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TURKEY RETURNS TO A TRANSFORMED TRANSCAUCASUS

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Moscow's use of force in Georgia and Moscow's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia created the sense in many capitals that the situation in the South Caucasus and even further afield had been fundamentally transformed. At the very least, because the rules of the game that had governed international relations there had been called into question and because the relative power of the players had been shifted, many governments decided to explore the limits of the new game by announcing new initiatives or changing their relationships to both those with whom they had been close in the past and those with whom they had a less satisfactory relationship.

No government has sought to exploit this situation more fully than Turkey which in the last two months has signaled its desire to emerge as a regional power

more independent from the West than ever before by announcing its own plan for regional security that calls into question other political and economic arrangements in the region, seeking closer cooperation with the Russian Federation, and perhaps most unexpectedly of all pursuing a rapprochement with Armenia, a neighboring country with which for a variety of reasons, it does not have diplomatic relations.

These steps by Ankara have created genuine excitement not only in Turkey but in the broader region, but it remains to be seen just what an impact they will ultimately have. On the one hand, many of the other actors in the region are not interested in seeing Ankara succeed because its success would represent a defeat for them. And on the other, despite the enormous impact of Russia's actions in Georgia on the region, these moves did not in fact change everything; and the power of geography, history and culture in the South Caucasus as everywhere else may undermine the expectations some have that the region has entered a new era.

It is far too early to draw any final conclusion about Turkey's latest efforts in the South Caucasus, but it is possible to describe some of the elements of the changed calculus in Ankara concerning the region, to discuss the reasons behind its proposal of a new regional security platform and its warming relations with Russia and Armenia, and to identify some of the features of Turkey itself and the region as a whole that have not changed and thus will continue to play a role.

Turkey's New Outlook on the World [1]

The events in Georgia had an especially great impact on Ankara for two reasons. On the one hand, after a long period of focusing more on its domestic difficulties than on foreign policy possibilities, Turkey saw those events as providing it with an opportunity to re-enter the broader geopolitical world. And on the other, because of its disappointment with both the European Union and NATO and because of its role as a major transport route for Caspian basin and West Siberian hydrocarbons regardless of whether they come through or bypass Russia, Turkey was prepared to exploit the dramatically different situation Russia's invasion of Georgia appeared to have created.

For much of the last decade, Turkey has been struggling with the nature of its identity, with political parties and the military fighting over whether it will remain a secular nationalist Turkic state linked in the West to Europe and the United States via NATO and in the East to Azerbaijan, Central Asia and Israel or whether it will become more Islamic and thus more closely involved with the Muslim world of the Arabian peninsula and the Maghreb. Historical tradition, military calculations, and economics drove it in the former direction, but demography and the decline in the influence of outside powers drove it in the latter.

The tilt in the latter direction was exacerbated by Turkey's increasing unhappiness with Europe and the United States. It has become increasingly clear that the European Union does not want to take Turkey in as a member, something that has undercut the secularists in Ankara and led many Turks to think about the other worlds of which they are a part. Among those is the Caucasus as a geographical region and not just its secular Turkic direction as represented by Azerbaijan.

At the same time, Turkey has become increasingly displeased with the United States and NATO. In the early 1990s, Turkey at Washington's behest sought to

promote secular democratic values in the Turkic regions of the former Soviet Union, but it found that it lost influence rather than gained it because it was viewed by many people in these countries as little more than a tool of Washington. Moreover, Ankara was increasingly sensitive to the reality that the United States, despite its constant claims of being the last remaining superpower, was becoming far weaker and less reliable as an ally of Turkey.

And because of the way in which the United States has acted in Iraq, virtually creating after 1991 an independent Kurdish region that served as a beacon for the Kurdish minority of Turkey itself and involving Turkey as a NATO member in ways that have undermined its ability to function in the region, except in concert with the United States and Israel, Turkey is increasingly interested in demonstrating its ability to be an independent actor, linked to Europe and the United States in some respects but capable of defining its place in the world on its own rather than allowing either of those power centers to do so.

Russia's moves in Georgia, an indication that Moscow too has concluded that it can act against both Europe and the United States and get away with it, gave Ankara an opportunity to act on many of the ideas its leaders had been thinking about for some years and to advance a claim, by taking actions with regard to the Russian Federation and the Republic of Armenia that most people had assumed up to then were unthinkable, even impossible, that it is now more than at any time in the last century the master of its own fate.

