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*School of International Affairs*

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### **RUSSIA'S INVASION OF GEORGIA: WHAT IT WAS AND WHAT IT MEANT**

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August this year was a hot month and not just in terms of the weather. Within a single week, two parallel wars began and ended. One was an intra-state war between Georgia and South Ossetia which Tbilisi won quickly and decisively. The other was an international war between Russia and Georgia, which Tbilisi lost equally decisively. This second war was the second time (after the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict) that two former Soviet republics have fought.

But if this was a military defeat in which Georgia lost many of its people and much of its key infrastructure, it was not a complete loss because NATO countries have pledged to rebuilt and improve on what was there before. And if this was a military victory for Russia, it was truly the pyrrhic one because it entailed a diplomatic loss of enormous proportions. Yes the Russian army triumphed in the field. But never in its history had Moscow been as isolated after a military victory. Except for Cuba and Venezuela, not one country came out in support of what Moscow had done.

Most analysts and governments around the world dismissed Moscow's claims about defending its citizens and Georgian aggression and identified actions of the Russian

Federation as an invasion of a sovereign country. Indeed, Moscow's isolation has been so complete that in Sochi on August 15, President Dmitry Medvedev complained about how the world was covering and treating what Russia had done without asking the question, "who started this war?"

But even if it is the case that Georgia's moves in South Ossetia provided Moscow with a pretext for action, it certainly did not justify Moscow's drive deep into parts of Georgia which have never been in dispute. And consequently, both people in the West and people in Russia itself soon recognized that Moscow had gone to war primarily to overthrow the pro-Western government of Mikheil Saakashvili, prevent Georgia from joining NATO, and re-establish Russian control over oil and gas pipelines from the Caspian basin to the West.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov admitted that Moscow wanted Saakashvili out during a telephone call with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, a desire that no Russian official has contradicted. [1] And Lavrov added that Moscow will not negotiate with Saakashvili whom he called "part of a special US project" and whose actions the foreign minister said prove that "he cannot be our partner." [2] The US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice immediately dismissed this argument by pointing out that "Georgia is a democratic government in the Caucasus that has elected its leaders. To call it a project of anyone, of anybody, perhaps belies more about the way Russia thinks about its neighbors than the way it thinks about US policy." [3]

A closer look at what happened in South Ossetia unveils many similarities with other regional crises of the past. One way or the other, Mikheil Saakashvili, by his attempt to emulate Russian actions in Chechnya to restore his country's territorial integrity, proved to be the best student of Vladimir Putin who himself proved to learn much from the West by applying the Kosovo blueprint in Georgia to return the boomerang to the Euro-Atlantic camp. Indeed, on August 16 during the course of the current crisis, Russia's representative at NATO Dmitry Rogozin said that "if someone doesn't respect Serbia's territorial integrity and sovereignty over Kosovo and Metohija, then they better shut up about the territorial integrity of Georgia," adding that "our critics behave like wolves that want to eat their sheep when hungry. But we are not a sheep, we are the Russian bear." [4] Two days later, on August 18, Alexander Konuzin, Russian ambassador to Serbia, said his country would ask the UN Secretary General for an explanation of how it had been possible to declare Kosovo's independence without the UN Security Council's approval. "We want to know this to apply the same knowledge in South Ossetia and Abkhazia," Ambassador stated. [5]

But at the same time, many in the West now stress that official Russian recognition of these "unrecognized" states could boomerang on Russia. The most obvious consequence as Carmen Eller pointed out in *Spiegel* would be that "Russia would have to explain why independence is right for South Ossetia and Abkhazia but not for Chechnya." [6] It is thus unclear how many boomerangs should be flying back and forth for the great powers to decide to stop this spiral of mutual vengeance.

A major reason behind Moscow's move was a desire to block Georgia's entrance into NATO, an organization that had always regarded protracted conflicts as an obstacle for a membership. This discourse was broken, thus paving the way for the moves Russia opted for in Georgia, by the German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier who on February 19, 2007 stated that the conflicts in Georgia would not prevent NATO from taking in Georgia, [7] a position that Georgian parliament speaker Nino Budzhanadze quickly welcomed. [8] Indeed, history provides numerous examples when divided nations nonetheless gained membership in international and regional organizations: West Germany became part of NATO, Cyprus was included in the European Union without its northern part, and consequently including Georgia in NATO should not be a problem.

A variant of this reason is that Russia invaded Georgia not to keep it out of NATO but rather because it was not yet a member. That argument rests on an expansive reading of Article Five of the North Atlantic Treaty [9] which says that an attack on one member is an

attack on all but only commits the alliance to consult on how to respond. But if Moscow hoped to delay Georgia's entrance into NATO, it has in fact almost certainly accelerated Tbilisi's admission by its action. [10] Still worse from Moscow's perspective, Ukraine will join Georgia in pressing for rapid admission and will likely succeed. And given that Russia has shown that it is prepared to use force in violation of international law, other former Soviet republics are likely to pursue NATO membership as well.

What lessons should Azerbaijan draw from all this? Is Moscow likely to move against Azerbaijan? As far as Russian interests are concerned, there are many similarities between Georgia and Azerbaijan. Both are linked to the hydrocarbon transportation infrastructure, both cooperate with NATO, and both have problematic regions that look to the north for the military, political and moral support, and thus can be manipulated by Moscow. And there are additional reasons for a Russian focus on Azerbaijan: it is a far bigger fish to catch than Georgia and from Moscow's point of view deserves to be "punished" for its role in re-routing the flow of hydrocarbons to the West.

Moscow's actions in Georgia highlighted the fragility of the security system in the South Caucasus. Baku has been supportive of the West's campaign against terrorism, and it has cooperated closely with NATO in many ways. [11] But the Georgian events show that Baku cannot rely on its balanced foreign policy and that it needs to declare its desire to join the Western alliance soon and work hard to become a full member of the only security system that provides any real guarantees of national sovereignty.

#### Notes

[1] See for example "Georgia-Russia War Intensifies", *Aljazeera.net*, August 11, 2008, available at <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/europe/2008/08/2008810225659470997.html> (last accessed August 30, 2008).

