in the Caucasus.

Indigenous ethnic groups who lived in the mountains of the North Caucasus in the early middle ages are considered to be the ancestors of the Nakh-Dagestani and Abkhazian-Circassian peoples, who are often mixed together.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the "socialist camp" led to a fundamental reshaping of the world's political map, marking the emergence of many new sovereign states. Hasty adoption of the "acts of independence" was carried out without considering the possible effect that changes to territory and status would have on autonomous republics. This led to armed clashes and local conflicts in some regions, one of which was the Georgian-Abkhazian (Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, Transnistria, Abkhazia) war of 1992-1993. [40]

In summarising these conflicts, we should also point out that there were several external players who, in one way or another, affected the political "game" in troubled regions. According to experts, when the ethno-political situation along the Russian borders escalated, its main purpose was to provoke the South Caucasus countries into reacting against the reckless actions of the United States and others. Important factors here are, on the one hand, the parallel solution of the Kosovo problem, which is impossible not to compare with the situations in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. On the other hand, the year in which these two ethnic problems arose — which involved Russian citizens — was also an election year in Russia.

In general, we can talk about the poor performance of non-military methods of conflict settlement in all three ethno-political situations. South Ossetia and Abkhazia are unrecognised states, Georgia has not revised its relationships in practice, and Nagorno-

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[40] Charles King, The Ghost of Freedom: A History of the Caucasus. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp.117.

Karabakh is in the process of a settlement which is likely to anticipate a scenario like former Georgian autonomy.

Despite the urgency of the problem for modern historical science and international processes, this topic remains poorly understood in terms of its history and new trends. Identifying the causes and prerequisites of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict has been widely discussed, by both domestic and foreign researchers. The historical roots of the conflict have been analysed in the works of V.A. Shnirelman, D. Malysheva, N.N. Aqaba, G.P. Lezhava, Coppieters, Nodia, G. Zhorzholiani, K.B. Barbaryan, S. Markedonov, and others.

Multi-ethnic Caucasus was conditioned by its geographical location, climatic conditions, and the desire to capture the different empires of the region. Even though there are many works on the history of Caucasian ethnicity, undeniably, the problem is still relevant and requires further research, especially since the collapse of the Soviet Empire and other political processes taking place in the world, led to new migratory movement of ethnic groups in the Caucasus.[41]

The Caucasus region is heterogeneous and religious-confessional perspective. Empires of conquest ambitions for the region and expressed their desire to extend their religion here. A certain exception in this regard were only Mongolians, they do not seek to ensure their ideological conquest. The collapse of the Mongols and their mixing with different peoples, probably, to a certain extent been conditioned by this fact. This time our goal is not a review of religious and confessional picture of the Caucasus.

We should note that in recent years the most frequent cases of distortion of history and ethnology of the Caucasus, are all sorts of myths about it. We have the facts assigning newly arrived ethnic groups other people's cultural heritage, history and achievements once lived in the Caucasus and disappeared indigenous ethnic groups. In the Caucasus today live, up to fifty people, each of which has its own original culture and language. This region, which connects Europe and Asia, even in ancient times was inhabited by many ethnic groups. In confirmation of this can result in the reduction of the Greek geographer Strabo (. 64/63 BCE -. 23/24

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[41] See, for instance, Beissinger, Mark, R. Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet Union, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

years BC...) That in the Black Sea, in Dioscurias (modern Sukhumi) gathered merchants from all mountain regions of the Caucasus, the former representatives of about seventy people living here (Latyshev1947: 209-210).[42]

It is worth also to recall the words of the Arab Geographer Ibn alFakih alHamadani from the middle of IX century and showing that in the Caucasus Mountains are living 72 people, speaking a completely different language (Karaulov1902: 15, 17).[43] Arab author called the Caucasus "mountain of languages." This ethnic diversity typical for this Caucasus, although this does not mean that for centuries these regions has not undergone certain changes. [44]

Migration and other processes and upheavals that have taken place around the world and especially in Eurasia and the Middle East, had a significant influence on the processes taking place in the Caucasus. The mixing of peoples led to the emergence of new ethnic groups; many ancient ethnic groups have sunk into oblivion, becoming a part of history, is enough to recall, for example, the missing people of Caucasian Albania.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union's tendency to reduce the number of Russian ethnic group in the North Caucasus remains. Thus, from ancient times to today ethno-demographic point of view, the Caucasus is constantly changing. All the events that took place in the Eurasian region and the Near East, certainly reflected the ethnic dynamics of this region.

Throughout the long history of the Caucasus many ethnic groups settled and many of them are gone. Russian state paid dearly for the conquest of the Caucasus, it has shed a lot of blood of indigenous Caucasian ethnic groups, many of who were forced to leave their ancestral lands, Russia has made ethnic diversity in the region, however, it won on the Caucasus at a certain time at last peace. For example, the

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[42] Caucasian Neighborhood: Turkey and South Caucasus. Yerevan, the Caucasus Institute, 2008. The
article Iskandaryan A. "The South Caucasus between Isolation and Integration: Genesis and Perspectives". P. 7.
[43] South Caucasus: The Origins of Separatism, Conflict Resolution, Long-term Peace. Proceedings of the
International Scientific-Practical Conference on the 90 the Anniversary of the Diplomatic Service of
Azerbaijan. Iv. Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. 20 November2009, ed. N.G. Aliyev.P. 13.
[44] Charles King, The Ghost of Freedom: A History of the Caucasus. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 234.

relative calm and fell on favorable conditions for the development of ethnic Georgians in the XIX-XX centuries (after termination devastating raids of the North Caucasus mountaineers), but in the same period narrowed area of the settlement of the Georgian ethnos; places of historical settlement of the Georgian occupied by other ethnic groups. Home of Russian policy in the Caucasus error consisted precisely in the fact that Russia had here their support in the face of "privileged people", for which she expected and which in some way help the implementation of its imperial purposes.

Ethnopolitical problems in the Caucasus

The study of the ethnic problem in the South Caucasus is extremely relevant, because there is a real threat to Russia's national security, its Integrity and sovereignty.

The Caucasus region (especially the South Caucasus) is considered a very important geostrategic space, where it has the functions and boundaries of the front of the clash of civilizations in the meridian section (neo-Atlanticists and neo-Eurasians) and the geo-economic bridge (Although in the context of economic and social opposition, in the meridian section, the neomondialists and the Islamists-integrates). In this respect, it is very important to note the prospects for the transformation of the Caucasus from Confrontational model in the so-called "peaceful island".

Recently, more studies have appeared on the problems of the settlement of ethno-political, socio-economic, national-cultural, and economic problems in the Caucasus.[45]

Different views are emerging on the problems of the ethnopolitical settlement in the Transcaucasia. The geopolitical situation in the Transcaucasia and its development are currently characterized by a clash in the region of a number of interstate and interethnic interests, the preservation of hotbeds of armed conflicts and tensions, the unstable nature of the emergence of new independent states in this region of the world, with continuing rivalry and struggle at the interethnic, regional and global levels for redistribution Spheres of influence and control over the resources of the region [23]. It is necessary to consider ethnic nationalism, which is inherent in the mass.[46]

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[45] Horowitz, D. L. (1985): Ethnic Groups in Conflict, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
[46] Cedereman, Lars-Erik, Emergent actors in World Politics: How States and Nations Develop and Dissolve. 1997, Princeton: Princeton University Press, chapter 8.

According to A.M Temirbulatov, the regional security system in the Caucasus should be developed in three main directions:

- political aspect and security;

- the economy;

- the sphere of law and the creation of a democratic society.

It is the synthesis of these three areas that will allow us to achieve the necessary unity in the region.[47]

The South Caucasus has always been of interest to big powers. Here their interests often collided: this happened historically. Political realism consists in integrating organically into the political processes taking place in the Caucasian region. At the same time, ensuring the basic national interests requires a correct definition and consistent implementation of priority tasks, aimed primarily at protecting national security and economic development of the country.

Geography of interethnic conflicts in the post-Soviet space

The Caucasian region takes its name from the Caucasian mountain range. The Caucasian ridge is a kind of dividing line between the North Caucasus and Transcaucasia (the South Caucasus). The Great Caucasus is a historical and cultural geographical area bounded by the Black Sea in the west, the Caspian Sea in the east, north by Russia and Iran and Turkey - in the south. Today, the Caucasus includes four states recognized by the international community. This is Russia, Azerbaijan, Armenia And Georgia.

The South Caucasus is a territory inhabited by many ethnic groups that, during the Soviet era, resided within the three socialist republics of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia, both within autonomous republics and regions, and outside such frameworks.

The first important interethnic conflict in the region is the territory and its status, the second is the power. The problem of access to power is expressed in the region already at the sub-ethnic level, since generic, clan groups persist in the structure of many Caucasian ethnic groups. The next most important object of conflicts in the south

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[47] Charles King, The Ghost of Freedom: A History of the Caucasus. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 229

Caucasus is land.[48] . In the past few years, there has been a collapse of security in the Caucasus region in both areas. " With the words of an expert from the London Institute of Peace and the war of Thomas de Waal is difficult not to agree.

The concepts of "the Caucasus" and "conflicts" (as well as the "Caucasus" And "war", "Caucasus" and "refugees") are closely related to late Soviet and post-Soviet history. Of the eight-armed conflicts in the post-Soviet space, six have occurred in the Caucasus region: Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, the Georgian-Ossetian And the Georgian-Abkhaz conflicts, the civil war in Georgia in 1993, the Ossetian-Ingush and the Russian-Chechen conflicts (the last two - on the territory of the Russian Federation).

Currently, in conflict situations, the land does not yet appear as the main object of the dispute, but it is so potentially in many latent conflicts.[49] The reasons that conditioned the actualization of ethnic conflicts in the territory of the former USSR were manifested to the full in the south Caucasus, while a few factors acting in the region, which give this process a special specificity and great acuity, acted.[50]

First, it is the increased importance of ethnic identification in the self-awareness of the Caucasian ethnic groups compared to other types of social identification. This situation is typical for regions with a complex ethnic structure and incomplete processes of nation-building.

Secondly, this is the legacy of national-territorial redistribution. Nowhere else within the limits of present-day Russia has such many changes in the national-territorial structure as in the south Caucasus been affected, and these changes concerned changes in borders as well as changes in the status of national-territorial entities.

Thirdly, these are the features of the mentality of the mountain peoples of the Caucasus, who for centuries have been oriented toward "resolving" conflicts by force. The cult of weapons and forces, conditioned by the historical and geographical peculiarities of the region, formed a specific culture of the conflict among the peoples of the Caucasus, in which the force's outcome is a priority.

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[48] Kaufmann, Ch. Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil War, International Security, Spring 1996, Vol.20, No. 4. pp. 136-175
[49] See, for instance, Svante E. Cornell, Small Nations, and Great Powers: A Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus, Ricmond, Curzon Press, 1999.
[50] See, for instance, Svante E. Cornell, "The Unruly Caucasus", Current History, October 1997.

Fourthly, it is a relatively late addition of the south Caucasus to Russia in comparison with other areas that are an ethnic homeland or historically formed areas of population settlement.

Fifthly, these are the consequences of deportations and mass resettlement of peoples.

Sixthly, this is the absence of the conceptually developed "Caucasian policy" of the new Russian state.

Ethnoterritorial conflicts can be divided into two large groups. The first of these is the territorial claims of some ethnic groups to others. The second is territorial separatism, i.e. The requirement to separate one territory whose population represents a stable one-ethnic array, from an integral state or state entity perceived as the statehood of another people.

Territorial separatism has three main forms: secession - separation to create or recreate its own national state; Irredentism - the separation of part of the territory of one state with the aim of joining a neighboring state; Enosis - separation of the territory to join the "mother" state, that is, a state with a one-ethnic population. The most common form of separatism is secession. Foreign ethno-conflictologists studied this phenomenon in sufficient details. There are several concepts explaining the causes and mechanism of this kind of ethno-territorial conflict, including, in relation to Russian conditions.

The first concept is based on the fact that the modernization processes (they cover the countries of the former socialist camp and many countries of the third world), exacerbate the ethnic sentiments of people and strengthen the requirements for self-determination.

The second concept is called the concept of "internal colonialism" and its main idea is the assertion that in the multi-ethnic states some peoples oppress and exploit others, in this connection the only way to resolve the conflict situation is to create its own independent state.[51]

The third concept has developed in the realm of the "realistic" school in conflictology and its supporters argue that behind the ideological struggle for the right of

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[51] Saideman, Stephen M. 2001. The Ties That Divide: Ethnic Politics, Foreign Policy, and International Conflict. New York: Columbia University Press.

nations self-determination lies in the struggle of certain sections of society for control over resources located on the disputed territory.

The fourth concept, which can be referred to as "procedural", does not seek to identify any single-type reasons for the emergence of the requirements of secession, but focuses on the study of the mechanism for the deployment of the conflict towards secession. As a rule, the movement for secession is designed to be supported from the outside, primarily by states interested in changing the balance of forces in the region, on the part of peoples close in ethnic, cultural, or religious aspects.

However, such a calculation turned out to be shallow, since the regional interests of Iran and Turkey, as well as some other Muslim states, do not include an acute confrontation with Russia.[52]

A special case of separatism is irredentism - the separation of territory is usually on the ethnic principle with the aim of joining the neighboring state. Since the borders of states do not coincide with the boundaries of ethnoses, the potential for irredentism in the world is great, however, irredentist movements turned out to be much less common than secessionist ones. This is explained by the fact that irredentism inevitably leads to the transformation of the intra-state ethnic conflict into an interstate conflict.

Another type of separatism is enosis, which represents the possibility of reuniting an ethnic minority with a state-organized single-ethnic majority. A typical example of an attempted enosis is the demand of the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh for the separation of this territory from Azerbaijan and its annexation to Armenia, the Ossetian population of South Ossetia, the secession from Georgia and accession to North Ossetia, From a formal and logical point of view, ethno-territorial conflict can be defined as a kind of social conflict, the subjects of which are social groups that differ in ethnicity, and the causes of contradictions - territorial dispute.

Since, as noted above, the ethnic conflict can "master" objects and objects of other types of conflicts, it is practically impossible to find an ethnic conflict in a social process, especially ethno-territorial conflict, in pure form (however, like other types of conflicts), and the identification of these types of conflicts is carried out based on the definition of the main line of schism in society.

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[52] Samuel Huntington "The Clash of Civilizations", Multipolar, Polycivilized World, source: http://lib.rus.ec/b/79038

So, it is not unusual for a conflict, in the early stages of which economic or other contradictions prevailed, to develop into an ethnic conflict and vice versa. Sometimes such transformations are a consequence of the purposeful management of the conflict.[53] Nevertheless, among the main and most dangerous manifestations of political instability, undoubtedly, there are territorial disputes and claims, possessing, in the times of global geopolitical shifts, a colossal destructive potential.

It was during the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the formation of the national statehood of the former union republics, the number of ethno-territorial disputes grew substantially, and many of them moved from the hidden phase to the active one. The term "ethnoterritorial conflict" is interpreted in a broad sense as any claim to the territory by the party of the dispute.

Ethnoterritorial conflicts can take forms more and less acute, civilized, and uncivilized, peaceful, and non-peaceful. Of course, this does not exclude the possibility and legitimacy of using this term in a narrower sense, when "conflicts" mean only the most acute forms of confrontation. But since a significant part of ethnic conflicts in the post-Soviet space develops precisely as ethno-territorial conflicts or has clear signs of such, the most pressing problem has been the systematization of information on ethnoterritorial claims and disputes and the creation of a corresponding data bank. Estimates of ethnoconflictologists, one way or another, preserve the relevance of about 140 territorial claims8. Not ethnical and not all territorial conflicts pertain to ethno-territorial, but precisely those that are at the junction of these two large groups of conflicts. They are both ethnic and territorial.

Typology of conflicts

The collapse of the Soviet Union was accompanied by a large number of conflicts, some of which went into the armed phase (Civil war in Tajikistan, the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, the Georgian-Abkhazian, Georgian-Ossetian, Russian-Chechen, Ossetian-Ingush, Moldovan-Transnistrian conflicts), And some confined themselves to clashes or tensions in the relationship. For example, after the

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[53] Kaufmann, Ch. Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil War, International Security, Spring 1996, Vol.20, No. 4. pp. 136-175

collapse of the Soviet Union, Uzbekistan unilaterally conducted mining of the border strip on the borders with Kyrgyzstan and tajikistan.

In the early 1990s, in many republics of the Russian North Caucasus, attempts were made to divide ethnicity (Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Karachay-Cherkessia). According to the comment of the Russian ethnologist Valery Tishkov, "An extremely important lesson is growing understanding that the division of States by themselves does not solve the most important issues of economic and Socio-cultural prosperity, and even more, the self-determination of peoples on the ethnic Basis. The payment for the sections, including human sacrifices and material destruction, is much greater than in the case of the selection of a strategy for improving governance, including the solution of problems of interethnic relations based on internal self-determination and a democratic governance system ". Nevertheless, the most violent conflicts of the 1990's Europe fell to the Balkans and the post-Soviet space. In this regard, it is extremely important to understand the general and special features of the genesis of these conflicts, as well as in the possibilities of post-conflict settlement. [54]

Most researchers agree that ethnic (interethnic) conflict is a particular case of social conflict, while possessing specific features. These include the nature of the subjects (the conflicting groups are formed on ethnic grounds) and the emotionally-irrational character of Conflict. Valery Tishkov characterizes conflicts as any form of "civil, political or armed confrontation in which the parties or one of the parties are mobilized, operate or suffer based on ethnic differences ". According to Zinaida Sikevich, "ethnic conflict" should be understood as such a social situation, which is due to "The discrepancy between the interests and goals of individual ethnic groups within a single ethnic space or ethnic group, on the one hand, and the state on the other"[55]

In the latter case, the subjects of the conflict and the deep objectives of their political activity are tightly bound in the definition, no matter what declarations they are covering up and in whatever forms the ethnic conflict manifests itself. The Norwegian researcher Dan Smith notes such an important aspect of the conflict as the struggle for

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[54] Yunusov, Arif (2003) Azerbaijan: The burden of history – waiting for change. Collection "The Caucasus: Armed and Divided". London, pg. 43-67; pg. Sidikov, Bahodir (2004) New or Traditional? "Clans". Regional Groupings and State in Post-Soviet Azerbaijan. Berliner Osteuropa Info. Berlin, pg. 68-78.
[55] Charles King, The Ghost of Freedom: A History of the Caucasus. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 150.

power or access to economic resources, which has an "ethnic mask". In this case, ethnicity acts as a tool for mobilizing a conflicting society, as well as for legitimizing the violence used during the confrontation (the protection of one's ethnicity is viewed as an "acceptable price" for its own victims and the victims of the opponents).

According to Smith, "the metaphor of the ethnic mask" is designed to draw attention to this particular strategy of political mobilization, and does not at all cast doubt on the reality of the sense of ethnic identity or diminish its significance, be it the time of conflict or outside him. For example, there is no doubt that the Chechens who oppose Russia in the wars of the 1990s have a deep and distinct sense of their ethnicity. " And yet, not only ethnic feelings, but also "rivalry over power between the new and old political elites, largely explains the transition of tensions between Chechnya and Russia in military operations in 1994. "

However, the phenomenon of "ethnic mask" is inherent in other interethnic conflicts (the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict is not least connected with the transition from shadow to legal private ownership of the Black Sea objects).[56] But the main problem, according to Smith, is "the removal of the ethnic mask," since the consolidated group identity based on resentment, discontent and sacrifice is difficult to correct. Nevertheless, today we can fix two approaches to the definition of the phenomenon of interethnic conflict.[57] At narrow sense, interethnic conflict can be considered a social confrontation, originally motivated by ethnic (Religious) reasons. In a broad sense, inter-ethnic (inter-confessional) conflict is a confrontation in which opposing groups belong to various ethnic (religious groups).

At the same time, ethnic (religious) belonging can be constructed, understood, and interpreted differently, and ethnic motivation may initially not be present, or be weakly expressed. A narrow understanding of the interethnic conflict, on the one hand, avoids the "inflation" of the concept itself, but, on the other hand, removes from the analytical field the stage of the development of the conflict, when it cannot yet be completely described as a formalized confrontation. Meanwhile, underestimation of these stages of conflicts (let's call them protoconflicts), often regarded as banal hooliganism or "domestic phenomenon," has significant Political consequences. The subsequent bloody war

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[56] Ghia Nodia, Causes and Vision of Conflict in Abkhazia, p. 4.
[57] Svante E. Cornell, "The Unruly Caucasus", Current History, October 1997

between Armenians and Azerbaijanis Because of Nagorno-Karabakh, refuted such statements.

In this regard, the classification and typology of interethnic conflicts is extremely important. Even now, there is no unified classification of interethnic conflicts. According to the form of flow, it is customary to distinguish between actualized ("open") and non- and latent ("hidden") conflicts. Some authors draw attention to the fact that a special category of inter-ethnic confrontation is an armed conflict (this definition may coincide with the notion of an "open" conflict).

According to the famous Norwegian researcher Dan Smith, this is "open clash with the use of weapons between two or more parties led from the center, an ongoing for some time in a dispute over control of the territory or its Management ". To specify the concept of "armed conflict", scientists from the Department for Peace and Conflict Studies of the University Uppsala (Sweden) proposed a quantitative criterion (25 deaths per war per year) and a qualitative criterion (state participation in a conflict, at least on one side). [58]

Meanwhile, in the post-Soviet space, virtually all armed interethnic confrontations were the result of unresolved multi-year latent conflicts. The Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh began with the "war of petitions and rallies", and only then grew into a large ethnic military confrontation. Georgian-Abkhazian And the Georgian-Ossetian conflicts initially developed as politico-legal (status) disputes. All interethnic conflicts of the post-Soviet space were originally formed and developed as internal state.

Armenian-Azerbaijani, Georgian-Abkhazian, Georgian-Ossetian, Russian-Chechen conflicts in the late Soviet period developed as conflicts between the leadership of the union and autonomous republics, as confrontation Principles of territorial integrity and the right to ethno-national self-determination. [59]The Ossetian-Ingush conflict, on the one hand, was a conflict of various ethnic groups, and, on the other, a territorial dispute. As for latent conflicts, the conflicting parties in them and before and after the dissolution of the USSR were representatives of various ethnic groups (Georgians and Armenians, Karachais and Circassians, Kabardians and Balkars, Laks and Kumyks).

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[58] Elman, C. 2005. Explanatory Typology in Qualitative Studies of Internal Politics. International Organization 59, pp. 295-300.

[59] Ghia Nodia, Causes and Vision of Conflict in Abkhazia, p. 4.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict was transformed into interstate. However, according to Russian diplomat Vladimir Kazimirov, "the specificity of the Karabakh conflict is, that there are at least two and a half sides in it. [60] "31 Of course, there were two fighting parties in the hostilities (the formations of the Karabakh Armenians together with the regular parts of the Republic of Armenia were one of them), but there were three politically (Baku-Stepanakert-Yerevan). Thus, the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict was considered (at least in the Azerbaijani interpretation) not only as a struggle between the two states, but also as a fight against "Karabakh separatism".

The withdrawal of the national republics from the Soviet Union provoked the secessionist sentiments of the former autonomies. The Georgian-Ossetian, Georgian-Abkhazian, Russian-Chechen conflicts became a confrontation between the central state power and separatist entities. At the same time, the opposing sides equally used the definition of „separatist ". For the leaders of breakaway Abkhazia and South Ossetia as separatist in 1989-1991. Georgia appeared, coming from the USSR, and thereby provide an opportunity for ethno-national self-determination of the Ossetians and Abkhazians.

For more than 20 years Nagorno Karabakh has been a point of special ethnopolitical tension in the South Caucasus. The status of this territory over the last century has undergone many changes within the framework of abolished and newly created state formations, which was often associated with armed confrontation of the population with third forces. The last conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, which developed into full-scale hostilities in 1992, remains unresolved until now and although the active use of armed forces by the parties was terminated in May 1994.

Until now, none of the interethnic Conflicts in the Caucasus is settled.[61] Conflict settlement in karabakh, South Ossetia, Abkhazia, the Priorian district of the Republic of North Ossetia did not become an irreversible process. On the contrary, since 2004, we can talk About the "defrosting" of certain conflicts in the Caucasus, that is, attempts to change the existing balance of power and the legal status quo with the use of force. This led to two military clashes in the South Ossetia (August 2004 and the so-called "five-day war" in

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[60] Christoph Zurcher. The Post-Soviet Wars: Rebellion, Ethnic Conflict, and Nationhood in the Caucasus. (New York: New York University Press, 2007), pp.13.

[61] Saideman, Stephen M. 2001. The Ties That Divide: Ethnic Politics, Foreign Policy, and International Conflict. New York: Columbia University Press.

August 2008), the escalation of violence in Abkhazia (in 2006-2008). Because of the "defrosting" of the two conflicts, a radical change occurred in the geopolitical landscape of not only South Caucasus, but also the entire post-Soviet space. Independence of two De facto states - Abkhazia and South Ossetia - was recognized by Russia (August 26, 2008) and with certain nuances by Nicaragua (September 5, 2008), Venezuela (September 10, 2009) and Nauru (December 15-16, 2009.)

Therefore, Russia as the mediator and the peacemaker, not only by fact, but also legally, became the guarantor of the self-determination of the two former autonomies of the Georgian SSR. Thus, for the first time since 1991, a precedent was created for the revision of state borders between the republics of the former Soviet Union.[62] Against the backdrop of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the situation in the zone of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict looks like a local story (there are no radical changes in the status quo that would affect the parties to the conflict and the parties concerned). [63]

However, here, in the beginning of 2006, an increase in the number of shootings on the ceasefire line (or "front line", as the band of the conflicting parties in Armenia and Azerbaijan are called) was recorded. In March 2008, there was the largest violation of the ceasefire, beginning with the truce reached in May 1994 between the conflicting parties. It was the Caucasus that became a kind of "supplier" of both unrecognized (de facto) state entities in the post-Soviet space - such as Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and self-proclaimed republics that existed for a few days and months to several years. [64]

From the four currently existing de facto post-Soviet states, three are located in the Caucasus region. At the same time, two of them - Abkhazia and South Ossetia - in August 2008 became partially recognized (their Independence is not recognized by the

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[62] Beissinger, Mark, R. Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet Union, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[63] Hunter, Shireen T., 'Azerbaijan: Searching for New Neighbors', in Bremmer and Taras (eds.), New States, New Politics, p. 438.

[64] Astourian, Stephan (2001) From Ter-Petrosyan to Kocharyan: Leadership Change in Armenia. Berkeley Programme in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies. UC Berkeley Working Paper Series, Berkeley. Libaridian, Gerard, (ed.) (1991) Armenia at the Crossroads: Democracy and Nationhood in the Post-Soviet Era. Blue Crane Books, Watertown. Libaridian, Gerard (2007) Modern Armenia: People, Nation, State Transaction Publishers. New Brunswick and London. Malkasian, Marc (1996) GhaRa-Bagh! The Emergence of the National Democratic Movement in Armenia. Wayne State University Press, Detroit. Marutyan, Harutyun, (2009) Iconography of Armenian Identity. Volume 1: The Memory of Genocide and the Karabagh Movement. Gitutyun, Yerevan. Suny Ronald (1993) Looking Toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History. Indiana University Press. Bloomington and Indianapolis.

UN and other international institutions, but recognized by the Russian Federation as a permanent member of the UN Security Council with the right of veto, as well as a member of the "nuclear club". [65]At the same time, the ideological base of de facto states and self-proclaimed republics was different (in most cases - Ethnic nationalism, as well as Islamic fundamentalism of the Salafi type).

Today's Caucasus is one of the most militarized regions in the world. The independent states of the South Caucasus have a military potential comparable to the potential of an average European country. The number of the Azerbaijani army is determined in 95 thousand people, the Armenian - in 53 thousand (with a population of 3 million people), the Georgian - about 30 thousand people.

In addition to the military machines of recognized states, there are armed forces of De facto states. In Abkhazia, there are 5 thousand people, in South Ossetia - 3 thousand people (not including reservists). In Nagorno-Karabakh (whose army is integrated with the armed forces Armenia) is about 18-20 thousand people. Prior to 2008, Russian peacekeepers (acting there under different mandates) were also in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Since August of 2008, their status has changed, negotiations with the leadership of de facto States on the establishment of Russian military bases on their territory.

Most of the conflicts ("open" And "hidden") on the territory of the Caucasus is closely connected with conflicts in the former republics of the Soviet Transcaucasia, and vice versa. In this regard, we can talk on the phenomenon of "related conflicts", the resolution of which can be the most successful only in a complex. The Armenian-Azerbaijani confrontation over Nagorno-Karabakh led to a significant displacement of Armenian refugees to the territory of the Krasnodar and Stavropol Territories.

According to official data, from 1989 to 2001, the number of Armenians increased by 42.52% (by 244,783 people, that is, 3.7% of its national composition). Today, Armenians are 12% of Tuapse's population, 15% of Sochi, and 38% of Adler. Thus, the "Armenian issue" has become one of the most important socio-political factors in the Krasnodar territory, and anti-Armenian (migrant-phobic) rhetoric is one of the ways of political legitimization of the regional elite, writing off its own mistakes for migrant "aliens."

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[65] Ghia Nodia, Causes and Vision of Conflict in Abkhazia, pp. 10.

One of the vivid examples of "connected" ethnic conflicts is the "Ossetian problem". The Georgian-Ossetian conflict has become the first interethnic confrontation in post-Soviet Georgia overgrown in a large-scale armed confrontation in January 1991 - July 1992. This conflict had a significant impact on the course and results of the first inter-ethnic conflict in the territory of the Russian Federation - Ossetian-Ingush. The military phase of the latter occurred in October-November 1992.

Because of the escalation of the Georgian-Ossetian Confrontation in North Ossetia in the early 1990s, arrived about 43 thousand refugees from South Ossetia and from hole Georgia. Refugees contributed to the radicalization of ethno-nationalistic sentiments in the North Ossetian society. At the same time Leaders of North Ossetia and North Ossetian nationalists were involved in another ethnic conflict, Ossetian-Ingush. To a large extent, refugees from South Ossetia became the mass supporters of the radicals of North Ossetia, who demanded the preservation of the "territorial integrity" of their republic. The result was- 40 thousand (according to Ingush data - more than 70 thousand) of internally displaced persons - Ingush. The Georgian-Abkhaz conflict contributed to the consolidation of the Adygeyan ethnonational movements (the "Circassian world"), in Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Adygea, as well as the activation of the Confederation of Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus, who played their significant role in 1992-1993 in Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. And today the "Circassian world" is one of the most important participants (although Often not declaring their participation) in Georgian-Abkhaz confrontation.

Chapter Two

Ethnopolitical Conflict in the South Caucasus

More than twenty years ago, in December 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed. This event led to the formation of fifteen independent states, each of which during this time passed a complex path of political construction and international legitimization. Some of them have managed, in just two decades, to go from the Soviet republics to the NATO member states and the EU (the Baltic states), and some have struggled to avoid turning into "failed states" (Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan).

However, one of the most important consequences of the collapse of the Soviet Union was the emergence of entities that also declared their sovereignty and were even able to defend it during armed confrontations with the former Soviet republics, but they did not receive international recognition or were recognized by a limited number of UN member states. Such are Abkhazia, South Ossetia, the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic.

South Ossetia – political Geography

The Republic of South Ossetia is located in the southern foothills of the Caucasus Mountains. In the north, it borders with one of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation - the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania; A kind of "window" in Russia is the Roki tunnel. South Ossetia is surrounded by Georgia from the southern, eastern, and western sides. The area of the republic is 3.84 thousand square meters. Km. The capital - Tskhinvali (Tskhinvali). There is no consensus on the exact population of South Ossetia. Moreover, the available estimates are highly politicized depending on the position taken in relation to the Georgian-Ossetian conflict.

According to the data of the All-Union Population Census (1989), 98,527 people lived on the territory of the South Ossetian Autonomous Region, of which 63.2 thousand Ossetians, 28.5 thousand Georgians, Russians, 0.9 thousand people - representatives of various Jewish ethnic groups.

As a result of the Georgian-Ossetian ethnopolitical conflict, the population of South Ossetia declined. However, it is extremely difficult to adequately assess the dynamics of these changes. Unlike Abkhazia, which conducted "population accounting" in 2003 and a census in February 2011, in South Ossetia after 1989 there was no own census. Its conduct was discussed on the eve of the 2009 parliamentary elections. However, in practice this idea was not implemented. So, in the presidential election in South Ossetia in 2006, 55,000 surnames were added to the electoral lists, and this is even though not all the territory of the South Ossetian AO was under the control of Tskhinvali at that time. During the parliamentary elections, the number of voters was slightly more than 60 thousand people. The UN Report on Georgia, states that before the August 2008 war in South Ossetia. 83 thousand people lived (of which 60 thousand - in the territories controlled by Tskhinvali). The report of the PACE Committee on Migration named the figure of 50 thousand people. This estimate was related to the period after the "Five-Day War".

The population census in Georgia in 2002 affected only those territories of the former South Ossetian Autonomous Oblast, which Tbilisi came under control after the cessation of armed Confrontation in 1992. There, the Georgian statistics recorded 7,730 inhabitants.[66]

Today, according to the administration of the Republic of South Ossetia, 72 thousand people live on its territory. The Georgian authorities call the figure of 8 thousand people, and various international experts and human rights defenders determine the number of residents of the republic in 20 -30 thousand people. So, human rights activist Varvara Pakhomenko in her research, based on the data of election commissions, information on migration of refugees and the number of schoolchildren, in 2009 determined the number of residents of the republic within 26-32 thousand people, of which about half lives in Tskhinvali.