Three Remarkable Initiatives

Over the last two months, Turkey has pursued three remarkable policies in the Caucasus, all of which share three common characteristics. First, they have been under discussion in Ankara for years and have important roots in domestic changes that have taken place in Turkey over the last 15 years. Second, these policies involve steps that most other countries in the region or with interests there had assumed were impossible. And third, they not only fly in the face of certain geographic, cultural and political realities but are already facing difficulties, not only because other governments are moving to counter them but also because Turkey lacks either the resources or the political consensus to implement on its own.

A Regional Security Initiative. Less than ten days after the Russians moved into Georgia, Turkey presented its plan for the creation of a Platform for Stability and Cooperation in the Caucasus, a grouping that would in the minds of Ankara bring together a new set of countries into a single organization and thus offer new possibilities for stability, the *sine qua non* of Turkey's interest in the region given its desire to increase its influence and to profit from the flow of hydrocarbons outward.

Many analysts around the world were shocked by this independent action, but they should not have been. Turkish leaders from the early 1990s had been discussing it in public, and it assumed its final shape shortly after the Europeans adopted a similar Pact of Stability for South Eastern Europe, an EU measure designed to promote regional cooperation, on the one hand, and the influence of the EU in that region on the other.

But until Russia changed the game by its move in Georgia, Turkey had no chance to push this idea very far forward. Too many countries were either skeptical or opposed, including not unimportantly Russia, Azerbaijan and the United States,

each of which had its own reasons for thinking that such an entity would either get in the way of its own specific agenda or allow one of its geopolitical opponents to gain the upper hand. None of them viewed it as a measure that could allow Turkey to become a leading power in the region, even though that is clearly what Ankara hoped for.

After some initial enthusiasm from Russia, Ankara has had to face the fact that few of the other players in the region are all that pleased with the idea. And consequently, it appears likely to become, like many other institutions in the Caucasus, a subject of long if not especially intense conversation but little if any real action.

Rapprochement with the Russian Federation. [2] Turkey's rapprochement with the Russian Federation has been taking place since the early 1990s. Money coming in from massive Russian tourism, the Blue Stream gas project, and other Russian investments, on the one hand, and Russia's withdrawal of support for the Kurds and the absence of Russian criticism of Turkey's domestic behavior, on the other, have transformed Russia in the minds of most Turkish policy-makers from an enemy to a partner far more than many in the Caucasus, the West or even in Moscow appear to have recognized.

All of these things came together in August and September of this year during and immediately after the Georgian conflict when Moscow showed particular solicitude to Turkey, with repeated visits in both directions by senior officials highlighting that Ankara and Moscow were now going to publicly proclaim what had earlier been only a diplomatic nicety that they were partners, with both far more interested in stability and business rather than change and democracy.

But there are clear limits to this rapprochement. On the one hand, many Turks remain deeply suspicious of Russian intentions and interested in expanding Ankara's influence in the Turkic portion of what Moscow continues to call its "near abroad." And on the other, however much Moscow and Ankara may agree on the principle of the inviolability of borders, they are at odds both because of Moscow's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and because of Moscow's support for Yerevan and Armenia's occupation of Karabakh and adjoining territories in Azerbaijan. If Moscow were to change its position on that conflict, a true Turkish-Russian rapprochement might be possible; but until it does, there are severe limits on the relationship, however much warmer it is now than in the past.

Toward a New Relationship with Armenia. Until September 6, when Turkish President Abdulla Gul went to Yerevan to attend a football match, hostility toward Armenia appeared to be a central tenet of Turkish thinking. First of all, Armenians insist that Turkey recognize that the 1915 events in Turkey were genocide, something Turkey strongly rejects. Second, Turkey not only broke relations but has maintained a formal economic blockade of Armenia because of the Karabakh conflict. And third, the political elites of both countries have found it useful to point to the existence of the other to justify mobilization and to distract attention from problems at home.