[2] "Lavrov: Saakashvili Is Not Sane As a Negotiator", *Russia Profile.org*, August 15, 2008, available at <http://www.russiaprofile.org/page.php?pageid=CDI+Russia+Profile+List&articleid=a1218816987> (last accessed August 30, 2008); "Russia Not To Hold Negotiations With Mikheil Saakashvili", *APA*, August 12, 2008, available at <http://en.apa.az/news.php?id=86614> (last accessed August 30, 2008).

[3] "Rice Rejects Lavrov's 'project' Accusations", *TREND News*, August 14, 2008, available at <http://news.trend.az/?show=news&newsid=1269769&lang=EN> (last accessed August 30, 2008).

[4] "Territorial Integrity of Georgia Impossible Without Territorial Integrity of Serbia", *Free Republic*, August 16, 2008, available at <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/2062593/posts> (last accessed August 30, 2008).

[5] "Россия потребует объяснений от ООН", *Московский Комсомолец*, August 18, 2008, available at <http://www.mk.ru/blogs/MK/2008/08/18/srochno/366725/> (last accessed August 30, 2008).

[6] Eller, Carmen. "How Tight Should the Bear Hug?", *Spiegel Online*, August 12, 2008, available at <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,571532,00.html> (last accessed August 30, 2008).

[7] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, "Georgia's Separatist Conflicts 'No Obstacle' to NATO Entry", *Press Kit*, February 19, 2007, available at [http://www.mfa.gov.ge/index.php?lang\\_id=ENG&sec\\_id=85&info\\_id=3481](http://www.mfa.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=85&info_id=3481) (last accessed August 30, 2008).

[8] "Russia Alarmed By Prospect of Georgia's NATO Membership", *RIA Novosti*, April 23, 2007, available at

<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2007/04/mil-070423-rianovosti01.htm>  
(last accessed August 30, 2008).

[9] The North Atlantic Treaty, *NATO On-line Library*, available at <http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/treaty.htm> (last accessed August 30, 2008).

[10] See "Merkel Signals Support for Georgia's NATO Membership Bid", *Deutsche Welle*, August 17, 2008, available at [http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,3570539,00.html?maca=en-newsletter\\_en\\_Newsline-2356-txt-nl](http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,3570539,00.html?maca=en-newsletter_en_Newsline-2356-txt-nl) (last accessed August 30, 2008).

[11] See for example Рзаев, С. "В НАТО нас понимают", *Эхо*, №20 (1501), February 3, 2007, available at [http://www.echo-az.com/archive/2007\\_02/1501/politica01.shtml](http://www.echo-az.com/archive/2007_02/1501/politica01.shtml) (last accessed August 30, 2008).

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### **AZERBAIJAN AFTER GEORGIA: Ten Shattered Assumptions of Azerbaijani Foreign Policy**

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No country, with the possible exception of the two immediate antagonists, has seen its foreign policy environment transformed by the recent war in Georgia more than Azerbaijan. That conflict and the way in which both individual countries and the international community have responded have cast doubt on almost all the assumptions on which Azerbaijan's foreign policy have been based over the last decade. And consequently both the government of Azerbaijan and the Azerbaijani people are confronted with the difficult and traumatic task of redefining not only the mental maps they have of the world around them but also redefining their foreign policy agendas.

Because these changes have come so quickly, because they are interrelated, and because there is no obvious or at least easily agreed upon response to any or all of them, it is far too early to say just what Baku will now do or even where both its immediate environment and the broader international community will land in a new angle of repose. But it may be useful to specify ten assumptions on which Azerbaijan's foreign policy have rested and then look at the ways in which the events in Georgia have shattered them in order to be in a position to consider the challenges and choices the new environment poses to Azerbaijan.

*Shattered Assumption 1: Georgia is sufficiently stable to allow it to be the primary path for the export of Azerbaijani and Caspian Basin oil and gas bypassing Russia.*

The most obvious consequence of Russia's intervention in Georgia for Azerbaijan is its demonstration that Georgia is not a reliable pathway west for Azerbaijani and Caspian hydrocarbons. Russia both through the actions of its own forces and its allies have blown up portions of the pipeline, destroyed a key railway bridge, and wreaked havoc in Georgian ports. Oil flows have been disrupted, and Azerbaijan has already had to ask Moscow for greater access to pipelines flowing through the Russian Federation to Novorossiysk. The assumption in Baku that Georgia was a reliable path that Azerbaijan could use to bypass Russia has been shattered, fracturing in turn Azerbaijan's assumptions about itself and the world.

*Shattered Assumption 2: Russia has accepted the 1991 settlement and will not use military force against its neighbors.*

Western powers led by the United States have said for 15 years that Russia has accepted the 1991 settlement and will never use force to challenge it. If Russia was a status quo power in the past, it is not now, and Moscow has exploited the misperceptions in the West to act against its neighbors first by subversion and then as in Georgia by naked military power. Under Vladimir Putin, it has become a revisionist power, one whose leaders believe that they can and should use force to promote their goals and especially to punish their enemies. Thus the assumption that Russia has entered the international community as a member which accepts the rules of the game, an assumption that many in Baku have operated on in many cases because they were encouraged to do so by Western governments, also lies shattered in the dustbin of history.

*Shattered Assumption 3: The United States is sufficiently powerful to be a reliable and credible deterrent to any Russian misbehavior in the former Soviet space.*

There is no question that the United States is the last remaining super-power, but for three reasons, as the Georgian events demonstrate, the US is not in a position to bring its power to bear in the post-Soviet space in ways that would block Russian action. First and most disturbingly, the United States has spent most of the last decade talking about its strategic partnership with Russia, a self-delusion that has nonetheless created a class of people in Washington's foreign policy establishment who will find a way to justify not challenging Russia on anything. Second, the United States has acted in ways in the Balkans and in Iraq and Afghanistan that make it more difficult for Washington to credibly oppose the use of power by another state, if it has nuclear weapons, to advance its own interests. And third, the current administration since September 11<sup>th</sup> has not only focused almost exclusively on combating terrorism in the Middle East but has neglected its allies in Europe and elsewhere and thus is not in a good position to mobilize a coalition against Russia. For those reasons and for others having to do with European dependence on Russian oil and gas, yet another assumption of Baku's foreign policy up to now lies discredited.