According to the Constitution of the Republic of South Ossetia, it is "a sovereign democratic legal state created because of the self-determination of the people of the Republic of South Ossetia". As of mid-2011, South Ossetia's independence was recognized

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[66] Coding decisions based on expert analyses found in: Minahan, James. "The Former Soviet Union's Diverse Peoples: A References Sourcebook." (Santa Barbara:ABC-CLIO), 2004. Gammer, Moshe. "EthnoNationalism, Islam, and the State in the Caucasus: Post-Soviet Disorder." (New York: Routledge), 2008.

by five states (Russia, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Nauru, Tuvalu). From the point of view of Georgian legislation, South Ossetia, unlike Abkhazia, is not regarded as an independent autonomous entity. The Georgian law mentions only "the former South Ossetian Autonomous Region". The South Ossetian autonomy was liquidated by the Georgian authorities a year before the collapse of the Soviet Union. The decision was made on December 11, 1990 by the Supreme Council of Georgia. In accordance with the administrative-territorial division of Georgia, the territory on which the republic is located belongs to the territories of such regions as Shida-Kartli, Mtskheta-Mtianeti, Imereti, Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo-Svaneti. In accordance with the Law of Georgia "On the Occupied Territories" (Article 2, paragraph "B") South Ossetia is defined as the "Tskhinvali region" (the territory of the former South Ossetian Autonomous Oblast). " [67]

The same definition is also present in other official documents issued by the Georgian authorities. So, in April 2007 the Parliament of Georgia adopted the law "On the creation of appropriate conditions for the settlement of the conflict in the former South Ossetian Autonomous Region". The definition of "Tskhinvali region" / "former South Ossetian Autonomous Region "was used in the" report of the government of Georgia on the full-scale aggression of the Russian Federation against Georgia "(January 2010).

Until August 2008, "Temporary Administrative and territorial unit of the Tskhinvali region was in the village of Kurta in the territory of the former South Ossetian Autonomous Region, which was controlled by the Georgian authorities. The head of the "Interim Administration" takes part in the "Geneva Discussions "as part of the Georgian delegation, he is the only legitimate representative of the "occupied Tskhinvali region ".

The Georgian-Ossetian conflict

In August 2008, many years of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict resulted in the "five-day war". For 17 years, this is the third armed confrontation between Georgia and the Republic of South Ossetia, - de jure recognized as part of the Georgian state (including by Russia until August 26, 2008). If in the period of the Georgian-Abkhaz war of 1992-

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[67] Hooman Peimani, Conflict and Security in Central Asia and the Caucasus, (Santa Barbara: ABC_CLIO, 2009)

1993, we dealt with the amateur performance of individual servicemen of the Russian Federation, this time the actions of the Russian army were not simply supported at the official level. The Kremlin described them as an operation to "force Georgia to peace", designed to save the Ossetian people from a large-scale humanitarian disaster.

Unlike previous Georgian-Ossetian armed confrontations (1991-1992, 1992-1993, 2004), the US and the European Union countries are actively involved in the current conflict. Activity was demonstrated by Ukraine, which tried to contain the actions of the Russian Black Sea Fleet during the military operation against Georgia. For the first time, Tbilisi fought against separatist formations (Abkhazia and South Ossetia) simultaneously - "on two fronts." Developments in South Ossetia and around it, have become almost the main issue on the international agenda. In the first day of the "five-day war" The UN Security Council met three times to discuss the situation in the Caucasus.

The Georgian-Ossetian conflict was the first inter-ethnic confrontation in post-Soviet Georgia, overgrown in a large-scale armed clash. South Ossetian Autonomous Region in the Georgian SSR - the historical predecessor of the unrecognized state formation Republic of South Ossetia - was formed on April 20, 1922. Its territory was 6.5% of the territory of Georgia (3.84 thousand square kilometers).

According to the data of the All-Union Population Census of 1989, 98.5 thousand people lived in the South Ossetian Autonomous District. Of these, 63.2 thousand were Ossetians, 28.5 thousand were Georgians, 2.1 thousand were Russians, and 0.9 thousand were representatives of Jewish ethnic groups. The number of Ossetians in Georgia in 1989 was 165 thousand (about 3% of the population). About 100 thousand Ossetians lived in the interior regions of Georgia (the largest were the Ossetian communities In Tbilisi, Gori, Rustavi). The legal status of South Ossetia in the pre-crisis period was regulated by the Law on the South Ossetian Autonomous Region, which was adopted in 1980.

In its development, the conflict went through several stages - from a local (even non-regional) confrontation, little known and of little interest to the international community, to an event of international significance.

The first stage (1988-1989) can be called ideological. During this period, the opposing sides formed the fundamental ethnopolitical mythologems of the future conflict. For example, Georgian historians and journalists began to talk about Ossetians as "aliens on the Georgian land", "natives of the North Caucasus", and Ossetians updated the theme

of "Alanian fraternity" (in the modern Ossetian historical and political narrative Alans are regarded as the ancestors of Ossetians).

The second stage (1989-1991) - Political and legal. For two years, the Georgian and Ossetian side were waging a lawmaking ("statutory") war against each other. On 20 September 1989, draft laws of the Georgian SSR were published, infringing the rights of the South Ossetian AO. Less than two months later, on November 10, At the session of People's Deputies was accepted the decision of transformation of the South Ossetian Autonomous Oblast into an autonomous republic within Georgia.

This action in Tbilisi was perceived extremely negatively, as South Ossetia raised its status unilaterally. On November 16, 1989, the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Georgian SSR abolished the decision of the South Ossetian Regional Council. A week later, many thousands of anti-Ossetian Georgian nationalists' marches went to Tskhinvali and the first victims appeared. Then the key event for the escalation of the conflict took place.

On December 11, 1990, the Supreme Council of Georgia decided to abolish the autonomous status of South Ossetia. Almost simultaneously, the authorities of the Soviet Union announced the regime of emergency in the South Ossetian autonomy, and the Georgian leadership began its blockade.

The third stage is the armed struggle between Georgia and South Ossetia (January 1991 - July 1992). On January 6, 1991, the internal troops of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs left Tskhinvali for barracks, the city includes a 6,000-strong detachment of Georgian militants, who appeared among the civilians. During the military operations, the capital of South Ossetia was stormed three times (February and March 1991, June 1992). North Ossetia (a constituent entity of the Russian Federation in the North Caucasus) was involved in the conflict, where about 43,000 refugees from South Ossetia and the interior regions of Georgia arrived. At the same time, the North Ossetian actions were not directly controlled by the Kremlin.

Moreover, the condition of signing the Federative Agreement put up support (in one form or another) of Moscow to South Ossetia. At the end of May 1992, North Ossetia blocked the gas pipeline leading to Georgia. June 24, 1992, Presidents of Russia and Georgia, Boris Yeltsin and Eduard Shevardnadze signed Dagomys (Sochi) agreements on the principles of the settlement of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict. July 14 begins a

peacekeeping operation. The Russian, Georgian and North Ossetian peacekeeping battalions were introduced, a Joint Control Commission was created (representatives of the Russian Federation, Georgia, South Ossetia, North Ossetia) on the observance of the ceasefire. As a result of armed confrontation, 100 villages were burned, more than a thousand people were killed. Thus, the armed conflict was "frozen".

So, begins the fourth stage, which lasted until May 2004. Unlike Abkhazia, South Ossetia did not know the large-scale ethnic cleansing of the Georgian population. Until August 2008, the joint residence of Georgians and Ossetians was preserved here. In the Constitution of the unrecognized Republic of South Ossetia, the Georgian language was named as a minority language. Shootings, blockades, and provocations ceased, a relative peace was achieved.

Until 2004, there was a direct bus service between Tbilisi and Tskhinvali, there were markets (Ergneti), where Georgians and Ossetians traded together. We should note that in post-war conditions the basis of the economy of the territory with the "deferred status" was contraband, in which representatives of both ethnic groups were involved. But this shadow economy firmly tied South Ossetia to Georgia, it, albeit in an informal way, formed the trust of two conflicting communities.

A notable role in the conflict settlement was played by the president of North Ossetia, Alexander Dzasokhov (elected in 1998), who had direct informal contacts with a colleague from the former Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee Eduard Shevardnadze. All this made possible to defuse the situation. Moreover, over 12 years, a significant positive potential has been gained in the process of peaceful settlement.

First, the Georgian and Russian battalions carried the peacekeeping mission together. Secondly, important documents were signed to ensure the rehabilitation of the conflict area. Among them, the Memorandum of Measures on the Security and mutual trust between parties in the Georgian-Ossetian conflict of May 16, 1996 and the Russian-Georgian intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in the restoration of the economy in the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict and the return of refugees on December 3, 2000.

The fifth stage (2004-2008) can be described as a "defrost" of the conflict. It began with attempts by official Tbilisi to reconsider the balance of power in South Ossetia and the political and legal format of the settlement. The Rose Revolution in Georgia (October-

November 2003), a staggering victory (97% of the vote) in the presidential election of Mikhail Saakashvili (January 2004) occurred, as in the early 1990s, based on mobilizing a "patriotic" resource. In the speeches of Saakashvili and his colleagues sounded ideas of re-creation of a united Georgia and revenge for "national humiliation" in South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

On May 31, 2004, without the coordination of actions with the Joint Control Commission (JCC), special forces of the Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs (300 people) were deployed under the pretext of combating smuggling into the territory of South Ossetia. These actions were regarded by the members of the JCC as a violation of the Dagomys agreements. From the Georgian side, accusations were made of Russian peacekeepers in ethnic engagement, as well as criminal activities. On July 20, 2004, the Georgian president publicly stated that he did not rule out the possibility of denouncing the Dagomys agreements: "If the agreements on the territory of the Tskhinvali region do not allow the lifting of the Georgian flag, I am ready to secede from these agreements." With this statement, Saakashvili demonstrated that he was striving to achieve three goals:

- to internationalize the Georgian-Ossetian conflict, to connect the United States, the European countries to its settlement;

- reformat the conflict from Georgian-Ossetian into Georgian-Russian and present it as a manifestation of Russian neo-imperialism;

- abandon the exclusive role of Russia as a guarantor of peace in the region.

It was the implementation of these goals that became the quintessence of the fifth stage of Georgian-Ossetian conflict. On August 8-19, 2004, a second war came to South Ossetia. In this military confrontation, not only small arms were used, but also artillery. And although by the end of the month the parties managed to separate for several days, August (the fateful time in the conflict) in 2004 marked the beginning of a new wave of shelling, attacks, provocations and overlaps of vital communications.

Since then, the tactic of "petty military foul" has become a daily reality in South Ossetia. This brief war (forgotten especially against the backdrop of the "hot August" of 2008) has become to some extent a turning point in Russian politics in the region. Until 2004, Moscow was striving for objectivity and neutrality, preserving the status quo as the best way out. After 2004, Russia (realizing the relationship of the situation in South

Ossetia with the security of the entire North Caucasus) was taking the side of the unrecognized republic.

In the years 2004-2006, the Georgian parliament adopted several resolutions that recognized the Russian peacekeeping mission as "negative," and the actions of the Russian Federation were assessed as "an open annexation." In the autumn of 2006, Tbilisi launched the project of "alternative South Ossetia", making its "banner" the former Prime Minister and Minister of Defense of the unrecognized republic of Dmitry Sanakoev. The goal of this project was to reformat the negotiation process (giving up direct dialogue with Tskhinvali).

In March 2007, Tbilisi creates in the territory of South Ossetia "A temporary administrative unit". This decision put an end to the negotiations between Georgia and the unrecognized republic. Tbilisi is attempting international legitimization of Sanakoyev (he participates in forums in Brussels and Strasbourg, he is viewed as a "constructive" representative of the Ossetian side, unlike Eduard Kokoity).

 The thawing of the policy of "defrosting" was the re-subordination of the Georgian peacekeeping battalion to the Georgian Defense Ministry (formerly it was subordinated to the command of the Joint Peacekeeping Forces), as well as repeated statements of the Georgian Minister for Reintegration Temuri Yakobashvili on the need to withdraw from the existing formats for a peaceful settlement. The negotiations between the conflicting parties ceased.

In 2008, Moscow also contributed to the "thawing" of conflicts in Georgia. On March 21, the State Duma adopted a statement outlining two conditions for the possible recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia (Georgia's accession to NATO, a military operation against two unrecognized republics). After that, in April, Russian President Vladimir Putin instructed the federal government to provide "substantive assistance" to the population of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

This mission among other things, presupposed the establishment of virtually direct diplomatic contacts between Moscow and Tskhinvali and Sukhumi. Immediately followed by a tough reaction from the West, for which territorial integrity of Georgia as one of its priorities.

By August 7, 2008, the status quo in South Ossetia was violated. During the clashes of 2004, about 70 people died, and in subsequent years the number of victims on

both sides (according to various estimates) was 100 people. In August 2008, the quantity went into quality. The tactic of "increasing" the level of violence led to the storming of Tskhinvali and a tough response from Russia (which, it seems, was not counted either in Tbilisi or in the West). Thus, Saakashvili's military-political adventure and Russia's direct intervention in the Georgian-Ossetian conflict, were prepared by all the logic of the previous stage of "defrosting Conflict ". During the "five-day war" South Ossetia with the help of the Russian Federation established its control over the territories of the former South Ossetian Autonomous District, which since the early 1990s and until 2008 was under the authority of Tbilisi (Akhalgori region, Liakhvsky corridor). About 15,000 ethnic Georgians were forced to flee South Ossetia.

August 26, 2008 Russia recognized the independence of South Ossetia. On September 17 of the same year, the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance between Russia and South Ossetia was signed (ratification in the State Duma was held on October 29), and on October 24 the Russian ambassador to Tskhinvali was appointed. In early 2009, the institution of the plenipotentiary representative of the President of South Ossetia in Russia was transformed into an embassy.

At the same time, except Russia, Nicaragua, Venezuela, and Nauru admitted the independence of South Ossetia. The United States, the EU countries, the UN, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, PACE, NATO are still considering South Ossetia as an integral part of Georgia. At the same time, representatives of South Ossetia can participate in multilateral consultations on stability and security in the Caucasus (known as the Geneva Process or the Geneva talks) that began on October 15, 2008. Representatives of the Russian Federation, the United States, the European Union, United Nations, OSCE, Georgia. South Ossetian and Abkhazian delegations are not considered official diplomatic missions, but they participate in the negotiation process on a wide range of humanitarian and security issues.

From the all abovementioned, Georgian-South Ossetian relations from 1991 to 2008 had the widest consequences, not only for the security of the Caucasus region, but also as a factor of political bargaining over the broadest spectrum of Georgia's interactions with Russia, many Western countries, and international organizations.

Georgia, which had the opportunity to make political concessions in the 1990s. Its autonomies, could avoid separatist tendencies in the region, prevent bloodshed and

preserve territorial integrity. South Ossetia, in turn, could realize the right of peoples to self-determination in the context of internal development, i.e. Freely determine the ways of their political, Socio-economic development within the framework of a unified Georgia, but in the conditions of broad autonomy.[68] With this approach, it would be possible to avoid a significant number of dead and injured on both sides.

The policy of Russia in the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict had a significant impact on the outcome of the relationship between Georgia and South Ossetia, and resulted in the formation on the political map of the world of two new Partially recognized states. The reasons for this were the change of the political course from the support of Georgia's territorial integrity to the sympathy for the self-proclaimed post-Soviet territories, as well as the changed international situation related to the recognition of Kosovo's independence, the NATO enlargement in the east direction and anti-Russian sentiments in a number of post-Soviet states of the Caucasus region.

In general, the situation around South Ossetia continues to be among the unsettled for the international community and represents a potential source of tension in the South Caucasus region.

Abkhazia - Political geography

The Republic of Abkhazia is located in northwestern part of the southern slope of the main Caucasian Range, south-eastern coast of the Black Sea. Its area is 8.7 thousand square kilometers, which is slightly less than the territory of Kosovo (10.877 thousand square kilometers). The capital is Sukhumi (Sukhum). In the northeast, Abkhazia borders on Russia (the Black Sea coast of the Krasnodar Territory), in the south-west – from Georgia (the Samegrelo region). There are serious differences regarding the population of the republic.

According to the latest All-Union Population Census (1989) conducted on the eve of the disintegration of the USSR and the Georgian-Abkhaz armed conflict (1992-1993), the territory of the Abkhaz ASSR resided 525,061 people (9.7% of the population of the

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[68] Svante E. Cornell, Small Nations and Great Powers: A Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus,
Ricmond, Curzon Press, 1999

entire Georgian SSR), of which 239,872 Georgians (45.7% of the population), 93,267 Abkhazians (17.8%), 76,541 Armenians (14.6%), 74,913 Russians (14.3% %), 14.700 Greeks (2.8%). However, a reservation is necessary. By Georgians, we mean the general designation of the Kartvelian ethnic groups adopted in state statistics, that is, the Georgians, the Mingrelians and the Svans.[69]

In the Soviet census of 1926, all these three ethnic groups were counted separately, and 41,000 Megrelians, 19,900 Georgians and 6,600 Svan were recorded. In subsequent censuses, a general indication of ethnicity for Kartvelian Ethnic groups. [70]

As a result, The Georgian-Abkhaz conflict of 1992-1993, the population of Abkhazia has decreased almost threefold. According to the preliminary data of the population census conducted from February 21 to 28, 2011, 242,862 people. However, as a result of the final processing of the database, a little more than 2,000 repetitions were excluded.

In accordance with the final census data, the population of Abkhazia is 240. 705 people. Representatives of 91 ethnic groups reside in the republic. The most numerous are Abkhazians - 122. 069 people (50.71%), Russians - 22. 077 people (9.17%), Armenians - 41. 864 people (17.39%), Georgians - 43. 166 people (17.93%). 3.201 people (1.33%) signed up as Megrelians. According to the Georgian statisticians, the population of Abkhazia is even smaller. It amounted about 179 thousand people in 2003 and 178 thousand people in 2005.

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Abkhazia (Apsny), it is "a sovereign, democratic legal state, historically affirmed by the people's right to free self-determination." As of June 2011, Abkhazia's independence was recognized by six States (Russia, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Nauru, Vanuatu, Tuvalu). On September 17, 2008, Russia and Abkhazia signed the document on the friendship, cooperation, and mutual assistance, which presupposed the Russian military and political presence in the republic. From the point of view of the Georgian legislation, Abkhazia is an autonomous republic within the Georgian state, its inalienable part. Georgian law emphasizes that "Georgia is an

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[69] Coding decisions based on expert analyses found in: Minahan, James. "The Former Soviet Union's Diverse Peoples: A References Sourcebook." (Santa Barbara:ABC-CLIO), 2004. Gammer, Moshe. "EthnoNationalism, Islam, and the State in the Caucasus: Post-Soviet Disorder." (New York: Routledge), 2008.

[70] Coding based on Zurcher, Christoph. "The Post-Soviet Wars: Rebellion, Ethnic Conflict, and Nationhood in the Caucasus." (New York: New York University Press), 2007

independent, unified and indivisible state, as confirmed by the referendum held on March 31, 1991.

Throughout the country, including the Abkhaz ASSR and the former South Ossetian Autonomous Region, and the Act on the restoration of State Independence of Georgia of April 9, 1991 ". Article 8 proclaims the Abkhaz language as the state language on the territory of Abkhazia, and Article 5 establishes a representation from Abkhazia in the upper chamber of the Georgian parliament of the Senate "after Creation on the whole territory of Georgia of the proper conditions and the formation of local self-government bodies ".

In accordance with the Law of Georgia "On the occupied territories" (article 2), the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia is a region that was subjected to illegal occupation by the Russian Federation, and the "government of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia", which is currently in Georgia, is the only legitimate authority in Georgia's view Power in Abkhazia.

The Georgian-Abkhaz conflict

The "Abkhazian problem" without exaggeration became the main "political trauma" of post-Soviet Georgia. The struggle of the Georgian national democrats for secession of Georgia from the USSR in the late 1980s, practically coincided with the aspirations of the Abkhaz for ethno-national self-determination.

The most important event in the recent history of Georgia was a rally on April 9, 1989 on Rustaveli Avenue in Tbilisi (overtaken with the use of the forces of the Transcaucasian Military District) – which was a response to the all-Abkhaz assembly in the village of Lykhny (the ancient capital of the Abkhazian princedom) on March 18, 1989. The meeting demanded that the Central Committee of the CPSU review the status of Abkhazia in the composition of the Georgian SSR.

Unlike Georgian-Ossetian conflict, actualized during the period of "perestroika", the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict had deep historical roots. Abkhazians (self-name "Apsua") is an ethnos, close in language to the Adygeyan peoples of the North-Western

Caucasus.[71] By the beginning of the XIX century. The Abkhazian princedom was under the formal protectorate of the Ottoman Empire.[72] In 1810, the incorporation of the principality into the Russian Empire began. Until 1864, it enjoyed actual autonomy.

Because of the anti-Russian uprising in 1866 (caused by the abolition of the Abkhazian principality and the transition to general imperial authority) and the events of the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878. Significant groups of Abkhaz were forced to emigrate outside the Russian Empire, at the end of XIX - early XX centuries. The Sukhumi district was a part of the Kutaisi province, and then subordinated to the Russian Caucasian administration in Tiflis[73]. In 1904-1917 years. Gagra and adjacent areas were part of the Sochi district of the Black Sea province. Thus, in the prerevolutionary period, the territory of today's Abkhazia was divided among various administrative-territorial entities of the Russian Empire.

After the collapse of the Russian Empire and the formation on its territory of new independent states, including the Democratic Republic of Georgia, the "Abkhazian issue" became the point of collision between the White Guard armed forces of the South of Russia under the command of Anton Denikin and independent Georgia

. In the summer of 1918, Abkhazia was included in the Georgian state. This process was accompanied by the entry of Georgian troops into the territory of Abkhazia and the dispersal of the Abkhaz People's Council. The hard nationalism of the Menshevik government of Georgia contributed to the Bolshevization of Abkhazia. In March 1921, the Soviet Socialist Republic of Abkhazia was proclaimed. In December of the same year, she entered into a union agreement in the composition of Georgia - already a Soviet one. In 1931, the Abkhaz ASSR was created within the Georgian 55 SSR. Under Stalin, the Georgian Republican leadership held a strict policy of discrimination against the Abkhaz population. In the years 1937-1938, but subsequently, in 1945-1946 discriminatory measures against the Abkhazian population were significantly relaxed, media appeared in

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[71] See Liz Fuller, "How Does Abkhazia Envisage Its Future Relationship with Russia?", Caucasus Report, Vol. 4, No. 36 (2001), http://www. rferl. org/caucasus-report/ 2001/10/ 36-291001.html.

[72] On the following see Bruno Coppieters, Tamara Kovziridze and Uwe Leonardy, "Federalization of Foreign Relations: Discussing Alternatives for the Georgian-Abkhaz Conflict", Caspian Studies Program Working Paper Series, working Paper 2, Cambridge, Mass.: Caspian Studies Program, Harvard University, October 2003, on the Internet on http:// bcsia.ksg.harvard. edu/publ ication. cf m? program=CSP&cty pe=paper&item_id=405.

[73] Hooman Peimani, Conflict and Security in Central Asia and the Caucasus, (Santa Barbara: ABC_CLIO, 2009): 54.

the Abkhaz language, national education was revived. However, the policy of ethnic discrimination has borne its negative results. Moreover, the economic policy of the Georgian SSR in 1960s-1980s, based on mass attraction, was aimed at changing the ethno-demographic balance in favor of the Abkhaz population. And if in 1959 there were 158 221 Georgians living on the territory of Abkhazia (Abkhazians - 61,193), in 1970 - 213,322 Georgians (Abkhazians - 83,907) 44. In 1979, Georgians constituted 43.8% of the population of the autonomy. "The policy of repression of the Abkhaz language and culture, carried out by absolutely specific persons of Georgian nationality (and not only by high officials, but also by ordinary performers), formed a generalized" enemy image "in relation to the mass of Georgian settlers who also possessed Social privileges, states modern Georgian researcher Gia Nodia[74].

The Abkhazian population began to connect their hopes for ethno-national self-determination with the withdrawal from Georgia. In 1957, 1967, and in the years 1977, Representatives of the Abkhaz ethno-national intelligentsia prepared appeals to the leadership of the Soviet Union for requests for secession from the Georgian SSR and membership in the RSFSR (or the formation of an independent Abkhazian SSR).

At the end of 1977, the so-called "Letter 130" was sent to the allied authorities (signatories were representatives of the Abkhazian intelligentsia).[75] This was not the first surge of mass discontent in Abkhazia. The authors of the "Letters 130" raised the issue of the withdrawal of the Abkhazian SSR from the Georgia n SSR with the subsequent constitutional consolidation of this secession. On February 22, 1978, this appeal became the subject of consideration at the Abkhaz bureau of the regional committee called "On the wrong views and slanderous fabrications contained in a collective letter of December 10, 1977". However, the decision of the regional committee caused a harsh reaction of the population.

On March 29, 1978, a gathering of residents of the village of Bzyb and several villages of Gudautsky district in support of "Letters 130". [76]Moreover, the demand of the meeting was to (it was also put forward during the mass actions of 1967) to end the migration of Georgians to the territory of Abkhazia (this was encouraged by the

[74] Ghia Nodia, Causes and Vision of Conflict in Abkhazia, p. 22
[75] The CIA World Factbook, Middle East: Georgia, (Washington D.C.: ISSN 1553-8133, 2009).
[76] Coding based on Zurcher, Christoph. "The Post-Soviet Wars: Rebellion, Ethnic Conflict, and Nationhood in the Caucasus." (New York: New York University Press), 2007

authorities in Tbilisi). In 1978, when The Constitution of the Abkhazian SSR adopted a compromise solution, the Abkhaz language along with the Georgian and Russian became state on the territory of the autonomy. At the 11th Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia (June 27, 1978), the then first secretary, Eduard Shevardnadze, spoke out against the "excesses" of the Georgian Communists in the "Abkhaz question."

Thus, the "Russian factor" in the Abkhaz movement arose long before the modern Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. The Abkhaz leaders repeatedly proclaimed their unity with the peoples of the North Caucasus, and therefore appealed in their demands (more to the authorities of the USSR) about the desirability of including their autonomous republic in the composition of Russia (which included seven North-Caucasian autonomies). With the beginning of the ethno-national self-determination of Georgians during the "perestroika" period, the "Abkhazian issue" also aggravated.

In March 1989, in Village Lyhny Gudautsky district was held a 30-thousand gathering, which was announced on the need to return Abkhazia "political, economic and cultural sovereignty within the Leninist idea of a federation". Since 1989, until today, the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict of modern times has gone through several stages.

The first stage (March 1989 - July 1992) - political and legal. Unlike South Ossetia, the conflict did not begin with an ideological justification of mutual ethnic claims, but as a dispute on the legality (illegitimacy) of the entry of Abkhazia in the composition of Georgia and the legal justification (unreasonableness) of the ethno-national self-determination of Georgia and Abkhazia.

At the first stage, the struggle was not so much between Tbilisi and Sukhumi as between the Abkhaz and Georgian communities in Abkhazia itself. The Georgian-Abkhazian confrontation was also more ethnic than mosaic in comparison with South Ossetia. About 5 thousand representatives from the Armenian, Russian And the Greek communities of Abkhazia.[77] Abkhaz nationalists drew public attention to the fact that opponents "Georgianization" of Abkhazia is not only ethnic Abkhazians, but also Russians, Armenians, Greeks. For the ideological and the legal basis for the national self-

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[77] On the following see Bruno Coppieters, Tamara Kovziridze and Uwe Leonardy, "Federalization of Foreign Relations: Discussing Alternatives for the Georgian-Abkhaz Conflict", Caspi an Studies Program Working Paper Series, Working Paper 2, Cambridge, Mass.: Caspian Studies Program, Harvard University, October 2003.

determination of Abkhazia was made by the leader of the Russian community of Abkhazia, the historian and archaeologist Yuri Voronov.

It is wrong to talk about Abkhaz separatism in 1989 and early 1992. At this time, the Georgians themselves acted as separatists in relation to the USSR. While the Abkhaz counteracted the Georgian national radicals, and defended the existing at that time a single union state.

The second stage (July 1992 - July 1994) - military-political. A fence between the first and the second stage was the decision of the Supreme Council of Abkhazia to abolish the Constitution of the Abkhaz ASSR in 1978 and the restoration of the Constitutional Project of 1925.

The abolition of the legal framework for Abkhazia's entry into Georgia and the response of the Georgian authorities - the introduction of troops of the State Council of Georgia into the territory of Abkhazia - marked the beginning of a major armed Collision. The Georgian-Abkhaz conflict from inter-ethnic confrontation in the territory of Abkhazia grows into a military clash between the Georgian state and the rebel territory. Since that time, the Abkhazian national movements main goal was to secede from the independent Georgia. In the fall of 1993, Georgia suffered a military defeat and in fact loses its control over a significant part of the territory of Abkhazia. Only "Abkhazian Svaneti" (Kodori Gorge) remained until August 2008, outside Sukhumi's control.

On 14 May 1994, the conflicting parties, with the participation of Russia, signed the Moscow agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation Forces. In July 1994, a peacekeeping operation of Russian forces began on the territory of Abkhazia. It became the boundary between the second and the third stage of the conflict. Since the operation was carried out under the mandate of the Council of Heads of State of the CIS, it was assumed, in addition to Russian military units, the participation of contingents of other member countries of the Commonwealth.

However, before the actual completion of the operation In August 2008, it was carried out only by the Russian peacekeeping contingent.58 Peacekeepers were deployed in a "security zone" on a 12-kilometer territory on both sides of the Inguri River, in the Gali district of Abkhazia and in the Zugdidi district of Georgia. On July 21, 1994, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution No. 937 on the definition of the format of the Organization of the Oversight Mission in Georgia (UNMIH). The mandate of UNMIH was

built on the basis of the Moscow agreements. Resolution No. 937 underlined "the key importance of progress in the negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations and with the help of Russia as an intermediary".

During military operations, 4,000 Georgians (1,000 people were missing) and more than 3,000 Abkhazians perished. The losses of Abkhazia's economy from the conflict amounted to 10.7 billion US dollars. Until the mid-1990s, on the territory of the republic, remained many mines, which claimed the lives of 700 people. About 250 thousand Georgians (almost half of the pre-war population) were forced to flee Abkhazia, but later about 55-60 thousand returned In the Gali district in the eastern part of the republic (before the war it was the most Georgian-populated, the return of refugees did not occur to other regions).[78]

The third stage (July 1994 - July 2006) - diplomatic, during which attempts were made to resolve the consequences of the Georgian-Abkhaz armed confrontation. These attempts were made, first, in the UN format. The first round of negotiations between the conflicting parties under the auspices of the United Nations was held on November 28 - December 1, 1993 (hence its name - the "Geneva process", which should not be confused with the October 2008 consultations on stability and security in the Caucasus).

Since 1997, the special representative of the Secretary General the UN coordinating the "Geneva Process" and the work of UNMIH, opened its office in Tbilisi. In 1993, the Group of Friends of the UN Secretary General for Georgia was established (initially, the United States, Germany, Great Britain, Russia, France). In 1997, he began his work of the Coordination Council and the three working groups on the non-use of violence, the return of temporarily displaced persons and economic problems within the framework of the "Geneva Process". The last meeting of the Coordination Council took place in May 2006 after almost a five-year break. This break was caused by an exacerbation Ethno-political situation in the Kodori Gorge in autumn 2001. However, after the Georgian military units entered the upper Kodori Gorge (demilitarized zone, under the terms of this document) in violation of the Moscow agreements of 1994, the Coordination Council was no longer functioning. In 2002, the German draft diplomat Dieter Boden presented the peace project of eight items "Basic Principles for the Distribution of Powers between Tbilisi and Sukhumi" (the "Boden Plan"), which

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[78] The CIA World Factbook, Middle East: Georgia (Washington D.C.: ISSN 1553-8133, 2009).

envisaged the creation of a sovereign Abkhazia within the single federal state of Georgia. The conflicting parties did not adopt the plan.

Secondly, Russia made independent attempts to resolve the conflict. Since late 1994, unofficially and since 1996, officially, the Russian Federation, together with Georgia, has in fact initiated the introduction of harsh socio-economic sanctions against Abkhazia. These actions were legalized by the decision of the Council of Heads of State of the CIS "On measures to resolve the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia" of January 19, 1996. Faced with the Chechen separatist challenge, Moscow initially supported Tbilisi's intentions to restore Georgia's territorial integrity. In 1997, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Yevgeny Primakov, proposed for the negotiation process the formula "common state" and tried to convince him of the need for its adoption by Sukhumi. However, the attempts of the Georgian leadership to unilaterally change the existing status quo and "defreeze the conflict" (May 1998, Gali district, October 2001, Kodori gorge) changed the position of Russian diplomacy unilaterally, without considering the interests of the Russian Federation. Already in 1999-2000. Moscow significantly weakened the sanctions regime against Abkhazia (but finally abolished them only in March 2008).

In March 2003, the presidents of the Russian Federation and Georgia Vladimir Putin and Eduard Shevardnadze signed the Sochi agreements, which envisage the creation of three working groups: on the return of refugees initially to the Gali district, the restoration of the Sochi-Tbilisi railway line through Abkhazia and the renovation of the Inguri hydroelectric power station. However, the subsequent "Rose Revolution" and the coming to power of President Saakashvili in Georgia (January 2004) made the implementation of these agreements impossible. In May 2004, the Georgian president said: "We will return Abkhazia in my presidential term".

Since that time, the negotiation process began to degrade steadily. During the ten years of negotiations, the initial positions of the Georgian (The territorial integrity of Georgia and the return of all refugees to the entire territory of Abkhazia) and the Abkhaz side (the independence of Abkhazia with the return of only those who did not participate in military operations against the Abkhaz forces) did not undergo significant changes. Compromise political formulas were not found. The conflicting parties managed to establish a constructive partnership only in the process of exploitation of the Inguri

hydroelectric power station (the largest energy facility in the entire Caucasus region, built in 1977; 60% of the generated electricity goes to Georgia; 40% to Abkhazia).