Despite those factors, there had in fact been movement in this relationship long before the Georgian events. First, it has become increasingly clear that Yerevan is less obsessed with the 1915 question than is the Armenian diaspora for whom it is an existential issue, and an increasing number of Turks have been moving toward

the kind of language the Armenian government if not the diaspora could accept. Second, while there is a formal blockade, Armenia and Turkey do a great deal of business across their common border. They would do more if the border were regularized and open, and thus there are groups in both countries pushing for that. And third, the elites in both now have other "others" they can point to for their domestic political needs.

Consequently, while it was certainly dramatic, Gul's visit to Yerevan and the progress that points to in overcoming this rift should not have been as surprising as they were to so many. But at the same time, it is clear that this relationship is not going to be normal or warm anytime soon. Gul did invite his Armenian counterpart to come to Turkey for a return football match – but only to one that will take place in November 2009. And significant progress on Karabakh seems unlikely, especially since Yerevan's main foreign supporter – Moscow – does not so much want a resolution as a continuation of the current status quo.

The Limits of Change [3]

Thus, in all three cases, the amount of progress that the Georgian events contributed to in Turkey's re-orientation has been relatively small. That too should not have surprised anyone. The geography of the region has not changed, Turkey's concerns about Turkishness and territorial integrity remain in place, and other players like the Europeans and the Americans, however much their power may have declined in the eyes of Turkey and others, still matter a great deal.

Moreover, as so often happens when a country attempts to make a breakthrough to the next level of a geopolitical game, Turkey finds itself in a position where it lacks the resources to pursue its own goals to the end by itself and thus may be exploited by those it hopes to cooperate with in ways it does not want. Thus, for example, Moscow welcomes the idea of a Russian-Turkish reaffirmation of the Kars Treaty of 1920 but for very different reasons than Ankara does. Ankara wants that as a measure of its success as a player; Moscow wants it to put pressure on Tbilisi to restore Ajarian autonomy and thus give the Russian government another lever on the Georgian government.

Consequently, it is very likely that six months or so from now, the various governments in the South Caucasus will look back on this remarkable period in much the same way many observers did on the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991. At the time that event happened, almost everyone assumed that the world had entered an entirely new era, but soon it became clear that the new era was not as different from the old one as they had thought.

That pattern was captured in a metaphor that applies to the current case as well. It was said in the early 1990s, that 1991 in Eurasia resembled a huge tree in which an enormous flock of birds was resting. When a gun went off, all the birds rose from the tree in fright, leaving it a very different place. But as the sound of the gun dissipated, the birds began to settle back down, most if not all of them on the same branches they had been sitting on only a short time ago.

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Notes

[1] This section draws on Mamayev (2008) and Davletov (2008).

[2] On these points, see, among others, Serenko (2008a) and Serenko (2008b).

[3] For a more extended discussion of these issues, see Çelikpala (2008).

RUSSIA'S USE OF THE MONTREUX CONVENTION AS A FACTOR IN ITS NEW POLICY TOWARD TURKEY

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In the wake of the Russian-Georgian hostilities over the territory of South Ossetia, NATO in order to demonstrate its growing presence in the Black Sea and express support to Georgia, a potential NATO member, sent a small flotilla of warships through the Turkish Straits in the late August. According to a Turkish official, "The Americans are politically backing Georgia. This may have been a flag show off which is quite normal in international relations." The flotilla included three American warships and support vessels from Spain, Germany and Poland.

The Turkish Straits, comprising Dardanelles, the Sea of Marmora and the Bosphorus, are in Turkey's territorial waters. As the sovereign over the Straits,

Turkey is entrusted by the international community with regulation of the traffic of merchant and naval ships through them. The Montreux Convention of 1936 provides the legal basis in the international law for the passage through the Turkish Straits of warships of the non-Black Sea states, and it limits the number of non-Black Sea countries' warships passing through the Straits during the peacetime. Only light and support naval ships are allowed to pass through the Straits during peacetime with the tonnage less than 15 thousand tons, and their number not exceeding nine vessels. The Turkish government must be given 15-day notice of the transit.