*Shattered Assumption 4: The United States and the international community are so committed to the inviolability of borders that they will not permit any revision of them, especially by violence.*

The United States and the international community are opposed to border changes in principle but not necessarily in practice. Not only did the US and its allies ultimately welcome the dismemberment of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia but most recently they have supported the independence of Kosovo. As a Wilsonian, the author believes that supporting the right of nations to self-determination is correct but he also is convinced that support for that principle means that one must be consistent. If one isn't, others will exploit that. And what the Russians have done in Georgia – or at least why Putin and company assumed they could get away with it – is the product of recent history in the Balkans more than anything else. Western and especially American failure to understand the implications of what was done there and to take action in the former Soviet space has thus shattered yet another Azerbaijani assumption.

*Shattered Assumption 5: Turkey can be counted on to back Azerbaijan against Russia.*

One of the bedrock assumptions of Azerbaijani thinking is that Turkey will always be in Azerbaijan's corner in the event of a clash. The events in Georgia prove that is not so. Ankara's decision not to allow two American hospital ships to pass through the straits in order to provide assistance to Georgia shows that Turkey today is far more influenced by Russia than many in Baku had thought, and its suggestion that Russia and Turkey should become joint guarantors of stability in the Caucasus may have its roots in Ataturk's policies, which after all were pro-Soviet early on, but such a condominium would not mean that Turkey would protect Azerbaijan but rather that it would cover Russian pressure on Baku. Again, another assumption shattered.

*Shattered Assumption 6: Iran, thanks to American-led efforts to isolate it and its own domestic problems, does not pose any fundamental threat to Azerbaijan.*

Not only has Iran lined up behind Moscow's actions in Georgia, but it has expanded its level of cooperation with Armenia in the intelligence and security areas and it has adopted a much harder line against its own ethnic Azerbaijanis in the North. Iran may be in a box in some respects as Washington clearly wants, but in its immediate neighborhood – and Azerbaijan is part of that – Tehran possesses the resources, the motive and now the opportunity to cause trouble for Baku. It is almost certain that Iran will seek to spark new challenges by the Lezgins and, working with Armenia, other minorities inside Azerbaijan as well as seek to use the large number of Iranians living in Azerbaijan to put pressure on Baku. Azerbaijan's assumption to the contrary, one again encouraged by the United States, is likely shattered beyond repair as the Georgian events play out.

*Shattered Assumption 7: Azerbaijan's growing economic might will allow it counter any challenge posed by Armenia over Karabakh.*

Azerbaijani officials from President Ilham Aliyev on down regularly insist that their country's growing economic might will allow them to build up their political and military power to the point that Baku will be in a position to rebuff any challenge by Armenia in the future. There are three reasons why that assumption is now shattered. First, economic power does not translate directly into military power. One can purchase more weapons but that does not in itself mean that one has more power. Second, Armenia now more than ever can count on Russian help. Relative to Armenia, Azerbaijan looks very strong; relative to Armenia and Russia, it looks rather different. And third, and again as the events in Georgia show, a modern military can be overwhelmed by numbers and by a power willing to sacrifice in order to achieve its military and political ends. "Economism" was a mistake a century ago; it is still a mistake in strategic thinking.

*Shattered Assumption 8: Azerbaijan as a source of oil for an energy thirsty Europe guarantees that it can count on outside support against any challenge.*

Azerbaijani oil is Baku's chief calling card to the world, but Azerbaijan is not the only source of oil and the Georgian events make its oil less attractive than it was before. After all, if Azerbaijan has something the world wants but can't deliver it reliably – and Moscow has demonstrated that it won't be able to unless you make concessions to Russian demands – then Azerbaijani oil, however much other countries might like to have it is devalued. Assumption eight is thus shattered as well.

*Shattered Assumption 9: Azerbaijan's so-called "balanced foreign policy" is sufficient to give Azerbaijan the security and freedom of action its leaders want.*

Many specialists on international affairs have been impressed by Azerbaijan's "balanced foreign policy," its efforts to maintain ties with all sides rather than line up only with one. Some would argue that the Georgian events show the virtue of that approach rather than undermine it, but that would be true only if one thing were true that clearly is not. A balanced approach presupposes that the two sides are roughly equal in power, but Russian actions in Georgia show that for the immediate future, that clearly is not true – and thus the continuation of a balanced approach rests on an assumption that has been shattered too.

*Shattered Assumption 10: Azerbaijan's international environment is sufficiently benign that it now can and should focus exclusively on its domestic problems.*

If there has been one refrain in the comments of Western officials visiting Azerbaijan it is this: Azerbaijan should not worry so much about ensuring the continued viability of the state; it should focus on reforming that state, improving the quality of democracy there. That Azerbaijan should focus on improving its domestic arrangements is beyond question, but it is for exactly the opposite reason that Western officials give. Azerbaijan lives in a bad

and increasingly dangerous neighborhood, and it must act in ways that will ensure that the country can survive as a more or less independent actor with a chance for long-term survival. The notion that Azerbaijan can count on a benign environment has never been completely true; it now lies shattered with all of the others listed above.

Many will see this list as overly bleak, but in the wake of Russia's violation of the rules, of the West's failure to find a way to force Moscow to back down, and of the rising tide of calls for "looking beyond" what Russia has done in order to avoid "a new cold war" and to obtain all the "benefits" of East-West cooperation, Azerbaijan, its leaders and its people, will not be doing themselves any favors by acting as if they do not have to redefine their approach because the environment in which they must operate is a very different one than that which they have been assuming they could rely.

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### **RUSSIA'S WAR WITH GEORGIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR AZERBAIJAN\***

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The Russo-Georgian war of August 2008 will have significant repercussions for the entire Caucasus. Moscow's objectives are already clear. It will annex South Ossetia and Abkhazia, thus violating the 1975 Helsinki treaty and ripping apart the post-Cold War settlement based on the indivisibility of European security. It will deprive Georgia of its economic and self-defense capacity and destroy Georgia's civilian infrastructure and economy. Meanwhile its call to indict Georgian President Saakashvili for war crimes and refusal to negotiate with him or adhere to the cease-fire terms strongly suggest that Russia will continue occupying Georgia until he is deposed. Obviously Moscow intends to create a new Georgia that will be a Russian satellite and renounce its Westernizing ambitions.