The fourth stage (July 2006 - 2008) is an attempt to "unfreeze" the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. The border between the third and fourth stages was the Kodori operation of Mikhail Saakashvili. From that moment, the process of negotiations between the parties of the conflict was finally stopped. The Georgian authorities tried to change the format of the negotiation process by presenting the so-called "government of Abkhazia in exile" (consisting of ethnic Georgians) as the sole legitimate representative of the republic. [79]What Concerns the authorities of the Abkhazian de facto state, the Georgian president did his best to present them exclusively as Russian puppets. According to the Georgian President (July 16, 2006), "These are not ethnic conflicts (confrontations in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. - CM.). These are political conflicts imposed on us. They relate to the attempts of the post-Soviet forces, the remnants of the old Soviet imperialist thinking, to gain control over at least some of the neighboring territories ... ".

In the years 2007-2008, The Georgian authorities undertook a whole series of military and political provocations (including military flights) in Abkhazia, which violently violated the Moscow agreements of 1994. In turn, Russia also violated the statute by introducing at the end of May 2008 into the territory of Abkhazia a unit of the railway troops (not Stipulated by the 1994 Agreements) and destroying Georgian unmanned vehicles (April 2008). During the military operations in South Ossetia on August 9, 2008, the Abkhaz armed forces opened the "second front" and, without encountering harsh resistance, took control on the Kodori Gorge. August 26th in 2008, the Russian Federation recognized the independence of Abkhazia, and on August 30, 2008, Georgia secede from the 1994 Moscow Agreements.

After August 2008, a new, fifth stage of the conflict begins. Its fundamental difference is recognition of the national independence of Abkhazia of the Russian Federation and Nicaragua and the beginning of diplomatic consultations on overcoming the consequences of the "five-day war". Like South Ossetia, Abkhazia is represented at the Geneva consultations on security and stability in the Caucasus.

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[79] See Liz Fuller, "How Does Abkhazia Envisage Its Future Relationship with Russia?", Caucasus Report, Vol. 4, No. 36 (2001), http://www. rferl.org/caucasus-report/ 2001/10/ 36-291001.html.

However - this is an unofficial representation, because the United States, the EU, and its individual members, as well as the UN, OSCE, NATO, the Council of Europe do not recognize the independence of Abkhazia. At the same time, we cannot fail to note more frequent visits (in comparison with South Ossetia) of various European diplomats, UN officials in Abkhazia. At an informal level, diplomats from various countries recognize the existence of certain prerequisites for the development of Abkhaz statehood (in Difference from South Ossetia). Russia has established diplomatic relations with Abkhazia, has appointed its ambassador to Sukhumi. Currently, preparations are being made for the establishment of the territory of Abkhazia the naval base of the Black Sea Fleet (in Ochamchira) and the air base (in Gudauta).[80]

Moreover, in our opinion, given the change in the political climate and the regime in Georgia, it is possible for Russia dialogue and cooperation at the regional and international levels. In our view, the restoration of the EAS of Russia and Georgia is beneficial for both states. important conditions are the restoration of trust and mutual understanding between the peoples of the former Georgian SSR, the rejection of the policy of provocation, awareness of their own national interests based on experience of history and modernity and plans.

One of the components of Russia's national interests is the creation of a space for peaceful dialogue in the Caucasus complex ethnopolitical problems. [81]Having in its composition such a complex and explosive region as the North Caucasus, it is extremely necessary for Russia. Peace in the Caucasus is a complex problem, political, economic, cultural. The Caucasus is a space of unrealized economic opportunities, a crossroads between Europe, Russia, and Central Asia. In the confrontation in the Caucasus, there will never be winners, no people will benefit from this. Therefore, restoration is so important Dialogue and cooperation between Russia and Georgia, between their historically and culturally close peoples.[82]

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[80] Caucasus 2009. Yearbook of the Caucasus Institute, 2010. Article – David Petrosyan "The Unrecognized Countries of Southern Caucasus in 2009: on a Way to Formation of new Status Quo in Region", p.98.
[81] Coding based on Zurcher, Christoph. "The Post-Soviet Wars: Rebellion, Ethnic Conflict, and Nationhood in the Caucasus." (New York: New York University Press), 2007
[82] The CIA World Factbook, Middle East: Georgia (Washington D.C.: ISSN 1553-8133, 2009).

Nagorno-Karabakh Republic: Political Geography

The dynamics of the Karabakh conflict, which led to the creation of a new unrecognized state entity - the Nagorno Karabakh Republic based on its results in the South Caucasus, clearly fits into the world logic of the processes of national construction and the emergence of new de facto state entities. Such ethnopolitical conflicts are not unique either for the South Caucasus (Abkhazia and South Ossetia), nor for the post-Soviet space (Transnistria), nor for the region of the Far East and the Mediterranean (North Cyprus), nor for the Balkans (Kosovo), nor for other regions of the world (Eritrea, Bangladesh, Aceh, etc.).

The long-term state of "no peace, no war" around Nagorno-Karabakh and the inability of the conflicting parties and mediators for the second decade to achieve a final settlement are due not only to the complex geopolitical background and regional rivalry of superpowers. This is primarily a result of the lack of will and desire for a settlement among the conflicting parties themselves. For all its specificity, the Karabakh conflict clearly fits into many "classical" ethnopolitical and / or ethnoterritorial conflicts associated with the processes of national construction and ethnic disengagement.

From the number of ethno-territorial conflicts, namely secessionist and irredentist conflicts, accompanied by the emergence of new De facto states, are considered in political science as the extreme and most fierce form of the development of the ethnopolitical conflict. In such a conflict, "a compromise solution is impossible in principle; Conflict can be either suppressed by force, or as a result it will lead to the destruction of the original poly-ethnic society through its dissolution into two new societies or transformation into a fundamentally different society after the emigration (deportation) of a conflict-free minority.[83]

Accordingly, with reference to the Karabakh conflict, it is necessary to consider the world experience of attempts to resolve this kind of complex ethnopolitical conflicts that have passed through an active military phase. Such ethnopolitical and ethno-territorial conflicts have almost never been resolved through a parity compromise agreement, equally satisfying all sides.

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[83] Samuel Huntington "The Clash of Civilizations", Multipolar, Politicized World, source: http://lib.rus.ec/b/79038

The world history of the last century practically does not know such examples, except for very exotic cases when conflicts did not reach such bitterness, had a small area or were not priority for the conflicting parties. Conversely, widely advertised compromise agreements, which in their time caused a worldwide resonance and support of a significant part of the conflicting parties, often led only to more bloody outbreaks of violence, after which the conflict continued to develop, but in even more difficult circumstances.

A classic example is the Oslo Accords of 1993 on the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, which not only did not lead to the achievement of the long-awaited peace in the land of Palestine, but became the prologue to the death of the chief architect of the peace process, Yitzhak Rabin, a new round of the intifada, Militants on Israel, the Lebanon War of 2006, the Operation Cast Lead in the Gaza Strip in late 2008, and the democratic entry of Hamas into the Gaza Strip. Too often Such an idealistic and "compromise" settlement based on the "ideafix" "the desire for peace without understanding the realities of the peace process led to very different results than originally planned."

In all other cases, ethnopolitical and territorial conflicts, especially those connected with secession and ethnic delimitation of the parties, had only a very small set of scenarios that led (or, to the contrary, still never led) to a final decision or Long-term peace.

The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict

The Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (NKR) is in the southeastern part of the Lesser Caucasus in the eastern part of the Karabakh plateau and on the Karabakh plain, which forms the bulk of the Kura-Araks lowland. Most of the Nagorno-Karabakh territory is marked by a severely cut mountain relief (The low parts are the eastern parts of the two regions - Mardakert and Martuninsky). The capital of the NKR is the city of Stepanakert. The NKR stands out especially among other unrecognized entities. The historical

precursor of the NKR was The Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region (NKAR) within the Azerbaijan SSR with an area of 4.4 thousand square meters. Km. At the same time, the territory declared by the NKR at the time of the proclamation included, in addition to the former NKAR, the Shaumyan district with an area of 701 square meters that was not part of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region. Because of the war with Azerbaijan in 1991-1994. The NKR lost control over the Shahumyan district, as well as on parts of the Mardakert and Martuni districts (a total of 327 square kilometers).[84]

The authorities of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic are considering these territories as "occupied by Azerbaijan". For today The NKR authorities control 92.5% of the territory of the former NKAR, after that the armed forces of the unrecognized republic, with the support of Armenia, occupied the territories of the 5 adjacent regions of Azerbaijan (Lachin, Kelbajar, Kubatly, Zangelan and Dzhebrail), and 2 districts partially (Agdam and Fizuli). This is 8% of the territory of Azerbaijan.[85]

Outside the former NKAO, the NKR authorities with the support of Yerevan control the land area of 7.4 thousand square kilometers. In Karabakh and Armenia these territories are called a "security belt" (or "Security zone"). More rarely - "liberated territories" (this definition is used mainly by politicians and political scientists in the NKR). Consequently, today, under the control of the NKR, there were altogether 13.4% of the territory that is considered by official Baku and the international community Azerbaijan. According to Kimitaka Matsuzato's just remark, "most of the newly acquired territory of the NKR is covered by mountains and Sparsely populated.

True, these mountains have an important strategic importance - the Lachin corridor connects Karabakh with Armenia, and in the northern part of this mountainous area, there are water sources serving both Karabakh and Azerbaijan. " Lachin provides an effective link between Yerevan and Stepanakert (Economy, military sphere, international

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[84] Coding decisions based on expert analyses found in: Minahan, James. "The Former Soviet Union's Diverse Peoples: A References Sourcebook." (Santa Barbara:ABC-CLIO), 2004. Gammer, Moshe. "EthnoNationalism, Islam, and the State in the Caucasus: Post-Soviet Disorder." (New York: Routledge), 2008.

[85] Hooman Peimani, Conflict and Security in Central Asia and the Caucasus, (Santa Barbara: ABC_CLIO, 2009): 20.

contacts). That is why the importance of the Lachin corridor is also high in the negotiation process on the Nagorno-Karabakh settlement.[86]

Thus, the third point of the "basic principles" proposed by the mediating countries in the negotiations concerns the establishment of a "corridor, linking Armenia and Karabakh. " Let's add to this the output of the NKR and Armenia to the Iranian border. Meanwhile, other occupied territories do not have the same meaning that they are often attributed to Azerbaijani media and political statements. So, despite the control over Agdam, the capital of the NKR Stepanakert was within reach of Azerbaijani army missiles, which was the reason for the actual shutdown of the airport, located near Stepanakert. The economic role of the newly acquired territories is also low, and their economic development is extremely slow.

According to the latest All-Union Population Census of 1989, 189,029 people lived in the territory of the NKAR, of which 145,450 Armenians, 40,632 Azerbaijanis and 2,417 representatives of Slavic ethnic groups (Russians and Ukrainians). In addition, 21,500 people resided in the Shahumyan district (in September 1991, which was part of the NKR), of which 17,000 were Armenians, 3,500 were Azerbaijanis and 1, - Russian and Ukrainian).

The census data caused reasonable doubts among the statisticians, since it was conducted at the height of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, when between the two union republics, as well as between various settlements of the Nagorno Karabakh Autonomous Region - Stepanakert, massive movements and exchanges of population took place. In Azerbaijan in October 1990, an additional census was conducted in 51 settlements of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region, populated by ethnic Azerbaijanis. It recorded 46 thousand Azerbaijanis (Or 24%).

However, according to both the all-Union and alternative Azerbaijani census, the number of the Azerbaijani community did not exceed a quarter of the total population of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region. The Karabakh conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh led to a serious change in the ethno-demographic situation in the NKR. Unlike all other unrecognized entities on the territory of the former USSR, the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic is almost monoethnic. According to the 2005 census, 137,737 people

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[86] Caucasus 2009. Yearbook of the Caucasus Institute, 2010. Article – David Petrosyan "The Unrecognized Countries of Southern Caucasus in 2009: on a Way to Formation of new Status Quo in Region", p.110.

lived in Karabakh, of which 137.380 were Armenians (that is, 99.74%), Russians - 171 (0.1%), Greeks - 22 people (0.02%), Ukrainians – 21 (0.02%), Georgians - 12 (0.01%) and Azerbaijanis - 6 (0.05%).

In 2009, the population of the NKR was 141.1 thousand people. In accordance with the Constitution, the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (Artsakh), is a "sovereign, democratic, legal, social state". Given the geopolitical features of the existence of the NKR (occupation of Azerbaijani territories outside the NKAR and loss of lands of the former NKAO and Shahumyan district), Article 142 of the Constitution defines its sovereignty as follows: "Until the restoration of the integrity of the state territory of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic and the specification of borders, public power is exercised in the territory actually under the jurisdiction of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. "

The NKR to date has not been recognized by any of the UN member states, including Armenia. The statehood of Nagorno-Karabakh is recognized only by other unrecognized entities of the post-Soviet space. At the same time, official Yerevan supports the ethnopolitical self-determination of the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh, financially, diplomatically, and militarily supports the unrecognized republic.

The circulation of the national currency of the Republic of Armenia (dram) is carried out on the territory of the NKR, and the Karabakhians have Armenian and foreign passports for moving around the world. At the same time, the Armenian Diaspora and lobbying structures in the US, Russia, and European states play an important role in reporting the position of the NKR to the world community. With their help, the NKR diplomatic service carries out wide international activities, has a network of representative offices abroad (USA, France, Germany, Australia, countries of the Middle East, Russia, Armenia). [87]

The Nagorno-Karabakh Republic is the only unrecognized entity on the territory of the former USSR, which receives funding from the US Congress to implement social

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[87] L. Deriglazova, S. Minasian. Nagorno-Karabakh: the Paradoxes of the Strengths and Weaknesses in Asymmetric Conflict. Yerevan, the Caucasus Institute, 2011. Remarks made by S. Minasyan. The term "low-intensity conflict»(LIC) today is often used synonymously with asymmetrical, guerrilla, rebel or unconventional wars and conflicts. Traditionally, the term military-strategic analysis is used to define armed conflict with the low level of interaction of the parties, low loss, and low participation of major combat units. Examples of hostilities during low-intensity conflicts are sniper attacks, raids and
reconnaissance and sabotage groups of small mobile units, using mainly small arms and light weapons without escalation, and active operations, major portions of the regular forces.

projects[88]. From the point of view of the Azerbaijani authorities, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is the result of aggression and territorial expansion by Armenia. Thus, the problem is interpreted as an interstate conflict, and not the result of ethno-political self-determination of the Armenian community of Karabakh.

The Nagorno-Karabakh autonomy was abolished by the Azerbaijani authorities on the eve of the collapse of the USSR. On October 18, 1991, the Constitutional Act of Independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan was adopted, and on November 26 of the same year the "Resolution on the abolition of the autonomy of Nagorno-Karabakh" was issued. At the same time, the official Baku gave the capital of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region Stepanakert the Turkic name of Khankendi.[89] Before that, the Azerbaijani authorities decided to unite the two neighboring regions of the republic - Shahumyan and Kasum Ismayilovsky - into one Goranboy region (decision of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Azerbaijani SSR of January 14, 1991). According to Article 7 of the Constitution of Azerbaijan, it is a "secular unitary republic". Azerbaijan Basic Law Does not imply any kind of political and legal subjectness for Nagorno-Karabakh, although in December 1998 an autonomous republican status with limited powers was granted to Nakhichevan.

According to Bruno Coppieters, "in open form, the Azerbaijani government did not offer to settle the Nagorno-Karabakh problem on a federal basis. His proposal to give Nagorno-Karabakh "the highest level of autonomy" does not go beyond some form of decentralization or Transfer of authority to the subordinate level ".

Azerbaijan took a step towards the middle of the bridge from this position and said that they are ready for flexibility, having in mind various models of self-government for the population in the Karabakh region within the Azerbaijan Republic. That is, flexibility within the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. " Unlike Georgia, Azerbaijan does not have a special power structure - the government or parliament "in exile" - which Baku would consider as a legitimate representative of the interests of Nagorno-Karabakh. At the

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[88] Svante E. Cornell, Small Nations, and Great Powers: A Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus,
Ricmond, Curzon Press, 1999
[89] Svante E. Cornell, "Turkey and the Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh: a Delicate Balance", Middle Eastern
Studies, Vol. 34, No. 1, January 1998

same time, the authorities see their main partner as "the Azerbaijani community Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Azerbaijan Republic ", established on March 24, 1992.

In 2006 the community was registered with the Ministry of Justice as a public association, and its first congress was held in Baku on June 5, On August 31 of the same year Ilham Aliyev issued a presidential decree "On measures to improve the material and technical Support of the Public Association" The Azerbaijani Community of the Nagorno-Karabakh Region of the Republic of Azerbaijan ". Over the past several years, the Azerbaijani authorities have intensified contacts between the leaders of this organization and embassies accredited in Baku. On December 16, 2009, the community prepared a letter to US President Barack Obama with a protest against the allocation of funds to the "Karabakh separatists" through official channels.

The complex dynamics of the negotiation process and peaceful settlement will directly influence the prospects for the preservation of the statehood of the unrecognized Nagorno-Karabakh. However, this does not mean that the representatives of the NKR themselves will play the role of passive contemplatives in this movement. The readiness of the "great powers" to turn the provision about "intermediate status" into something legally working and binding, or, on the contrary, to leave it as an unimportant fiction, depends on the quality of management institutions, legislation, and acceptance of decisions by the elite of the republic.

Chapter Three

The role and interest of global and regional players In South Caucasus

The geopolitical role of the South Caucasus is really unique - both in terms of its potential and geographic location. Such an intermediate position of the South Caucasus determines its unique opportunities both in implementing the plans for the modernization of the Middle East (BSW) and in establishing a constructive dialogue, with Europe. It must also be taken into account, that the South Caucasian republics, formerly part of the Soviet Union, are secular states that are much closer in their "state mentality" to Western countries, than their southern neighbors. Their population is far less religious than the population of many countries of the Near and Middle East, they are largely associated with European culture and European values, and therefore these countries can serve as a kind of dampener, that is, to some extent weaken the influence of religious fanaticism and extremism, out of the southern countries of the region, to prevent the spread of Extremist and fundamentalist ideas and trends and, ultimately, to make a tangible contribution to the modernization of the WBG countries, to the realization of this geopolitical project of global significance.

In addition, the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia, which are increasingly regarded as the northern extremity of the Middle East, are much easier to "democratize" than the rest of the region, especially since most of them were and continue to be countries with sufficiently developed democratic institutions, that awere close to Western models over the past 15 years of independent existence. And these countries, like their western patrons and sponsors count, can and should serve with the support of their "democratic image" by Western governments and the media (as is observed, in particular, with regard to Georgia) is a vivid example for "difficult" countries. In the direction of "west-east", the South Caucasus is often regarded as the central part of the so-called, Mediterranean-Black Sea - which includes the Balkan states, the countries of South-Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus proper and the countries of Central Asia. In particular, the problems of this extended belt, representing the southern part of the Europe, is subject of serious research and was discussed at a number of international conferences of recent years, with the participation of the Institute of Europe of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the Institute of Strategic Assessments and Analysis, the

Rostov State University, representatives of the analytical centers of the South Caucasus and Central Asia, the Balkan countries and countries of South-Eastern Europe.[90]

And one more feature of the South Caucasus, which carries an important geopolitical load. It's not a secret that certain forces in the West consider the South Caucasus as the part of the "sanitary cordon" (the "iron bridge") from the Baltic to the Caspian and, further, to the Chinese border that is trying to build around Russia and thereby neutralize its attempts to restore, at least in part, its former influence. But what does this lead to? First of all, to the growth of Russia's fears for its territorial integrity. It is difficult to separate the South Caucasus from the republics of the North Caucasus that are part of the Russian Federation. A serious irritant for Russia in this respect may be not only the activation of the separatist forces in the North Caucasus republics, heated from the outside, but also the extension of similar processes to other republics of the Southern and Central Federal Districts of Russia.

Historically, Russia has always been very influential in all the countries of the South Caucasus. This concerns both civilizational influence and economy, social and cultural spheres. With the help of Russia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia became industrialized countries, with high-tech and competitive industrial potential, which made a significant contribution to the overall industrial potential of the USSR, with a developed agrarian sector. They created an advanced system of education, training of scientific and Engineering and technical personnel, health, social security, national culture. Fraternal, friendly ties between the peoples of the Russian Federation and the Caucasian peoples were far away not an empty sound. Even today they play a significant role in the mutual relations of our peoples. But at the same time, the implementation of plans to build "bridges", "cordons" and other defensive objects of geopolitical architecture on the western and southern borders of Russia, the involvement of the states of the South Caucasus and other CIS countries in the military-political bloc of NATO, inevitably require appropriate processing of their population and this process, as a rule, is accompanied by the formation of the image of Russia, if not as hostile, in any case, an unfriendly country.

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[90] Revaz Gachechiladze, The New Georgia: Space, Society, Politics, Texas A & M University Press: College
Station, 1995, pp. 19-20.

In the countries of the South Caucasus, this unfriendly strategy towards Russia has been intensified and continues to be amplified by those mistakes, in relation to the Caucasian policy in general and the individual republics, in particular those that were committed in the time of Gorbachev and Yeltsin, and many of which retain their destructive impact today.

Without adequate ideological processing of the population, without the support of the majority of citizens of anti-Russian motives in the policy pursued by the ruling elite of the state, all these "obstructing" Russian imperial policies and "constructions" and functions will cost nothing. After all, for Russia it is dangerous not only Georgia's membership in NATO, but the main danger is that the Georgian army (primarily) and the Georgian people are deliberately taught (and already accustomed, judging by the results of opinion polls) to the idea that Russia is the main enemy of Georgia.

It is clear that in addition to the threat of violation of Russia's territorial integrity, attempts to create a "cordon sanitaire" around it carry a different, even more real threat: isolation of the country from historically formed areas of its vital interests, an artificial break of ties with the countries of the so-called near abroad, weakening of the country's political and economic independence and undermining its sovereignty. And in this sense, sovereignty, among other things, is "a synonym for competitiveness." So the "construction" of similar "defensive fortifications" around Russia in the form of planting pro-Western and unfriendly regimes in neighboring countries carries, in themselves, in addition to geopolitical, also the geo-economic burden. It should be emphasized, that this is not just a question of the pro-Western orientation of the states of the South Caucasus. In the Russian political elite, at least in the greater part, like representatives of the Russian authorities, the cooperation of the states of the South Caucasus with the West is by no means regarded as a manifestation of hostility toward Russia. At the end, the Russian authorities have a firm understanding that there is no alternative to cooperation with Western countries, with the European Union and NATO, that the confrontational path with the West for modern Russia, as well as for the states of the South Caucasus, is unacceptable.[91]

It is on this, in the last two decades that Russia's policy is being built in relation to the United States and European countries, the pan-European and Euro-Atlantic

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[91] Svante E. Cornell, "The Unruly Caucasus", Current History, October 1997.

institutions. But we are talking about the unacceptability of such a pro-Western policy, which they are trying to build on an anti-Russian foundation, as is observed, in particular, in the policy of the current leadership of Georgia. [92]Azerbaijan and Armenia also in their official foreign policy actively cooperate with Western countries and institutions, including with NATO, but not on Russia, but maintaining normal, friendly ties with it and trying to resolve the emerging bilateral problems calmly, without unnecessary hysteria and without Anti-Russian information attacks on political or diplomatic channels. [93]

The geopolitical significance of the South Caucasus is also indisputable. Events that unfold around Kosovo and go far beyond the framework of the Balkan region.[94] An important international precedent is being created in Kosovo, it can affect not only the situation that is developing around the self-proclaimed republics of the South Caucasus, but, ultimately, it can contribute to new geopolitical cataclysms and a new redistribution of the world, the positive things that the states of Europe have achieved after the "cold war". The South Caucasus in this sense can become one of the main catalysts of these destabilizing processes.

Geo-economic role of the region

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[92] Miroslav Hroch, Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe. A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1985, p. 12; Karl W. Deutsch, Problems of Nation-Building and National Development, in: Karl W. Deutsch, William J. Foltz (eds.), Nation-Building, Atherton Press: New York, 1963, p. 140

[93] Michael E. Brown, "Causes and Implications of Ethnic Conflict", in: Michael E. Brown, ed., Ethnic Conflict and International Security (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1993), p. 5.

[94] Revaz Gachechiladze, The New Georgia: Space, Society, Politics, Texas A & M University Press: College Station, 1995, pp. 19-20.

The South Caucasus is also a notable region in the world economic system. Its economic potential allows us to assert that the region will by no means be a passive consumer in the world economy system, but it is capable of contributing to the world economy, the world's scientific and production potential.

The geo-economic role of the region is determined by its energy Value.[95] First of all, it concerns the Caspian oil and gas reserves - Azerbaijan in the South Caucasus, the Caspian states of Central Asia - Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan[96]. Caspian oil and gas are also called upon to ensure the diversification of hydrocarbon supplies to Europe. In addition, due to its favorable geographical position, in fact, in the center of the Eurasian continent, the region has unique communication capabilities.[97] Its transport communications - existing and projected - connect the North and South, West and East. Those who control the South Caucasus will have the opportunity not only to gain considerable profits and secure one of the leading places in transcontinental transportation, but also to solve in their own interests many political tasks.

It is also important that the region is located between two Seas - Black in the west (Georgia) and Caspian in the east (Azerbaijan). There are well-equipped ports and a corresponding port and shore structure, which allows for the handling of bulk and dry cargoes, as well as container transportation. Another important feature of the region is that countries of the South Caucasus has a significantly developed industrial and scientific potential, sufficiently professional staff, a developed system of education and training.[98] Especially it concerns to such countries as Georgia and Armenia. Azerbaijan, whose economy for many years was and is today the oil sector and who prepared and supplied oil workers for many oil-bearing regions of the Soviet Union, managed to save a significant part of them and in this respect is in a better position.

Geostrategic significance of the South Caucasus

[95] Neal Ascherson, Black Sea, Hill and Wang: New York, 1995, p. 245

[96] Terry D. Adams. Caspian Oil and Gas Development and the Black Sea Region: An Overview. In: Europe's Black Sea Dimension. Brussels, CEPS, 2002, pp. 47-52, 60-68.

[97] The Caucasus and the Caspian: 1996 Seminar Series, vol. II, F. Hill (ed.), Harvard University, J.F. Kennedy School of Government, Cambridge, 1996, Presentation by Michael Ochs, p. 77

[98] Terry D. Adams. Caspian Oil and Gas Development and the Black Sea Region: An Overview. In: Europe's Black Sea Dimension. Brussels, CEPS, 2002, pp. 47-52, 60-68.

It should also be noted that the geostrategic significance of the SouthCaucasus, first of all, in connection with the plans implemented by Washington "Democratization" of the Middle East (which, as the international practice of recent years shows, not only does not exclude the use of military force, but also rely on it - Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran and other "naughty" regimes). Another important factor is the provision of naval control over the waters of the Black and Caspian seas.[99] Over the Black Sea, the United States and other NATO countries have already established their almost total control, especially considering the unenviable position of the Russian Black Sea Fleet. In the Caspian Sea, where recently the Caspian Flotilla of the Soviet Navy dominated the USSR, such control was established over a significant part of the water area. At the same time, the geostrategic aspect of the Caspian Sea is that today there are naval groups of all five Caspian states - in addition to Azerbaijan, as well as Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran. And, thus, which for centuries has been peaceful, the Caspian Sea has real chances to become potentially even more conflict-dangerous than the Black Sea.[100]

Geo-strategic "arguments" in assessing the South Caucasus are also the threat of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, the fight against international terrorism, a barrier to the influence of Moscow and Beijing, which Washington is trying to build, and which does not exclude, among other things, the adoption of military measures.[101] Among the preparatory measures for such a plan are, in particular: the operational development of the theater of operations and the development of its operational infrastructure, the maintenance of military factions, military bases and facilities in the countries of the region, partly on an ongoing basis, in part by creating the possibility for rapid deployment of military groupings, reconnaissance of territories and airspace of neighboring states using technical means located in the countries of the South Caucasus, as well as increasing this cooperation with NATO, which has the ultimate goal of including all the states of the

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[99] Suha Bolukba, "The Controversy over the Caspian Mineral Resources: Conflicting Perception, Clashing
Interests", Europe-Asia Studies, Vol. 50, No. 3, 1998, pp. 397-414.
[100] Karl W. Deutsch, Problems of Nation-Building and National Development, in Karl W. Deutsch and William J Foltz, eds., Nation-Building, Atherton Press: New York, 1963, p. 140.
[101] On this, see Ghia Nodia, 'Waiting for the Russian Bear', in: War Report, June 1995, no. 34, pp. 39-40.

region as members of this military alliance "with global responsibility," as it positions itself at present and appropriately builds its policy and military strategy.[102]

US National Interests and Strategies

While analyzing the activity of the USA in the South Caucasus, it is necessary to mention three main factors, that determine the political line of the United States and are its driving force.

First of all, region has a noticeable lack of a coherent policy of both the US and the West as a whole. One of the most revealing examples of recent times is NATO's expansion in the South Caucasus, which is accompanied by a shortage of planning, inappropriate preparation and a lack of political will, as can be seen in Georgia's desire to join NATO.

The second defining aspect of US activities in the South Caucasus is the fact that, within the framework of Western policy, it is restrained and limited by the competing interests of various Western players. This can be clearly seen in the example of a characteristic conflict of national interests of the EU member states and the United States, as well as between individual EU countries. Although, the presence of competing national interests is a natural phenomenon, that reflects the often conflicting political priorities of various Western players, this situation as a whole, limited the effectiveness of the activities of both the West and the United States, and impeded the establishment of a real, long-term consistency, at the strategic level of Western policy.

The third and most actual factor of activity - US has become more dynamic and active involvement of the West as a bloc. In the South Caucasus, this new level of dynamic activity is particularly reflected in the creation of the Eastern Partnership initiative after the war in Georgia in 2008. In the same time, this more frequent activity of the US was boosted by the new EU priorities, aimed at expanding Europe's involvement, its investments and activism, especially after the United States has recently begun to move

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[102] I.W. Zartman, Elusive Peace. Negotiating an End to Civil Wars, Washington D.C., The Brookings Institution 1995.

away from a direct role in this region, reducing its activity and being in search of multilateral, cooperative approach towards the South Caucasus.

The United States is one of the most influential external players in the South Caucasus. Between Washington and Moscow all these years, there was the most acute rivalry for the South Caucasus as a sphere of influence. And, judging by the results of this rivalry, Moscow is still a losing party in it. Already today, in the South Caucasus, the influence of the United States is noticeably stronger than that of the Russian. Even Armenia, which is a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization and positions itself as Russia's strategic partner in the South Caucasus, is unlikely in this context can be considered an exception, although so far the pro-Western attitude in its policy does not show itself as noticeably as, for example, in Georgia. Georgia and Azerbaijan have little to lose - the strategic interests of Baku as one of the main "oil producers" of the Caspian region are increasingly reorienting to the West, and, as mentioned above, the country is becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the passive Russian policy towards the country that occupied it.[103] Thus, if Moscow's role in recent years has declined in all countries of the South Caucasus, the influence of the "western" team of players at the head of the United States, on the contrary, systematically increased. "We must strengthen our global alliances as the nucleus of a new global compact, the League of Democracies, which can use the enormous influence of more than one hundred democratic nations, around the world to promote our values and protect our joint interests.[104]

The countries of the South Caucasus are viewed in the United States as the main geopolitical springboard, a reference area that is used in the interests of implementing the plans for democratic reform of the WBG states, and in fact - to strengthen US influence in the Caspian-Black Sea region (including Central Asia), important for their national security. But in order to effectively fulfill this function, the countries of the South Caucasus themselves had to become the primary targets of modernization. Here, according to Washington's plan, it is necessary to strengthen the institutions of democracy and civil society, to ensure the corresponding rights and freedoms, taking as the benchmark Western, primarily American, models. In these areas, the activities of the

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[103] Terry D. Adams. Caspian Oil and Gas Development and the Black Sea Region: An Overview. In: Europe's Black Sea Dimension. Brussels, CEPS, 2002, pp. 47-52, 60-68.
[104] Barry R. Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict," in: Michael E. Brown, ed., Ethnic Conflict and International Security (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1993), pp. 103-124.

United States and interstate associations in which the influence of Washington is indisputable (the same GUAM)[105]. In addition to expanding and deepening contacts with official authorities, supporting numerous non-governmental organizations, there is a purposeful work with the opposition in these countries, which, must be admitted, is bearing fruit.

A number of works by Western analysts are disappointed by the results of democratic reforms in the post-Soviet states, including the South Caucasus. In the South Caucasus states themselves, the opinion is strengthened that a "formalized" democracy, for example, introduced in Georgia and Azerbaijan, is just a cover for solving the problems of the energy and globalist order for the US and Europe. At the same time, this "imitation" democracy actually suits both the US and local ruling circles. Another important US interest in the South Caucasus is energy, Caspian sources of oil. Caspian oil is designed to ensure the diversification of oil supplies to Europe, by passing Russia. [106]This means that the control over the crane, opening the supply of Caspian oil to the EU countries, will be carried out by Washington.[107] If we add that control over a significant part of the Middle East, oil will also be in the hands of American companies, then the independent policies of some EU countries (as it was, for example, with respect to the war in Iraq) will be restrained by serious economic restrictions. Oil and gas of the Caspian Sea in the hands of Washington, is also an effective coercive means for consolidating Euro-Atlantic unity with the dominant role of the United States.

If during the "cold war" this dominant role was determined by so-called Soviet threat, now it is replaced by threats related to the energy security of Europe, which, as a rule, is linked with the policy of Russia. [108] But the US is not the only player in the struggle for oil resources in the region. In this struggle, the European Union and other major world powers - Russia, China – participate too. It involves regional countries like Turkey, Iran, Ukraine, etc.

