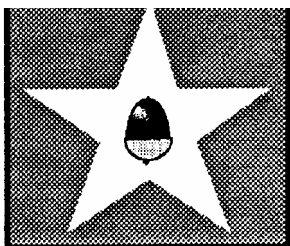


Conflict Studies Research Centre

Influences in the South Caucasus:
Opposition & Convergence
in Axes of Cooperation

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Key Points

- It is too simplistic to see relationships in the Caucasus as only North-South (Armenia-Russia) or East-West (Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey and the USA) orientated.
- Axes of cooperation are quite flexible: on the one hand, Armenia is also willing to normalise relations with Turkey and is diversifying cooperation with the USA; on the other hand, Azerbaijan's and Georgia's relations with Russia have noticeably improved.
- Partnerships are constrained by:
 - unresolved conflicts,
 - trade, energy and security dependencies,
 - and power relationships at the international level.

Abstract

In terms of foreign policy, the priorities set up by the leaders of the South Caucasian republics are often represented as dividing the region into two directions. The North-South axis is the one linking Armenia with Russia and Iran, while the East-West axis ties Azerbaijan and Georgia to Turkey and the United States. If this representation faithfully describes the major trends of regional policies, it is not, however, a constant and an exclusive one. Over the past years, the axes of cooperation have turned out to be quite flexible. Yerevan is indeed trying to develop relations with Ankara and Washington. As for the ties between Baku and Tbilisi on the one hand and Moscow on the other hand, they tend to be strengthened as well. Proceeding from constraint rather than from a sense of common values, the harmonisation of the foreign partnerships of the South-Caucasian republics is, however, still uncertain.

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"A people whose position leaves it with no choice but trade or war is bound to be weak; it depends on its neighbours and is at the mercy of events; its existence can only ever be an uncertain one ...".

Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, 1762, Book II, Chapter X

Frequently considered from the perspective of foreign hegemonic powers, external influences in the South Caucasus are also resulting from local "calls for empire".¹ Since the break-up of the Soviet Union, the leaders of the independent republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia have effectively linked the survival of their states to the intervention of regional powers (Russia, Turkey or Iran), the United States and Europe. Faced to varying degrees with similar domestic problems - territorial conflicts, poverty, lack of political legitimacy, weak armies - they have developed foreign policies which all have the same objective: to consolidate the state on the basis of economic, political and military aid from foreign powers.²

However, in making their calls for influence, the Armenian, Azerbaijani and Georgian leaders have chosen different directions and partners among foreign powers. Largely determined by the alliances that crystallised at the time of the conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the international partnerships established by the Caucasian republics have often been presented as dividing the region into two axes: a North-South axis, linking Armenia to Russia and Iran, and an East-West axis, linking Azerbaijan and Georgia to Turkey and the United States.³ Although this is a fair reflection of trends in the South Caucasus, recent changes and some flexibility in the opposition between the two axes of cooperation should not be overlooked. This paper deals mainly with events before the leadership changes in Azerbaijan and Georgia in autumn 2003. But the trends it highlights have gained significant momentum in the last few months.

External Influences & Polarisation of the Axes of Cooperation

Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia have originally based the main orientations of their foreign policy on the geopolitical and economic realities which materialised after independence and the armed conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and South Ossetia.⁴ In many respects, these orientations still appear today to revolve on two axes, the North-South axis and the East-West axis.

The North-South Axis: Armenia - Russia - Iran

Despite its wish to establish links with all the regional powers, Armenia has failed to normalise its relations with Turkey. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which is

pitting Armenia against Azerbaijan, is one of the main sources of tension between the two states. After the escalation of military operations and Armenia's victories over Azerbaijan in 1993, the Turkish government decided to suspend all diplomatic and economic relations with the Armenian government. It is laying down the withdrawal of the Armenian forces occupying the territory of Azerbaijan as a condition for opening up its borders with Armenia. Faced with this situation, the Armenian foreign minister, Vartan Oskanian, called upon the Turkish authorities to separate their relations with Azerbaijan from those with Armenia.⁵ Moreover the Turkish government is disputing the references made in Armenia's Declaration of Independence to the need for "international recognition of the Armenian genocide in Ottoman Turkey and Western Armenia".⁶ Rejecting these "accusations", Turkish leaders are demanding that their Armenian counterparts waive all claims in this connection before considering any reconciliation process. Even if he is not defining any first steps towards initiating dialogue with Ankara, Armenia's President Robert Kocharian is keeping the acknowledgement of the Armenian genocide "on Armenia's foreign policy agenda".⁷ Yerevan considers it is essential to settle the genocide question if a climate of trust is ever to be established between Armenia and Turkey.⁸