Russia will also seek to deter investors and financiers from supporting the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline and portray it as a bad investment risk. Should this pipeline plus the Baku-Erzurum pipeline for gas fail, EU hopes for a Nabucco pipeline will wither with them and Russia will then be the exclusive gas supplier from the CIS to Europe. Then it can monopolize Caspian energy flows to Europe and use that power and those revenues to corrupt and subvert European political institutions peacefully thus establishing its primacy in Europe. But the implications for Azerbaijan in that case are enormous. Russia has already begun to claim that the BTC pipeline is a bad risk and has attempted to bomb it, albeit unsuccessfully. Therefore as a direct result of this war we should expect pressure against Armenia and Azerbaijan and other CIS governments to subordinate themselves to Moscow's dictates, cease their flirtations with the West, and let Russia gradually take over their energy and other key economic sectors.

Russia will then become more than just the sole *Ordnungsmacht* in the Caucasus. It can then inhibit any moves towards democratization there. Thus Georgia's defeat puts the rest of the CIS at risk as well because Georgia is and has been the most prominent example of the West's project to promote democracy, liberal capitalism, free markets, and security in the Caucasus and the former Soviet Union. Thus Western success or failure will have definite reverberations throughout the CIS, including Russia. Georgia's defeat opens the way to sustained Russian pressure against Baku with reference to its inclinations towards partnership with NATO, the possibility of democratic reforms in Azerbaijan, and its being the exception to Russia's monopoly of Caspian basin energy pipelines to Europe.

Due to Georgia's defeat in this war Azerbaijan's effective independence is now menaced by the threat of more direct and stronger Russian pressure in all areas of policy. Neither can Azerbaijan count on foreign support. NATO and the EU's responses to Russia's

aggression (the evidence being overwhelming that the war was a Russian provocation from start to finish) have shown them to be what Jan Techau has called a "coalition of the impotent." If this is the case with regard to Georgia which was the symbol of the Western project in the Caucasus, support for Azerbaijan against Russian pressure will probably be considerably less. Neither can Baku truly count on Ankara. That government, which has had excellent ties to Georgia and has possessed a long-standing strategic interest in the stability and security of Georgia and Azerbaijan, merely, and somewhat inexplicably, called for a new regional security framework which it could join so that it would not be left out of a new potentially Russian-dominated Caucasus. That response is clearly a case of too little too late and cannot give anyone a sense of security based on Turkey's support for it.

Neither can Armenia count on Russia as Russian bombs destroyed the railway to Georgia, Armenia's sole railway to the outside world. Likewise, the blockade of Georgian ports and the occupation of Poti impede, if they do not block entirely, Armenia's maritime trade with the rest of the world. Beyond that we may safely assume that the CFE treaty is dead, a fact that has profound consequences for the entire Caucasus as nothing now stands in the way of Moscow further militarizing the region to achieve an overwhelming local superiority with which to overawe local governments. Similarly in view of the currently blocked status of peace talks regarding Nagorno-Karabakh, we can also postulate that the Minsk process led by Russia, France, and the United States is also dead. Russo-American cooperation will not occur at least till a new administration takes power in the United States. And even if it does occur it will not be on this issue given Russia's record in the Caucasus.

These facts suggest as well the danger of not moving forward on Nagorno-Karabakh. These so called frozen conflicts are actually quite dynamic and could easily spiral out of control as we have now seen. Moreover, they provide excellent justifications for foreign powers to intervene with deleterious effects in the political life of the smaller and embattled countries. The crisis and war with Georgia suggests that for both Baku and Yerevan the time has possibly come to resume their bilateral negotiations eliminating all the outside parties, in order to reach an agreement more quickly. Previous negotiations have clearly led to agreements between both parties on several key points and perhaps the looming common danger to both governments might galvanize them to approach each other again free of outside interference. In 2005, this author suggested a kind of grand bargain whereby Turkey, in return for EU membership, might open its borders to Armenia and end the blockade that costs Armenia up to 15% of its annual GDP. In return for this Yerevan could make substantive concessions on the remaining outstanding issues in the negotiations over Nagorno-Karabakh, leading as well to Azerbaijani reciprocity. Certainly a genuine and workable agreement with Turkish backing, and possibly European support as well, would go far to eliminate the conflict that renders both Armenia and Azerbaijan permanently vulnerable to Russian pressure. Of course, that pressure will never go away given Russia's proximity and the imbalance of power between it and the other states in the Caucasus. But under the circumstances, a policy that reduces the likelihood of an unending conflict with Armenia that gives Russia ample opportunities for interfering with both states' politics seems to be the best alternative. Otherwise Azerbaijan will be left to face Moscow directly without any certainty that wavering and even unreliable partners can help it when its crisis comes. And if this conflict is left unresolved, one thing we can be sure of is that this crisis will come sooner rather than later.

*\* The views expressed in this article do not in any way represent those of the US Army, Defense Department, or the US Government.*

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## **DID MOSCOW PREVENT A US ATTACK ON IRAN BY ITS MOVES IN GEORGIA?**

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While it is still too early to speak in detail about the results of the behind the scenes talks between Moscow and Washington about the resolution of the Georgian-Russian conflict, it is clear that these discussions, like the calculations of all those involved in this conflict, reflected not just the immediate situation in Georgia and its two breakaway republics, Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Some of these larger or more distant goals have been mentioned by various officials and analysts, but some of the most interesting, even if they remain in the realm of speculation, say a great deal about just how consequential this conflict is.

Many, especially in the Russian capital, saw Georgia's moves as part of a larger U.S.-sponsored effort to push Russia out of the Caucasus and to place American bases there in order to protect American energy interests. Others, especially in Washington, viewed what happened as a Russian effort to bring a former Soviet republic to heel and thus to demonstrate not only that it is a world power that can take actions independently of what others think but also that other former Soviet republics must consider Moscow's views first and foremost.

There is more than a little truth in each of these perceptions. Obviously, the Georgian conflict has had a serious impact on the energy situation throughout the Caspian region and thus on the dynamics of prices in the world market, and equally obviously, both the United States and Russia want to be able to protect their interests in the region, interests that are sufficiently at odds that it is difficult to imagine just what a negotiated settlement in this area will look like.