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[105] Jared Feinberg, "GUAM: Creating Perceptions in the Caucasus", Summer Digest, Weekly Defense Monitor, Center for Defense Information, 1998

[106] B. Coppieters, "Conclusions: The Caucasus as a Security Complex", in: B. Coppieters (ed.), Contested Borders in the Caucasus, op.cit., p. 196

[107] See Johan Galtung, 'Some observations on the Caucasus', in: Caucasian Regional Studies, vol. 2, Issue 1, http://www.vub.ac.be/POLI/.

[108] I. Rotar', "Stat' nashimi satellitami ili umeret': takovo mnenie o Blizhnem Zarubezhye Konstantina Zatulina – Predsedatelya komiteta podelam SNG i svyazyam s sootechestvennikami Gosudarstvennoy Dumy", Nezavisimaya gazeta, 5 May 1994

Consequently, we can expect further aggravation of the political struggle over Caspian oil, and this struggle will be supported by military, financial and other resources.[109] Accordingly, the role of the countries of the South Caucasus in the geopolitical alignment of world forces and the special importance will be the formation by the American "sponsors" of new political elites in the countries of the South Caucasus, taking under control specific political figures that can become guarantors of the policy of reorienting their states and in the future firm retention of the pro-American course. This process is given a course, and it is in development. In this connection, attention is drawn to the strengthening of comprador principles in the official oligarchy of the South Caucasus states, strengthening its ties with transnational corporations (TNCs), and large business of the West. This is the reason for the coincidence of the positions of the ruling forces in the countries of the South Caucasus with American approaches, on many issues of geopolitics, regional policy, activation of GUAM, etc.

One should also take into account the fact that the South Caucasus can serve for Washington as a kind of "test" polygon (after the Balkans and Kosovo), during which all these years the plans of reorganizing the political systems of countries and replacing those regimes whose policies do not fit into the predetermined framework of the "modernization" of the world, does not differ in loyalty to Washington, or is disagreeable to it with something else. In this respect, the South Caucasus could serve as a good example for other countries of the reformist activity of Americans in the territory of the former USSR. Undeniable for the United States and military-strategic importance of the South Caucasus: not only as a convenient and reliable bridgehead in the event of a possible forceful impact on the "obstinate" BBV regimes and further expansion into Central Asia, but also as an outpost to contain "Russian expansion" and Moscow's influence in the south.

The US and Turkey show special activity in the military sphere of cooperation with Georgia, which took control over the reform and Re-equipment of the Georgian armed forces and for two years prepared four battalions for the Georgian army. Turkey has undertaken to prepare and fully staff the infantry brigade, which is located in Akhaltsikhe and Gori.[110]

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[109] Tim Potier, The Constitutional Future of the Post-Soviet Caucasian Autonomous Republics, Briefing Paper, unpublished
[110] Ernest Gellner, Nation and Nationalism, Basil Blackwell: Oxford, 1983, pp. 50-52.

In the military strategic plans of the United States, the South Caucasus plays an increasingly important role. The Caucasus is the ideal air corridor between the European bases of the United States and their Afghan grouping. It is clear that the same corridor, as well as the operational infrastructure of the South Caucasian states, will be used in any operations - military, humanitarian and others, which the US and its armed forces can conduct in the bordering the South Caucasus or Nearby regions.[111]

The American ruling elite still holds the conviction, that from the point of view of universal and regional security, it is impossible to separate the North Caucasus from the Southern one. Consequently, any system of regional security, which the US neoconservatives hope will be built under the auspices of the United States or NATO, must in one way or another cover the North Caucasus, which for obvious reasons is unacceptable for Russia. But it should be noted that there are certain disagreements in the United States, between various executive authorities regarding the policy pursued in the South Caucasus region: on some issues the positions of the State Department and the Ministry of Defense differ.

General characteristics of the US policy

In order to achieve a detailed analysis of the United States policy, it is necessary to examine the basis of the United States strategic view of the region, with particular reference to a number of interests that determine US policy in the South Caucasus.[112] The foundation and common bases of United States activities in each of the three South Caucasus countries, were laid down in the initial period of independence in the 1990s, due to a number of trends and is particularly pronounced in four specific areas:

- Support for democratization and political reform, despite serious disruptions in the conduct of elections in each country;

- Promise to support and assist in reforms aimed at transition to a market economy and privatization;

- The growing emphasis on security and anti-terrorism issues;

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[111] F. Corley, "Peoples on the move" War report, no. 28, January/February 1997, pp. 22-23
[112] James McDougall, "A New Stage in U.S.-Caspian Sea Basin Relations", Central Asia (Lulea), No. 5, 1997

-      Comprehensive efforts in the field of conflict resolution and mediation.

It is interesting to note that these four main areas of interest also reflect a wide range of different and even contradictory political goals among Western players. At the same time, there are common interests reflected in the policies of the United States.

Similar interests

Since the recognition of the independence of the three South Caucasus states (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) that arose in the process of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, western political lines as a whole reflected three main tasks or spheres of similar interests. Basically, they were focused on the common interests of the US and EU with respect to politics, development processes and geopolitical issues. The first collective goal tended to reflect a general policy line that was geared towards supporting democratization, political reforms, as well as economic reforms aimed at the transition to a market economy. The movement towards the solution of these problems was carried out in tandem of the EU and the USA.

The second sphere of similar interests represented in the framework of the transitional period described above, was the development process. At the same time, the United States pursued a policy line aimed at strengthening independence and supporting statehood with an additional element of conflict resolution and diplomatic mediation. In this early period, the general emphasis on the geopolitical context of the South Caucasus was the third collective goal.

This geopolitical plan was the strategic goal of providing and supporting alternative transit routes for the export of oil and gas from the region, in order to circumvent and isolate Iran, as well as to overcome the inherent in this region, dependence on the Russian pipeline network and energy infrastructure.[113] Thus, in general, the driving force of Western activity in the South Caucasus political principles, proclaimed by America to strengthen the sovereignty and support of the independence of

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[113] Terry D. Adams. Caspian Oil and Gas Development and the Black Sea Region: an overview. In: Europe's Black Sea Dimension. Brussels, CEPS, 2002, pp. 47-52, 60-68.

these "young states" in the era of change, and search for ways to reduce their dependence on Russia and help to overcome the legacy of the Soviet regime.

Forecast of priorities in US policy

When you look at the main trends in the policy of the United States and their activity in the South Caucasus, it becomes apparent that the current policy faces a number of menacing challenges. The first of these is the obvious danger of the "frozen" conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, as Azerbaijan is increasingly targeting an escalation of tension and using separate military attacks as a means political blackmail in order to put pressure on international community. Azerbaijan is irritated by the lack of real progress in the peace process, as well as diplomatic activity between Turkey and Armenia, which in the eyes of Azerbaijan looks like a betrayal of Turkey. The next daunting challenge in the region is the approaching series of elections and political changes in Armenia and in Georgia for the United States, the South Caucasus has returned to its more traditional role in the second plan of strategic relations between America and Russia. This happened for two main reasons.

First, the war in Georgia and the subsequent tension in the relations between Washington and Moscow led to the resumption of the view of the South Caucasus as a region that can not be viewed outside the context of Russian-American relations.[114]

This perspective has lowered the strategic importance of the region. At the same time, hand in hand with this process is a more important strategic calculation aimed at balancing Russia's renewed offensive position with the geopolitical need for reliable cooperation with Russia in accordance with US needs in Afghanistan and Iran. In view of Washington's desire to "nullify" bilateral relations with Russia, this meant a veiled recognition of Russia's interests in the "near abroad", which strengthened Moscow's view of the region as its "sphere of interests."[115]

This development was also reflected in the US approach, which allowed the issue of Georgia to be brought to the periphery as an issue on which Washington and

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[114] Svante E. Cornell, "The Unruly Caucasus", Current History, October 1997

[115] Suha Bolukba, "The Controversy over the Caspian Mineral Resources: Conflicting Perception, Clashing Interests", Europe-Asia Studies, Vol. 50, No. 3, 1998, pp. 397-414.

Moscow "remained at their opinions", but that at the same time allowed both sides to advance on issues not related to Georgia, avoiding the problems with Georgia. [116]This country for the benefit of solving larger strategic issues. The next central factor that led to the rise of Russia's position in the structure of US political priorities in the region was the growth of security issues and the preference for stability. [117]Previous efforts in support of democracy and face of the region's vulnerability to pressure and threats from Russia. The US security priorities were related to the need for access to the airspace of the region and facilitating the conduct of military operations in Afghanistan with the help of Russia. [118]At the same time, it should be noted that the result was a shift in interests in relation to the previous decade, within which the priorities for use of reliable energy pipelines and transit routes have been replaced by a new need for transit routes and access to air corridors. [119]The overall result of such changes in the US political line, is a kind of strategic exit from the region with Washington's lesser leading role in actively engaging in local interests and concentrating on broader strategic objectives.[120]

At the same time, while changes in US policy initiated, their departure from active and direct activities in the region, the EU was faced with the possibility and pressing need to expand its activities in the South Caucasus. After a difficult and tedious "exam on suitability "to the ceasefire in the war in Georgia was led by European activity. Despite the fact that most of the diplomatic actions were carried out by France, rather than by the EU institutions, the perception of European mediation as an effective participation was in general an important exam for the EU.

[116] See S. Neil MacFarlane, Larry Minear, and Stephen D. Schenfield, Armed Conflict in Georgia: A Case Study in Humanitarian Action and Peacekeeping, Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies, Occasional Paper #21, 1996

[117] Suha Bolukba, "The Controversy over the Caspian Mineral Resources: Conflicting Perception, Clashing Interests", Europe-Asia Studies, Vol. 50, No. 3, 1998, pp. 397-414.

[118] Barry R. Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict," in: Michael E. Brown, ed., Ethnic Conflict and International Security (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1993), pp. 103-124.

[119] See: Gayane Novikova. The Five-Day War of August 2008 and Shifts in Security in the South Caucasus. Panorama of Global Security Environment 2009. Ed. by M.Majer, R.Ondrejcsak, V.Tarasovic, T.Valasek Centre for European and North Atlantic Affairs, Bratislava, 2009, pp.343-359.

[120] See, for instance: Fiona Hill, Report on Ethnic Conflicts in the Russian Federation and Transcaucasia, Harvard University: Cambridge, Mass., 1993; Suzanne Goldenberg, Pride of Small Nations: The Caucasus and Post-Soviet Disorder, Zed Books Ltd.: London, 1994; Catherine Dale, Development and Implications of the Conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, in: "Conflicts in the Caucasus", Conference Proceedings, International Peace Research Institute: Oslo, 1995; Alexei Zverev, "Ethnic Conflict in the Caucasus 1988-94," in Bruno Coppieters, ed., Contested Borders in the Caucasus, VUB University Press: Brussels, 1996.

However, in order to maintain such a successful and broad activities in the region, the European Union needs to improve the EU's notoriously controversial strategy, as a number of leading country participants tend to follow their national political lines, which compete with each other and sometimes contradict each other. These discrepancies are particularly noticeable in relations with Russia's energy policy issues. Nevertheless, the EU has the characteristic advantage provided by the EU Action Plans and the Eastern Partnership, each of which contributed to the gradual accumulation of political capital in the region.[121]

Despite this, the future of the EU's activities in the South Caucasus region depends to a large extent on the EU itself, which is already at a crossroads between a more convenient situation involving competing national political strategies and a difficult process to achieve a single political line for Strategic activity. To date, there is reason to be optimistic about a more active involvement of the EU in the region, since it is impossible in further to ignore or diminish the significance of EU objectives aimed at assuming the leading role in the development of security and stability in the South Caucasus, which to a large extent remains "a region Risk ".

Thus, we can draw four main conclusions regarding the US and the South Caucasus:

- Elections in this region have been and continue to be conducted under the influence of force, not politics. Political leadership is largely determined by selection, not by elections;

- Legality is the key factor determining the achievement of lasting security and stability;

- The strategic stability of these regions in the lesser degree is determined by geopolitics and More - politics and economy, with local issues and interests playing a dominant role;

- Institutions play a significant role; Individual activity can be useful, but it is not enough for true democratization; It is not necessary to look for another externally oriented to the West, a reformist-minded leader to provide support (for example, Saakashvili's model in Georgia).

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[121] James McDougall, "A New Stage in U.S.-Caspian Sea Basin Relations", Central Asia (Lulea), No. 5, 1997

Hence, the key to the future is in the hands of the states of the South Caucasus. And while there is The need to prevent regional isolation and the need for active work, the achievement of true stability and security depends on the rule of law and local politics and the economy, and to a much lesser extent on the "big" geopolitics.[122]

Divergences in interests

Nevertheless, at the same time, political lines, as well as Western activities, were characterized by differences in interests between the US and the EU, which was particularly vividly reflected in America's policy towards listed above to three countries. In this context, the activity of the West was also determined by a set of differing advantages for each of the western players, especially for the US, who as a result pursued a special line in each of the three states. In a broad sense, US policy toward Armenia was largely determined by the significant influence of large and well-organized Armenian diasporas in the US (and to a lesser extent in Europe). During the early period of independence in the 1990s, the US policy towards Armenia was concentrated in three main areas:

- humanitarian assistance, mainly in the field of earthquake response;
- assistance in the conduct of processes, democratization and political reform, as well as poverty reduction and economic reforms, and, finally;
- efforts aimed at settlement, mediation and possible resolution;

Azerbaijan and the United States

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[122] Neal Ascherson, Black Sea, Hill and Wang: New York, 1995, p. 245

Azerbaijan-US relations are developing in the Several dimensions. Azerbaijan is present in the context of Russian-American relations, and today they are on the verge of remilitarization and competition in the military-political sphere. Azerbaijan's role in this bloc should be discussed separately. In general, the competition between the US and Russia in the post-Soviet space has a very negative impact on the overall situation in the region.

Between themselves, the United States and Russia find a common language, but their actions on Post-Soviet space show that the powers profess different views and concepts of development. Russian-US relations today are deeply asymmetric, the difference in their potentials is too great. At the same time, Russia is a country of European civilization, therefore it's role in the context of Azerbaijan's western choice is to compensate for the consequences of distortions and at times unjustified pressure, rendered to Azerbaijan by partners in the West.

The most obvious example is the compensation of pressure on Iran. It is obvious that the war in neighboring Iran is unprofitable for Azerbaijan, where is the largest Azerbaijani community. Russia, in turn, is the most active supporter of the peaceful resolution of this crisis. In this example, we see the second dimension of the Azerbaijani-American relations: in a broader context. This can be called the art of maneuvering a small country, sandwiched between the conflicting aspirations of bellicose powers. But dont Forget the other factor of the relations between Baku and Washington - with all the distortions of American policy in the Middle East, Azerbaijan finds the answers to its aspirations, recognition and respect as an independent country in the United States. Baku's own foreign policy line looks quite independent within the framework of freedom that does not cross the borders of American interests.

The multi-vector nature of Azerbaijan allows building equal relationships with interested players and understanding them in case of pressure from one of the parties. Another problem that needs to be considered is clarifying the specifics Azerbaijani relations. Even if the United States were an ideal monopoly on world power, that is, a monopolist that "everyone loves", it is unlikely that other countries would not try to undermine this monopoly. Given this ambiguity, there can not be any one-sided choice in favor of one geopolitical model. Azerbaijan chooses only certain elements for itself, avoiding the close embrace of one superpower. Yes, a unipolar world is unjust, but a

multipolar world can be more dangerous and unstable, but the historical pendulum has swung precisely towards multiplicity. In such conditions, the rate on one leader is doomed to failure. Therefore, when starting to describe the specifics of bilateral relations, it should be said that the American vector for Azerbaijan is one of the essential, but not the only one among many.

The US established diplomatic relations with Azerbaijan in early 1992. At that time, the uncertainty of the future of Azerbaijan,possible withdrawal along the "Iranian" path of development was considered in the United States as a serious danger.

Since the return of Heydar Aliyev to the power of Azerbaijan races Washington was seen through the prism of the interests of American oil companies as a supplier of small quantities of oil. Serious relations began after the first official visit of Heydar Aliyev (July 27 - August 6, 1997), during which the Azerbaijani leader visited Washington, New York, Houston and Chicago. Just the same day, Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, speaking at Johns Hopkins University with the speech "American Politics in the Caucasus and Central Asia," outlined the milestones American policy. It is believed that it was at that time (that was the second term of the presidency of Bill Clinton) that the US congress announced The Caspian-Black Sea region is a zone of its national interests; Owls. Under the US President, the post of special adviser was established on the Caspian region. Developing a strategy in the region several research centers began to be engaged. The US proceeded from the fact that the oil strategy is a good way to expand the range of mechanisms for military penetration and political influence in the region. The arrival of George W. Bush and the statements of his administration officials showed that the US was determined to defend more rigidly and to enforce their interests in the world, including with the help of the armed forces.

The challenges of September 11 confirmed them in this choice. So, according to the views of the head of the US State Department Condoleezza Rice, the US military has a three-fold responsibility. In her opinion, the American army is the only army in the world that can prevent a "big war", which means a "global strategic conflict" at key points such as the Persian Gulf with its 40% of the world's oil reserves.[123]

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[123] Terry D. Adams. Caspian Oil and Gas Development and the Black Sea Region: An Overview. In: Europe's Black Sea Dimension. Brussels, CEPS, 2002, pp. 47-52, 60-68.

Accordingly, the US can not stand aloof from local conflicts that threaten to turn into larger-scale wars in "zones of vital strategic interests," and the armed forces can be used to help prevent "localized large-scale violence".

Changes in US activities in the South Caucasus have recently been reflected in four general trends:

- A broader and more sustained level of direct support aimed at democratization and the processes of political reforms, especially after the Rose Revolution in Georgia, despite violations in the conduct of elections in each of the other states of the region;

- A more assertive policy aimed at curbing Russia's influence in this region with a parallel search for areas for cooperation where and when possible, for example, within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group (co-chaired by France, Russia and the USA) acting as a single intermediary In the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict;

- A more pronounced focus on security and antiterror, with the initial priority in energy and transit pipelines being replaced by the need for "air corridors" and the use of airspace for military purposes, as well as the emergence of a number of new bilateral security partnerships that are also among the strategic Priorities of the West;

- And an attempt to "build bridges" and use the new opportunities that are emerging in the region, which is especially noticeable with the example of the explicit development of new diplomatic initiatives in the relations between Armenia and Turkey.

Against the background of the shift in the US priorities, the South Caucasus region also continued to receive assistance in carrying out reforms aimed at building a market economy and conducting privatization processes. In addition, the region continues to be the central goal of efforts aimed at resolving Conflicts, and mediation efforts.

However, by 2010, Western policy began to follow a more complex plan, developing in three main areas.[124]

First, the EU began to follow a political line that takes into account more nuances that complement direct activities within the framework of the Eastern Partnership. This policy line, including the identification of key strategic partners in the former Soviet space, was modified to achieve an even more detailed and complex approach, defined as the principle "more for more and less for less ". The purpose of this approach is to create a new range of incentives aimed at supporting and encouraging improvements in the economic and political reforms in the three states of the South Caucasus. For the EU, this activity was also due to the strategic recognition of the need for stabilization and security on the European periphery. Washington welcomed such a course of events, Since the US wanted a more direct role for the EU in the region, along with the EU's more significant contribution to geopolitical "burden sharing" in the South Caucasus.[125]

The next new direction is rooted in a renewed focus on conflict prevention. It reflects the approach to the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh under the motto "back to basics", which was aimed at preventing war or resuming hostilities in the situation of Azerbaijan's growing threats to turn to weapons or a "military solution" of problems in Karabakh.[126] Here the US welcomed the new initiative of Russia to resolve the conflict in Karabakh, which was based on Moscow's desire not only to assume the leading diplomatic role of an influential state in this region, but also to show that after the war with Georgia in August 2008, Russia is able to play a positive role in establishing security and stability in this region.[127] At the same time, from the position of the United States, such a significant cooperation of Russia within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group could only strengthen the US desire to "nullify" its relations with Russia.[128]

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[124] I. Rotar', "Stat' nashimi satellitami ili umeret': takovo mnenie o Blizhnem Zarubezhye Konstantina Zatulina – Predsedatelya komiteta po delam SNG i svyazyam s sootechestvennikami Gosudarstvennoy Dumy", Nezavisimaya gazeta, 5 May 199

[125] Neal Ascherson, Black Sea, Hill and Wang: New York, 1995, p. 245

[126] Suha Bolukba, "The Controversy over the Caspian Mineral Resources: Conflicting Perception, Clashing Interests", Europe-Asia Studies, Vol. 50, No. 3, 1998, pp. 397-414.

[127] I.W. Zartman, Elusive Peace. Negotiating an End to Civil Wars, Washington D.C., The Brookings Institution 1995.

[128] Miroslav Hroch, Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe. A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations, Cambridge

Finally, the third new direction of Western policy is based on changes in US political priorities aimed at making more direct demands on the leaders of the states of the region to achieve greater progress in the processes of democratization and economic reforms. Such a more confrontational policy could already be observed in each of the capitals of the three states, when the US ambassadors to Tbilisi and Baku took a course to more actively make demands to the authorities of Georgia and Azerbaijan.

Nevertheless, at the same time, the United States was increasingly encouraging and even demanding greater European activity in the region, while trying to apply a less confrontational approach to Russia's interests and influence, which was part of a larger reformatting of the relationship between USA and Russia. However, this development was not only a prudent adjustment of the political line, but also reflected the position weakness of America. [129]More specifically, at the moment, the region lacks clear, consistent political principles of the United States. Thus, the region of the South Caucasus as a whole Is regarded as a region of secondary importance that does not have immediate priority. The typical weakness of the "excessively expanded" American presence in this region is due to several reasons.[130]

First, the US is distracted and busy with other priorities, primarily the economic downturn in the country and the consequences of the global financial crisis. In addition, many officials responsible for the region continue to be distracted by other tasks and priorities. This includes looking at the region as a the periphery of US-Russian relations and the need to address the problems associated with Iraq and Afghanistan.

Russian interests and strategies in the South Caucasus

University Press: Cambridge, 1985, p. 12; Karl W. Deutsch, Problems of Nation-Building and National Development, in: Karl W. Deutsch, William J. Foltz (eds.), Nation-Building, Atherton Press: New York, 1963, p. 140

[129] See, for instance: Fiona Hill, Report on Ethnic Conflicts in the Russian Federation and Transcaucasia, Harvard University: Cambridge, Mass., 1993; Suzanne Goldenberg, Pride of Small Nations: The Caucasus and Post-Soviet Disorder, Zed Books Ltd.: London, 1994; Catherine Dale, Development and Implications of the Conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, in: "Conflicts in the Caucasus", Conference Proceedings, International Peace Research Institute: Oslo, 1995; Alexei Zverev, "Ethnic Conflict in the Caucasus 1988-94," in Bruno Coppieters, ed., Contested Borders in the Caucasus, VUB University Press: Brussels, 1996.

[130] See Johan Galtung, 'Some observations on the Caucasus', in: Caucasian Regional Studies, vol. 2, Issue 1, http://www.vub.ac.be/POLI/.

For 20 years of their independent existence has undergone a complex evolution that largely reflects the different stages of the emergence of post-communist Russia as a new state, a change in the views of its leaders on the place and role of the country in the world and the region. This policy has been influenced by a wide range of various factors - ideological, military-strategic, economic. It was influenced by differences in views between group and departmental interests within the ruling elite of Russia, changes in its foreign policy priorities at both the global and regional levels. These differences were felt mainly in the first half of the 1990s.[131]

An important role in accelerating the collapse of the Soviet Union, As is known, played numerous Ethno-political conflicts in the south of the country - in the republics of Central Asia and Transcaucasia (that was the name of the South Caucasus at that time).[132] They had a strong influence on the formation of the foreign policy line of the leadership of post-communist Russia in the first years of its existence. Preserving the stability of the country and protecting its territorial integrity from potential threats that might Come from the South, by discarding the imperial heritage, became one of the most important priorities of Russia's international policy, ensuring its national security.

The South Caucasus has long attracted leading European powers - Great Britain, France and Germany, which for many decades, since the XIX century, had strong positions here, which did not prevent them from sharply competing with each other.

Today, the number of so-called extra-regional players in the South Caucasus (especially if we take into account the Caspian countries in general, that is, some Central Asian countries) has grown significantly and has become larger than in other regions of the world: practically all the leading centers forces of the modern world. This feature once again shows the importance and the uniqueness of the South Caucasus in the global geopolitical situation. Russia is closely connected with the countries of the region with long-standing historical, economic, cultural ties. It is quite legitimate to talk about vital for Russia interests in the South Caucasus. But at the same time, it should be noted that Moscow did not have an integral, long-term policy for the South Caucasus under the new

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[131] See S. Neil MacFarlane, Larry Minear, and Stephen D. Schenfield, Armed Conflict in Georgia: A Case Study in Humanitarian Action and Peacekeeping, Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies, Occasional Paper #21, 1996

[132] D. Trenin, "Russia's Security Interests and Policies in the Caucasus Region", in: B. Coppieters (ed.), Contested Borders in the Caucasus, Brussels, VUB Press, 1996, pp. 91-102

conditions, when it is necessary to compete for influence with many extra-regional powers and other centers of power, actively and, most importantly, have clear goals in the region.[133]

To some extent, the inertia of the past plays a negative role in this. At one time, Russia came to the Caucasus in wars with Iran and Turkey, and this was not only a struggle for spheres of influence, but power expansion to expand the Russian Empire, which was justified by the need to create a kind of security belt on the southern borders. For many decades, new territories have become an organic geopolitical part of Russia.

The revolutionary events of the beginning of the twentieth century and the subsequent Soviet period made their own adjustments-the former national outskirts of the Russian Empire acquired the same, albeit truncated, forms of statehood, and became an equal part of the vast federation. It is impossible not to see the logical progressive movement of history, which brought these states, which grew up on the Russian socio-cultural and economic foundation, to an independent existence. And today Russia is fighting in this geopolitical space not to conquer its former lands, but to preserve and strengthen its influence in the Caucasus.[134] The difference is principled, and it requires a new policy from the Russian authorities in the Caucasus, which has not yet been observed. Among the Russian political elite there is even an opinion that the problems of the Caucasus for today's Russia are an unnecessary headache. And many Caucasian politicians consider panacea from all problems to be integration into Western structures and distancing from Russia.

The fallibility of such views is obvious. The Caucasus is a "bridge" unique in its geopolitical parameters, connecting the North and South, Asia and Europe, Islam and Christianity.[135] This can be a boon for the peoples of the Caucasus and Russia, but can be used to harm them if the Caucasus remains the arena of rivalry.[136] Today, the South

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[133]See: Gayane Novikova. The Five-Day War of August 2008 and Shifts in Security in the South Caucasus. Panorama of Global Security Environment 2009. Ed. by M.Majer, R.Ondrejcsak, V.Tarasovic, T.Valasek Centre for European and North Atlantic Affairs, Bratislava, 2009, pp. 343-359.

[134] Robert O. Freedman, "Russian Policy-Making and Caspian Sea Oil", Analysis of Current Events, vol. 9, no. 2, February 1997, p. 6

[135] See, for instance, Dmitri Trenin, "Russia's Security Interests and Policies in the Caucasus Region", in: Bruno Coppieters (ed.) Contested Borders in the Caucasus, Brussels, VUBPRESS, 1996, pp. 91-102.

[136] On this, see Ghia Nodia, 'Waiting for the Russian Bear', in: War Report, June 1995, no. 34, pp. 39-40.

Caucasus is a space of intersection between geopolitical and geostrategic interests of the Russian Federation and the United States, the European Union, NATO, regional states - Turkey, Iran and others. Unfortunately, recently the tendency of rivalry is noticeable prevails over reasonable cooperation. So, with the advent of Saakashvili's regime, Georgia's relations with the Russian Federation have sharply deteriorated.[137]

With Armenia, Russia builds relations of strategic partnership, which is enshrined in the 1997 Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. Moscow actually supported Yerevan during the war because of Karabakh. And today, which is a sin to conceal, officially recognizing the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, the Russian Federation contributes to the growth of the military potential of Armenia, which occupies a significant part of Azerbaijan. Yerevan is supplied with Russian weapons at preferential prices, here is the military base of the Russian Federation. Close ties are maintained between the political and business elites of the two countries. A significant part of industrial enterprises, 80% of the republic's energy sector is controlled by Russian companies. The influential Armenian foreign diaspora, which is forced to reckon not only in Moscow, but also in Paris and Washington, contributes to all this.

But it is also worth noting that references to influential lobbying forces in solving complex interstate problems are not enough to convince those against whom the policy of such bilateral friendly unions is acting unwillingly. In this case, we are talking about Azerbaijan, whose political elite in its majority views the strategic alliance between Moscow and Yerevan as supporting the aggressive course of Armenia against Azerbaijan, a country potentially friendly to Russia. So, many representatives of the political class of Azerbaijan urge Russian diplomacy to decide what is more important for it - the national interests of the Russian state or the lobbying capabilities of the Armenians? After all, in fact, the territorial claims of Armenia create a difficult tangle of problems, the consequence of which is the increasingly noticeable policy of alienation pursued by Baku in relation to Moscow. Relations with Azerbaijan, to which the Moscow's position on Nagorno-Karabakh had and continues to exert a cooling influence, remained rather tense during the 1990s. Only under Putin's presidency they have improved somewhat. A number of acute problems were resolved, such as the status of the Caspian Sea, Gabala

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[137]Barry R. Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict," in: Michael E. Brown, ed., Ethnic Conflict and International Security (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1993), pp. 103-124.

radar station, more than 4 times - up to $ 1 billion - turnover has increased. The improvement of relations was not prevented by the pro-Western orientation of Baku based on Turkey, the course towards rapprochement with NATO. But the problem of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan remains a stumbling block in interstate relations.[138] On the whole, it should be noted that Russia's clear strategic goal in the region has not yet been outlined, its interests have not been determined, without which it is impossible to talk about a thought-out foreign policy strategy.[139] Moscow did not seem to notice that a new political elite and civil society were formed in the countries of the South Caucasus, far from the stereotypes of the past. Relations with Russia are recognized as important, but already far from being a priority. It is characteristic that in all countries of the South Caucasus there are no more or less influential pro-Russian parties or Social movements.[140] In addition, the Russian-speaking stratum and the part of the national elites that was brought up in the political culture of the times of the USSR. Moscow indifferently looks at the fact that the Russian language has ceased to be a state language, and loses its prospects as a language of communication between our peoples. A generation of citizens has grown up in Azerbaijan, for which the Russian language sounds as incomprehensible as German or Farsi.

Underestimation of all these processes is one of the main mistakes of Russian policy in the region and the reason for the decreasing influence of Moscow in the countries of the South Caucasus. So, the population of Georgia in recent years, especially during the years of M. Saakashvili, actually began to take a hostile attitude towards Russia, blaming him in Split the country and support the "separatist regimes" of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and earlier - the "corrupt regime" . [141]The results of the plebiscite held in Georgia in January 2008, along with the presidential elections, when almost 70% of the voters who voted in it voted for the country's accession to NATO, say, in particular, that

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[138] For more on this, see: S. Neil MacFarlane, Larry Minear, and Stephen D. Schenfield, Armed Conflict in Georgia: A Case Study in Humanitarian Action and Peacekeeping, Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies, Occasional Paper no. 21, 1996.

[139]The Caucasus and the Caspian: 1996 Seminar Series, vol. II, F. Hill (ed.), Harvard University, J.F. Kennedy School of Government, Cambridge, 1996, Presentation by Michael Ochs, p. 77

[140] Tim Potier, The Constitutional Future of the Post-Soviet Caucasian Autonomous Republics, Briefing Paper, Unpublished.

[141] A. Rondeli, "Georgia in the Post-Soviet Space", Caucasian Regional Studies, no. 1, 1996, pp. 96-100.

the anti-Russian position of the government is supported by a large part of the population of the republic.[142]

Thus, from the very beginning, with respect to Moscow, security considerations dominated the new states of the South Caucasus. In th is sense, the initial situation, in which the new Russia turned out, strongly resembled the positioning of the Russian Empire to the region of Transcaucasia in the 19th - early 20th centuries.

The Russian presence in the South Caucasus and the political influence on the situation in the region were initially carried out by supporting those parties in ethnic and interstate conflicts, whose victory was deemed to be more in line with Russia's long-term interests both in the world as a whole and in the region . Such an approach was largely conditioned by the general ideology of Russian foreign policy in that period. In the Kremlin and the Foreign Ministry in the early 1990s, it was believed that it was necessary to support those post-communist countries and political regimes that were ready to move hand in hand with Russia towards a democratic future, resolutely breaking with the Soviet past. In this context, it seemed quite natural that Moscow, as the conflict between the central government of the country and Abkhazia was on the rise in Georgia, took the side of official Tbilisi, after Shevardnazde came to power there. The name of this politician in the then ruling circles of Russia was linked with the prospects of Georgia's democratic development and close bilateral cooperation for the benefit of both peoples. On the contrary, in respect of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict in Moscow, a 180-turn Degrees compared with the policy of the former USSR. In this conflict, since its inception in 1988, the Soviet leadership secretly supported Azerbaijan.[143] It believed that this republic adheres to more conservative and acceptable for Moscow attitudes towards preserving the Union, unlike Armenia, where liberal-democratic forces began to dominate, whose views and actions objectively undermined the state integrity of the USSR. Initially, the leadership of post-communist Russia by inertia also supported Azerbaijan.[144]

However, in the second half of Russian politics a radical turn took place. The government of President Boris Yeltsin came to the conclusion that the support of a

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[142] F. Corley, "Peoples on the move" War report, no. 28, January/February 1997, pp. 22-23
[143] Michael E. Brown, "Causes and Implications of Ethnic Conflict", in: Michael E. Brown, ed., Ethnic Conflict and International Security (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1993), p. 5.
[144] Svante E. Cornell, "The Unruly Caucasus", Current History, October 1997

democratic Armenia should become a priority.[145] Moreover, in the ruling circles of Russia, looking at the expanding cooperation between Azerbaijan and Turkey, expressed growing concern over the possible strengthening of Ankara's influence not only in the South Caucasus states, but also in the Russian North Caucasus. Prospects for Turkey's influence, a country where the military played a key role in politics, in Moscow wasn't linked with the opportunities for democratic progress in the South Caucasus.