According to the Montreux Convention, only the Black Sea states have the right to transit their naval capital ships escorted by no more than two minesweepers, or submarines passing after surfacing; they require 8-day notification. Thus, the size, number, armament and period of stay of vessels of non-Black Sea states were greatly limited under the Convention, both in passage through the Straits and in the Black Sea. On the other hand, the passage of warships is allowed if, under the Covenant obligations, they were proceeding to the aid of an attacked nation. On September 3, the United States released the information that the USS Mount Whitney would arrive in Georgia to deliver 17 tons of humanitarian goods, including blankets, fruit juice, dry milk and hygienic supplies. On the 4th of September, the USS Mount Whitney made a controversial landing at the Georgian port of Poti. The arrival of the USS Mount Whitney, a flagship of the 6th Fleet in the Mediterranean, came as Moscow accused Turkey of breaching the Montreux Convention. American government claimed that the goal of the US Navy flagship's visit to the Georgian port is to deliver humanitarian aid to Georgia, which suffers from the Russian military intervention, the goal in accord with the Montreux Convention. To the Russians' chagrin, on the same day, after meeting President Saakashvili, Vice President Cheney assured the Georgian government that Georgia would join the NATO alliance in the near future.

The Russian authorities tried to create a perception that the Americans were breaching the Convention by claiming that USS Mount Whitney might be delivering military supplies to Georgia. On September 5, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation official Andrey Nesterenko stated that Russia lacked trust in the American declarations about the avowed goal of delivering humanitarian aid by the USS Mount Whitney. Unnamed sources in the Russian media claimed that heavy equipment or, even, weapons might be on board of the American ship and requested to conduct a search of its cargo. The Russian official described the USS Mount Whitney as "the flagship of the US 6th Fleet, which is equipped with the command and control, intelligence capabilities, that allows it command a fleet or squadron." He concluded that Russian authorities have questioned the legality of the entry of the USS Mount Whitney and a possibility of the breach of the Montreux Convention. The Russian authorities warned that the possible violations of the Montreux Convention will be reported to the United Nations and other inter-governmental organizations and will be open for deliberations. Nesterenko emphasized that "if there is a breach of the convention, then it should become a matter for deliberation in the United Nations and, possibly, other international institutions, because the matter at hand is about the violations of a well-known international agreement and should be the matter of concern for every country that signed this convention." In conclusion, the Russian official said: "We hope that if the facts of a serious violation of the Montreux Convention will be established, appropriate steps will be taken to correct the situation." He added that he did not imply any military actions.

Turkey has critical dependence on imports of natural gas. Natural gas emerges as a strategic resource for this country. In the early 1990s, Turkey has started the process of shifting from oil to natural gas for its energy production and industrial needs. The consumption of natural gas has increased five times in Turkey from 150 billion cubic feet (Bcf) in 1991 to 748 (Bcf) in 2003.

The Russian Blue Stream project even further undermines the long-term Turkish energy independence and security because it locks Russia and Turkey into a symbiotic, but unequal relationship. Russia achieved this through the legal mechanism of the "take-or-pay" provisions of the contract obliging Turkey to pay exorbitant penalty fees for suspension of pumping Russian gas into its distribution system. The agreement to construct the underwater pipeline to deliver Russian gas to Turkey, known as the Blue Stream project, was signed during the Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin's visit to Turkey on 16-17 December, 1997. But by 2003, the Turkish leadership realized its impending dependence on Russia for its natural gas.

Russia has imposed "take-or-pay" provisions on Turkey in the event that the Turkish government fails to purchase contracted gas. According to the provisions, Turkey is not allowed to re-export Russian gas to third parties. Expected heavy financial penalties compel Turkey to re-negotiate the clauses of the contract that ban it from re-exporting natural gas to third countries. But this remains at the discretion of the Russian signatories to the agreement. The Justice and Development (AK) government Energy Minister Hilmi Guler harshly criticized the gas deal concluded by the previous governments. He urged sharp reductions in Turkey's reliance on Russian natural gas. Hilmi Guler declared to the Turkish Parliament in April of 2003 that the AK government had a "strategic goal" to reduce Russian supplied natural gas from 70 percent to 30 percent within five years. As a result of the construction of the Blue Stream project that transports 16 billion cubic meters of natural gas each year, Turkey will be locked into importing 50 percent of its gas from Russia by 2010.