Indeed, by provoking a war with Georgia, the Kremlin was able to create obstacles to the transportation of energy resources via routes bypassing Russia. As a result, it created the conditions for the realization of Iran's Neka-Jask project, which envisages the transportation of the Caspian oil and thus allows for Moscow to preserve its control over the transportation of energy resources from the region. The statement made by the deputy executive director of the Iranian National Oil Company for investment issues Hojatollah Ghanimifard that the Iranian Neja-Jask pipeline will be a serious competitor to and eventual replacement of the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline [4] attests to this line of thinking. In the meantime, the problems arising with pipelines in Georgia have forced Azerbaijan for the first time to send its oil into Iran. [5]

But as large an issue as the control of the flow of hydrocarbons out of the Caspian basin is, there are clearly still greater equities involved. When Russia launched its drive against Georgia, the international community did not devote much attention to the ways in which this may have been a move by a great power in the complicated politics in the Middle East. It is important to note that almost at the same time as the events in Tskhvinvali began, there were major American, British and French naval exercises in the Persian Gulf, an action that dramatically increased the number of ships and hence firepower in that region. The exercises were explicitly intended to prevent Iran from taking any action in the Straits of Hormus which might impede the flow of oil, but at least some analysts, pointing to statements in Washington and Jerusalem, have suggested that these forces might have been assembled to launch an attack on Iran. [1] And hence it could well be that in the complex play of forces which always affect international relations, the Russian move into Georgia may have prevented an American-led move against Iran. Some evidence points in that direction.

Most notably, as the events in Tskhinvali and the international reaction to it were unfolding, Turkish prime-minister Erdogan visited Russia with his new "Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform" – an initiative Moscow wholeheartedly embraced. Shortly afterwards Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad paid a "working visit" to Turkey - his first visit to a NATO country which Israel harshly objected. [2] These developments attest to the fact that Ankara and Russia combined their efforts to prevent the United States and Israel from an attack against Iran.

One additional report that lends credence to this reading was the statement of Haled Mashal, the head of Hamas which won the Palestinian elections. He too was received both in Moscow and in Ankara. And by this maneuver, Turkish and Russian officials demonstrated their willingness to use the Palestinian lever of influence in the event of the use of force against Iran, something that neither saw as being in its economic or geopolitical interests.

Of course, the place Azerbaijan with its rapidly developing economy has in the calculations about the Georgian-Russian military conflict should not and cannot be ignored. Some in Azerbaijan were extremely critical of the government for failing to react sharply against Russian aggression, given Azerbaijan's membership in GUAM and its strategic partnership with Tbilisi. But President Ilham Aliyev continued to pursue his step by step balanced diplomacy and spoke only about the importance of maintaining the territorial integrity of states, something Azerbaijan itself is very much interested in.

That was striking given the role Baku had always played in maintaining friendly ties with Georgia, in supplying its neighbor with oil and gas and thereby mitigating its energy, and hence political as well, dependence on Russia.

But of course there is yet another implicit negotiation going on here. That concerns the competition between Moscow and Washington for influence in the former Soviet republics. Moscow's actions in Georgia sent a clear message to Ukraine, Moldova and Azerbaijan, who also have frozen conflicts on their territories that Russia can intervene if it chooses to, a new element in the foreign policy calculations of all these states. Indeed, it may be that Moscow was especially interested in sending this message to Azerbaijan given the upcoming electoral campaign in which some candidates will push for greater integration with the West.

In that connection, it is worth noting that at the time of the crisis, David Harris, the executive director of the Jewish Committee of America, was in Baku. Considering the role of the Jewish lobby in the US and the well-known sympathy of that lobby for Azerbaijan, it is entirely possible that Harris made clear that Baku would be defended from aggression from its northern neighbor. [3] Whether that message was received, however, is unclear, given that the United States has not yet taken any dramatic actions as opposed to tougher rhetoric in response to Russian moves in Georgia.

In short, Baku appears likely to become a place des armes not for military action but rather political discussions not only about its own status but about the status of Iran in the world and the influence of Moscow and Washington in the post-Soviet states.

#### Notes

[1] See <http://www.ethnoglobus.com/?page=full&id=344> (last accessed August 21, 2008).

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## **TURKEY'S PUSH FOR CAUCASUS STABILITY AND COOPERATION PLATFORM**

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In the course of the Georgian crisis, Turkey has engaged in extensive shuttle diplomacy in the aftermath of the conflict in Georgia, Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan visiting Tbilisi, Moscow and Baku to push Ankara's plan for a Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform. That plan, which aims to bring together Turkey, Russia and all three South Caucasus countries, has received support across the region, and Turkish diplomats are now arranging working level meetings with their counterparts.

Since Erdogan announced this proposal, Ankara has tried to work in close cooperation with Russia on its details. Turkish Foreign Minister Ali Babacan had a phone conversation with Sergey Lavrov about this proposal on August 22. A Turkish delegation visited Moscow four days later to explore the details. [1] Other countries were very much drawn in as well: Azerbaijan's foreign minister, Elmar Mammadyarov, visited Ankara on August 29 and his Georgian counterpart, Eka Tkeshelashvili, came to Istanbul on August 31. And Armenian officials have welcomed Turkey's proposal. On September 6, Turkish President Abdullah Gul is expected to visit Armenia to discuss it (Kardas 2008a).

The current plan, the full scope of which has not yet been announced, has its origins in discussions in the late 1990s. Inspired by the European Union-led Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, Turkey's president at the time, Suleyman Demirel, suggested in November 1999 a similar arrangement as a conflict prevention strategy for the Caucasus. [2] Over the next several years, Turkey pushed this idea at the OSCE as well as in the United States, Europe and the region. Some European think-tanks picked up the idea and published reports discussing its feasibility and relevance (see for example Celac, Emerson, Tocci 2000). Notwithstanding the expressed interest among the regional leaders, the lack of an agreed upon Western strategy for the Caucasus, political divisions in the region and Russian opposition to the formation of any new groupings within the Commonwealth of Independent States with an external power involved prevented any real progress. [3]

But Turkey has never abandoned this project because, since the end of the Cold War, Turkey has sought to prevent crises in its neighborhood from becoming violent. Given its experience in the Middle East, Ankara does not want to see the Caucasus drifting toward similar violence or having violence spread to Ukraine. And encouraged by the relative success of the European idea of cooperative security in the Balkans, Turkey believes it has a chance now to introduce a similar notion to the Caucasus and thus to achieve stability and peace through close regional interaction. It hopes to find solutions to long-running conflicts in the region through the promotion of economic interdependence, including energy, transportation and communication cooperation. [4]

Turkey has an additional reason for advancing such a program. The crises around Turkey have the effect of reminding the West of Turkey's geostrategic position and political importance, something Ankara can and does use as a bargaining chip in its relations with

the major powers. Moreover, when Turkey has been reluctant to assume such an assertive role, some of the outsiders suggest that it do so (see for example Zaman 2008).