After the transition of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict to the military stage in August 1992, radical changes also took place in Russian politics, in relation to this problem. Ethnic movements gained strength in the republics of the North Caucasus, and they were supported by local elites, mainly representing the former communist nomenclature of the region. In this regard, the threat of Russia's territorial integrity, stemming from growing ethno-separatism.[146]

First of all in the republics with the Circassian component, was assessed very highly, especially by the Russian military. The beginning of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict provided a unique opportunity to direct the destructive energy of the Circassian ethnic movement towards the neighboring state. Therefore, Moscow did not interfere with the flow of volunteers from the North Caucasus, especially from the Circassian republics, which went to the aid of the ethnically close Abkhazian people. Among the volunteers were residents of other regions of Russia, Cossacks. In the future, despite the fact that Moscow officially adhered to neutrality in this conflict, as it grew, pro-Abkhazian position of Russia intensified. The decisive role in this played the line of the MO. And although the Foreign Ministry tried to maintain the territorial integrity of Georgia by inertia, the position of the country's political leadership gradually was inclined in favor of the line of generals and support of the Abkhazian government V. Ardzinba.

However, in the future, during the interethnic conflicts that have unfolded in the countries of the South Caucasus, Russia has substantially corrected its position. The political leadership of the country came to the conclusion that, in the face of unfinished conflicts, peacekeeping would be the most effective form of preserving Russian influence and presence in the region. At that time, the international situation contributed to the

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[145] B. Coppieters, "Conclusions: The Caucasus as a Security Complex", in: B. Coppieters (ed.), Contested Borders in the Caucasus, op.cit., p. 196

[146] Revaz Gachechiladze, The New Georgia: Space, Society, Politics, Texas A & M University Press: College Station, 1995, pp. 19-20

realization of this choice. The United States of America (USA) and the European Community at that time actively supported the domestic political Line of President Boris Yeltsin and his government, aimed at building democracy in Russia and a market economy.

Therefore, the Western powers generally favored that the Russian Federation assume a significant share of the responsibility for ensuring stability in the post-Soviet space. [147]In many ways, thanks to the dominant role of the West in world politics, this attitude was supported by international institutions - the United Nations (UN) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). In the summer of 1992, the Joint Control Commission (JCC) was created to maintain peace in the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict. After the signing in Moscow in May 1994. The Georgian-Abkhaz agreement on a cease-fire and the division of troops, Russian units under the flag of the peacekeepers of the commonwealth of independent states (CIS) took positions on both sides of conflict lines. This peacekeeping operation was sanctioned by the UN, which every 5 years extended the status of Russian peacekeepers. Russia became part of the OSCE Minsk Group (MG), established in 1992, to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. A new strategic vision of Moscow's tasks Foreign policy towards the South Caucasus Was due to several factors.[148]

Firstly, in the Kremlin and departments that were involved in the formulation and implementation of the foreign policy course, they were well aware that the conflicts that have arisen in the region have no prospect of solution in the coming years, On the basis of compromise and mutual consent of the parties. At the same time, neither in the region of the South Caucasus nor beyond its borders is any power or military-political alliance that could force the conflicting parties to agree on the basis of the ideas proposed by these external players. Therefore, the freezing of conflicts and the preservation of Russia's key role in maintaining the post-war status quo became the main task of Russian policy. It fits well into the general context of the course that Moscow pursued in

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[147] On this, see Ghia Nodia, 'Waiting for the Russian Bear', in: War Report, June 1995, no. 34, pp. 39-40.

[148] A. Krylov, "Peregovory mogut prekratit'sia po vine Tbilisi: takoe mnenie v intervyu 'NG' vyskazal prezident Respubliki Abkhaziya V. Ardzinba", Nezavisimaya gazeta, 5 March.1997.

international affairs in the 1990s. [149]Experiencing enormous difficulties and tensions during the implementation of internal political reforms, gradually moving away from the West, since 1993, Russia could not claim some significant role in the formation of a new, post-Stalinist world, even in the limited space of the former USSR. The only task that Moscow has been able to do is to preserve the results of the disintegration of the Soviet Union in those forms and at the stage where the disintegration processes were suspended, and their actual results were fixed in 1992-1994. And, of course, Moscow left for A role of the guarantor of stability of this "temporary" Order.

Russia in world politics, therefore, turned into a power status quo. "Paradoxes" and contradictions of peacemaking. At the same time, peacekeeping, which required from the Russian Federation to refrain from the principles of impartiality and equidistance in relation to the conflicting parties, continued to be combined in Moscow's policy with maintaining exclusive relations with one of the partners. Such a strange "splitting" of Russian policy became possible not because of the "cunning" of the Kremlin or the skill of its diplomacy. In the situation that developed in the 1990s in the South Caucasus, the state of this region could count on the fact that other world players will take the initiative in restoring the situation that existed at the time of the collapse of the USSR. Therefore, they were forced to agree to maintain Russia's dominant position. So, shortly after the military defeat of Georgia in Abkhazia, Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze insisted on his country's accession to the CIS, believing that while only being part of this international organization dominated by Russia, Georgia will have a chance to restore its territorial integrity.[150]

There is a very common opinion that Russia's peacekeeping policy has never been consistent, that Moscow has always sought to use a peacekeeping mandate to support one of the parties to the conflicts, for the gradual redrawing of the internationally recognized borders of the states located here in their own interests. However, the assertion about Russia's adherence to unilateral actions is only partially true. It mainly reflects the course of Moscow towards Georgia, and even at a time when it has headed for

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[149] See, for instance, Dmitri Trenin, "Russia's Security Interests and Policies in the Caucasus Region", in: Bruno Coppieters (ed.) Contested Borders in the Caucasus, Brussels, VUBPRESS, 1996, pp. 91-102.

[150] See Johan Galtung, 'Some observations on the Caucasus', in: Caucasian Regional Studies, vol. 2, Issue 1,
http://www.vub.ac.be/POLI/.

NATO membership, and the Russian-American and Russian-NATO relations have entered a phase of confrontation. But this turn happened later. The events of August 2004, when the Georgian forces attempted to restore control over the capital of South Ossetia, Tskhinvali, were finally destroyed by the desire of the Russian and Georgian governments for constructive interaction, although in the previous period the parties to the conflict achieved notable progress on the way to its settlement.

The same line aimed at maintaining stability in the region and cautious rapprochement of the sides' positions, Russia also adhered to the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, although it would seem that the very logic of bilateral relations with these countries had to push Moscow to a tough choice In favor of one of them. So, on the one hand Armenia Officially became Russia's only military ally in the South Caucasus. During the reign of the pro-Western politician, President L. Ter-Petrosyan, in 1995 the Russian military base in Gyumri was deployed on the territory of Armenia. In August 1997, the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance between the two countries was concluded. As a result, Russia assumed the role of guarantor of Armenia's security. In Moscow, the presence of such an ally as Armenia was seen as an important factor in safeguarding the balance of power in the South Caucasus, restraining Turkey's desire to expand its influence in the region. Armenia, after a victorious war with Azerbaijan, which led to the establishment of control over part of the bordering Azerbaijani territories (the so-called "security belt" of Nagorno-Karabakh), actually ended up in peace in the world Situation of semi-insulation.[151] Relations with Turkey have not been normalized, moreover, the prospects for their normalization in connection with the new situation around Karabakh have only worsened.[152]

In such cases, while maintaining Yerevan's tough position on Karabakh, only Russia could act as guarantor of Armenia's security, inviolability of its borders. Thus, the conclusion of the Russian-Armenian alliance was a pragmatic decision of both sides. But, on the other hand, as energy Problems became one of the central themes of world politics, the importance of Azerbaijan for Russia as the most important exporter and the country

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[151] I. Rotar', "Stat' nashimi satellitami ili umeret': takovo mnenie o Blizhnem Zarubezhye Konstantina Zatulina – Predsedatelya komiteta po delam SNG i svyazyam s sootechestvennikami Gosudarstvennoy Dumy", Nezavisimaya gazeta.
[152] Robert O. Freedman, "Russian Policy-Making and Caspian Sea Oil", Analysis of Current Events, vol. 9, no. 2, February 1997, p. 6

for the transit of oil and gas increased significantly. [153]This demanded from Moscow a more flexible policy in the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict. To keep these two important foreign policy positions in the South Caucasus - Armenia as the only military ally and Azerbaijan as a key economic partner, Russia was forced to balance. [154]At the same time, Moscow was well aware that the resumption of the armed conflict in and around Karabakh would inevitably lead to the collapse of Moscow's positions both in Yerevan and Baku.

It was only during the presidency of D. Medvedev that he held five meetings between the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan - S. Sargsyan and I. Aliyev (in Moscow in November 2008 and July 2009, in Astrakhan in September 2010, in Sochi in March and in Kazan in June 2011). In particular, on the initiative of D. Medvedev, on November 2, 2008, the so-called. Moscow (Mayen-Dorf) "Declaration of three presidents" on Nagorno-Karabakh, according to which official Baku He committed himself to resolving the Karabakh conflict exclusively by peaceful means. In July 2009, the Russian representative, along with representatives of the governments of the United States and France, co-chairing the MG, took an active part in the preparation of the so-called "updated version" of the Madrid Principles for a peaceful settlement on Nagorno-Karabakh, which was designed to stimulate the development of the negotiation process between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The 21st century begins to gradually change the role of Caspian-Black Sea region in world politics. It turns into territory, through Which can pass corridors for the transit of energy from the countries of Central Asia and Azerbaijan to Europe. This added another important task to the Russian policy in the South Caucasus: to maintain Russia's role as a key transit country for oil. In 1999, despite the negative attitude of Russia, the governments of Turkey, Georgia and Azerbaijan signed an agreement on the construction of an oil pipeline Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan. In Moscow, from the very beginning, this project was considered to be a political project, not having Under a serious economic basis that Aims to direct Caspian oil to Europe by passing Russia.

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[153] See: Gayane Novikova. The Five-Day War of August 2008 and Shifts in Security in the South Caucasus. Panorama of Global Security Environment 2009. Ed. by M.Majer, R.Ondrejcsak, V.Tarasovic, T.Valasek Centre for European and North Atlantic Affairs, Bratislava, 2009, pp.343-359.
[154] Terry D. Adams. Caspian Oil and Gas Development and the Black Sea Region: an Overview. In: Europe's Black Sea Dimension. Brussels, CEPS, 2002, pp. 47-52, 60-68.

At the beginning of the 21st century, as the transformation of Gazprom into a leading player on the European gas market for Russia, the importance and dominance of gas transit routes to Europe increased. In these new international situations, the role of not only Azerbaijan as one of the gas producers, but also Georgia as a potential transit country, has significantly increased. This strengthened positions of these states in regional politics, strengthened the positions of those forces in the Which advocated a reduction in From Russia and the reduction of its influence in the region. Russian diplomacy has made a lot of efforts to persuade the states of the European Union and the South Caucasus to abandon the NABUCCO gas pipeline project in favor of the Russian "South Stream". This question has not been finally resolved to this day. He continues to be at the center of various International political intrigues and diplomatic negotiations.

In the expert and political environment, there is an opinion that Russia actively impeded the implementation of oil and gas pipeline projects through the territory of Azerbaijan and Georgia to Turkey, and even allegedly used its influence in the region to increase tensions in conflict zones in order to disrupt Construction plans. Indeed, as noted above, the Kremlin reacted painfully to projects of alternative ways of delivering hydrocarbons to Europe, considering it a threat to Russia's role as the most important transit country for energy resources.[155] However, in fact, the growth of competition in the issue of energy transit routes made the Russian Policy in the South Caucasus to look for more flexible approaches to the states of the region. This had the greatest impact on Russia's attitude towards Azerbaijan. And although the current problem of energy transit is still acute and urgent for the South Caucasus, it seems that it can no longer seriously affect the changes in the configuration of international relations in the region and the balances of forces that have formed in it. [156]

Moreover, in the political and expert circles of the South Caucasus countries the opinion is growing that in the near future global and regional powers under the

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[155] See, for instance: Fiona Hill, Report on Ethnic Conflicts in the Russian Federation and Transcaucasia, Harvard University: Cambridge, Mass., 1993; Suzanne Goldenberg, Pride of Small Nations: The Caucasus and Post-Soviet Disorder, Zed Books Ltd.: London, 1994; Catherine Dale, Development and Implications of the Conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, in: "Conflicts in the Caucasus", Conference Proceedings, International Peace Research Institute: Oslo, 1995; Alexei Zverev, "Ethnic Conflict in the Caucasus 1988-94," in Bruno Coppieters, ed., Contested Borders in the Caucasus, VUB University Press: Brussels, 1996.

[156] Suha Bolukba, "The Controversy over the Caspian Mineral Resources: Conflicting Perception, Clashing Interests", Europe-Asia Studies, Vol. 50, No. 3, 1998, pp. 397-414.

influence of the current realities in the South Caucasus will be forced to move to a policy of complementarity of the already located Under the construction of pipelines. In a situation where the South Caucasus, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, has become one of the most conflict-ridden regions of the world, the importance of economic Cooperation to accelerate the development of the states and territories in the region has never been considered by Moscow as one of the priority tasks. Although Russia was one of the founders of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) in 1992 and its largest sponsor, the Kremlin and the Foreign Ministry coolly treated numerous projects in the field of transport and infrastructure development in the region, developed in the depths of the BSEC.

Apparently, such a position of Moscow is objective Reflected the complex realities of the region, which is clearly not yet ripe for the development of multilateral cooperation. To maintain the status quo, bilateral ties were viewed by Moscow as more effective. [157]At the same time, Russian capital has taken significant positions in the economy of Armenia and Georgia. But if in the first case this became an additional tool to strengthen Russia's political influence on the partner country, then in the second case a different situation was observed.

Despite Difficult relations between Russia and Georgia, and even Military confrontation with it in August 2008, the position of Russian capital, especially in the energy sector, banking business, telecommunications of this country turned out to be very strong. Neither the big politics affected them, nor, on the contrary, the activity of Russian capital could not contribute to the warming in bilateral relations. At the same time, That the presence of Russian capital in the economy of Armenia and Georgia has no strategic significance for Russia. As for Azerbaijan, cooperation with this country in the field of hydrocarbon production and transportation is strategically important for Russia's foreign economic activity. After 2000, the situation around the South Caucasus began to change markedly. In connection with the increased role of this region in the extraction and transit of energy carriers, interest in it from other world players, the US and the EU, has increased sharply.

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[157] D. Trenin, "Russia's Security Interests and Policies in the Caucasus Region", in: B. Coppieters (ed.), Contested Borders in the Caucasus, Brussels, VUB Press, 1996, pp. 91-102.

For the United States, which began large-scale military operations in Afghanistan, the military-political importance of the region has increased as it directly adjoins the zone of military operations. In particular, it was decided to establish military bases for NATO and the US in Bulgaria and Romania. With the entry of these two countries into the EU, in 2007 the activity of European diplomacy in the countries of the Black Sea basin increased noticeably. In Russia, unlike the US and the EU, it could not offer the attractive social order to the South Caucasus countries, it was perceived as a serious factor weakening its influence in the region. In connection with the expansion of the US and EU presence in the South Caucasus, the states located here began to connect hopes with the fact that these global players will help to resolve the frozen conflicts. The growth of similar expectations in the states of the South Caucasus also troubled Moscow, which, in the course of time, was afraid of losing its monopoly on peacekeeping. In general, the activity of Western countries in the South Caucasus began to be perceived in the Kremlin as an attempt to limit Russia's influence in this important area of the post-Soviet space.

The change in Russian policy in the region began after 2004, and as noted above, was associated with a reaction to the events in South Ossetia. However, the true reasons for the change in Russian policy in the South Caucasus were deeper[158]. In addition to the general change in the balance of power in the Black Sea region, not in favor of Russia, the activation of the US and the EU here, played a significant role.

For first, after the American operation in Iraq, the gradual deterioration of relations between Russia, on the one hand, and the US and NATO, on the other. For many reasons, the South Caucasus has become ruling circles in Moscow one of the most important lines of defense of the interests of the Russian Federation.

Secondly, the support of George W. Bush's junior "color revolutions", first in Georgia (November 2003), and then in Ukraine (November 2004-January 2005), which initiated the course "promoting democracy to the east", was perceived in Moscow was already a threat to internal political order in Russia itself.

Thirdly, in the Russian capital, a new line of the American administration met with a lack of understanding and irritation to "thaw" conflicts around the world, including in the post-Soviet space. The Kremlin believed that the necessary conditions for

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[158] Neal Ascherson, Black Sea, Hill and Wang: New York, 1995, p. 245

this were not yet ripe, and that the Russian policy of maintaining the status quo remains, as before, the best available solution. Although Moscow did not interfere with attempts to resolve the Karabakh conflict Within the so-called "Prague process", started in April 2004 in the capital of the Czech Republic, in which the key role was played by American diplomacy.

Fourthly, in the context of intensifying confrontation with the United States, the most proclaimed in Moscow was the proclamation of Georgian leadership to integrate the country into NATO, his intention to restore the territorial integrity of the country with the support of the EU and the North Atlantic Alliance. [159]Official Tbilisi began to persistently seek the withdrawal of Russian peacekeepers from the zones of the Georgian-Abkhaz and Georgian-Ossetian conflicts and replace them with international police forces. In 2007, after the request of Georgia, Russia withdrew its troops from the territory of this state.

Fifthly, after September 2006, Tbilisi regained control of the upper Kodori Gorge and Announced the move there to the government of the Abkhazian autonomy, formerly located in the Georgian capital, Moscow began seriously to fear Georgia's attempts to restore its territorial integrity with the help of military force. On the way to a direct clash with Georgia, the development of a new policy towards Georgia and conflicts in its territory, caused serious discussions in Russian political circles. However, these discussions, taking place in an atmosphere of secrecy, characteristic of the decision-making process in modern Russia, never came to the level of public discussions. As a result, a new Russian policy was defined with regard to the former Georgian autonomies, which was unofficially called "rapprochement without recognition."

Back in August 2006, Moscow withdrew from the ban on trade, economic and financial ties with Abkhazia. On April 16, 2008, Russian President Vladimir Putin instructed the government to develop measures to provide substantive assistance to Abkhazia and South Ossetia. By this order in fact, the legal personality of not only the authorities of the former Georgian autonomies, but also legal entities registered on their territory, including industrial, commercial and financial enterprises, was recognized. In

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[159] See, for instance, Dmitri Trenin, "Russia's Security Interests and Policies in the Caucasus Region", in: Bruno Coppieters (ed.) Contested Borders in the Caucasus, Brussels, VUBPRESS, 1996, pp. 91-102.

political and expert circles, this was regarded as a serious move by Moscow towards Economic absorption of the former Georgian autonomies, their gradual integration into the political space of the Russian Federation. At the same time, the Kremlin refused to officially recognize the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, aware of how much damage can be caused by the international consequences of such a move of Russian foreign policy. At the same time, Moscow allowed and even encouraged the distribution of passports to the residents of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, using the new law on the citizenship of the USSR, adopted in 2002. The Russian authorities saw in this certain guarantees for the preservation of Russia's presence in the former Georgian autonomies.

Tensions in the Russian-Georgian relations have been constantly increasing. After deporting Russian servicemen from Georgia accused of espionage in favor of Moscow, the Russian Federation responded by introducing the visa regime in 2006 against Georgian citizens, mass expelling them from the country under various pretexts. And yet, the war between Russia and Georgia in August 2008 was not inevitable exit from the developed situation. Several circumstances contributed to the fact that tense bilateral relations moved to the stage of armed conflict. From the Bush administration on the eve of the war, Tbilisi seemed to receive ambiguous signals that the government of M. Saakashvili perceived as certain guarantees of American support in the event of a military clash with Russia. Neither the US nor the EU could, and apparently did not really want to convince Moscow of their readiness to take into account Russia's interests in the process of settling the conflicts around the former Georgian autonomies, provided that this process becomes a multilateral format.[160] On the contrary, the statements and actions of some American and European diplomats have contributed to minimizing the significance of Russian interests in the region in the perception of Georgian politicians[161].

In Moscow, all this was regarded as an alarming symptom. The fact that the West once again intends to ignore Russia's interests. Moscow also feared that if Russia did not take active measures to protect the Abkhaz and Ossetian population of former Georgian autonomies from Tbilisi's attempts to impose territorial reintegration with Georgia by force, this could lead to a significant aggravation of the political situation in the North Caucasus, primarily in the Republics with the Circassian (Adyghe) ethnic component and

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[160] F. Corley, "Peoples on the move" War report, no. 28, January/February 1997, pp. 22-23
[161] Revaz Gachechiladze, The New Georgia: Space, Society, Politics, Texas A & M University Press: College Station, 1995, pp. 19-20.

in North Ossetia. Therefore, the leadership of Russia came to the conclusion that it is possible to use military force against Georgia to ensure the status quo in the zone of the Georgian-Abkhaz and Georgian-Ossetian conflicts. Moreover, officially such a tactic could be justified and be a necessity for the protection of Russian citizens living on the territory of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Back in July 2008, the newspaper "Nezavisimaya Gazeta" published information with reference to an analytical report for the country's leadership recommending "all necessary measures with all the ensuing circumstances" to protect Abkhazia and South Ossetia.[162]

Not only Russia, but Georgia was also preparing for war. However, as it has happened in history, both sides obviously did not expect the military conflict to break out so soon. The study of the events that led to the August 2008 war, apparently, for a long time will be the object of special historical research. To date, the most objective version of direct causes of the war was outlined in the report of the Independent International Mission on the establishment of the actual circumstances of the war in Georgia ("Mission Tagliavini"), established in December 2008 at the EU summit. Although the conclusions of this report, first introduced in September 2009, inevitably affected certain political and diplomatic constraints, due to the status and character of the Mission. Nevertheless, it follows from the report that the war was the result of coincidence of several dramatic circumstances, and both sides contributed to the unleashing of the conflict.[163] The conclusion about mutual responsibility is shared by many other independent analysts from different countries of the world.

However, in the international analytical community, it is also widely believed that Russia as a great power, bears great responsibility for what happened[164]. An important issue, still subject to various assumptions and interpretations, concerns the reasons that prompted Russia's leadership to recognize the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, contrary to Moscow's previously adopted policy on "rapprochement without recognition". Apparently, this decision was determined to a large extent by the fact that as

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[162]A. Rondeli, "Georgia in the Post-Soviet Space", Caucasian Regional Studies, no. 1, 1996, pp. 96-100.

[163] D. Trenin, "Russia's Security Interests and Policies in the Caucasus Region", in: B. Coppieters (ed.), Contested Borders in the Caucasus, Brussels, VUB Press, 1996, pp. 91-102

[164] See S. Neil MacFarlane, Larry Minear, and Stephen D. Schenfield, Armed Conflict in Georgia: A Case Study in Humanitarian Action and Peacekeeping, Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies, Occasional Paper #21, 1996

a result of the postwar settlement, Russia would inevitably lose the status of a peacekeeper. Its armed forces would be forced to leave the territory of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. On the contrary, the recognition of these territories by independent states opened up the possibility for Russia to consolidate the outcome of the war and its presence, including the military one, in the former Georgian autonomies.

At the same time, Moscow was well aware of the negative consequences recognition for the positions of Russia in the international arena. However, as it turned out later, the miscalculation of the Kremlin and the Foreign Ministry was made only with regard to the reaction of the countries of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to Russia's recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. None of the countries included in these international organizations, including Belarus, Kazakhstan and China, did not support Russia. True, and this circumstance became a certain compensation for Moscow, the CSTO and SCO member states recognized Russia's special role in ensuring stability and order in the Caucasus region. The number of states that recognized the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, are Latin America and Oceania. But this was enough for Moscow to attribute Abkhazia and South Ossetia to the category of partially recognized states. As for Russia's relations with the West, then, as it was believed in the Kremlin, over time, the discussion of the issue of Georgia's territorial integrity turned into a routine exchange of views and reproaches on this topic.

To the new status quo

The August war, of course, has become a frontier in Russian policy towards the South Caucasus. After that, it seemed for a while that Russia had completely changed its role in the region, instead of a country that maintained the status quo, a revisionist power. However, it soon became clear that, to create a new international order in the region and a new structure of regional security, Moscow hadn't any ideas, or resources. At the same time, the Shortly after the war in September 2008, the global financial and economic crisis changed much in world politics. The US and EU, for various reasons, were forced to sharply limit their activity in the post-Soviet space, including the South

Caucasus. In this regard, they have lost the opportunity to act as world players capable of offering the region a new model of development and international relations. In Moscow, however, it was felt that its main objectives as a result of conflict were reached. [165]The question of Georgia's accession to the NATO was postponed indefinitely. The military presence of Russia in Abkhazia and South Ossetia has strengthened and has acquired a new, more solid in the legal sense and a long-term basis of bilateral treaties. And although President Saakashvili remained in power (many analysts in the West believe that one of the goals of the entry of Russian troops into the territory of Georgia was just to overthrow him), from the point of view of Russian leadership, the military potential of Georgia to unleash a new conflict was undermined. At Moscow, nevertheless, did not object to the normalization of relations with Georgia, but only on the condition that the "territorial issue" should not be affected at the talks. In the long run, it was assumed that if Tbilisi could establish a direct dialogue with the former autonomies, Moscow would not object to the creation of a confederation of Georgia with Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Tbilisi did not like this approach at all. They believed that the basis for the beginning of the normalization of bilateral relations should be Russia's refusal to recognize the independence of the former autonomies and the confirmation of the territorial integrity of Georgia.

In the next few years, Russia's policy in the South Caucasus, aimed at preserving the new Status quo, formed after the August war 2008, most likely, will not undergo significant changes. Moreover, most likely further deterioration of the situation in the Russian North Caucasus will encourage Moscow to strengthen support for Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In the longer term, the return to active politics in the South Caucasus of global players - the US and EU, and the possible arrival of a new world actor - China substantially will change the situation in the region.[166] For the states located here, the space for foreign policy maneuver will expand, and new opportunities for international cooperation will appear. In these circumstances, the Russian Federation, with its limited economic resources and an unattractive socio-political model, will find it increasingly

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[165] Michael E. Brown, "Causes and Implications of Ethnic Conflict", in: Michael E. Brown, ed., Ethnic Conflict and International Security (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1993), p. 5.
[166] The Caucasus and the Caspian: 1996 Seminar Series, vol. II, F. Hill (ed.), Harvard University, J.F. Kennedy School of Government, Cambridge, 1996, Presentation by Michael Ochs, p. 77

difficult to compete for role of the main partner of the countries of the South Caucasus and defend leadership positions here.

Apparently, the role and participation of the Russian Federation in the settlement of the Karabakh problem will noticeably decrease. However, the recognition of new realities will hardly force Russia to reconsider its approaches to politics in the region towards multilateral cooperation. Apparently, Moscow will focus on Preservation of influence within the framework of new dividing lines with an emphasis on retaining control over Abkhazia and South Ossetia.[167]

During the years of post-Soviet independence, several periods have gradually changed in Russian-Azerbaijani relations.Post-Soviet years was marked by sharp leaps. Among the objective reasons for the slowdown, the problem[168]s related to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict are the first, followed by problems related to the creation of a new political elite, the disintegration of a single economic mechanism, and the division of all-Union property. Among the subjective - the pro-Armenian position of the political and power groups of the Russian leadership, the Moscow's establishment of a transport blockade during the first Chechen campaign, irritation over the arrival of Western oil and gas companies in Azerbaijan.

With the coming to power of Vladimir Putin, a surge of Russian activity in the post-Soviet space brings countries closer together and allows building a policy of strategic partnership. Nwe are witnessing the continuation of this line. Azerbaijan and Russia got rid of many complexes and illusions, learned new realism and pragmatism, overcame the difficulties of the transition period of their own development. Managed to go through a difficult path from the policy of emotion to long-term partnership. The dense fabric of today's relationships creates contacts at the senior management level business elites in the process of working on joint projects separately. Is it possible to say that the Russian-Azerbaijani strategic partnership for today is a complete, and ideal geopolitical project? Probably, it will be more accurate to define it as a constantly developing multifaceted process that requires regular tuning. At the same time, the total result of these years is

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[167] See Johan Galtung, 'Some observations on the Caucasus', in: Caucasian Regional Studies, vol. 2, Issue 1, http://www.vub.ac.be/POLI/.

[168] Barry R. Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict," in: Michael E. Brown, ed., Ethnic Conflict and International Security (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1993), pp. 103-124.

with a positive balance. And given the rather impressive volume of complex regional and global problems, the final balance of relations inspires optimism.[169]

Important and even key aspect of the relationship, while thin and not Always public - friendly relations between presidents, mutual sympathy. By the presence or absence of this feature, you can More accurately draw a picture of relations between countries. It is noticeable how Putin has changed his attitude to the West, primarily to the United States, and Ilham Aliyev is well aware that he is dealing with the strongest leader in the post-Soviet space, which will exert no less influence on Russian foreign policy beyond 2008.

The interests and strategic lines of Turkey in the South Caucasus

In the early 1990s, ended the era when Turkey had a common land border with the Soviet Union, so that the Turks once again discovered their own Neighbors in the South Caucasus. For the first time in many centuries (except for the period from 1918 to 1920), Turkey and Russia did not have a common land border. Establishing its first contacts with the former Soviet republics, Ankara showed the utmost caution in order not to cause a sharp reaction from Moscow, and it built up an even relationship with all the players. As a result of a new era of "old geographical discoveries," accompanied by changes in the cutting of interstate borders in the southern Caucasus region, the former Turkish-Soviet border became a zone of instability, there was a danger of direct confrontation with Russia, and once again the phantom of the frequent Russian-Turkish wars of the past centuries flashed. In these conditions, the perception of [part of] the former Soviet space as a "geography of the Turkic world" receives a certain amount of fuel at the expense of the strategic course of the United States in the region, where Turkey is mainly prepared for the role of the West's bastion against Russia. Striving to maintain its strategic importance within NATO, Turkey perfectly combined its functions as a flank and front-line alliance during the 1990s.

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[169] See, for instance, Dmitri Trenin, "Russia's Security Interests and Policies in the Caucasus Region", in: Bruno Coppieters (ed.) Contested Borders in the Caucasus, Brussels, VUBPRESS, 1996, pp. 91-102.

At that time, the ambiguous idea of "Turkishness" became an important leitmotif of Turkey's foreign policy strategy in the South Caucasus region, which led to a confrontational tone in relations with Russia and the pro-Azerbaijani "roll" in Ankara's position in the context of regional conflicts. The cornerstone of Turkey's policy towards South Caucasus region is a project to lay the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline. Ankara's regional policy has actually been squeezed into the framework of the BTC issues. Such a narrow approach limits the opportunities for Ankara's more active involvement in the affairs of the region and the formation of strategic thinking. Overcoming the remaining frictions in the 2000s will be helped by the strengthening of bilateral Turkish-Russian ties. In its relations with Russia, Turkey is gradually overcoming the legacy Cold war, which directly affects its strategic vector in the South Caucasus.[170]

The era of "geographical discoveries": the reopening of neighbors in the South Caucasus Turkey began to once again worry about the future of the South Caucasus in January 1990, when, in response to attacks on the Armenian community in Baku in the capital of Azerbaijan were introduced Soviet troops and killed several hundred Azerbaijani demonstrators. Despite the sympathy of the broad masses of the Turkish population towards the Azerbaijani brothers, the government of Turkey nevertheless took a very cautious position based on the insistent assertion that the events in Azerbaijan were purely a domestic affair of the Soviet Union. Istanbul also refused to recognize the premature independence of Azerbaijan, proclaimed on January 20.

In March 1991, President of the Turkish Republic Turgut Ozal paid an official visit to Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, as well as to Moscow; Regular flights between Istanbul and Baku were opened. A month later, the first in the history of relations between the two countries, a high-ranking official of Turkey visited Armenia, when the Turkish Ambassador to Moscow Volkan Vural arrived in Yerevan to discuss ways of improving Bilateral relations. The government of M. Yilmaz decided to take a certain risk by recognizing the independence of all former Soviet republics before similar decisions were made by the US and other Western countries. One of the latest decisions taken by the government of M. Yilmaz before the end of his term of office was the recognition of independent Azerbaijan on November 9, 1991. The government of S.

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[170] Mustafa Aydin. Twenty Years Before, Twenty Years After: Turkish Foreign Policy at the Threshold of the 21 St Century. In: Turkish Foreign Policy in the 21st Century. A Changing Role in World Politics. Ed. by T.Ismael and M.Aydin, Burlington, 2003, Ashgate, pp.16-17

Yemmaz replaced the government of S. Demirel and continued the course, recognizing December 19 [the same year] all the rest New independent states, Formed in the former Soviet space.[171]

In the aftermath of the end of the Cold War, the practice of border crossings changed radically. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the formation of new independent states in the South Caucasus, Turkey had to build relations with its new neighbors. The most significant events of the early 1990s were the closure of the only border crossing with Armenia in 1993 and the opening of new border crossings with Georgia and the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic.[172]

Armenia-Turkey: Strategic Opportunities for all

One of the most significant new situations in this region is the normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia. This new diplomatic activity opens up a number of strategic opportunities at various levels: the possibility of reintegration for the entire South Caucasus region; A new level of relations that are not burdensome and not obscured by the history associated with the genocide, for Turkey and Armenia; And, finally, for the United States, in particular, there is a powerful chance to re-create the geopolitical map of the South Caucasus, which will have consequences that go beyond the region, and will affect Russia and even Iran.