The poor state of relations with Turkey has been a major factor of Armenia's establishing a close military partnership with Russia, with whom it feels it has common security interests in the Caucasus. After signing the Alma-Ata declaration on 21 December 1991, Armenia was the first state in the region to join the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). On 15 May 1992, it signed the CIS Collective Security Treaty, including a clause that establishes automatic assistance in the event of aggression against one of its member states.⁹ President Kocharian is still regarding the treaty as "one of the most important components of the country's security system".¹⁰ On 30 September 1992, Yerevan also concluded an agreement with Moscow on maintaining Russian border guards in Armenia. Accordingly, Russian troops are patrolling alongside Armenian troops on the borders with Turkey and Iran.¹¹ Lastly, under a 25-year agreement signed on 16 March 1995, Armenia and Russia settled the conditions for the stationing of the 102nd Russian military base in the town of Gyumri, located a few kilometres from the border with Turkey. This military cooperation system between Armenia and Russia, disputed by some neighbouring states, especially Azerbaijan, is presented as "factors of stability" by the Armenian defence minister, Serge Sarkisian.¹²

Russia also appears to be Armenia's major economic partner. With only meagre resources of its own, Armenia largely depends on Russia for a range of supplies, particularly natural gas imports. Economic partnership was promoted during the visit to Moscow by the Armenian head of state on 26 September 2000. Under a joint declaration, Robert Kocharian and Vladimir Putin undertook to give "primary importance to the strengthening of mutually advantageous economic cooperation".¹³ Their commitment resulted in the conclusion of a "property-for-debt" agreement, signed on 17 July 2002 and finalised on 5 November 2002. Under this agreement, Armenia decided to transfer to Russia five large state-owned companies, including the Razdan thermoelectric power station,¹⁴ in return for cancellation of its 98 million dollar debt to Moscow. Presented by the authorities as opening vital investment prospects for Armenia's development, this agreement was severely criticised for creating a heavy energy-related dependency on Russia.¹⁵

As Turkey and Azerbaijan are exercising a blockade against Armenia, Iran represents the only option available to Yerevan for diversifying its sources of supply. Iran is in fact Armenia's third trading partner. In the economic field, the main

project discussed since 1992 is the construction of a gas pipeline linking the two countries. This project was partly worked out owing to the possible closure of the Medzamor nuclear power station, and also in view of the political instability in Georgia, which was liable to cut off imports from Russia. Mentioned during President Kocharian's first official visit to Tehran from 25-27 December 2001, the development of the project has made significant progress as concerns the legal and technical frameworks, but its implementation has been postponed because no concrete commitment was made to finance it.¹⁶ In the field of diplomacy, Armenia appreciates Iran's relatively neutral involvement in the mediation process over the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, undertaken by the Minsk Group of the OSCE.

The East-West Axis: Azerbaijan - Georgia - the United States - Turkey

Unlike Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia have strained relations with Russia on several foreign policy issues. Firstly, Azerbaijani leaders protested against the support provided by elements of the Russian army to the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh. They are particularly concerned by the military cooperation between Russia and Armenia. Azerbaijan's foreign minister, Vilayat Guliyev, expressed for example his "discontent" over the redeployment in Armenia of certain Russian units stationed in Georgia.¹⁷ Secondly, as a border state of the Caspian Sea and a producer of gas and oil, Azerbaijan is in competition with Russia over access to export markets and the choice of transportation routes for energy resources. Georgia's interests are also clashing with Russia's over many issues. A major bone of contention between the two states is Russia's policy towards Abkhazia.¹⁸ The negotiations on the withdrawal of the two Russian military bases stationed on the republic's territory are another source of tension.¹⁹ Moreover, Tbilisi has denied Moscow's accusations that it was willing to offer sanctuary to Chechen terrorist militants in the Pankisi Gorge and has condemned the repeated violations of Georgia's airspace by Russian aircraft. Lastly, Georgia has been worried about the pressure put by Russia on the country through periodical cuts in gas supplies.²⁰