At present, such an approach fits in with the AK Party government's new foreign policy line intended to present Turkey as a peace broker in its surrounding regions. [5] That line emphasizes the multi-dimensional nature of Turkish foreign policy. Prior to the conflict in Georgia, the government had come under criticism for ignoring the relations with the Caucasus and Central Asia as it sought to expand ties in the Middle East, and even Africa. Now, with this project, it has responded to that criticism. [6]

Economic considerations have always played a key role in Turkish foreign policy, and because of that, Ankara has always been very sensitive to the ways in which political crises and instability can prevent countries from reaping the benefits of economic cooperation. In recent years, it has acted like a "trading state," (Rosecrance 1986) one that uses soft power in its foreign policy and does not engage in traditional hard power politics. [7] The crisis in Georgia served as a reminder of the importance of those ideas and calculations.

However, Turkey's growing economic power also makes it more dependent on its trading partners. At the present time, Russia is Turkey's largest trade partner and within the last years Russia has been a major destination for Turkish investments and exports. Despite Turkey's support of projects like the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, two-thirds of Turkey's gas comes from Russia, in large measure because Ankara's effort to diversify its sources by closer cooperation with Iran has been opposed by the United States. Turkey's overlapping dependencies on Russia are now a major foreign policy challenge for Ankara. [8]

These various factors explain Turkish policy during the Georgian crisis. Caught between its traditional ally the United States and its regional ally Georgia on the one hand and its increasingly assertive trading partner Russia on the other, Turkey has pursued a policy intended to avoid offending either side. Ankara was especially careful to avoid offending Moscow and decided not to protest forcefully Russia's recognition of Georgia's breakaway regions. [9] It acted with caution and followed a restrained policy vis-à-vis American demands as in the case of allowing the passage of American ships to the Black Sea (Kardas 2008b), something that even led some analysts to conclude that Turkey might be slipping away from the West (Baran 2008).

Against this background, Ankara's proposal for a Caucasus pact serves well Turkey's apparently ambivalent policy trying to balance the conflicting requirements of its multifaceted political and economic relationships. By involving all the parties of the region's many hotspots in a multilateral platform, Turkey thus can avoid taking sides, especially against Russia. And it offers a way to resolve its difficulties with Armenia. Indeed, in exchange for its role as a mediator in the Russian-Georgian crisis, Turkey expects Moscow to use its influence in Yerevan and play a similar role there. [10] Any progress in the Turkish-Armenian relations will represent a major achievement even if the broader aspects of the pact are not realized.

Because the Caucasus has so many problems both bilateral and multilateral, the ability of this initiative to address them is limited. And the absence across the region of respect for the territorial integrity of states, a centerpiece of the modern international system, means that there is little reason to hope that the various potential participants will be able to find a common language or set aside their differences long enough to consider the possibilities such conversations might offer. Moreover, some countries, like Russia and Armenia, benefit from the status quo, while others like Azerbaijan and Georgia, suffer from it and want change, a divide that makes such discussions even more difficult.

A fundamental problem with the proposed pact is that as long as the major regional power is seen as the aggressor, smaller countries will seek powerful external supporters. When Russia was weaker, it opposed a Caucasus Pact fearful that this would open its sphere of influence to others; now, as it has gained strength, it will be inclined to support a group

that ratifies its advantages but not one that will force it to retreat. Since Turkey will hardly be able to balance Russia on its own, and guarantee the security of the smaller countries, the viability of the project, is highly questionable. In fact, Turkey's ambivalent attitude toward Russian aggression can be seen as appeasing Russia due to Ankara's own dependence on Moscow, something that might undermine its credibility in the eyes of Georgia and Azerbaijan. [11]

Armenia's ongoing occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh continues to poison its relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey. Ankara still does not have diplomatic ties with Yerevan, and Azerbaijan considers itself at war with Armenia. The continuation of the *status quo* thus favors Armenia vis-à-vis Turkey and Azerbaijan. It helps Armenia sustain its occupation of Azerbaijani territory and consolidate its gains, and the Armenian diaspora has been successful in having the events of 1915 termed genocide by many western parliaments, positions Yerevan has few reasons to retreat from.

Many argue that Turkey's approach to Armenia, largely a product of its ties with Azerbaijan, has damaged its relations with the West without doing much to help Azerbaijan (Amberin 2008). Moves to normalize ties with Armenia thus require resolving some historical problems and ending Armenia's geographic isolation. Despite the objections of some, Turkey's AKP government is determined to move in that direction, but unless Armenia responds in ways that now seem improbable drifting away from its uncompromising position, Turkey may find itself alienating Azerbaijan with whom it must work if it wants the regional pact to work. [12]

Such problems make the achievement of Turkey's goal of a regional security platform highly problematic, but these same problems, including Russia's willingness to act as a spoiler, [13] highlight why just such an arrangement is worth pursuing.

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[6] Kanbolat, Hasan (2008).

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## **A CHRONOLOGY OF AZERBAIJAN'S FOREIGN POLICY**

### **I. Key Government Statements on Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy**

President Ilham Aliyev says that Georgia and Russia are friends of Azerbaijan and that Azerbaijan would like to see the two of them be friends with each other ([http://www.day.az/view\\_day.php?date=2008-8-20](http://www.day.az/view_day.php?date=2008-8-20)), but he also reiterates Azerbaijan's support for the territorial integrity of Georgia (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=85008>).

Azerbaijan, together with its GUAM partners, announces plans to issue a statement on Georgia reaffirming the organization's commitment to the territorial integrity of that country and all others ([http://www.analitika.az/articles.php?item\\_id=20080830013437472&sec\\_id=69](http://www.analitika.az/articles.php?item_id=20080830013437472&sec_id=69)).