Moreover, the strategic opportunities that characterize the Turkish-Armenian diplomacy are associated with several special advantages. First, it strengthens stability in the region, as it seeks to resolve disputes by diplomatic rather than military means, which is a striking contrast to the terrible lesson learned from the war in Georgia.

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[171] For more on this, see: S. Neil MacFarlane, Larry Minear, and Stephen D. Schenfield, Armed Conflict in Georgia: A Case Study in Humanitarian Action and Peacekeeping, Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies, Occasional Paper no. 21, 1996.

[172] I.W. Zartman, Elusive Peace. Negotiating an End to Civil Wars, Washington D.C., The Brookings Institution 1995.

Second The chance is connected with the possibility to optimize the Turkish-Armenian diplomacy with the aim of renewing efforts to resolve the unresolved conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, the last "frozen" conflict in the South Caucasus.[173]

The third possibility is focused on the wider implications of normalizing relations with Turkey as an important mechanism for deepening democracy and supporting reforms in each of the countries, which at the same time offers a new path towards regional reintegration and wider development after the opening of the borders and the resumption of trade. Finally, in a broader perspective, diplomatic activity Turkey in relation to Armenia can help with the possible accession to the EU, especially in the light of Turkey's recent launch of the Kurdish Initiative.

Despite the fact that initiatives aimed at achieving normalization in the past have not yielded significant success, the potential advantages of even the simplest and most primitive forms of activity are obvious to both countries and unite them. For Turkey, opening the border with Armenia will be a strategic opportunity to increase economic activity in the poor eastern regions of the country. Such development could play a key role in the economic stabilization of the turbulent eastern regions with Kurdish settlement, and so fulfill the important task of national security, counteracting the causes of Kurdish terrorism and separatism with similarly, opening the border with Turkey would allow Armenia to withdraw from regional isolation and marginalization, and at the same time become a bridge that gives access to larger markets that is necessary for economic growth and development. In addition, commercial and economic activity resulting from the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border would have a positive impact on the subsequent trade ties between the two countries, which in turn would lead to greater formal cooperation in the customs sphere and border security. The deepening of bilateral ties and cross-border cooperation could undoubtedly be followed by the establishment of diplomatic relations.[174] In this way the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border would not only lead to a significant breakthrough in the development of trade and economic ties, but would also serve as an impetus to support stability and security in the conflict-prone region of the South Caucasus.

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[173]Mustafa Aydin. Twenty Years Before, Twenty Years After: Turkish Foreign Policy at the Threshold of the 21St Century. In: Turkish Foreign Policy in the 21St Century. A Changing Role in World Politics. Ed. by T.Ismael and M.Aydin, Burlington, 2003, Ashgate, pp.16-17
[174] F. Corley, "Peoples on the move" War report, no. 28, January/February 1997, pp. 22-23

The energy vector in bipolar Approach to security factor

However, despite the growing volume of mutual exchanges in the border zone between Turkey and the countries of the South Caucasus, during the 1990s Turkey had to combine its traditional function of the flank state of NATO with a new task - to ensure the front line of the alliance. In the early 1990s Turkey's role in NATO has acquired a new dimension: it became a "front-line" state. It was assumed that the new cold war with Moscow could rather take the form of friction in the remote southern periphery of Russia than a more direct confrontation in the European theater. Security challenges were considered more serious, more direct and more fraught with the use of force in the eastern Mediterranean, possibly on the border with Turkey. The regional position of Turkey was formed under the influence of US energy policy, imbued with confrontational logic in relation to Russia.

The cornerstone of Turkey's policy towards South Caucasus region is a project to lay the BTC oil pipeline. Turkey took an active part in the development of the concept of the project, and its completion symbolizes the real success of Turkish diplomacy, which made considerable efforts to unravel the complex tangle of the existing problems. The importance of the pipeline connecting the Caspian Sea with the Mediterranean Sea through the territory of Turkey, is mainly due to its political, not economic dimension. In the traditional bipolar paradigm, Turkey seeks to extract political and strategic benefits by finding its niche in the dynamics of relations between the United States and Russia. The official opening of the BTC oil pipeline was held on July 13, 2006 at a solemn ceremony in Ceyhan, which received wide coverage in the press.

That day was called historic. It is expected that the volumes of oil pumped through the BTC will in the future reach the level of two million barrels a day (b / d), which will allow even more diversification of energy sources at the expense of countries not included in the OPEC. At the same time, revenues from transit operation, the oil pipeline will depend on the volumes of oil transported. During the first 16 years of operation of the pipeline, the expected level of revenues will be in the range of 140-200 million US dollars, and in the next 24 years - between 200 and 300 million US dollars. Before the BTC

pipeline reaches its maximum capacity of 1 million b / d, the expected level income from its operation should not exceed level of revenues from oil pipeline operation Iraq-Turkey. With the expansion of the circle of supporters of the BTC pipeline (which Ankara gave its preference to), Turkey also strengthened its security ties among the countries of the region. Azerbaijan and Georgia have launched an active campaign to expand their relations with NATO in the military and security spheres. Azerbaijan offered its territory to the US, NATO and (or) Turkey to deploy a military base in exchange for the country's joining NATO as a leading a bulwark in opposing Russian expansionism. [175]

Both Azerbaijan and Georgia have expanded their military ties with Turkey, including training [military] personnel and conducting joint exercises, and made a proposal to intensify cooperation with NATO in order to ensure the safety of the pipeline infrastructure[176]. All three partner countries tried to consolidate their willingness to cooperate in some official document related to the BTC. [177]This process resulted to the signing on July 23, 2003 of the Protocol "On Ensuring the Security of the East-West Energy Corridor" between the Republic of Azerbaijan, Georgia and the Republic of Turkey. The regional security system created under the auspices of Turkey is aimed at preserving the status quo.[178] The emerging regional security system, focused on Tasks of "pipeline protection", contributes to "deep freezing" of existing conflicts and aggravates polarization processes due to the advancement of bipolar regional order, which is fraught with aggravation of tension and the emergence of additional threats and security challenges in this volatile region.

As a result of its regional policy, entrenched in the "Procrustean bed" of the BTC project, Turkey largely contributed to the freeze of the Azerbaijani-Armenian conflict. The diplomatic potential of Ankara in the region was significantly weakened by

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[175] Revaz Gachechiladze, The New Georgia: Space, Society, Politics, Texas A & M University Press: College Station, 1995, pp. 19-20

[176] See Ghia Nodia, Waiting for the Russian Bear, "War Report", June 1995, No. 34, pp. 39-40

[177] B. Coppieters, "Conclusions: The Caucasus as a Security Complex", in: B. Coppieters (ed.), Contested Borders in the Caucasus, op.cit., p. 196

[178] Miroslav Hroch, Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe. A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1985, p. 12; Karl W. Deutsch, Problems of Nation-Building and National Development, in: Karl W. Deutsch, William J. Foltz (eds.), Nation-Building, Atherton Press: New York, 1963, p. 140

the compromise formula of the relationship between security considerations and economic expediency found by Azerbaijan and Turkey.

The policy of Turkey in the region was hostage to her Relations with Azerbaijan in the field of security. Moreover, the occupation of the frankly pro-Azerbaijani position on regional issues was the price paid for the BTC pipeline project.

Triangle Turkey-Azerbaijan-Armenia And the conflict around Nagorno-Karabakh, Inviolability of international borders

However, towards the closure of the Turkish-Armenian border, it was not this dispute that ultimately led, but an exacerbation the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The closure of the border in the midst of the war in Karabakh was a kind of retaliation, which Turkey responded to the occupation of part of the territory of Azerbaijan by Armenia. since then, the question of opening the border has been perceived as a question of lifting the ten-year-long blockade imposed by Armenia by Turkey and is linked to the issue of a political settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the return of the occupied territories to Azerbaijan. Any potential departure [of Turkey] from this traditional position causes concern in Azerbaijan, which fears a possible weakening of its position as a result of this in the search for a political settlement of the Karabakh dispute. A widespread fear in Azerbaijan is that if the normal regime of the transition of the Turkish-Armenian border is resumed, Baku will lose the main lever of influence on Yerevan. In these conditions, Azerbaijan exerts pressure on Turkey in order to preserve the existing status quo, since the effectiveness of the blockade can only be achieved if Armenia's isolation on both sides remains. In this context, it is believed that the resumption of the normal functioning of the border may jeopardize relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan, moral and political and economic support to Armenia and adversely affect the prospects for the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Adherents of such logic do not try to put question for the effectiveness of Turkey's adherence to the idea of maintaining a closed regime on the border with Armenia, accepting as a self-evident argument that if the economic blockade of Armenia gives leverage to other participants in the peace negotiations, the leverage of influence on

Yerevan. At the same time, the main issue here should sound as follows: did the policy of boycotting Armenia on the part of Turkey lead to the development of any solution and finding any way out of the conflict? Does such a policy help Azerbaijan at the negotiating table? Finally, was Azerbaijan closer to being able to force the Armenian side to make any major concessions? Is not it time for Turkey to abandon the course that did not lead to positive results, and begin the process of normalizing relations with Armenia in order to more actively promote Resolution of the Karabakh issue and more effectively promote the interests of Azerbaijan.

In essence, Azerbaijan's support from Turkey in the form of closing the border with Armenia was nothing more than a symbolic gesture. Over the past twenty years, the boycott of Armenia by Turkey has not contributed to the development of any decision. Moreover, Ankara's policy has limited the potential for Turkey to influence Turkey. Despite the fact that Turkey is a permanent member of the Minsk Group and fully Supports all efforts undertaken by her, the very unenviable state of her relations with Armenia only hampers the realization of her potential, which she could play [more] active mediation role in the settlement of the Karabakh conflict. Consequently, the preservation of the status quo does not help Turkey in achieving its foreign policy goals. Preservation of the status quo also hardly corresponds to the interests of Azerbaijan.

Turkish-Armenian protocols in Zurich October 10, 2009 opened a historic window of opportunity to normalize bilateral relations. Both sides have worked hard for a month to study carefully and agree on documents designed to create conditions for achieving bilateral intergovernmental agreement. The signed protocols contain a detailed plan for establishing diplomatic ties, opening common borders And improving bilateral official relations and strengthening ties at the level of ordinary people on the basis of a set of common principles and an agreed timetable. At the moment, apparently, we can say that the process of normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia has reached a deadlock. Prospects for a second inclusion of protocols on the current agenda seems to be very fragile, especially after the decision taken by Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan on April 22, 2010, to suspend the procedure for their ratification by the country's parliament.[179] A common understanding is that the process is suspended for an indefinite

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[179] Mustafa Aydin. Twenty Years Before, Twenty Years After: Turkish Foreign Policy at the Threshold of the 21st Century. In: Turkish Foreign Policy in the 21st Century. A Changing Role in World Politics. Ed. by T.Ismael and M.Aydin, Burlington, 2003, Ashgate, pp.16-17

period.[180] To achieve success in this process, factors such as efficiency and transparency would be needed, but the pace was not high, and positions are ambiguous. In addition, the negotiations were strongly influenced by domestic political agendas in both capitals. The whole process was upset because of a new condition put forward by Turkey - to link the normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations with the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict.

Preservation of Turkish-Armenian bilateral relations in a state of rupture at this stage, is fraught with a higher probability of diverting attention of the world community from the problems of the region and worsening prospects for achieving any settlement of the conflict in the foreseeable future.

Turkey's interest in strengthening Independent Georgia: first of all, a neighbor, and not just a transit territory for a pipeline

The importance of Georgia for Turkey can not be overestimated. The development of relations with Turkey helps Georgia to strengthen its independence. On the other hand, after the closure of the Turkish-Armenian border, Georgia turned into a gateway to the South Caucasus for Turkey and - further - to Central Asia.[181] The best symbol of this logical connection is the BTC oil pipeline. Georgia, initially perceived [only] from the point of view of the transit of Caspian oil along the BTC route, becomes also a neighbor. The return of the war to the region in 2008 demonstrated the preservation of serious risks associated with the operation of East-West transit and the laying of a transport corridor through the territory of Georgia. However, for Ankara, the formation of a hotbed of instability and unpredictability as a result of the war that erupted literally near the most northeastern borders of Turkey is a much more serious source of concern than interruptions to supply of hydrocarbons through the pipeline.[182]

The border strip between Turkey and Georgia is completely open to people and trade. The airport in Batumi, built and operated by the Turkish company TAV, is operated by Turkish Airlines (THY) for domestic flights. The village of Sarpi, once divided into

[180] Neal Ascherson, Black Sea, Hill and Wang: New York, 1995, p. 245
[181] Svante E. Cornell, "The Unruly Caucasus", Current History, October 1997.
[182] Terry D. Adams. Caspian Oil and Gas Development and the Black Sea Region: An Overview. In: Europe's Black Sea Dimension. Brussels, CEPS, 2002, pp. 47-52, 60-68.

parts by a Cold War , is reunited [in one piece] thanks to Intensive border exchanges and cooperation. Adjaria integrates with the Black Sea coast of Turkey. Once closed, the village of Gonio is now the venue for business meetings at the dinner table between Turkish and Georgian business partners. Inspired by the experience of the united Europe, the Turkish and Georgian authorities are doing their best to virtually erase the borders between the two countries. In these conditions, the state of Russian-Turkish relations has become an important source of concern for Ankara.[183]

Overcoming the legacy of the Cold War: the rapprochement between Turkey and Russia and the events in the South Caucasus

The strengthening of bilateral Turkish-Russian relations will help overcome the frictions that have remained since the 2000s. Turkey is gradually overcoming the legacy of the Cold War in its relations with Russia, which directly affects the formation of Turkey's strategic course towards the South Caucasus. Russia is gradually becoming the main partner [of Turkey] in the former Soviet space, in particular, on the part that was defined in the 1990s as the "geography of the Turkic world." Finally, there is some discomfort experienced by Ankara with regard to Washington's ambitions in the Black Sea region, and also a ripe willingness to pursue a more confident and independent foreign policy will help of Turkey to dump the burden of thinking in the spirit of the Cold War. In 2003-2004, against the backdrop of the invasion of Iraq, both countries - Turkey and Russia - began to fear the growth of the Bush administration's activity in the Black Sea and South Caucasus regions, considering it as a major factor of instability.

For first, NATO had no need to deploy forces in this region, since there already existed adequate regional structures, also already tuned to the wave of interaction with NATO.

Secondly, any regional initiative must necessarily include Russia as well. According to Ankara, any movements that irritate Moscow are fraught with destabilization of the situation in the region.

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[183] Revaz Gachechiladze, The New Georgia: Space, Society, Politics, Texas A & M University Press: College Station, 1995, pp. 19-20

Russia can be an important participant in the search for ways to resolve frozen conflicts in the region. The process of historical reconciliation between Turkey and Russia should cause the same enthusiasm as the same process between France and Germany at one time triggered when two traditional enemies found [and expand] the general political bases of mutual understanding. In this rapprochement between the two nations, the economy as a whole and the private sector in particular played the driving force. Both countries, which fought each other sixteen times in the history of their existence, [suddenly] realized the fact that they have no more reasons for wars. For the 1990s, it was typical for the scenery to be set again for the resumption of a 400-year race between Turkey and Russia. The conditions that prevailed in the region at the end of the Cold War provided grounds for asserting that there was profound hostility at the genetic level between the two peoples. Turkey and Russia have always had disputed territories, where their interests and mutual claims collided.

Before the Transcaucasus appeared on the border between the Republic of Turkey and the USSR in 1921, it was a region of direct contact between the Ottoman and Russian empires. A distinctive feature of this contact was a rather high level of violence, because for many decades, both empires fought among themselves rather than traded. Acting as a kind of gray zone between two political rivals and fulfilling the function of the buffer zone, the Transcaucasian region has long been a platform for mutual disputes. An extensive multilateral partnership, supported by both states, is based on the achieved mutual understanding that contributed to the gradual overcoming of the centuries-old heritage of mutual claims and conflicts. This is sad, the legacy was filled with many unsightly pictures that formed a thick tangle of suspicion, mutual hostility and fear. The process of Turkish-Russian reconciliation is more interesting and promising, since it involves ordinary citizens-entrepreneurs and tourists. Russia has become for Turkey the largest supplier of natural gas and one of the main partners in the implementation of regional energy projects.

From the point of view of Turkey, still interested in energy transportation projects from east to west [through its territory], energy issues are no longer a factor of polarization in the South Caucasus. According to IMF data from 2010, Turkey ranks third in the world in terms of growth in energy consumption, second only to China and India

and ahead of Brazil. In these conditions, it is extremely necessary to develop a global energy strategy (concept) based on pragmatism and market principles.

The European Union in the South Caucasus

The European Union (EU) in the 1990s became one of the main players in the South Caucasus. However, unlike the US and NATO, the EU in its "Caucasian policy" does not focus on the military-political, but on the socio-economic sphere. The second priority direction of the EU is to ensure stability in the region, as well as respect and compliance with the "European standards" in the field of human rights and democratic freedoms.

The emphasis in the close bilateral and multilateral relations of the EU on political, economic, and humanitarian ties with the countries of the South Caucasus shows the advantage of considering the interests of security and the economy. There are different approaches of the European Union to the Caucasus region. To implement these approaches at their disposal EU has various political and economic means.

In accordance with this approach, political instability in the Caucasus region is obvious, security issues and ethnic conflicts are the main problems of the Caucasus, therefore the Caucasian region should occupy the appropriate place on the agenda of the European Union. In accordance with the energy interests, the Caucasus for the EU is one of the most important regions.

The EU's relations with the countries of the South Caucasus can be assessed:

· within the framework of relations established with the former Soviet Union countries After 1990;

· in the framework of regional relations with the EU;

· within the framework of EU relations with individual countries;

· within the framework of International Organizations and formations.

The EU recognized the independence of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia in December 1991. In 1994, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) considered the issue of prospects for cooperation with Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

In 1995, the EU Council adopted a draft "common position" on the states of the South Caucasus, which stressed the need for comprehensive assistance to the former South Caucasus republic in the construction of democratic institutions. All the countries of the South Caucasus are in favor of European integration and consider this direction of their foreign policy one of the priority. But the "European character" of its policy stresses Georgia. In 1997, the parliament of this state adopted the "Concept of Strengthening Stability of Public Life, State Sovereignty and Security, Restoration of Georgia's Territorial Integrity." This document emphasized the constructive role of European institutions. In 1999, President Shevardnadze proclaimed the European direction of Georgian foreign policy to be one of the priority. In early 1999, Georgia was admitted to the Council of Europe, despite the unsettledness of the two inter-ethnic conflicts. This recognized the "European" democratic character of the republic. In October 1999, the head of Georgia visited Germany, where he was received not just as head of a foreign state, but also as an "architect of a united Europe" and "new thinking". A year later, Federal Chancellor of Germany G. Schroeder visited Georgia. With the advent of Saakashvili's team, Tbilisi's aspirations to the EU were pushed to the background, the main efforts were focused on the country's introduction into NATO. Moreover, by that time Brussels had made it clear to all members of the next wave of candidates for membership in the EU that the admission to the Union had been suspended for an indefinite period of time.

Azerbaijan, in comparison with Georgia and Armenia, was most often awarded criticism from the EU. Recognizing the facts of the republic's movement towards democracy, representatives of European structures gave a generally critical assessment of the political process in Azerbaijan. They invariably noted numerous violations in legislation and abuse of power by officials of all levels. Nonetheless, the leaders of the republic, declaring the need for close integration with the EU in all directions, constantly stressed that the republic "is aware of itself as a constituent element of a new Europe".

But, despite these declarations, there is no conscious and well-developed policy of integration in Baku until now. The EU and the Council of Europe are often indignant over gross violations of human rights, persecution of journalists in Azerbaijan, and in Baku they are dissuaded that in the West they do not understand the local features. If we forget about the energy factor that Europe is worried about, it turns out that everything that the authorities of the republic has undertaken regarding integration is

nothing more than a good wish. It is not uncommon for a high-level government, that Europe is reprimanded for its comments on the limitation of Democracy, violation of human rights, justifying this by the originality Historical moment, the burden of problems from the past. Sometimes even Europeans are reprimanded: they say that there are many similar problems, the situation in Azerbaijan is no worse than that of its neighbors, Georgia. European standards, which are the only true criterion for European integration, are not affirmed either in the economic, cultural or social life.

The European direction has become one of the priorities in Armenia's foreign policy. In January 1994 the visit of the head of the Armenian Parliament to Armenia was held in Strasbourg, and in September of the same year Armenia took part in the session of the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe. In 1996, Armenia was the first of the South Caucasus states to be granted special guest status in the PACE. In subsequent years, representatives of the Council of Europe often criticized Armenia for a "non-European" political style (strengthening authoritarian tendencies in Internal policy, as well as the lack of flexibility in the Karabakh Settlement). For their part, representatives of the political class and public figures of Armenia, criticize European Structures for the desire to impose ideas that are alien to the Armenian society (tolerant attitude towards sexual minorities, non-traditional religious associations, etc.). Still, it should be noted that Yerevan's position in terms of building up promising relations in three directions – Russian, American and European - is preferable to its neighbors in terms of Region. The official policy of Armenia is complemented by the work of strong lobbying centers, various ties in the capitals of the most important states of the world. Losing in recent years Azerbaijan in the discussions of international organizations, Yerevan nevertheless finds its understanding of its unyielding policy at the diplomatic level and enjoys great support on the international Level.

Armenia's relations with its Islamic neighbor are developing in all directions and are almost friendly, while Azerbaijan's relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran, which has more opportunities and grounds for this, remain tense, periodically even tingling.

Having studied the position of the EU in relation to ethnic conflicts and rich natural resources in the region, some researchers argue that the EU is interested in the Caucasus, without pursuing any policy. Nevertheless, contrary to these statements, after

the collapse of the Soviet Union, the region was recognized as a new market for ensuring the security of Europe's enlarged borders with rich resources and developing trade, and thus gained a place in the EU strategy. Rapprochement of the South Caucasus with the West, a partial or complete desire to pursue an independent policy independent of Russia, accelerated economic and political cooperation with Western Countries.

After the enlargement of the European Union, the South Caucasus region has acquired great importance for the EU and the Western world. Adoption of the countries of the region of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia in the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) creates conditions that allow developing relations that will benefit both the South Caucasus and the EU. Inclusion in the integration process, through which the implementation of the reform potential is developing, is of great importance for societies in transition. Nevertheless, the rich natural resources and geopolitical position of the South Caucasus region is an important criterion for the EU. The EU, the largest international energy-consuming actor, will in future buy most of the oil and natural gas through imports. In that Context, the continued importation of oil and natural gas and its delivery through the Middle East and Russia is a direct threat to the energy security of the EU.

Taking advantage of political and economic influence, the EU has been trying on a regional level since 2000 and through bilateral dialogue to strengthen its relations with the main energy producers towards the establishment of market rules. Within the framework of this policy, relations with the countries of the South Caucasus, being regulated by legal laws, are developed by projects and programs related to energy. One of the mechanisms that the EU uses to strengthen energy security is a strategically important policy of energy diversification [9]. The policy of diversification (diversity) at the EU level was not quite successful due to lack of political support. First, it was aimed at reducing dependence on Russia. However, contrary to the logic of the policy of diversification, several EU states have concluded bilateral agreements with Russia. Nevertheless, the EU, considering such important competitors as China and India, is making efforts to ensure the implementation of pipeline projects in the east-west direction.

In addition to this, the Caucasus, connecting two important seas - the Black and the Caspian, is located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, Islam, and Christianity. The

South Caucasus provides an opportunity for interregional, intercultural, and interreligious cooperation. The region can play a key role in the development of mutual understanding and dialogue between the East and the West. At the same time, this region, perceiving external influences and synthesizing optimal answers, can make contribution to the modeling of effective forms of modernization and Europeanization, which will have a huge impact in the east. Thus, we can say that the development of relations between the EU and the South Caucasus has a positive outlook and is in the interests of the countries of the region and the EU.

The European Union on most key issues relating to policy in the South Caucasus and further development of the region, is worth on positions close to the United States.[184] In this case, often the "military fist" of the United States and NATO and the "soft power" of the European Union actually complement each other, which gives a synergistic effect, remains objective complementarities between the resources and intentions of the United States and the European Union to expand their influence in the east in general and in the South Caucasus in particular. With the expansion of the European Union, the significance of the South Caucasus has increased for him. Recently, European experts have been increasingly emphasizing that instability in the Caucasus is a threat to the EU.[185] The main tasks in the region, the solution of which the EU intends to give priority to, are the following:

- development of the energy production sector and provision of transportation of Caspian energy resources to the West;

- settlement of ethnopolitical crises in the Caucasus;

- Building a democratic and legal society in the states of the South Caucasus.

The activation of the Caucasian policy of the EU can be noted since 2003, when the EU special representative for the South Caucasus was appointed (Heike Talvitie, since

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[184] Tim Potier, The Constitutional Future of the Post-Soviet Caucasian Autonomous Republics, Briefing Paper, unpublished

[185] See, for instance: Fiona Hill, Report on Ethnic Conflicts in the Russian Federation and Transcaucasia, Harvard University: Cambridge, Mass., 1993; Suzanne Goldenberg, Pride of Small Nations: The Caucasus and Post-Soviet Disorder, Zed Books Ltd.: London, 1994; Catherine Dale, Development and Implications of the Conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, in: "Conflicts in the Caucasus", Conference Proceedings, International Peace Research Institute: Oslo, 1995; Alexei Zverev, "Ethnic Conflict in the Caucasus 1988-94," in Bruno Coppieters, ed., Contested Borders in the Caucasus, VUB University Press: Brussels, 1996.

2006 this position is occupied by Peter Semneby).[186] In June 2004, the South Caucasus states were included in the EU's "European Neighborhood Policy" program, which aims to develop closer contacts with states located near the external borders of the European Union. Since 2007, funding for specific projects under this program has been started, and substantial funds are being allocated from the EU budget. The activities planned within the framework of the "European Neighborhood Policy" program will become the EU's main tool for penetrating the Caucasus. At the same time, the weakness of the EU, which is intensely engaged in developing a common foreign policy doctrine, is that on many issues within this Union, an agreed position has not yet been formulated. In addition, the further development of common approaches and the expansion of EU activity in the Black Sea-Caspian region are complicated, exacerbated internal problems (the failure of Introduction into the political practice of the EU) and contradictions are arising between the EU member states.[187]

Washington, for its part, seeks to direct the EU's resources to strategically beneficial projects for the US. (So, he insists On the accession of one of the most important players in the South Caucasus - Turkey to the EU.) With regard to energy resources, the common interests of the US and the EU are to ensure the uninterrupted supply of Caspian oil and gas through Azerbaijan and Georgia (including Armenia in the future, bypassing Russia) .

But it is also important to note that the competitive struggle of the "Westerners" with other players and centers of power that are leading their policy in the region is intensifying. What this competition will lead to and whether it is an absolute boon for the countries of the region is not yet clear. The expected rapid influx of investment from competing forces, a noticeable economic growth, an increase in the standard of living of the population in most countries of the region has not happened yet.[188] The level of security and stability also leaves much to be desired, and compared to the times of the

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[186] I. Rotar', "Stat' nashimi satellitami ili umeret': takovo mnenie o Blizhnem Zarubezhye Konstantina Zatulina – Predsedatelya komiteta po delam SNG i svyazyam s sootechestvennikami Gosudarstvennoy Dumy", Nezavisimaya gazeta, 5 May 1994.

[187] D. Trenin, "Russia's Security Interests and Policies in the Caucasus Region", in: B. Coppieters (ed.), Contested Borders in the Caucasus, Brussels, VUB Press, 1996, pp. 91-102

[188] Miroslav Hroch, Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe. A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1985, p. 12; Karl W. Deutsch, Problems of Nation-Building and National Development, in: Karl W. Deutsch, William J. Foltz (eds.), Nation-Building, Atherton Press: New York, 1963, p. 140

Cold War, it even went down. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the escalation of military tension around Iran with the possibility of another war in close proximity to the borders of the region give enough reasons for pessimistic forecasts. The war in the immediate vicinity of strategic energy communications is extremely undesirable for both Baku, Tbilisi and Yerevan. In addition to conflicts, the situation in the region can be affected by increased expectations from petrodollars, unprecedented enrichment of a small part and greater poverty. This horrendous social polarization, forces people to turn to religion, , and also leads to massive forced emigration and migration.

Today, it is quite possible to talk about a single geopolitical model of Western countries in relation to the South Caucasus, acting on the principles of atlantism. Its distinctive features: the unity of the energy policy, which provides for the creation of a South Caucasus corridor for the supply of energy resources to Western markets, which operates around Russia; Use of the communication capabilities of the region in the common interest;[189] The conduct of a common defense and security policy, which in practical politics results in the entry of the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia into the North Atlantic Alliance; Complete "squeezing" of Russia from the region - not only politically, but also culturally, the weakening of economic ties between the South Caucasian states and Russia, ideological reorientation Of the population of the South Caucasus to the West using anti-Russian motives; Admission of other players to the region; [190]The use of the South Caucasus as a kind of bilateral barrier that prevents both the spread of Russian influence in the south and Islamic influence in the west. A significant place in the palette of external forces that affect Countries of the region, occupies Turkey and as the "southern anchor" of NATO, and how one of the most influential regional powers, historically striving for leadership among the Turkic-speaking countries and actively developing partnership relations with Georgia.

Several European political initiatives are being conducted in the South Caucasus. In addition to the Southern Energy Corridor, such initiatives are the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), the Eastern Partnership and the Black Sea Synergy. The

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[189] Svante E. Cornell, Small Nations and Great Powers: A Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus, Ricmond, Curzon Press, 1999.

[190] See Johan Galtung, 'Some observations on the Caucasus', in: Caucasian Regional Studies, vol. 2, Issue 1,

http://www.vub.ac.be/POLI/.

geopolitical situation causes a great interest of external players in the development of this region. In addition to Russia, the United States and the EU are actively involved in this process by regional players: Turkey and Iran. The integration of the South Caucasus into the ENP began relatively recently. The strategy of the EU consisted in the parallel development of relations with all countries with which the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement was concluded in 1999. The next phase used the ENP Action Plans, which were designed to support democratic reforms, stimulate the market economy and cooperation with the EU. All Action Plans were aimed at economic recovery after ethnic conflicts in Georgia and Nagorno-Karabakh. According to this plan, Georgia was to become a stable and prosperous democracy that could integrate separatist South Ossetia and Abkhazia at the expense of economic attractiveness.

Mediation of conflicts is not part of the "Eastern Partnership ", although this should be the main pre-requisite for the development of the region. To stimulate the creation of an effective governance system in the countries of the South Caucasus, the EU needs to unite efforts aimed at resolving conflicts, economic cooperation and support of civil society. Only active participation of the EU in all regional processes, including those not related to energy, may indicate support for the principles of democracy, transparency and a market economy.

Chapter four

History of attempted solutions

The so-called frozen conflicts are among the most difficult challenges to the security of the Black Sea region, as well as the national interests of several post-Soviet states. These include the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the conflicts of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia.

These conflicts differ in scale, history, and regulatory options, but they are structurally similar. In each of these conflicts there are factors such as weakness of states, economic depression and external support. Moreover, they create the same threat to the national security of Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia. Artificially "frozen" or muffled, all these conflicts remain unresolved. Along with traditional geopolitical problems, they are also a source of transnational threats. Common sense suggests that regional integration is one of the best possible answers to this kind of problem.

However, despite numerous attempts to include frozen conflicts within the framework of various integration projects, they are still far from the solution. It is possible that now they are even further from the solution than ever earlier. Here a dilemma arises. Is regional integration an ineffective tool for resolving the problems of individuality and separatism? This would mean that a liberal approach to conflict management, in its broader sense, loses its appeal. Or there is something special either in the conflicts themselves, or in the conditions in which they develop?

Such pluralism can have different origins, but most often it is ethnic or ideological. Most modern theories of ethnic conflict suggest that it is better to regulate ethnic / ideological differences than to eliminate them.

With 285 politically active minority groups, inhabiting only about 200 countries, ethnic problems are inevitable. Simultaneously with ideological, religious, and internal political disagreements, they create an extensive base for various internal political conflicts. If we consider the effects of globalization and the growing interdependence on a global scale, it is impossible to solve the problems of individuality by eliminating ethnic, religious, and ideological diversity through genocide or ethnic cleansing, as well as by artificially creating an isolated homogeneous society. For those who define politics, there is only one option - to manage disagreements, and not to liquidate them. Strategies can be different. They are usually aimed at various causes of internal conflicts, attempts to improve ethnic security dilemma, to minimize the level of discrimination and to ensure a more effective separation of power.

All this is important for the internal post-Soviet conflicts. They are due to the interaction of factors, among which structural and political are the most important. The combination of a weak state and an active local elite creates a dilemma of ethnic security in which state norms and regularities can no longer contain mutual distrust, suspicion, and hostility between ethnic groups. This combination is enhanced by economic problems, political instability and growing cultural discrimination. With small variations, all these factors could be observed in the initial stage of frozen conflicts. They also have another common feature. Except for the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the Russian-speaking minority plays a significant role. This opens the door to permanent Russian support for the self-proclaimed states of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Russia's participation in these conflicts not only raises doubts about objectivity of Russia as an intermediary, but also changes their structure, increasing asymmetry and reducing the likelihood of reaching an agreement.

In these circumstances, it is problematic both to improve the security dilemma, and to create effective mechanisms for the separation of power. Theoretically, such Conflicts, as in Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, are best resolved through strategic liberalization. This approach involves a long-term transformation of the social structure with a view to eliminating all forms of discrimination and ensuring equal access to power by various ethnic groups, thus minimizing the likelihood of outbursts of hostility. Unlike rapid democratization, this approach does not provoke a sharp increase of nationalist ideology and rhetoric, since it pays more attention to the means of limiting aggression and does not support the "win or lose "in relations with other ethnic groups. Strategic liberalization is aimed at the gradual construction of a democratic society in which both the strengthening of the state and the separation power, are achieved through the introduction of democratic norms and institutions.