Turkish authorities are therefore concerned that the deterioration of relations with Russia would precipitate an economic crisis in the country. Foreign trade analysts in Turkey are concerned that Russia would declare an energy war against their country as Russia did against Ukraine in the winter of 2006. In January 2006, Russia alarmed the European Union when shipments of gas were halted for several days due to a price dispute with Ukraine. As a result of these events, Russia's reputation as a reliable supplier of energy for Europe diminished. In October 2007, the world's largest producer of natural gas once again threatened to shut off gas supplies to Ukraine over a \$2.2 billion debt.

The deteriorating political climate after the Russian-Georgian military conflict is likely to affect the trade between the two major trade partners, one of them being a NATO member. Russia introduced new restrictions on and harsh customs regulations for imported goods from Turkey. In fact, the imports of the Russian gas are increasing and affect substantially the trade balance the two countries. Turkey's exports to Russia are estimated to be 4.7 billion US dollars, whereas Turkey's imports from Russia reach 23.5 billion dollars annually.

Russia introduced these measures in response to Turkey's consent to let a NATO flotilla pass the Straits into the Black Sea. The increasing tensions between two regional powers might further precipitate the international tensions and Russian refusal to deliver gas or curtail its delivery in the future. Turkey depends on supply

of the key energy resources, natural gas and oil from Russia. Russian imports constitute 60% percent of the gas consumption in Turkey. Turkey can find alternative sources of oil as did some Arab oil-producing countries, but the dependence on Russian gas exposes the weakness in Turkish economy.

As the last war in the Caucasus showed Russia does not have any intention to give up on its strategy of controlling energy resources of the former Soviet Union and using them as a political weapon in relations with its neighbors and the European Union. In particular, Russia is preoccupied about possibility to lose control over energy networks and pipelines for export of oil and natural gas from the Caspian basin. In particular, the BTC pipeline, which transports oil from Azerbaijan through Georgia to the Turkish sea terminal at Ceyhan, suffered a stoppage. As became known, the Turkish section of the pipeline suffered from an explosion allegedly engineered by the Kurdish separatists. Russia again threatened to use the energy weapon against its neighbor and major trade partner Turkey. This action makes even more urgent for Turkey and other Western countries the need to seek energy independence from Russia.

Now Russia seeks any pretext in the international law, including the Montreux Convention, to demonstrate who the main regional power in the region and the final arbiter of all conflicts in the Caucasus is. The Russian Federation cannot exclude NATO from the Black Sea region completely because Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania are the Black Sea states. While the United States tries to assure Turkey that it does intend to undermine the international Convention adopted in 1936, Adm. Michael Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the U.S., told journalists: "We have no plans to change the Montreux Treaty. All the U.S. ships that pass through the straits complied with the treaty and we will continue to do so." The European Union should pursue the unified policy in coordination with Turkey on energy issues, including the construction of the Nabucco project to wean itself from the increasing dependence on the Russian energy supplies.

**MARCH 1918:
A DEFINING MOMENT FOR AZERBAIJAN**

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Editorial Note: The events of March 1918, in which some 30,000 Azerbaijanis died at the hands of the Bolsheviks and the Dashnakcutun, were a defining moment for Azerbaijan. Below is an excerpted version of Dr. Balayev's new archivally based study, "The March Events of 1918 in Azerbaijan" (Moscow: Flinta, 2008).

Until the collapse of the Soviet Union, Azerbaijani historians had few opportunities to launch an objective study into the causes, character and consequences of the events of March 1918. But now, with the archives open and ideological controls lifted, it is possible to do so and thus dispel some of the myths that have surrounded those events which cost the lives of 30,000 Azerbaijanis.

To understand these events, it is critical to remember that Azerbaijani national forces led by the Musavat Party were calling for national-territorial autonomy within Soviet Russia, an appeal that for all their differences both the Armenian Dashnaks and the Bolshevik Party were completely against.

For the Dashnaks, the establishment of an Azerbaijani autonomous formation would contradict their geo-strategic interests. The leaders of the Dashnaktcutun party believed that the historically Azerbaijani lands in the Transcaucasus, including the territory of Baku and Elisavetpol (Ganja) gubernia should be included within the so-called "Greater Armenia" which was to extend "from sea to sea" and have an entirely Armenian population.

For the Bolsheviks, the creation of an Azerbaijani entity would create a major obstacle to the extension of Moscow's rule across not only Azerbaijani areas but the entire Transcaucasus. Moreover, their ideology based on the ideas of class struggle considered the national program of the Musavatists as a factor which was disorganizing and disorienting the toiling masses.