Azerbaijan's foreign ministry announces that Baku has no immediate plans to leave the Commonwealth of Independent States (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/127867.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev says that Armenia is not in a position to compete with Azerbaijan in any area ([http://www.1news.az/articles.php?item\\_id=20080802072636155&sec\\_id=2](http://www.1news.az/articles.php?item_id=20080802072636155&sec_id=2)).

Hafiz Pashayev, deputy foreign minister and rector of the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy and Azerbaijan's former ambassador to Washington, calls for an expansion in ties between Azerbaijan and the United States (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/127434.html>).

Elin Suleymanov, Azerbaijan's consul general in Los Angeles, says that he hopes the events in Georgia will not lead to a new cold war between the Russian Federation and the United States (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/127587.html>).

### **II. Key Statements by Others about Azerbaijan**

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov says that the resolution of the Karabakh dispute will not be achieved the same way as were those of Abkhazia and South Ossetia ([http://www.analitika.az/articles.php?item\\_id=20080828012201732&sec\\_id=69](http://www.analitika.az/articles.php?item_id=20080828012201732&sec_id=69)).

Senator Richard Lugar, ranking Republican on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, says in Baku that the United States "provided all kinds of support to Georgia for conflict settlement and is ready to do it for Azerbaijan if needed" (<http://www.ans.az/index.php?nid=85521>).

Vasily Istratov, Russia's ambassador to Azerbaijan, says that "Russia's recognition of independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia will not effect on its respect to Azerbaijan's territorial integrity" (<http://www.ans.az/index.php?nid=85794>).

Stephan Goris, the honorary president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the European Union, says that Azerbaijan will retain its leadership in the Caucasus, despite the events in Georgia (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=85726>).

Andres Herkel, the Council of Europe's special representative, says Azerbaijan must improve the ways in which it conducts elections (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/127999.html>).

Vasily Istratov, the ambassador of the Russian Federation to Azerbaijan, says that he hopes the countries of the South Caucasus will draw "the correct lesson" from what is happening in Georgia now (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/127438.html>).

Turkey's foreign minister, Ali Babadzhan, says that he hopes the Karabakh dispute can be resolved as quickly as possible (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/127675.html>).

Peter Semnebi, special representative of the European Union for the South Caucasus, says that the European Union hopes that the assessments of elections in Azerbaijan to be positive (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/126257.html>).

Andreas Herkel, co-rapporteur of the PACE monitoring commission in Azerbaijan, says that Azerbaijani opposition parties would achieve more by participating in the upcoming presidential elections than by violating them (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/126421.html>).

Geydar Dzhemal, the head of the Islamic Committee of Russia, says that the Kremlin has no plans to promote the restoration of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/126521.html>).

### **III. A Chronology of Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy**

31 August

The first group of OSCE election observers arrives in Baku.

30 August

Azerbaijan Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets his Turkish counterpart Ali Babacan in Ankara and the two announce that they have a common position on Ankara's proposal for new security arrangements in the Caucasus (<http://www.anspress.com/nid86055.html>).

Sheikh ul-Islam Haji Allahshukur Pashazade discusses the situation in Georgia with spiritual leaders there and in the Russian Federation via telephone.

29 August

Azerbaijanis demonstrate in front of the Russian Embassy in Baku to demand that Moscow withdraw its troops from Georgia.

Veronica Kotek, the special representative of the OSCE Secretary General in Azerbaijan, expresses the hope that Azerbaijan's upcoming presidential elections will be free and fair.

27 August

President Ilham Aliyev receives Michai Rezvan Unguryanu, the head of the Romanian foreign intelligence service.

Vasily Istratov, Russian Federation ambassador in Baku, says that the events in Georgia do not have any effect on Moscow's respect for and commitment to the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.

26 August

President Ilham Aliyev receives Stephan Goris, the honorary president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the European Union.

The Council of Europe holds a conference in Baku on "Media and Elections: The Democratic Responsibilities of the Media" (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=85602>).

25 August

President Ilham Aliyev receives U.S. Senator Richard Lugar.

Azerbaijan Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that Baku is vitally interested in ensuring the security of energy transit corridors ([http://www.day.az/view\\_day.php?date=2008-8-20](http://www.day.az/view_day.php?date=2008-8-20)).

Azerbaijan's foreign ministry reiterates its support for the territorial integrity of the Republic of Georgia ([www.ans.az/index.php?nid=85489](http://www.ans.az/index.php?nid=85489)).

23 August

The Congress of Azerbaijanis of the World announces plan to open an office in Daghestan (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=85320>).

22 August

Azerbaijani foreign minister dismisses concerns expressed in the European Parliament that Moscow will try the same strategy it has used in Georgia against Azerbaijan with regard to Karabakh ([http://www.echo-az.info/archive/2008\\_08/1876/politica01.shtml](http://www.echo-az.info/archive/2008_08/1876/politica01.shtml)).

21 August

President Ilham Aliyev receives Romanian President Traian Basescu at the conclusion of his visit to Baku.

The Center for Azerbaijani Culture in Tbilisi organizes a demonstration to protest the presence of Russian troops in Georgia (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=85146>).

The Venetian Commission expresses the hope that Azerbaijan will fulfill its commitments to meet the commission's standards on elections and referenda (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=85118>).

20 August

During the course of a meeting with visiting Turkish Prime Minister Recep Erdogan, President Ilham Aliyev reiterates Azerbaijan's support for the territorial integrity of Georgia. The two also discuss other regional security matters (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=85008>).

A group of Azerbaijani parliamentarians travels to Los Angeles to meet with government and community leaders ([http://www.echo-az.info/archive/2008\\_08/1874/politica04.shtml](http://www.echo-az.info/archive/2008_08/1874/politica04.shtml)).

19 August

President Ilham Aliyev receives outgoing Egyptian Ambassador Achmed al-Shaqawi (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=84858>).

Despite media reports to the contrary, Baku officials say that crossing points on the Azerbaijani-Russian border are operating normally (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=84768>).

18 August

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Erdogan arrives in Baku for a three day visit.

The United States embassy in Baku condemns the attack on the Abu Bakr mosque in the Azerbaijani capital.

U.S. Ambassador to Baku Anne Derse says that Moscow's actions in Georgia threaten not only that country but the development of all the countries of the region (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/127900.html>).