Moreover, the Caucasus is the only part of the former USSR, where neighboring states do not have diplomatic relations with each other (Armenia and Azerbaijan, Russia and Georgia, Armenia, and Turkey). The borders of Armenia with Turkey and Azerbaijan are closed. The opening of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway route will only increase the isolation of Armenia.

After the collapse of the USSR, all countries in the region haven't demonstrated readiness to find compromises to strengthen regional cooperation. They preferred to

contact external partners to replenish their own resources and solutions to various political and economic tasks, often to cause damage to a neighbor. Three South Caucasus states are involved in intense competition between European and Eurasian integration projects.

Therefore, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is now considered the most explosive. And there is, as I said, the long-playing historical background is the Armenian-Turkish conflict, which, apart from other conflicts, is not explosive, but is a very important component, primarily in the Karabakh conflict and in the geopolitical situation of the entire region. The South Caucasus differs from the Balkans in that, there was no peace agreement in the South Caucasus - the maximum that the parties agreed upon is a ceasefire that was respected in some situations, and in some cases, it was not. In 2008, it was violated in the Georgian conflicts and was constantly violated in the Karabakh conflict. In the Balkans peace treaties were signed, there was a trial - tribunal - for the former Yugoslavia, there was a transitional international administration in Kosovo, a detailed plan for restructuring the political systems. That is, the world in the Balkans was indeed constructed according to all the rules.

All this, of course, does not add stability. But if you return to your question about why the world was established there, and in the Caucasus - no, the answer is simple: because the Balkans had a priority, because this is Europe. I must say that the Russian factor was not so strong in the Balkans - it was not absent, but it was not so strong as it was in the South Caucasus, and in such a situation there was not a big deal between the external forces.

Under the Russian factor, I mean the position of Russia on a compromise, agreement between the parties. Russia did not play the role of an honest broker in the conflicts in the South Caucasus, because it is increasingly confidently considering this region as a property - or, as they say, as a sign of its interests. Russia does not benefit from a large-scale war. The only thing that Russia did during the times of Yeltsin's rule is, in fact, an agreement on a cease-fire - both in the Karabakh situation and in the Georgian-Abkhazian one. But today Russia is an obstacle to the creation of a sustainable world, because any bilateral agreement between the participants in thesis of the most existential conflicts, will entrench the ability to control this region. Europe needed peace in the

Balkans, at any cost, and Russia does not need such a world in the Caucasus, and not at any cost.

Georgia

The ruling party of Georgia "Georgian Dream", despite the acute confrontation with ex-President Mikheil Saakashvili, continues strengthening of cooperation ties with the EU and NATO. It was the government of the "Georgian dream " which signed the EU-Georgia Association Agreement. It also agreed on a visa-free regime from 2017. These tasks seemed almost unattainable during the presidency of Saakashvili. The current Georgian government has strengthened cooperation with NATO (despite the low probability of Georgia joining the Alliance) and bilateral military- political ties with the United States (apart from NATO projects). At the same time, the Georgian Dream uses a different tactic than the team of Saakashvili. Its strategic goal the ruling party of Georgia sees the accession to NATO and the EU, but the process itself was perceived through the prism of the concept of "normalization" in relations with Moscow, and not through confrontation with Russia and the "revival" of two ethnopolitical conflicts. Thus, the strategic vector of Tbilisi is still a consensus between authorities and parliamentary opposition. At the same time in recent years there is an increase in Euroscepticism in the country. There are several reasons for this. In- First, strengthening cooperation with NATO and the EU does not help Georgia in resolving its issues of territorial integrity. Despite the confrontation with Moscow, the West is not interested in aggravation of conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Over six years of institutional reforms in Georgia, there have been changes that no post- socialist country, the author writes. Despite the authoritarian nature of Saakashvili's power, he has considerable support of the population, the country's economy is provided with investments and tranches, and Russian business continues to operate, which under certain conditions could become a link in the normalization of Russian-Georgian relations[191]

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[191] On the following see Bruno Coppieters, Tamara Kovziridze and Uwe Leonardy, "Federalization of Foreign Relations: Discussing Alternatives for the Georgian-Abkhaz Conflict", Caspi an Studies Program Working Paper Series, Working Paper 2, Cambridge, Mass.: Caspian Studies Program, Harvard University, October 2003.

The processes of transformation of the Russian-Georgian conflict largely depend on the general nature of the regional policy of the United States, the European Union and NATO, on the one hand, and the state of relations between Russia and Georgia with the countries of the West, on the other. If Russia has practically no levers of influence in Georgia, the United States invests heavily in it, contributing to the reform of the Georgian army. However, the ability of the American side to control the situation in the region is less than most observers think. Returning to the general problems of the Black Sea-Caspian region, one cannot help noticing that the processes occurring in it are causing increasing alarm. The conflicts that arose after the collapse of the USSR are not solved, and in some cases, are exacerbated. In the struggle for the extraction and transportation of energy the resources of the Caspian Sea, which the United States used to be most active, were now joined by Turkey and Iran, claiming transit infrastructure in their own interests and using the Georgian "buffer" in the interests of restricting Russia's access to the Black Sea-Caspian region.

In the light of what has been said, it seems necessary to conduct further, more profound, and concrete studies of the impasse that has developed in our relations with countries located at our southern borders.

The events of August 2008 played an important role in changing the current system of international relations and building a new world order. After the end of the hostilities, a new, no less complex stage in the life of the republics began, connected with seeking approval in the desire to be an independent and equal member of the international community. After the military actions in South Ossetia in 2008, the only legal guarantor of stability and security in the region is the jointly developed "Medvedev-Sarkozy Plan", which includes six points for stabilizing the situation in the region. Despite the West's opinion on the need to preserve the territorial integrity of Georgia, South Ossetia and Abkhazia are the first post-Soviet countries to receive partial recognition. The end of hostilities and recognition of the republics on the part of Russia influenced the decline of tension in the South Caucasus, but did not resolve the issues of guarantees of stability and order. The prospects for settling the contradictions of the Georgian, Abkhaz and Ossetian peoples will depend on the mutual desire of the countries to peacefully resolve the remaining disputes, by overcoming the existing social tension. In view of the fact that the European community refuses to put up with the current situation and

continues to perceive the territories of the republics as part of the Georgian state, Abkhazia and South Ossetia face a difficult task to consolidate their right to be an equal participant in international relations.

Azerbaijan

Multi-vector is a distinctive feature of Azerbaijan's foreign policy. While Armenia is a member of the CSTO and the EEA, and Georgia is positioning itself, as a reliable partner of the US, NATO and the EU, Azerbaijan is trying to distance itself from tight binding to any bloc or state. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan consistently upholds the principles of "equidistance". In September 2014 in Baku celebrated the 20th anniversary of the so-called "Contract of the Century" (agreement between Azerbaijan and twelve Western oil and gas companies). This agreement has become one of the largest commercial contracts for the last two and a half decades and, in many respects, remains the basis for foreign trade and foreign policy of Azerbaijan. Baku managed to find sensitive areas in the EU and the US, which consider the Russian monopoly on energy supplies to Europe, as a risk factor and even a danger. For Azerbaijan, the advantages of cooperation with the West are obvious. First, it minimizes Western criticism of Azerbaijan's domestic policy (violation of rights and authoritarian tendencies). Secondly, Azerbaijan is looking for counterweight Moscow and the Armenian lobby in the US and Europe, with the support of Western politicians. Azerbaijan's participation in the EU-patronized "Eastern partnership "should also be considered, although Baku does not seek membership in the European Union. Azerbaijan, unlike Georgia, does not seek to join NATO. Baku is extremely wary to the attempts of Western politicians to discuss democratization in Azerbaijan. Not less than skeptically there also refer to the so-called "Arab spring" in the Middle East. On the one hand, democracy does not bode well for a political monopoly of Aliev. On the other hand, Baku is wary of situations such as US intervention in Iraq (and the potential interference of the West in neighboring Iran). Consequently, Azerbaijan supports cooperation with Russia.

The significance of the Russian- transboundary cooperation on combating terrorism (they have the general section of the state border in the Dagestan direction) is

large. Moscow and Baku also have a common approach to the status of the Caspian Sea. Active purchases of Baku of the Russian weapons are, in fact, a solid financial compensation for Moscow for pro-Western elements of the policy of Azerbaijan. They also show that Russia is not a potential opponent of the Caspian republic in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, despite Russia's security guarantees for Armenia (as at the bilateral level, and within the framework of the CSTO). Unlike the West, Moscow does not Strives to criticize the internal political standards of Azerbaijan. The approach of Russia is an important factor for the international legitimization of the Baku elite. Thus, Azerbaijan is an example of policy of maneuvering between West and Russia. He does not seek to join any of the competing integration projects - neither to the Association with the EU nor to joining the EEA. Baku supports one or the other side when it considers it useful or necessary, and Azerbaijani diplomats are well versed in how to cross the "red lines".

First, with the success of democracy and the construction of modern state institutions Azerbaijan can become a stronger country and more important strategic partner.

The second point concerns the energy partnership between Turkey, Azerbaijan, and the US: American representatives hope that through this partnership, Azerbaijan will be able to find resources to strengthen its state, peace, and security in the region.

The third point relates to the impact that strategic cooperation between the US, Turkey and Azerbaijan will have on the region stretching from the Black Sea to China. In implementing the tasks set, Turkey accepts the most vivid participation.

Armenia

In comparison with its neighbors, Armenia has the highest degree of integration with Russia. It is Moscow's priority partner in the South Caucasus. Armenia is the only country in the region that is present in the collective security treaty organization (CSTO) which is unofficially called "Eurasian NATO". In January 2015, Yerevan joined the Eurasian Economic Union (ЕАЭС). Moscow plays an extremely important role in the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as a peaceful mediator - co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, as well as the organizer of regular consultations between representatives of Yerevan and Baku.

Nevertheless, Yerevan is trying to maintain a high degree of partnership with the West.

First, Armenia seeks not to admit Azerbaijan's monopoly on interpretation of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Secondly, Yerevan is vitally interested in cooperation with Washington and Paris, because they act as co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group. Thirdly, Armenia hopes to use authority and resources of the Armenian Diaspora for the promotion of their goals, such as recognition of the Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire in the early twentieth century, support self-determination of Nagorno-Karabakh and the adoption of international declarations on the Azerbaijan and Turkey. Fourth, Yerevan stands for economic rapprochement with the EU, they are ready to sign the economic part of the Association Agreement with the EU (the political segment could contradict the interests of Moscow). At the same time, neither the US nor the EU is ready to offer Armenia more guarantees in security sphere, than Moscow does today. Membership in the CSTO allows Armenia count on military aid from Russia (for example, if there is an invasion on the territory of Armenia). Armenia has access to Russian arms by preferential, domestic, and not market prices. The US and EU do not have alternative initiatives to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which would be different from the joint approach with Russia. These factors narrow the space for Yerevan's maneuver and practically do not give it alternatives to Russia as an ally, especially given the fact that Turkey is part of NATO and is the second largest country in the Alliance.

However, this is also understood in Europe, so the entry of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia in the EU today is considered only in a remote term. Nevertheless, this does not interfere with the dialogue between European representatives and leaders of the South Caucasus, which is becoming more intense. The reasons for the EU's increased interest in the South Caucasus were outlined by representatives of the EU's foreign policy - Swedish Foreign Minister Anna Lindt and European Commissioner for External Relations Christopher Patten regarding their trip to the South Caucasus: "There is as much oil in the Caspian Sea as in the North. Here and in Central Asia is huge gas reserves - and this is good news for countries of Europe, experiencing an energy hunger. The Caucasian corridor is the shortest route from Southern Europe to the Middle Asia and beyond; hence the importance that the European Union from the outset attaches to helping the South

Caucasus realize its potential in the field of transit of goods and energy from the Caspian region and Central Asia. "

Nagorno Karabakh

For two decades, the Karabakh conflict continues to be a major factor affecting the political map of the South Caucasus and the fate of Armenians and Azerbaijanis residing in the region. Motion of Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh for self-determination, which started in February 1988, resulted in a violent conflict between the population of this former Soviet autonomy (and the Armenians who supported them in Armenia and all over the world) first with Communist authorities of the USSR and Soviet Azerbaijan, and then, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, with independent Azerbaijan.

Thousands of people became victims of the conflict on both sides; hundreds of thousands were deported, lost their homes and property, turned into refugees and IDP's. All the conflicting parties cite a significant number of historical, political, and legal arguments to substantiate their position and policies. At the same time, the public and the elites of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Nagorno-Karabakh, demonstrating the minimum of readiness for a compromise settlement, entirely lay the blame for the escalating conflict and the lack of will to peace on the opposing side. Involved to some extent in the conflict itself or in the process of peaceful settlement, third countries and international organizations do not have a common position and often pursue their own goals and interests.

As a result, the negotiation process on Nagorno-Karabakh resembles the situation of permanent déjà vu. Surprisingly, although there hasn't been noticeable progress in reaching a peaceful agreement soon around Karabakh, the conflicting parties themselves perceive the situation of the remaining status quo as minimally acceptable. Even the loser in the war, Azerbaijan, which declared from time to time its readiness to take revenge by force, nevertheless, based on political and military restrictions, also must consider the prevailing realities, where the persistence of uncertainty in the negotiation process is the "lesser evil". [192]

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[192] Coding decisions based on expert analyses found in: Monahan, James. "The Former Soviet Union's Diverse

State of "no peace, no war" around Nagorno-Karabakh and the inability of the conflicting parties and mediators for the second decade to achieve a final settlement are due not only to the complex geopolitical background and regional rivalry of superpowers. This is primarily a result of the lack of will and desire for a settlement among the conflicting parties themselves. Such ethnopolitical and ethno-territorial conflicts are almost never managed to settle through a parity compromise agreement, equally satisfying all parties. The world history of the last century practically does not know such examples, except for very exotic cases when conflicts did not reach such bitterness, they had a small area or were not a priority for the conflicting parties themselves.

Strategies and political approaches of the conflicting parties In the Karabakh conflict, is a complete lack of convergence in approaches and the unpreparedness of the conflicting parties to compromise. The level of hypothetical maximum concessions for which, in principle, each of the warring parties during negotiations, absolutely does not meet the expectations of the society and elites of the opposite side. On the other hand, as external constraints in the form of the positions of the leading powers and the international community, the military-political and military-technical balance that has developed in the conflict at the present stage really inhibit the resumption of hostilities in the conflict zone. However, the sharp confrontation between the Armenian and Azerbaijani sides does not weaken from this, but simply takes a different form. The need for the return of Karabakh even at a very high price, has become a key element in the state construction of post-Soviet Azerbaijan and the ideological basis for the consolidation of Azerbaijani society. Over the past two decades, the struggle for Karabakh has been one of the foundations of Azerbaijan's foreign and domestic policy.

The focus in this struggle was initially made on the communication blockade of Armenia and Karabakh with the support of Turkey, as well as diplomatic and propaganda efforts at the international level. To date, Azerbaijan's main argument in the Karabakh conflict is significant revenues from oil and gas production, which give hope to Azerbaijan to achieve a cardinal advantage in the military-technical sphere and force Armenia and Karabakh to make concessions. The real hydrocarbon potential of Azerbaijan is very

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Peoples: A References Sourcebook." (Santa Barbara:ABC-CLIO), 2004. Gammer, Moshe. "EthnoNationalism, Islam, and the State in the Caucasus: Post-Soviet Disorder." (New York: Routledge), 2008.

significant, although it is limited. However, a policy based on oil revenues and military superiority, faces two problems.

First, oil and gas are not a guarantee of either stable economic growth or the political development of exporting countries, especially if these countries have only a small experience of state construction and make the first steps towards democratic transit and the formation of civil society institutions. It is not by chance that there is even the term "oil curse", which quite accurately characterizes the degree of economic, social, and political problems and difficulties that arise when the country is hit by a cash flow from the sale of natural resources. These problems are the dark side of the facade of the economic well-being of oil-exporting countries. In history, there are dozens of examples of countries in whose destiny the presence of rich natural resources (primarily oil and gas) played an insidious and even fatal role - from Nigeria to Mexico, from the Spanish Empire of the Habsburgs (in this case - cheap silver from mines in the Spanish colonies in America)

And secondly, the situation in the conflict zone is such that it will be very difficult for Azerbaijan to regain Karabakh under its authority because of the existing military-technical and military-political balance, the most important part of which is a convenient and fortified defense line along the borders of Karabakh. According to many military experts, the saturation of the defensive positions of the Karabakh army with anti-tank weapons and artillery allows them to inflict serious losses on the offensive troops, which eliminates the multiple superiority of the Azerbaijani army in tanks and other armored vehicles during the first strike, and does not allow the possibility of a "blitzkrieg" and rapid breakthrough in the depth of the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Moreover, according to the estimates of many international experts, in the coming years the military balance in the conflict zone will not change radically. Karabakh and Armenia are fully aware of this, and accordingly, the threats of war do not have the expected impact on them. As for the diplomatic efforts and the negotiation process, the reality that emerged after more than twenty years of negotiations on the settlement of the Karabakh conflict is such that now the return of Karabakh to Azerbaijan is not present on the negotiating table. In any of the currently negotiated options for a peaceful settlement (be it the Madrid principles or other relevant proposals of the mediators), Azerbaijan can theoretically expect to return the "occupied territories", but will have to agree that

Nagorno-Karabakh itself, along with the land corridor for communication with Armenia, in the administrative borders of the Soviet era, will not immediately returned to its jurisdiction. This is exactly the content of the proposals currently on the negotiating table of the OSCE Minsk Group.

A key element of the Madrid principles is the referendum as a mechanism for international political-legal legitimization of the separation of Karabakh from Azerbaijan. Meanwhile, the desire of Azeri society and elites to return Karabakh to Azerbaijan within the next few years will not weaken.

The struggle for the independence of Karabakh, which began at the end of the Soviet era, for the modern Armenian political elite was no less important than the struggle with the communist regime for the independence of Armenia. The burden of the unsettled Karabakh conflict, the economic costs of the transport blockade and the need to maintain a military balance in view of the threat of resumption of hostilities naturally hamper Armenia's political and socio-economic development. In view of the parties' unpreparedness for compromises, for a speedy settlement of relations with Azerbaijan in the short or even medium term, not necessary. Accordingly, Armenia is trying to establish relations with external actors in isolation from the Karabakh factor. In addition, the Armenian political elite hopes that regional integration and the establishment of more trusting relations in the region in the future will create a field for establishing cooperation with Azerbaijan (in this sphere there was an unfinished project of the Armenian-Turkish normalization).[193]

At the same time, Armenia uses the Karabakh factor as a resource of its foreign policy, attracting the attention of European organizations and world powers to the South Caucasus precisely because of the unsettled Karabakh conflict. The conflict factor is used to maintain information and political interest in the region, as well as to stimulate economic assistance and political assistance. Yerevan "exploits" the topic of the Karabakh conflict to enhance Armenia's geopolitical role both in the regional format and at the pan-European level. Another component of Yerevan's policy in the Karabakh conflict is the so-called foreign policy "complementarity", that is, an attempt to balance the interests of

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[193] On the following see Bruno Coppieters, Tamara Kovziridze and Uwe Leonardy, "Federalization of Foreign Relations: Discussing Alternatives for the Georgian-Abkhaz Conflict", Caspi an Studies Program Working Paper Series, Working Paper 2, Cambridge, Mass.: Caspian Studies Program, Harvard University, October 2003.

various actors, including those in strained or even hostile relations (Russia and Georgia, the United States and Iran). In the context of the Karabakh conflict, the successful balancing is facilitated by the fact that Azerbaijan is not regarded as equally undeniably pro-Western and deserving of the West's support state, like Georgia.

In addition, Armenia has a resource that helps it to implement its complementary policy, balances Azerbaijan in the sphere of political lobbying and contributes to the inflow of economic and financial resources. It is a large Armenian diaspora scattered all over the world, which occupies a strong position in the economic, social, cultural, and political life of some of its countries of residence. Ironically, especially the large and influential Armenian diasporas are concentrated in the three co-chairing countries of the OSCE Minsk Group (USA, France, and Russia). As a result, the United States, the co-chairing country of the Minsk Group, is the second country after Armenia, which provides direct financial assistance to Nagorno-Karabakh. Another co-chair is Russia - the main military-political ally and partner of Armenia in the military-technical sphere, and the third - France - the main lobbyist of Armenia on the European platform, a country with traditionally profound cultural and social ties with Armenia. Of course, the arms race falls heavily on Armenia's economic opportunities. As for the danger of a new war, Armenia relies on a military balance and the technical impossibility of a blitzkrieg in Karabakh, as well as the fact that as the arms race escalates, the likelihood of hostilities in the conflict zone is decreasing. This pattern, although somewhat paradoxical, has been well known since the Cold War and is widely studied in political science.

The format of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs includes Russia, the United States and France (in the latter case it is envisaged that the French co-chair also expresses to a certain extent the EU's position), while the interests and policies of the three countries on a global scale and in the post-Soviet space often not only compete, but also enter an open contradiction. This occurs even directly in the South Caucasus region, particularly regarding Georgia, where the US and the EU can openly oppose to build its policy towards Russia on the verge of open confrontation, and in the neighborhood, in the same Caucasus region, to have similar approaches to the process of peaceful settlement of the Karabakh conflict and even a consensus opinion on the issue of preventing the unleashing of new fighting in Karabakh.

Such a unique and at the same time realistic policy of the three co-chairs allows preserving and continuing an extremely difficult negotiation process in the conditions of the unpreparedness of the societies and political elites of the conflicting parties themselves for any real compromises. It is quite natural that the approaches of the main external actors to the Karabakh conflict are determined, among other things, by their own interests in the South Caucasus and in the adjacent regions. It can be interests in the sphere of such as energy and communications (which is relevant, for example, for the US and France), and security and geopolitical dominance (as in the case of Russia and the United States, as well as regional powers - Iran and Turkey). In addition, the approaches of external actors to the Karabakh conflict are affected by considerations of a different order: ideals and principles of democracy and integration (clearly manifested in the positions of European countries and organizations involved in the settlement processes, for example, the Council of Europe or the OSCE). as well as historical and cultural proximity to certain states of the South Caucasus (which is especially relevant in the case of Russia and Turkey).

The settlement of the Karabakh conflict will reduce the regional importance of Georgia, deprive it of the economic and political advantages, that Tbilisi obtains in the face of the conflict between its two neighbors in the South Caucasus region. Even the change in the general background around the Karabakh conflict, as many fear in Georgia, could have a negative impact on Georgia's monopoly regional position. For example, as Georgian experts point out, in Georgia there is a feeling that in the case of the Armenian-Turkish rapprochement, the opening of borders and communications, Tbilisi will lose its "privileged position" in regional transit and economic projects. Although Georgian experts also express hope that the opening of the Armenian-Turkish border will reduce the Russian military and political presence in Armenia and the whole South Caucasus, which also comes from the interests of Georgia.

The EU and NATO: Readiness to Action or Inaction?

The US, the NATO countries, the EU and, in general, Europe for the South Caucasus are "external" players, while Russia is an "inside" player. At the same time, the activity of the West in the South Caucasus direction is higher than that of Russia. The lack of a broad view of the possibilities and depth of cooperation with the new states makes Russia's position region of the world and opens the West a lot of opportunities to declare, that he should occupy the vacant place of the Soviet Union. According to the West, Russia is not able to be responsible for the situation in the South Caucasus, and therefore it is believed that without Western guardianship, the Caucasus cannot develop steadily. In the South Caucasus, the US and its allies are proposing to the new states such combinations of political and military co-operation that are much broader than that implying today Russia.

On a more distant prospect, the South Caucasus for the West is still and a bridgehead for confrontation in the Iranian direction. If the bilateral relations of the countries of the South Caucasus with the United States are understandable and predictable, then everything that concerns New Europe looks different.

First, Europe itself is still in the stage of formation as a single organism. And political, military, and economic.

Secondly, only now - after a lapse of more than fifteen years formal independence - the period begins when the countries of the South Caucasus can really begin to formulate provisions of their political-military aspirations.

Thirdly, the countries of the South Caucasus gravitate towards Europe, and the enlargement of a united Europe due to them in the future is possible.

Fourthly, Russia continues to gain economic weight. Her claims to return to the informal club of world leaders have become quite real. In other words, the main events in the region are still ahead. And the situation in the South Caucasus begins to resemble a period of redistribution of the world almost two centuries ago. With the only difference is that now geopolitical reality forces participants in the process to exit for the regional framework. Another feature of the situation is that both Europe as a single force, and individual members of the EU, and the US do not know the Caucasian problems and do not have the experience of solving them. Western influence in the region is due to the observance of Western interests, without considering the deep aspirations of the South Caucasian peoples.

For centuries, Russia has mastered the Caucasus through trial and error. Ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity placed the problem of mutual adaptation at the forefront, not the division of the region into spheres of influence, as the "external forces" always tried to do (formerly Iran and Turkey, then Great Britain, and now the US and NATO). In the recent past, through joint efforts, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, and Russia managed to find a way to manage numerous local contradictions. After decades, Russia in the region was recognized as a power capable of bringing order and prosperity, but the events of the past 20 years have crossed out centuries of experience.

Historically, the only "guarantor" of stability and a competent arbiter is Russia. This status she confirmed in August 2008. Is there an alternative to this? It is possible, if the states of the South Caucasus themselves find the strength to create a certain union, self-sufficient in political terms. It must be emphasized that, despite the seeming impossibility of such a union, there are already precursors of the development of this direction. If such a new formation does not take place, then Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia are doomed to permanent maneuver between the interests of numerous friends and enemies and, most importantly, to abstract considerable material resources for the decision of political and military problems.

Peace in this case in the Caucasus will not wait for a long time. And military political alliances will not be a stabilizing factor, but a disruptive factor. Observation of the formation of the states of the South Caucasus as independent subjects of the world community is extremely interesting from all points of view. However, one cannot help noticing that a certain group of researchers, including those who live and work in the states of the South Caucasus, send a solid part of their creative energy for studying the problems of the region. Perhaps this is due to the fact that progressively thinking representatives of the ruling and political circles of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia agree with the truth that is in sight - joint efforts to consolidate the positions of the South Caucasus region on the world stage will bring their countries more benefits than the isolated actions in the same direction.

This approach makes it necessary to take a different look at the problem of regional security in the South Caucasus, attempt to determine the main direction of the efforts of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia, aimed at ensuring that the region finds a political stability, and distrust, has disappeared from the interrelations of its member

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states. Today's South Caucasus is a transforming region, a region that is in search of its identity (national-state, geopolitical, sociocultural). South Caucasus still retains a very high destructive potential due to the presence of several "frozen conflicts", i.e. separated and virtually sovereign states (now officially recognized by Russia).[194]

The destructive potential is also connected with two other factors, which today cannot be said to be in a latent state. The first factor is the developed separatist tendencies among such large minorities as Armenians, Talyshs, Lezgins, Avars, the issue with the Kurds (Azerbaijan) stands apart; the Armenians, the Azerbaijanis and the Turcomishetians in Javakheti, who have isolated themselves in Javakheti. These processes are most infectiously infiltrated into the territory of Russia - in Dagestan and beyond.

If we add here the problem of Southern Azerbaijan, which can worsen during military intervention USA, or because of internal political outbursts of discontent, we get a tangle of problems, in its destructive potential, not less than the so-called "frozen conflicts". And this cannot be ignored. Despite the varying degree of implementation of separatist aspirations, their solution is possible under the same conditions: improving the welfare of the entire population, de facto democratization of public life, neutralizing ideological and political influence from the outside. It's time for the South Caucasus states to start working out the principles of peaceful coexistence, the core of which would be the pact for the removal of territorial claims.

However, that current leaders tend to solve these problems, like their predecessors, - agreeing on personal basis of presidents, to drive the disease inwards. Of the four such now-existing unrecognized states Post-Soviet space three are in this region. To date, Azerbaijan and Georgia have been unable to resolve problems of the integrity of their territories. Recall that the Georgian de facto jurisdiction does not extend to most of the territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and, in fact, Azerbaijan has lost control over the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region (NKAO), as well as seven areas outside the "rebellious autonomy".

The main problem of the political elites of the countries of the South Caucasus - Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia - the lack of new approaches to the solution "Frozen" interethnic conflicts. Azerbaijan, already with the President Aliyev, reassigned the

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[194] Hooman Peimani, Conflict and Security in Central Asia and the Caucasus, (Santa Barbara: ABC_CLIO, 2009): 20.

solution of the problem on international mediators and now hopes for resuscitation of the strength and effectiveness of international law. All expectations and hopes of Georgia are reduced to the possibility of replacing the Russian presence. Recently, such sentiments have intensified in Baku. Here, it is hoped that other players - the US, NATO or the European Union with the OSCE - will be able to solve the internal problems of both states. In fact, the entire geopolitical fantasy of the leaders of the newly independent states was limited to playing on the contradictions of the "great powers" in the region. And if Azerbaijan and, to some extent, Armenia managed to build a diversified relationship with all participants of the "Great Game", then Georgia uniquely placed its stake on the US (and to a lesser extent on the EU).

Apparently, it was the all-embracing US support that created the illusion of the Georgian leadership's ability to solve the territorial problems by force. The hope for the strength of his overseas ally played a cruel joke with the Saakashvili regime in August 2008. In this regard, the Transcaucasian vector is one of the "hot" areas of Russian foreign policy, which is particularly distinguished by the dynamism, complexity and severity of the problems being solved, having a geostrategic dimension.

The most important obstacle to the integration of the states of the South Caucasus into the European Community is the presence in the region of Russian military bases. In this regard, it is necessary to consider the intentions of the leading European states regarding the Russian military presence in the South Caucasus.

In general, the European states consider this problem not so much as a problem for the US, but as their own problem. For the US, this problem is, rather, a medium-term nature, since the US has not yet developed its strategy in Eurasia and allows for the weakening of its geo-economic interests. The US is interested in political neutralization of Russia, but is not interested in confrontation with it.

This was repeatedly stated by American generals representing the Command of American Forces in Europe (for example, General Charles speech during his visit to Armenia in 2003). As part of more practical plans, the US pursues the goal of completely depriving Russia of the ability to control the extraction and transportation of Caspian oil. For example, unlike oil companies and Great Britain, the US negatively considers the possibility of transporting Russian oil via the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline. However, even in the framework of such an uncompromising position, the goals of the leading

European states on the issue of the withdrawal of Russian bases are, nevertheless, different. According to British analysts and experts, the United Kingdom, which has the most extensive economic and political activity in the South Caucasus, most of all insists on withdrawing Russian troops and drastically reducing Russia's influence in this region. But it is this large-scale economic presence of the UK and its plans for the development of the Eurasian Corridor project, that put before it the security problems in the region that so far only Russia can solve.

However, the withdrawal of Russian bases does not at all reflect the national interests of France, which poses the task of limiting the influence of the United States (and Great Britain and Germany) in the South Caucasus and Central Asia. The withdrawal of Russian bases from the South Caucasus will only strengthen the positions of the opponents of France. Therefore, Russia has a subject for negotiations with France on this issue.

According to political analysts dealing with European security issues, Germany is most interested in ousting Russia from Central and Eastern Europe, from the South Caucasus and Central Asia. Germany is gradually and consistently implemented in the European and Eurasian regions, relying on its enormous economic opportunities. Germany, which is difficult to acquire positions in the zones of French and British influence, is trying to create its continental, Eurasian influence zone.[195]

At the same time, Russia in this super project is given the role not of a strategic partner, but of an energy-raw province. If at the beginning of the 1990s there were hopes for strategic cooperation among Russian and even German political scientists, later it became clear that Germany does not need a political partnership with Russia. She is only interested in Russia's participation in her communication projects, ensuring guaranteed delivery of goods from Central Asia and Kazakhstan, as well as from Russia itself.

However, this is difficult to attribute to the task of political strategy. Germany is much more interested in the "DE russification" of Eurasia, the regions of the South Caucasus and Central Asia, than the United States and Great Britain. Germany does not need to force events on the withdrawal of Russian bases, since this process occurs without its accentuated participation. Moreover, the forcing of this process can lead to the

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[195] Terry D. Adams. Caspian Oil and Gas Development and the Black Sea Region: An Overview. In: Europe's Black Sea Dimension. Brussels, CEPS, 2002, pp. 47-52, 60-68.

strengthening of the positions of Great Britain and the United States as competing powers. Among Russian politicians and political scientists, there was an opinion that the state of European-Russian relations should be judged by the results of Russia's integration into European structures. At the same time, the processes of European integration are an integral part of "linking" Russia to the interests of European states, which occurs to impose Russia on relevant norms and rules of international order. The policy of the leading European states towards Russia needs to be judged by their actual steps in the Western and Southern regions of the post-Soviet space.

As for NATO and the EU, there is a simple question: will joining in one or both organizations will help to resolve frozen conflicts? Since accession to the EU looks like a very distant prospect for any GUAM country, I will say, in mainly, about NATO as a system of collective security and, thus, an instrument for resolving internal conflicts.

Of course, the subsequent chain of events looks quite the opposite: joining NATO, for example, will be possible only after the conflict resolution. But the political leadership, especially in Georgia, continues to rely on NATO mechanisms in search of solutions for the protracted problems of separatism. There are two principal problems with NATO as a tool for resolving internal conflicts. The primary sources of conflict are structural, political, and historical. NATO is ineffective in solving such problems. The alliance remains primarily a system of interstate security with very little capacity for regulation of internal conflicts. Examples of such conflicts in NATO member countries (such as Turkey) are enough to see the lack of such opportunities. Founded as a traditional interstate coalition, NATO has not changed so much as to solve problems at the domestic level. It is even less suitable for regulating transnational or civil problems. At the same time, separatism in frozen conflicts still remains due to the weakness of states, lack of legality, economic instability, and historical / cultural features. NATO's participation in any of the frozen conflicts can, in fact, worsen the situation by transforming frozen conflicts into aggravating and, possibly, interstate conflicts. This is especially true for Georgia.