Thus it was no accident that the completely justified demand of Musavat for an Azerbaijani national-territorial autonomy was described by Stepan Shaumyan, who was both an Armenian and a Bolshevik as "the dream of Azerbaijani nationalists" to make Baku "the capital of an Azerbaijani khanate." He considered that any manifestation of nationalism as something that could not but lead to tragedy for the working class.

Thus, the March events of 1918 reflected the basic division between the Bolshevik-Dashnak alliance, on the one hand, and the Musavat Party, on the other.

Not surprisingly, the conflict between these two forces began in Baku. First, as M.E. Rasolzade (1990, p. 33) has stressed, "Baku was the center of the Azerbaijani national movement," in the destruction of which both the Dashnaks and the Bolsheviks had an interest. Second, the oil fields in and around Baku were a prize that both these opponents of the Azerbaijani national movement wanted to have for themselves. And third, the Bolsheviks in particular viewed the city as a jumping off point for the spread of their power throughout the Transcaucasus. Indeed, they believed that the question of the life and death of Bolshevik power in that region would be decided.

The March events were triggered by the incident with the steamship "Evelina," on which the soldiers and officers of the Azerbaijani cavalry regiment led by general Talyshinski arrived in Baku from Lankaran on March 15 (27) to attend the funeral of their fellow-soldier Mamed Tagiyev and were not subsequently allowed to sail back by the Bolsheviks who demanded that they disarm, which they did early in the morning of March 18 (30). Given the presence in Baku of thousands of armed Armenian units, the Azerbaijani population protested demanding the return of the seized arms or a similar disarmament of Armenian formations. Though the negotiations that followed on the same day between the Musavat leader Rasolzade and the leader of the Baku Council Shaumyan resulted in the preliminary agreement on the return of the seized arms to the Azerbaijani soldiers, the subsequent events showed that the Bolsheviks intended this simply as a feint to keep the Azerbaijani national movement from taking any preemptive action against the representatives of the Moscow party.

At the very moment on March 18 (30) when the Azerbaijani leaders appeared at the Baku Council to settle the details of the agreed-upon arrangement, word came that a cavalry detachment of the Red Army had been attacked on the city's Shemakha Street. Invoking this incident as a justification, the Dashnaks and the Bolsheviks broke off talks and ignored all appeals by the Azerbaijani side on the need to continue consultations in order to avoid a serious bloodletting.

Unfortunately, that appears exactly what those two organizations wanted, and they attacked not only Azerbaijani leaders and organizations but members of the civil population as well. The result was a disaster. Unlike in 1905-06 when in various regions of the Transcaucasus took place armed clashes between unorganized Azerbaijani and unorganized Armenian groups, this time around, the battle was between unorganized Azerbaijanis and regular Armenian military units supported by those of the Bolsheviks.

The pogrom continued for three days, and it was only in the morning of March 21 (April 2) that the leadership of the Baku Council finally agreed to a ceasefire. But despite that formal accord with Azerbaijani leaders, the killing of Azerbaijanis and the destruction of Azerbaijani property continued until March 24 (April 5). During that period, more than 12,000 Azerbaijanis lost their lives in Baku, and another 18,000 lost them in clashes outside the city.

The Dashnak and Armenian Bolshevik detachments behaved with extreme brutality. They did not permit the Azerbaijanis even to bury their murdered relatives and friends, despite the requirements of Muslim law that this be done on the same day as the death took place. According to witnesses, after the end of the bloody action on the streets of Baku there lay hundreds of bodies of Azerbaijanis that had been disfigured by their murders. The Dashnaks and Armenian Bolsheviks did not limit their violence to adult males and killed many women and children as well.

As a result, the armed action which was launched under the pretext of a struggle with the Musavat party in fact rapidly took the form of an intentional destruction of the peaceful Azerbaijani population of the city and surrounding villages. As the newspaper *Azerbaijan* put it at the time, "questions of class struggle" which the Bolsheviks talked so much about "took a back seat, and the struggle is now not among classes but with the Azerbaijani Turks, and on a social, but rather on a national or even religious basis." [1]

Beyond any question, however, no one should accuse the entire Armenian population of Baku for the crimes committed in the course of these events against the Azerbaijanis there. In certain cases, Azerbaijanis were saved from death precisely by their Armenian neighbors and friends even though the latter did so at a risk to their own lives. But at the same time, it is clearly the case that a large part of the Armenian community of the city had become hostages of the Bolshevik-Dashnak leaders and followed them against the Azerbaijanis.