#### 16 August

Parliamentarian Sabir Rustamkhanli, the vice president of the Congress of Azerbaijanis of the World, says that Iran violates the rights of ethnic Azerbaijanis more often than any other country ([http://www.echo-az.info/archive/2008\\_08/1872/politica01.shtml](http://www.echo-az.info/archive/2008_08/1872/politica01.shtml)).

Azerbaijanis in Georgia take part in a general demonstration against the actions of Russian forces there.

David Harris, the executive director of the American Jewish Committee, says in Baku that his organization will work to secure the repeal of Section 907 which restricts U.S. assistance to Azerbaijan (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=84528>).

Vladimir Socor, an analyst at Washington's Jamestown Foundation, says that there will never be a settlement of the Karabakh dispute if Moscow has its way (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/127745.html>).

#### 15 August

President Ilham Aliyev receives David Harris, the executive director of the Jewish Committee of the United States.

Azerbaijan dispatches humanitarian aid to Georgia via land ([http://www.1news.az/articles.php?item\\_id=20080815063957092&sec\\_id=2](http://www.1news.az/articles.php?item_id=20080815063957092&sec_id=2)).

Azerbaijani leaders in Georgia say that no ethnic Azerbaijanis have died as a result of the clashes between Russian and Georgian forces there although some have been injured (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/127639.html>).

Ilgar Gadzhiyev, an official of the All-Russian Azerbaijani Congress, says that he does not believe there has been an increase in xenophobia against ethnic minorities, including Azerbaijanis, as a result of the events in Georgia (<http://www.day.az/news/society/127706.html>).

#### 14 August

Azerbaijani and Georgian public organizations line up in support of Tbilisi against Russian intervention in Georgia (<http://www.newsazerbaijan.ru/conf/20080814/42438636.html>).

#### 13 August

The Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy conducts a conference on "Azerbaijanis and Americans: How We View One Another" with participants including representatives of leading American news outlets.

#### 12 August

Azerbaijan foreign ministry reiterates its support for the territorial integrity of Georgia but refuses to call Russia the aggressor in the current conflict (<http://www.zerkalo.az/rubric.php?id=35084&dd=12&mo=8&yr=2008>).

A TRACECA official says that military operations in Georgia will have no impact on the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway.

#### 11 August

Azerbaijani police disperse a demonstration in front of the Russian embassy in Baku against Moscow's actions in Georgia. Meanwhile, the Russian embassy refuses to accept a protest petition from Georgians living in Azerbaijan.

Hundreds of foreign citizens leave Georgia by crossing the border by land into Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/127214.html>).

Transit of Azerbaijani goods through the Georgian ports of Poti and Batumi is suspended because of the fighting between Russian and Georgian forces. Meanwhile, Azerbaijan asks Russia to allow the doubling of oil shipments via Baku-Novorossiysk.

Azerbaijan's defense ministry hosts a two-day meeting of international experts on peacekeeping operations.

#### 10 August

Azerbaijan Airlines stops flights to Tbilisi.

Azerbaijanis in Hungary call for withdrawal of both Russian and Georgian forces from the conflict zones.

Beijing hosts an Azerbaijan Day in connection with the Olympic Games.

#### 8 August

President Ilham Aliyev confirms inter-governmental accords with Hungary, Russia, Moldova, and Qatar on a wide variety of issues.

Azerbaijan says none of its citizens or co-ethnics suffered during the bombing of Marneuli in Georgia but urges both Georgians and Russians to resolve their differences without resort to violence but on the basis of full recognition of the territorial integrity of Georgia.

#### 7 August

President Ilham Aliyev leaves for China to take part in the opening ceremonies of the Beijing Olympics.

Azerbaijani experts say that their country will lose more than any other country from the terrorist attack on the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline.

Azerbaijan is acquiring a wide range of military equipment from Israel, according to reports in Jerusalem (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/126796.html>).

Azerbaijan expresses concern about the level of cooperation between the special services of Iran and Armenia ([http://www.echo-az.info/archive/2008\\_08/1865/politica01.shtml](http://www.echo-az.info/archive/2008_08/1865/politica01.shtml)).

#### 6 August

A poll finds that 73 percent of Azerbaijanis think that their culture and values are significantly different than those of Europe (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/126733.html>).

## 5 August

President Ilham Aliyev orders the removal of all posters of himself in parks and squares so as not to violate the country's law on elections.

Iran continues to arrest ethnic Azerbaijanis who call for education in their native language ([http://www.echo-az.info/archive/2008\\_08/1863/politica01.shtml](http://www.echo-az.info/archive/2008_08/1863/politica01.shtml)).

Following a series of fires which Baku says Armenians set near the line of the front, the Azerbaijan ecology ministry announces the creation of a commission to assess the extent of the damages from such fires.

## 4 August

Azerbaijan's foreign ministry says that the status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia should be established by negotiations but on the basis of the principle of maintaining the territorial integrity of the Republic of Georgia.

Pakistani Ambassador to Azerbaijan Abdul Gamid says that his government believes that Nagorno-Karabakh is an inalienable part of Azerbaijan.

Elshad Miralam, a press spokesman for the State Committee for Work with Azerbaijanis Abroad, says that there are now more than 360 Azerbaijani organizations abroad in some 50 countries (<http://www.day.az/news/society/126426.html>).

## 2 August

The New Azerbaijan Party officially nominated incumbent President Ilham Aliyev for re-election. The leaders of most other major parties announce that they will not take part in the vote.

Novruz Mammadov, a foreign policy advisor to President Ilham Aliyev, says that a referendum about the status of Nagorno-Karabakh will be possible only in 15 to 20 years.

## 1 August

Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets his Armenian counterpart Edvard Nalbadyan in Moscow.

Azerbaijan's ambassador to the United States, Yashar Aliyev, wins praise for presentation to Helsinki Commission hearings (<http://www.zerkalo.az/rubric.php?id=34797&dd=1&mo=8&yr=2008>).

An *Echo* commentary questions what is behind Moscow's announcement that it will set up a USAID-type organization for the CIS ([http://www.echo-az.info/archive/2008\\_08/1861/politica08.shtml](http://www.echo-az.info/archive/2008_08/1861/politica08.shtml)).

The Azerbaijani communications ministry announces plans to set up a center to promote security of electronic security as part of its effort to bring Baku's approach into line with Europe's and to protect Internet communications in Azerbaijan.

### **Note to Readers**

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