Distrusting their Russian counterparts, Azerbaijani and Georgian leaders did not renew their participation in the CIS Collective Security Treaty in April 1999 and prefer to entrust the security of the Caucasus to Euro-Atlantic organisations. Thus Azerbaijan and Georgia are active participants in the military cooperation agencies set up by NATO, in particular the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) and various Partnership for Peace (PfP) programmes.²¹ In 1997, meeting at the summit of heads of state and government of the EAPC in Madrid, Heydar Aliyev and Eduard Shevardnadze called on the Alliance to play an active role in the region.²² Some officials in both Azerbaijan and Georgia would welcome the deployment of NATO troops on the territory of their republic in one form or another. In 1999 Vafa Guluzade, former adviser to the President of Azerbaijan, openly requested that NATO's US military base stationed at Incirlik, Turkey, should be transferred to the Apsheron peninsula in Azerbaijan.²³ The same year, Georgia's foreign minister, Irakli Menagarishvili, urged NATO to help settle the conflict in Abkhazia, as it had in Kosovo.²⁴ Considering NATO's potential contribution to the security of the region, Azerbaijan's and Georgia's leaders also hope to see their countries fully integrated into the Alliance. On 22 November 2002, President Shevardnadze formally declared at the EAPC summit in Prague that "Georgia is determined to be a full member of NATO". President Aliyev said Azerbaijan aspired to "integrational partnership" and intensified dialogue with the Alliance.

Over and above the multilateral cooperative partnerships initiated with NATO-members, Azerbaijan and Georgia are promoting bilateral ties with some of their Euro-Atlantic partners, in particular the United States. Since the terror attacks of

11 September 2001, Washington's relations with Baku and Tbilisi have become much closer. The restrictions imposed on assistance by the US administration to the Azerbaijani government in 1992, much criticised in Baku, were lifted by President Bush on 25 January 2002.²⁵ Since then, Azerbaijan has received military aid from Washington in the form of foreign military financing (FMF) and military training programmes (IMET, *International Military Education and Training*). Enjoying similar programmes, Georgia has become the focus of a special attention by the United States. In response to a pressing request from Tbilisi, the US Department of Defence decided on 27 February 2002 to launch a special military training and equipment programme to help Georgia secure its borders with Russia and control its territory in the Pankisi Gorge.²⁶

In their efforts to reinforce independence from Russia, Azerbaijan and Georgia are also developing major military and, more importantly, economic cooperation projects with Turkey. After deciding to export "early oil" production through the Russian territory, Azerbaijani leaders agreed with their Georgian counterparts to establish a close energy partnership with Turkey. Meeting in Ankara on 29 October 1998, they voiced their determination to build a main export pipeline from the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean Sea, called the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline. The construction of this Turkish line, supported by Washington, was officially started in Baku on 18 September 2002 in the presence of Heydar Aliyev and Eduard Shevardnadze. The Azerbaijani President took the opportunity to stress the "political importance" of the project, whose implementation could be, in his opinion, "a guarantor of peace, security and stability in the Caucasus region". The Georgian President described the construction of the pipeline as "Georgia's greatest achievement since the reestablishment of its independence".²⁷ With a similar end in view, there are also plans to build a gas pipeline alongside the BTC oil pipeline to enable Azerbaijan to export its gas production to Turkey (from Baku to Erzerum via Tbilisi).