Subsequent events in the region showed that the mass destruction of peaceful Azerbaijanis in Baku and its surrounding villages by the Bolsheviks and Dashnaks was only a prelude to a broader operation to displace the Azerbaijanis from lands that had been theirs from time immemorial. At the very lead, during this period, the Baku Council strove to reduce as much as possible the Azerbaijani population in Baku and Elisavetpol gubernias.

Moreover, it was precisely in the wake of these events, that Bolshevik leaders seriously considered plans to take Baku and several neighboring regions away from Azerbaijan and include them within the Russian Federation. The Bolsheviks even prepared documents to provide an ideological justification of such an action.

Joseph Stalin, the Bolshevik's leading specialist on the nationality question, said that in economic terms, Baku's oil region had nothing in common with the rest of Azerbaijan, a view that was then echoed by Shaumyan and other Armenian and Bolshevik leaders in the Baku Council and by the Dashnaks more generally because such an arrangement would allow them to expand Armenia significantly.

But nothing came of that or of plans by the Bolsheviks and Dashnaks to reduce the Azerbaijani share of the population in the region. They did not succeed in decapitating the Azerbaijani national movement, and despite the blood shed at that time, Bolshevik leaders later said that they had "pursued with insufficient energy" the Musavatists on whom they placed all the blame for the March events.

These events, however, did have a major impact on the thinking of Azerbaijanis. They destroyed what authority the Bolsheviks had among Azerbaijanis and strengthened the social base of the national forces led by the Musavat Party. In addition and despite all the suffering, the March 1918 events contributed to the consolidation of the Azerbaijan national movement and even the Azerbaijani nation, a development that provided the foundation for the emergence of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan shortly thereafter and the recovery of Azerbaijani independence in 1991.

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Note

[1] *Azerbaijan* newspaper (in Azerbaijani), 1918, December 8.

A CHRONOLOGY OF AZERBAIJAN'S FOREIGN POLICY

I. Key Government Statements on Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

President Ilham Aliyev says that as long as Armenia is in occupation of any Azerbaijani territory, Baku will continue its policy of promoting the "total" isolation of Yerevan in diplomatic, political, economic, transportation, military, propaganda and other spheres. "Until the resolution of [the Karabakh] question, no cooperation with Armenia is possible nor is its participation in any regional project. And we will do everything possible in order that the current situation will continue." The Azerbaijan leader adds that the Karabakh dispute can only be solved on the basis of the

recognition by all parties of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/133129.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev says that “the financial crisis which is observed in the world has not had an impact on Azerbaijan” as a result of the country’s policies of diversifying the economy (<http://www.day.az/news/economy/133136.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that “the step-by-step resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will create the conditions for effective cooperation.” He stresses that the conflict can be resolved by peaceful means, on the basis of international principles including the recognition of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132492.html>).

II. Key Statements by Others about Azerbaijan

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov says that he is not familiar with declarations by the Azerbaijani foreign ministry that Baku supports the territorial integrity of the Republic of Georgia. He adds that Baku is a very important strategic partner for Russia (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132184.html>).

U.S. Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte says that “we recognize the territorial integrity and independence of Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia. For that reason, the United States more than ever wants a resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict by peaceful means ... on the basis of territorial integrity and considering other international principles.” He also expresses Washington’s gratitude for Azerbaijan’s contribution to the peacekeeping forces in Afghanistan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132128.html>).

Russian Vice Prime Minister Viktor Zubkov says at a summit of the Caspian basin states in Astrakhan that reaching agreement on “a new legal status for the Caspian” will create conditions for the large-scale exploration of hydrocarbon resources (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132237.html>).

Matthew Bryza, U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state and co-chair of the Minsk Group, says in a BBC interview that “the United States considers that the resolution of the Karabakh question must be based on the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.” He adds that “it is necessary to begin with [this] principle” even though “we know that Yerevan has a different position, and we must use creative and constructive approach so that Azerbaijan and Armenia will find a common language” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132778.html>).