The EU could provide a broader way to resolve conflicts. Being a common market and a common political space, EU could help to solve the dilemma of ethnic security, by building effective mechanisms for sharing power and guaranteeing cultural autonomy. But there are also obstacles that make such a scenario unrealistic for the short and medium term.

The level of democratization in the countries is not sufficient to create structures for conflict management. Separatist regions are governed by the local elite, isolated from society, which the existing status quo is beneficial. Thus, both strategic integration and rapid democratization would require a long transitional period. In this regard, the attempts of the European Union to play a more active role in the region are noteworthy. Of course, the bureaucratic structures (and, of course, the EU) are characterized by inertia and slowness, especially in the sphere of foreign policy.

However, the realities that have changed after the "five-day war" of August 2008 in the South Caucasus have affected the regional policy of Brussels. At the same time, in European countries, at the expert level, statements arose in favor of a revision of the approaches of Brussels to the population of the unrecognized republics of the South Caucasus.[196] The need for greater involvement of the de facto state population in EU projects is also argued by the fact that this will prevent their involvement in the political and economic space of Russia. And if earlier the geopolitical predilections of Brussels with respect to the conflict regions were rather on the side of the "former metropolises" (at least, in the case of Georgia), now the situation has changed. De Facto State of the South Caucasus, previously isolated from the EU, is benefiting from the new European policy, as it helps to maintain the status quo in the regional conflicts, regardless of their configuration.

Both the EU leadership and the public of European countries have clear value priorities regarding the format of conflict resolution. The priority is to prevent military escalation and the resumption of hostilities. In the situation where it is impossible to achieve a compromise settlement soon in any of the ethnopolitical conflicts in the South Caucasus, this approach contributes to their freezing. This is in the direct interests of those actors in regional politics who benefit from maintaining the status quo (i.e. de facto states, as well as Armenia supporting Nagorno-Karabakh). Another important priority of EU policy in the South Caucasus is the promotion of regional integration. However, the intensification of regional cooperation, and the opening of borders, and the establishment of communications, will also contribute to the preservation of status in conflicts, since

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[196] See S. Neil MacFarlane, Larry Minear, and Stephen D. Schenfield, Armed Conflict in Georgia: A Case Study in Humanitarian Action and Peacekeeping, Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies, Occasional Paper #21, 1996

until now the calculation has been made that it is precisely the desire to break out of isolation that will drive the secessionist states to compromises.

As for pragmatic considerations, the EU is extremely concerned about the fate of existing and projected regional energy projects. For the safe operation of all oil pipelines and gas pipelines passing around Russia through the territory of the South Caucasus, non-resumption of hostilities in the zone of the Karabakh conflict is a paramount condition for the EU. There are also indirect results of EU involvement in regional security and stability, that directly affect the situation around the conflict. For example, these are humanitarian and economic projects of the European Union, which promote the rehabilitation of refugees, reduce poverty and social tension, strengthen civilian control over the armed forces and power structures, build political institutions and democratization in the states of the South Caucasus.

All of this, among other things, reduces tensions in conflict zones. For all that, the Karabakh conflict is not in the focus of attention of the world community, which controls the settlement process through a relatively small format of three co-chairs and several military. The low-budget and small involvement of international structures in the negotiation process under the aegis of the OSCE, is an indicator that the problem is on the periphery of world politics, but rather that the international community does not consider the conflict to be so acute and dangerous compared with many other similar conflicts and problems) to give him increased attention.

The above-mentioned countries are simply too far from joining the EU. Taking all this into account, it can be said that the mechanisms of the EU and NATO will not be directly used to resolve frozen conflicts.

It seems that most likely they will serve as a model for creating a structure for conflict resolution. The ideology and values that underlie Euro-Atlantic integration could help to build more democratic societies, which in turn will create more opportunities for the solution of internal conflicts. security problem Regulation of frozen conflicts is problematic. Structural factors are too strong, ethnic division too difficult and economic interdependence is too low. In combination with a set of Russian interests in the region, conflicts are a serious challenge to regional security. Attempts to solve the problem through strategic liberalization, in the majority, have failed. Democratization is too slow and civil society remains underdeveloped. This hinders effective separation of power,

creates discrimination, and gives ground for aggressive rhetoric of the local elite. Appeal to any form of regional integration looks like is sensible. Regional integration helps to establish common benefits, provides economic growth, and promotes activities international organizations and regimes.

Over time, it establishes common procedures and norms for political regulation and creates elements of a common individuality. This did not work in cases of frozen conflicts. But such a failure occurred more at the expense of specific features of conflicts, and not at the expense of the approach itself. For various reasons projects on regional integration failed. There is some economic cooperation, but it cannot replace the process of integration when it comes to internal conflicts. Levels of economic interdependence among the countries of the region remain relatively low, and there are no overflow effects. Regional integration could be effective, but it must be meaningful. The introduction of democratic measures, legislative protection of minority rights, stimulating the "win-win" approach in conflict management - all this could be strengthened by integration.

However, in societies first there must be institutional and regulatory frameworks created. Until this is done, integration will help to save problems and difficulties. The integration process that is effective for conflict management should be economically sound and follow the logic of a gradual increase in interdependence. In this respect, an example of the EU could play an important role. Integration will be successful if it benefits the ethnic minorities and weakens the dilemma of ethnic security. But it will fail if the interdependence and practical cooperation in it are replaced by slogans and political rhetoric.

Prospects for the resolution of "frozen" conflicts in the region

To resolve conflicts in the South Caucasus, it is necessary to change the way people think. It is impossible to resolve the conflicts in the South Caucasus, remaining as

we are now, we need to change ourselves and change the society and then, perhaps, there will be such types of conflict resolution that we now cannot imagine. Nowadays there are no open wars in the Caucasus, as there are mechanisms of balance, sometimes extremely stringent. Our task is not to eliminate conflicts, but to transform them. It is necessary to learn how to live in a conflict, being able to regulate it not by relative methods, then we can discuss and solve them on paper, and not killing each other. At the same time, the states existing in the Caucasus are built on an ethnic basis, and the conflict becomes a natural thing. We need to interact with our politicians and societies. Nothing new can be invented to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, it is necessary to change ourselves. [197]

The countries of the South Caucasus and Russia are connected by thousands of visible and invisible threads. The whole issue is Russia's ability to work out and propose to Azerbaijan and Armenia such a plan for maintaining fraternal relations, which would "nullify" all efforts of those interested in deepening the split between them.

The "hot spots" of the South Caucasus, which largely determine the level of regional security, are Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Nagorno-Karabakh. Each of these conflicts has its own reasons. But the leading and general cause of the impasse lies in the main principle embodied in the settlement processes - "the right to self-determination of peoples within the territorial integrity of the state". In modern conditions, the "right to self-determination of peoples", legalized by the UN resolution of December 14, 1960 in the process of the collapse of the colonial world order, contradicts the "territorial integrity of states", fixed on the international level for the last time on August 1, 1975 in the Helsinki Final Act of the OSCE. The military adventure of Saakashvili in South Ossetia, undertaken by him in the summer of 2008, pushed Russia to recognize the state independence of ethnic breakaway ethnic enclaves from Georgia. However, it is premature to speak about a full international recognition of the sovereignty of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. For most of the countries of the world, they continue to remain "rebellious", separatist territories of Georgia.

The events of the late XX and early XXI centuries, became a stage not only of profound changes in the political system of the world, but also the emergence of a new social thinking and world outlook. The collapse of the Soviet Union led to natural

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[197] Svante E. Cornell, Small Nations and Great Powers: A Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus,
Ricmond, Curzon Press, 1999

consequences: the collapse of the Yalta-Potsdam system of international relations, the bipolar world and, as a consequence, the end of the Cold War. The state of confrontation, in which the United States and the USSR were constantly (NATO and ATS), as well as the social and economic difficulties that created the crisis in the Soviet Union, led to the need for systemic changes.

The three countries of the South Caucasus are an example of the post-Soviet geopolitical conflict. Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, they don't demonstrate their sincere readiness to promote a common language for regional security and compromises on economic development. They value external partners more than own neighbors. But even in relation to their external partners, they all 6th prefer to hedge their rates, as well as to prevent the situation "Final choice" between different integration associations. Pro-Western Georgia is interested in normalizing relations with Russia, although it seeks to build up cooperation with the West. Pro-Russian Armenia considers the EU as a key vector in the diversification of foreign policy, but remains close to Russia. Azerbaijan in the post-Soviet period succeeded in implementation of the "swing" policy. Of course, one of the ways to break their deadlock would be to reduce the level of confrontation between the West and Russia. However, the Caucasus here is not a critically important site. But if the improvement of relations between major international players will still happen, the chances of improving security and conflict resolution in this will increase

Analysis of inter-ethnic clashes has shown that the emergence and development of conflicts are a complex process based on the struggle of objective and subjective contradictions, competition between two international legal principles: the right of nations to self-determination and the territorial integrity of states.

In view of the multi-ethnicity of the countries of the modern world and the threat of escalation of ethnic contradictions, the international community for many years adhered to the principle of the territorial integrity of the state in its policy. However, the turning point in changing the system of international relations was 2008 - the year of recognition of Kosovo, Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

The Caucasus region has always been the center of the intersection of interests not only of regional but also world powers. Bloody wars in the eyes of the international community created the image of the region as a center of instability and ethnic conflict. An important factor in solving regional conflicts today is the energy resource factor,

which is most evident in the Azerbaijani-Karabakh conflict. Due to the availability of energy resources in the Caspian basin, the world powers use the policy of maneuvering, which only delays the process of resolving the issue.

However, we should not underestimate the actions of a number of states that played a major role in ending the war and preserving peace in the region, despite the unsettled issue. The analysis of the negotiation process showed how important is Russia's role as an intermediary in the settlement of the Karabakh conflict, all key documents on the conflict were signed with the assistance of Russia, during it's active policy in the Caucasus.[198]

Over time, on the basis of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, another confrontation of extra-regional players for influence arose, where Russia and the USA played the main role.Contradictions between mediating countries in the course of resolving the conflict began to be sharply manifested in the period of 1993-1994. It was at this time that the struggle for leadership grew into a desire to play a major role in the peace process. The main task that Washington set for itself in the process of settling the conflict - to prevent the strengthening of Russia's influence in the South Caucasus and its superiority in mediation, in turn, Moscow could not allow the growth of US and Turkish influence in the region.

In view of the fact that in the modern world the solution of such ethno-territorial disputes is possible with the support of the leading power of one of the sides of the conflict, the availability of energy resources and the geographic location of the conflict zone only hinders the process of resolving the issue.

The main reason for the "unresolved" conflict, in the opinion of some experts, is the mutual distrust of the conflicting parties.[199]

In the current situation any compromise of the conflicting countries is tantamount to a loss and is perceived as a betrayal of national interests. In this regard, the way from the moment of signing the peace to resolving the disputable issues and determining the status of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic to the parties to the conflict was never able to

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[198] Hooman Peimani, Conflict and Security in Central Asia and the Caucasus, (Santa Barbara: ABC_CLIO, 2009): 20.

[199] Svante E. Cornell, Small Nations and Great Powers: A Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus,
Ricmond, Curzon Press, 1999

pass. The main requirement of the Government of Azerbaijan during the negotiations on the conflict is the preservation of the territorial integrity of the country, through the liberation of the occupied territories. Armenia's official position on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict after decades, remained unchanged and diametrically opposite from Azerbaijan one. Ethnopolitical conflicts like the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh have three solutions: military; Through peaceful negotiations; Under the influence of an external actor, however, all the listed variants of conflict resolution, for a given period of time, do not approach the situation that has arisen in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Trying to find ways out of the conflict, many experts tried to combine the demands of the conflicting parties and unite the two principles of international law - the principle of territorial integrity and the right of the nation to self-determination. Thus, the model of a "common state" was suggested, according to which Nagorno-Karabakh, while remaining part of Azerbaijan, would have many rights of an independent state. This model of conflict resolution was approved by the governments of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, but the Azerbaijani authorities rejected the proposals, believing that they contradict the national interests of the country.

Many researchers of this conflict believe that the current situation of "no war, no peace" is beneficial to the governments of both countries, "is a tool for fighting dissent and strengthening power." Armenia expects that over time the world community will get used to the current situation, and Azerbaijan believes that it will be possible to take revenge after the economic recovery due to the sale of energy resources.

As a result of the system analysis of ethnopolitical conflicts in the South Caucasus, taking into account the growing interest of international organizations and states to the region, general conclusions have been drawn up for developing methods for their resolution and the following scientific results have been obtained:

1. The basis of ethnic conflicts is the desire of ethnic groups to preserve their culture and unity through political definition. In view of the fact that in the modern world the number of ethnic groups exceeds the number of sovereign states tenfold, the problem of interethnic conflicts is an urgent topic for the entire world community.

2. Interethnic contradictions have a negative impact on the socio-economic and political development and security of not only a single country, but of the whole of mankind, taking into account the fact that the process of the emergence of new ethnic

clashes is endless, the study of conflict prediction and management mechanisms underlies each country's internal policy State.

3. It is established that the negotiation process with the participation of an intermediary (third state or international organizations) is the most popular method for solving ethnic conflicts. However, the analysis of the contradictions in the South Caucasus demonstrated the effectiveness of this method in the issues of cessation of hostilities, and its incapacity for the final settlement of ethnic disputes. Thus, the negotiation process in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict for many years created a situation of "neither war nor peace", but in the Georgian-Abkhaz and Georgian-Ossetian conflicts this method of regulating ethnic contradictions could not prevent the outbreak of hostilities in South Ossetia in August 2008 .

4. It is revealed that ethnopolitical conflicts in the South Caucasus are a consequence of the policy of the leadership of the USSR, when the internal borders were established or changed at the request of the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee and without taking into account the resettlement of ethnic groups, and illegal actions of newly-formed states. Despite the fact that the creation of post-Soviet states took place under the sign of the right of ethnic self-determination of peoples, the leadership of independent republics began to conduct an ethno-nationalist policy that only complicated inter-ethnic contradictions within states and in many cases led to armed actions. Wishing to obtain their own independence, the republics armedly resisted the wishes of autonomous entities in protecting their ethnic and political equality, citing violation of the principle of territorial integrity of the state.

5. It is proved that the energy resource factor played an important role in the solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. It is the natural riches of the Caspian basin that cause the unstable position of world powers in this matter, which only delays the process of forming ways out of the protracted ethnic confrontation. Thus, the lack of success in resolving the conflict is associated not only with the ambitions and contradictions of the conflicting parties, but also with hidden interests in the region of mediator states.

6. Despite the active policy in the negotiation process on the resolution of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, on the one hand - regional players, caused by the need to stabilize the situation at their own borders and the desire to increase the influence in the

region; On the other hand, extra-regional players interested in the stable extraction and transportation of the Caspian's natural resources, the situation in the region "no war, no peace", negatively affecting the socio-economic development of the conflicting countries remains.

7. It has been established that the main obstacle to the final resolution of the issue of the status and future fate of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic is the uncompromising policy of the leadership of the conflicting parties, any concession to either party is perceived by the authorities, and sometimes by the people as a defeat. However, despite the openness of the status issue, for 20 years (since the end of hostilities), the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh has demonstrated its independence, commitment to democracy and the right to be in line with other subjects of the world community.

8. Despite the options for a peaceful Georgian solution to ethnopolitical conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia by granting broad autonomy to the republics, the five day August war, perceived by the society as genocide against the Ossetian people, has become a fatal mistake of the Georgian president, which left no hope for the restoration of the territory of Georgia of the Soviet period.

9. The war in South Ossetia showed the realities of the modern world and the role of a new type of weapon, information, in achieving the strategic objectives of the state, the main objects of which are the consciousness and worldview of people. It is this type of weapon that allowed the Georgian leadership to present Russia in the minds of the European community as the main aggressor and a threat to the territorial integrity of the sovereign Georgian state.

10. An analysis of the actions of the OSCE and UN peacekeeping forces during the period of the beginning the five day war the inhabitants of South Ossetia made it possible to establish the inefficiency of the work of the organizations and their bias in this matter. International organizations failed to cope with the peacekeeping mission in the region and left the scene the day before the operation began, moreover, OSCE observers were observed in close cooperation with the Georgian special services and in providing assistance in preparing the military operation. Thus, in view of the loss of the reputation of international organizations, the presence of European observers in the region is possible only after carrying out reforms to eliminate facts that adversely affect the impartiality and neutrality of such organizations.

11. The active policy of the Russian leadership on the issue of cessation of hostilities in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the prevention of the genocide of the Ossetian people, followed by recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, is caused by historical, political and economic aspects. However, if Moscow's mediation in the signing of the peace treaty between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh was connected with the desire to establish stability in the region, in time, in view of the growing influence of world powers in the Caucasus, Russia's participation in the Georgian-Ossetian war (August 2008) and in the subsequent recognition of the republics, is connected not only with the elimination of tension near its southern borders, but also with the desire to maintain its influence in the region.[200]

Recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia was the result of the age-old struggle of peoples for independence, but it is not a guarantor of security in the region, due to the incompleteness of the process of forming the statehood of the republics. However, due to the fact that in modern politics the process of recognition depends on the geostrategic and economic goals of the influential countries, the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the recognition by the world community of the independence of the Republic of Abkhazia and the Republic of South Ossetia will largely depend on the strategic interests of these or those states.

It is obvious that the conflicts in Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh impede normal political and economic development, threaten security even outside of the Caucasus and complicate relations with Russia and Turkey. The mechanisms for resolving the acute contradictions that existed at that time did not involve the participation of the EU, and so far, have been largely ineffective. If it was destined to play a key role in implementing and supporting peace agreements, it should be actively present in the negotiation process, if it was recognized by all the parties to Brussels. It is necessary to participate in one or more of the available conflict resolution mechanisms. The EU could also use its political and financial weight to facilitate the reconciliation process, coordinate efforts with the main partners (not least Russia), initiate the planning of its possible role in conflict resolution, and publicly declare their interest in resolving them.

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[200] Terry D. Adams. Caspian Oil and Gas Development and the Black Sea Region: An Overview. In: Europe's Black Sea Dimension. Brussels, CEPS, 2002, pp. 47-52, 60-68.

The confidence-building measures would help to resolve the situation in Georgia. In part, similar proposals were put forward in the second half of 2007, when tensions started to increase. The above measures included the deployment of staff for communication and interaction with the police in conflict regions, technical assistance and recommendations to the Georgian Ministry for Conflict Resolution, assistance in the rehabilitation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. This can include meetings of representatives of civil society, the assignment of the function of a liaison to the European group for supporting security at the borders, which is present in Georgia. Recommendations on customs issues of trade with conflict regions, as well as transit through them, the opening there of EU information centers, the participation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in regional drug control programs, support in the elimination of booby traps, a program for assistance to refugees and displaced persons. Finally, they are educational programs for students, consultations on restoring the damaged infrastructure, as well as discussions between the parties to the conflict in South Ossetia to determine a possible European contribution to confidence building, not counting the OSCE South Ossetia rehabilitation program.

Many of these initiatives were postponed or disrupted relating to military actions, but some could later be continued and implemented with Abkhazia, whose authorities, after a short cooling period, de facto retain interest in maintaining and developing diverse international relations. However, the post-war situation differed from the pre-war situation, as new delicate moments appeared-in, after Russia recognized the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. That is why it was necessary to discuss and formulate a policy of EU participation.

The new policy was developed in parallel with the so-called Geneva Dialogue between Russia and Georgia, at the center of which is the implementation of the cease-fire agreement after the August war, and the security problem and the situation of displaced persons. The mediation of the EU in signing the ceasefire agreement played an extremely important role in terms of the prestige of the European Community and its further participation in the resolution of the conflict. It also became clear, that the EU needs broader framework legislation to pursue a policy on conflict regions, since it cannot be limited to measures stabilization of the situation and enhance security, such as the signing of a ceasefire agreement.

At the same time, the crisis around Nagorno-Karabakh continues to deepen to the south of Georgia, and the situation still seems deadlocked and unsolvable. The internal logic and dynamics of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict are fraught with serious risks. There is a real danger of a sharp escalation. The conflicting parties got involved in an unrelenting and destabilizing arms race. There is only a self-regulating and unreliable cease-fire agreement without disengaging the belligerents. There is only a self-regulating and fragile ceasefire without separation of forces and monitored by only a handful of OSCE observers.

Brussels made it clear that they are ready to contribute to strengthening confidence and support negotiations within the framework of the Minsk Group. The EU policy on Abkhazia and South Ossetia could be partially used to resolve the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, but the complete lack of trust between the parties has so far made it impossible to carry out systemic interaction. The European Union could also, in addition to soft confidence-building measures, make a practical and political contribution to the work of the Minsk Group. It is necessary to strengthen the ceasefire agreement.

The second important priority, is that the European Union should continue supporting state building and democratization in the countries of the South Caucasus. The rationale for such a policy is obvious: effective governance, democracy and human rights are indispensable in themselves, but they are also prerequisites for closer relations with the European Union based on common values. Among other things, in the framework of this direction, consultations were held on legal reform and programs to support parliaments and political parties. I also believed in further strengthening of the role of Europe in the part of border management in Georgia, as it would contribute to state building and strengthening of sovereignty.

Since then, Brussels has contributed to political stabilization by supporting reforms in the three countries. However, the democratic process in the region is still slipping. The lack of a credible political dialogue and confidence in the conscientiousness and sincerity of relations between the ruling parties and the opposition in the three countries, continue to negatively affect the domestic political situation in the region. Conflicts also undermine efforts to promote political reform and economic development.

Brussels also had to manage the expectations of the South Caucasus countries, to be their effective partner. The difference between expectations and concrete cases had

two sides. In the short term, the European Union did not respond quickly enough to the real or perceived needs of the partner countries. For example, until the European Commission sent delegations to two countries, the EU was forced to tolerate fair criticism for its inconsistency with its expectations and hopes. However, the difference between expectations and affairs was also explained by the unrealistic demands of the partner countries, who needed to understand the relationship they can expect in the long term and what kind of support they can receive in various disputes and conflicts.

The August war helped to narrow the gap between expectations and deeds. It became clear the level of support of the international community in the event of a serious aggravation of the situation: vigorous cooperation with a view to ending the conflict, support in matters of principle - not least in matters of preserving the territorial integrity of Georgia. At the same time, the world takes a more detached and restrained position on secondary issues. This concerns the requirement to immediately change the format of negotiations and peacekeeping efforts. The war also showed the EU leadership, what measures should be taken without delay. As a result, a new regional initiative entitled "Eastern Partnership" was given, within the framework of which agreements on cooperation, free trade and freer movement were promised. If not for the war, the initiative would have a more difficult fate in the EU Council, although it met the long-standing aspirations of the partner countries.

I think that It is necessary to conduct as much as possible a meaningful dialogue with Russia, a country with extremely strong historical ties here. The EU should actively be present in the region and make the South Caucasus a permanent topic in contacts with Moscow. The EU should strive to build relations with Russia on common interests, such as cooperation in the fields of security, stability, energy, and transport, to weaken and neutralize the logic of "managed instability," while at the same time reserving the right to raise more serious problems. Then I was convinced that it was necessary to develop all these areas based on bilateral interaction with Russia and within larger regional associations.

In the short term, some aspects of Russian politics have complicated the launching of joint security initiatives - for example, Moscow's desire to defend its special interests in neighboring countries, recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and a unique interpretation of the 2008 ceasefire agreement. The EU still expects that

Russia will fully fulfill its obligations to withdraw troops within the framework of the six-point plan that put an end to the war in Georgia. However, this should not prevent a joint discussion of some long-term plans and common interests right now. In particular, it is quite possible to open the ways of communication, despite the remaining disagreements on the status of the two republics.

Most importantly, the transformation of the South Caucasus into a transport hub, promoted by the geography of the region, would further increase the interest of the EU and Russia in its security. For Russia, the most important routes are from the south to the north, and for the European Union - the routes going from east to west. But this should not damage either side. Such an approach would facilitate the resolution of protracted conflicts, since the economic benefits of opening strategic communications through conflict zones would become more tangible for all participants. For example, the opening of the railway traffic through the territory of Abkhazia would have a huge positive impact on more remote regions. Such initiatives would allow the peace process to move from the deadlock and make significant progress.

Already in 2006, I noted that it is very important to promote the establishment of good-neighborly relations between Turkey - another great historical power of the region - and the countries of the South Caucasus. The importance of Turkey is obvious, since all three countries in the region have borders with this very serious economic partner - through energy transit, trade, and development assistance. The Turkish blockade of Armenia allowed Ankara indirectly to participate in delicate negotiations on Nagorno-Karabakh. I saw several possible ways of EU-Turkey cooperation in the South Caucasus: raising the region's problems in the context of Turkey's multifaceted bilateral contacts with the countries of the European Union and by implementing joint programs of assistance to this region.

The period in question coincided with the most far-sighted and ambitious foreign policy that Turkey began to implement. Ankara made various initiatives to assert its role in the South Caucasus, including the Caucasus Stability and Security Pact, adopted with Russia's participation soon after the August war. However, the initiative was not successful, primarily because the European Union did not participate in it, which by that time had become an indispensable actor in regional politics, and after Bulgaria and Romania had become an immediate neighbor in the EU.

Turkey's capabilities in the South Caucasus remain limited, as conflicts in the region have the most direct impact on it. The Armenian issue continues to cause violent emotions, the Turkish population vigorously supports Azerbaijan, and the voice of the numerous community of Abkhazians and Circassians in Turkey is also well audible. Nevertheless, as Special Representative, I made every effort to establish a close political dialogue with Ankara, as it will always be an important part of any framework agreement in the region.[201]

The difficulties faced by Turkey, which seeks to play a more active role in the Caucasus, are reflected in the mirror in its failed attempt to normalize relations with Armenia. And without that, she cannot become an important player here. Brussels strongly supported the normalization process between Ankara and Yerevan, being firmly convinced that the opening of the border will give an impetus to positive dynamics, that can facilitate the resolution of other conflicts; However, the joint efforts of the European Union and its partners at least serve as a guarantee that the process has only halted, but not decayed.

The three countries here are not alike, and it is unlikely that they will be able to develop a framework agreement only with their participation. Both for the EU and the countries of the South Caucasus, it is much more beneficial to build cooperation around the Black Sea and involve other countries with access to the Black Sea (Moldova, Ukraine), as well as states that have recently become members of the European Union (Bulgaria, Romania). A broader framework agreement on regional cooperation could also help to resolve Russian-Georgian and Turkish-Armenian differences.

In the past few years, Brussels has, in fact, made serious efforts to establish regional cooperation and expand the sphere of interaction of the South Caucasus with neighboring countries and regions, but all initiatives have had certain shortcomings. One of them, entitled "Black Sea Synergy", is linked to the regional Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation; unfortunately, this initiative did not justify the hopes placed on it. The Eastern Partnership, which also includes Belarus, Ukraine, and Moldova, has achieved concrete results in terms of deepening bilateral relations with each of these countries.

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[201] Hooman Peimani, Conflict and Security in Central Asia and the Caucasus, (Santa Barbara: ABC_CLIO, 2009): 20.

However, the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan did not give an opportunity to reveal the potential of the program. The "Eastern Partnership" also provides for the participation of Russia and Turkey in certain regional projects, but this is again difficult because of the complex relations of these countries, respectively, with Georgia and Armenia. The creation of such framework agreements would be of great importance for regional cooperation, but their heterogeneous ratification once again shows how important it is to resolve unresolved conflicts.

The need to develop a joint Transatlantic program was also explained by the possibility of opening NATO to the countries of the region. Although you can argue about what conditions should precede this. The decision taken at the summit of the alliance in Bucharest in March 2008, to grant Tbilisi and Kiev the possibility of joining in the long term, unfortunately, led to an aggravation of tensions in the region that culminated in the August war. After it, it became clear that Georgia will not be able to become a member of NATO very soon. In parallel, the European Union was first obliged to assume a significant share of responsibility for ensuring security around conflict regions.

Finally, European Union should organize monitoring of potential conflict areas and take measures to prevent new conflicts. Their potential is significant, because the countries of the South Caucasus are small, poor, and unstable, and Georgia is also ethnically heterogeneous. It is obvious that the conflict potential will be preserved in peripheral territories inhabited mainly by minorities, until the national welfare begins to be distributed more evenly.

Among other things, the 2008 war was a testament to the inability to prevent conflict in a timely manner. At least a year before the outbreak of hostilities in the region of South Ossetia, tension was constantly growing. EU representatives, have made numerous attempts to appease passions and call on the international community to play a more active role in preventing conflict, but efforts have not been enough. At that time, the European Union was not prepared to insist on a more active role in its resolution or the deployment of a police contingent and ground forces capable of exerting a deterrent influence on the parties to the conflict. Of course, it is unclear if the European Union could prevent a war, but a more active participation and EU presence would mitigate its consequences.

Perhaps the risk of resumption of hostilities around Abkhazia and South Ossetia has declined, but has not completely disappeared. The barrier to military confrontation around Nagorno-Karabakh is gradually disappearing, as the parties continue to arm themselves. The delicate balance that allowed the conflict to remain relatively manageable and prevent its escalation over the past 15 years may soon be violated. In the long term, the aggravation of all conflicts can be ruled out, only if their main causes are not frozen, but eliminated. Otherwise, the risk remains that the focus of tension will continue to smolder imperceptibly in the depths of the earth, until a new volcanic eruption suddenly starts. While conflicts are not resolved, it is impossible to realize the entire economic potential of the region for the benefit of the countries of the South Caucasus and their neighbors.

In the South Caucasus, there are many potential outbreaks: regions populated by minorities, where unemployment and social problems, if not addressed, can provoke a conflict on ethnic grounds; religious extremism; the risk of interference between this region and the troubled, etc. Many EU programs are aimed at regional development in depressed areas populated by ethnic minorities. The European Union is also working on the legislative framework, the creation of state institutions, the education system, and other legal issues in conjunction with the OSCE. But to be truly effective and capable of timely action, preventing the situation from escaping from control, it is important to raise awareness about risks.

Consequently, conflict prevention, as well as the resolution of existing ones, remain top priorities. Ensuring the safety of citizens requires (in addition to official political negotiations and deployment of security forces) and very different approaches. Attention to the needs of individual people is possible only if the international community takes on an entirely different toolkit. First, it is about supporting civil society, increasing its importance, and organizing dialogue. This brings us back to the question of the importance that effective management has and its connection with avoiding possible conflicts. I remain convinced that the EU and the OSCE are exceptionally well equipped and prepared to organize and conduct such work.

Conflicts in the South Caucasus are unlikely to be finally resolved soon. There are different related levels of confrontation, which must be eliminated in parallel. Georgian conflicts include both interstate and intra-Georgian components. These aspects cannot be

ignored or denied. Settlement can be considered valid if all involved parties agree. And this will happen only after the main needs of the parties are met: physical security, people's security, and the right of displaced persons to return. Status - a secondary question. Parties to the conflict will otherwise look at the status issues after their primary needs are met. Among other things, there is also a strategic level, from the point of view of which the South Caucasus is one of several playing fields in a larger game.

Even today, the foundation for the settlement of the conflict can be laid. Greater efforts must be made to make progress in the Geneva Security Negotiations - not least to resolve the withdrawal of troops in accordance with the 2008 agreements, as well as to deal with the problem of displaced persons. However, this is only part of the plan. Since it is impossible to imagine that the conflict areas continue to be fenced off in the long-term from neighbors that play an important historical and economic role and pursue a policy of isolationism, the main actors in the process - governments, as well as residents and de facto authorities in the conflict regions - will inevitably expand contacts, and they need to be encouraged in every way. As soon as these ties develop into mutual economic interests, the dynamics of resolving the main conflict issues will change.

The resource of economic interaction and common interests exists not only at the level of the local population, but also at the regional level. The closed borders between Armenia and Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Turkey, as well as the lack of functional ties between Russia and Georgia prevent the opening of the huge potential of the region. All three unresolved conflicts block some of the strategic ties and communication routes that can take place in the South Caucasus. This is of enormous importance for a region that historically has always been a crossroads of strategic routes from the south to the north and from the east to the west. If regional integration receives a new powerful impetus, the potential benefits of conflict resolution may become more apparent to their participants.

The stability of the region requires the agreement of all involved parties. Russia has opposed a series of opinions. Western initiatives concerning Nagorno-Karabakh and the Abkhazian conflicts, as well as the West hindered Russia's efforts to be the only mediator in Georgian internal conflicts. The West in the Caucasus issues is compelled to comprise Russia's geographical, military, and economic weight. The solution to the problems of the Caucasus for the West is not only the role of mediator between the opposing sides but the negotiations with Russia, Turkey, and Iran, as each of the

highlands directly deals with the results of attempts to resolve conflicts in the Caucasus. It is also necessary to consider the multilateral security framework, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the North Atlantic Alliance, and the Independent Commonwealth of States.

Thus, the resolution of a conflict or disagreement is possible only from the standpoint of law. It has long been established that international relations can develop normally only if the dominant idea is dominance rights. Experience shows that the rule of law is equally beneficial to the most powerful and weakest state.

In addition, the inhabitants of the region need a single identity, to get along better with each other. Today they have too little in common. The EU can add a new dimension of belonging to a large European family to help the countries of the South Caucasus to go beyond the narrow national self-determination, that came to the fore after gaining political independence and then was fixed by the wars of the 1990s. A common identity would help the peoples of the South Caucasus find common aspirations instead of squandering energy into conflicts that no one wins. But for this, Brussels needs to demonstrate a consistent adherence to the interests, needs and aspirations of the people who inhabit this region. Russia should understand how profitable it would be to allow the European Union to play such a role. If this becomes a reality, then the outlook for the next decade will be favorable. Most of the foundation is already laid.

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