From Opposition to Convergence of the Axes of Cooperation

Reflecting the different foreign policy orientations defined by the leaders of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, the opposition of a North-South axis to an East-West axis in the South Caucasus is, however, neither constant nor exclusive. Just as geopolitical and economic realities change, so too do the axes of cooperation diversify to become more flexible. Thus, a "provisional stability" characterises the power relations that shape international cooperation in the Caucasus.²⁸

Signs of & Potential for Armenia's Integration in the East-West Axis

For several years, Armenian authorities have presented Armenia's foreign policy as founded on the notion of "complementarity".²⁹ They are, consequently, developing their relations with the United States. Yerevan aims at nurturing its links with this member of the Minsk Group, also a major supplier of aid to the republic.³⁰ Since 2002, Armenia, like Azerbaijan, has entered into military cooperation with the United States. Financing and training programmes include the supply of communication equipments to the Armenian army and the creation of a mine clearance centre near Yerevan. Although relations between Yerevan and Washington are diversifying, the Armenian Defence Minister is still cautious in defining the scope of this development where military issues are concerned. During his visit to Washington on 25 March 2002, he stated that "the United States does not aim at replacing Russian troops or Russia's role in Armenia. It just aims at supplementing them".³¹

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Within the framework of its balance of power policy, Yerevan is broadening cooperation with NATO. After joining the Partnership for Peace in 1994, Armenia hosted the joint military exercises of the PfP on its own territory for the first time from 16-27 June 2003. Unprecedented in the history of PfP exercises, the participation of Russian troops in this event was part of the concept of "complementarity" advocated by Armenian leaders. However, having closely linked its security interests to the Collective Security Treaty Organisation of the CIS, Armenia has no plans to develop its partnership with a view to joining NATO. "Membership in the Alliance has never been on our foreign policy agenda," Serge Sarkisian explicitly stated in an interview given to the Russian press.³²

The status of relations between Armenia and Turkey has been widely discussed in Yerevan. On several occasions, the Armenian foreign minister has presented the geopolitical realities that are prompting the settlement of disputes between the two countries.³³ As neighbouring states belonging to the same region, both Armenia and Turkey have vested interests in engaging in a dialogue.³⁴ The international community, notably the United States, is also calling the parties to normalise their relations. Yerevan is particularly interested in opening up economic borders with Turkey. According to Armenia's foreign minister, the development of direct commercial exchanges could only be "beneficial" for the whole region.³⁵ It could especially enable Armenia to reduce import costs for Turkish products by avoiding transit through Georgia. So plans are occasionally put forward to open up lines of communication between the two countries, such as the railway line linking Gyumri in Armenia to Kars in Turkey. But despite private initiatives aimed at promoting a Turkish-Armenian rapprochement,³⁶ some ruling parties are fearing and contesting the development of a growing role for Turkey in the region, as well as changes which would serve the interests of the United States more than those of Armenia.³⁷

Azerbaijan, Georgia & the North-South Axis: Signs of Rapprochement

The increased flexibility of the East-West axis has led to a cautious policy of balance by Armenia in its relations with Russia and the United States, as well as limited adjustments with Turkey, based on the promotion of dialogue and the working out of cooperation projects. Azerbaijan's and Georgia's rapprochement with Russia under the North-South axis is far more tangible. It has taken the form of economic and military agreements, promoted by domestic changes in Russia and by new steps in Russian-American relations in the Caucasus since the attacks of 11 September 2001.³⁸

The election of Vladimir Putin as President of the Russian Federation contributed to improving relations between Azerbaijan and Russia. From 9-10 January 2001, Vladimir Putin paid the first official visit to Azerbaijan by a Russian head of state.³⁹ Although no agreement was signed, the meeting was officially described as opening up a new phase in the relations between the two states. Under the Declaration of Baku, Vladimir Putin and Heydar Aliyev undertook to raise the level of state cooperation, particularly on economic issues.⁴⁰ On this occasion, a new agreement was signed on the exploitation of Azerbaijan's oil between Lukoil and SOCAR, the Russian and Azerbaijani companies. The dispute between Baku and Moscow concerning the legal status of the Caspian Sea was settled by an agreement signed on 23 September 2002.⁴¹