III. A Chronology of Azerbaijan’s Foreign Policy

15 October

Azerbaijan hold presidential elections; Ilham Aliyev re-elected with 88,73 percent of the vote.

13 October

Matthew Bryza, U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state and co-chair of the Minsk Group, says that the United States hopes that "the next step" after the Bishkek meeting of the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan will be a meeting of the presidents of the two countries (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/133149.html>).

12 October

A special committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe arrives in Baku to observe the elections (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/133032.html>).

11 October

Fikret Sadykhov, a professor at Baku's Western University, says that the distribution of Russian passports in the northern part of Azerbaijan is worrisome, especially after Moscow invoked the presence of Russian citizens in Abkhazia and South Ossetia to justify its intervention there (http://www.echo-az.info/archive/2008_10/1909/politica04.shtml).

Even though Georgia has left the Commonwealth of Independent States, its GUAM partners, Moldova and Ukraine, have assumed key positions in that organization, leading some Azerbaijanis to suggest that as a result of the changes, "GUAM Heads the CIS" (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=91151>).

Igor Panarin, the dean of the international relations faculty of the Russian Foreign Ministry's Diplomatic Academy, says that the recent conflict in Georgia has strengthened the position of Russia in the South Caucasus and increased the activities there of other powers, including the United States, Iran and Turkey, as a result (http://www.echo-az.info/archive/2008_10/1909/politica03.shtml).

10 October

President Ilham Aliyev receives the national security advisor of the president of Poland, Vladislav Stasiak, to discuss expanding cooperation between Baku and Warsaw in the security area (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132890.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets with his Russian and Armenian counterparts, Sergey Lavrov and Eduard Nalbandyan, on the sidelines of the foreign ministers' meeting of the Commonwealth of Independent States in Bishkek (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132865.html>).

The Central Asian and Caucasus Institute of Johns Hopkins University hosts a roundtable on "Azerbaijan's Forthcoming Presidential Elections in the Context of National and Regional Developments" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132608.html>).

9 October

President Ilham Aliyev expresses his sympathy to President Abdullah Gul after a series of terrorist attacks in Turkey (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=91103>).

Prime Minister Artur Rasizade leaves for the CIS summit in Bishkek (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132786.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov says in Brussels that Azerbaijan does not consider the European Union to be able to play the role of intermediary in peace talks in the South Caucasus, and he rejects the idea that the EU might become "a partner" within the Minsk Group (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132758.html>).

8 October

President Ilham Aliyev says that Azerbaijan has already been transformed into a major transportation corridor as a result of the efforts of his father, the late President Heydar Aliyev (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=90960>).

7 October

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives Cripsin Gray-Johnson, the Gambia's state secretary for higher education, science and technology, who says that he is visiting Azerbaijan to learn from Baku's successes in the energy sector (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132549.html>).

Gusein Baguirov, Azerbaijan's minister of ecology and natural resources, says that Armenians in occupation of parts of Azerbaijan are intentionally using the Terter River in ways that harm residents of the adjoining regions (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132538.html>).

The Azerbaijani foreign ministry says that "Azerbaijan in any case will invest in Nagorno-Karabakh which is an inalienable part of our country" but not because Yerevan has suggested it (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132532.html>).

6 October

President Ilham Aliyev receives Peter Semneby, the special representative of the European Union for the South Caucasus. Semneby also meets with the other candidates for president of Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132369.html> and <http://www.day.az/news/politics/132426.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives participants of the fourth conference of ministers of higher education of Islamic countries and says that such meetings increase the solidarity of this group of states (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=90721>).

4 October

U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan Ann Derse says that "the basic goal of the visit of Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte was to convey a message from President Bush and Secretary Condoleezza Rice that the United States has a serious interest in building stronger relations with Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132285.html>).

3 October

President Ilham Aliyev receives the letter of credence from Ionannis Metaxas, the newly arrived ambassador from Greece (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132180.html>).

2 October

President Ilham Aliyev receives U.S. Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte to discuss both economic development and security cooperation (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132053.html>).

Azerbaijan's parliament indicates that it will increase the size of the country's peacekeeping contingent in Afghanistan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132066.html>).

Note to Readers

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