Parallel to the economic rapprochement, there are signs of closer interaction between Baku and Moscow in the military field. Following his visit to Moscow from 24-26 January 2002, President Aliyev referred to the "strategic partnership" established between Azerbaijan and Russia.⁴² A bilateral agreement was reached

on joint operation of the Gabala radar station, which had been deprived of any legal framework since the break-up of the USSR. Under this agreement, Azerbaijan granted Russia the right to lease the station for ten years at a cost of seven million dollars per year.⁴³ The following year, during the Russian Defence Minister's visit to Baku from 26-27 February 2003, a military cooperation agreement was also signed, covering arms sales, modernisation of military equipment and training of Azerbaijani military personnel by Russia.⁴⁴

Though later and less clear-cut than in the case of Russian-Azerbaijani relations, relations between Moscow and Tbilisi improved under the previous Georgian government. Despite continuing disagreements with Russia, Eduard Shevardnadze emphasised the geopolitical constraints weighing on his country. He acknowledged "the vital significance of friendship and cooperation with Russia", its "unique role" as "the closest neighbouring state" and as a full-fledged player in the Caucasian region. He stated that "Georgia would strengthen cooperation with Russia" alongside development of its links with the United States and NATO. Georgia's official line thus proves more conciliatory toward Russia, presented as a real "strategic partner".⁴⁵

In the field of energy, the Russo-Georgian partnership took a concrete turn when the Georgian government sold Russian companies a large number of shares in state-owned gas and electricity companies. Speeding up the privatisation process, in August 2002, Eduard Shevardnadze supported the agreement transferring control of the Tbilgazi company, a regional gas distributor in Tbilisi, to the Itera group. Since Itera already had a monopoly on gas supply in Georgia, this agreement brought about fierce criticism from the opposition.⁴⁶ The Georgian President replied that in view of the country's energy needs, "Russia would remain an extremely important partner in the energy sphere for Georgia and Armenia, as well as Azerbaijan".⁴⁷ On 28 May 2003, he negotiated a 25-year preliminary strategic cooperation agreement with Alexey Miller, the head of Gazprom.⁴⁸ In response to concerns expressed over the threat that these agreements could represent to Georgia's sovereignty and independence, Eduard Shevardnadze again pointed out that he had no choice but to adopt a realistic attitude. In his opinion, the country's gas and electricity needs and the lack of alternative investments conducive to creating jobs and developing Georgia's economy had made these deals necessary.⁴⁹

Georgia's cooperation with Russia covers not only economic, but also security issues. In a private meeting during the CIS summit held in Chisinau on 6 October 2002, Vladimir Putin and Eduard Shevardnadze agreed to improve coordination of anti-terrorist activities and to jointly control their borders.⁵⁰ The dialogue between the two states appeared to be intensifying, in particular where Abkhazia was concerned. Firstly, the mandate of the Russian CIS troops stationed on the Abkhaz territory was renewed, despite the reservations regularly voiced by Georgian officials. Even though Eduard Shevardnadze criticised some actions of these troops, he acknowledged their contribution to peace-keeping in the region: "Without the presence of [these] forces, the consequences could have been much worse".⁵¹ Moreover, meeting at Sochi on 6-7 March 2003, the Georgian and Russian heads of state tried to boost the settlement of the Abkhaz conflict. They decided to set up three working groups: one on the issue of returning refugees, the other on the possibility of reopening the railway line linking Sukhumi to Tbilisi and the last one on the conditions for modernising the Inguri power station, which may help to meet the national needs for electricity. Commenting on the results of this meeting, Eduard Shevardnadze described the dialogue thus established as "the beginning of a new phase in Russian-Georgian relations".⁵²

Conclusion

Running in a North-South and East-West direction, the axes of cooperation with foreign powers show an obvious flexibility in the South Caucasus. It is true that Armenia has established a privileged partnership with Russia, while Azerbaijan and Georgia are trying to develop close links with Turkey and the United States. However, this trend, as shown by recent developments, is not exclusive. Yerevan is also seeking to promote relations with Ankara and Washington; at the same time there are signs of a rapprochement in relations between Baku and Tbilisi on the one hand and Moscow on the other. Although Armenian, Azerbaijani and Georgian foreign policies have become more harmonious over the past years, differences remain on the strength of cooperation (which varies according to the field - economic, political, military) and on the political resolve underlying the reorientation of partnerships.

The foreign policies of the republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia are tending to converge under the influence of geopolitical and economic constraints rather than on the basis of a common system of values.⁵³ Internally, the constraints are connected with security interests, economic development requirements and electoral stakes. At the international level, they are mainly the product of the desire for power or powerlessness⁵⁴ of the players leading the regional or international system. Diversification of the axes of cooperation depends to a great extent on the response these powers give to the calls for influence expressed by the three republics. This may explain why most observers have focused so much attention on hegemonic impulses in the South Caucasus. However, although the desire for power is a crucial factor in the way influences evolve, any power exercised under constraint and therefore lacking legitimacy is bound to remain fragile and uncertain.

"The strong are never strong enough to stay in power forever unless they convert their strength into law and obedience into duty."

Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, 1762, Book I, Chapter III

ENDNOTES

¹ This is a viewpoint proposed by Ghassan Salamé, *Appels d'empire : ingérences et résistances à l'âge de la mondialisation*, Paris, Fayard, 1996, 351p.

² The analysis of the external influences in the South Caucasus based on study of the foreign policies of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia also has its origins in the emphasis put by Dietrich Jung on the need to study "peripheral foreign policies", cf Dietrich Jung, "Le retour de la culture : l'analyse des politiques étrangères périphériques", in Frédéric Charillon, (dir), *Politique étrangère, nouveaux regards*, Paris, Presses de Sciences-Po, 2002, pp99-111.

³ See in particular: Jean Radvanyi, "Vent américain au Caucase", *Géopolitique*, July-September 2002, No 79, pp25-31. Although relations between the South Caucasian republics and European organisations are growing, they will not be discussed in this article.

⁴ In this context see: Shireen Hunter, "The Evolution of the Foreign Policy of the Transcaucasian States", in Gary Bertsch, Cassody Craft, Scott Jones *et al*, *Crossroad and Conflict, Security and Foreign Policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia*, New York, London,

Routledge, 2000, pp25-47; Revaz Gachechiladze, "Geopolitics in the South Caucasus: Local and External Players", *Geopolitics*, Summer 2002, Vol 7, No 1, pp113-138.

⁵ In a speech given at the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation in Istanbul on 26 June 2002, he lamented that "relations between Turkey and Armenia are being held hostage to Armenia's own conflicts with Azerbaijan", text available on the website of the Armenian Foreign Ministry, <http://www.armeniaforeignministry.com/>.

⁶ The text of the Declaration of Independence, adopted by the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia on 23 August 1990, is available on the website of the Armenian Foreign Ministry.

⁷ Robert Kocharian stated this position in his declaration on 24 April 2003 at Yerevan, at the commemoration of the Armenian genocide, available on the website of the President of the Armenian Republic, <http://www.president.am/eng/>.

⁸ On relations between Armenia and Turkey, refer also to: Bertrand Buchwalter, *Les relations turco-arméniennes : quelles perspectives?*, Istanbul, IFEA, 2002, p56; Burcu Gültekin, Nicolas Tavitian, "Les relations arméno-turques : la porte close de l'Orient", *Les rapports du GRIP*, 2003, No 2, p30.

⁹ The CIS Collective Security Treaty came into force on 20 April 1994 for a five-year period. Armenia renewed its participation on 2 April 1999 for a further five-year period, automatically renewable for five years. On 14 May 2002, on the 10th anniversary of the treaty, the member states decided to institutionalise their cooperation and to create the Collective Security Treaty Organisation, formed on 28 April 2003.

¹⁰ Robert Kocharian expressed this view on 25 May 2001 during his speech opening the session of the Collective Security Council in Yerevan, available on the website of the President of the Armenian Republic.

¹¹ The press recently mentioned the recruitment of 700 conscripts - 400 Russians and 300 Armenians, *Mediamax*, 5 August 2003.

¹² Interview given by Serge Sarkisian, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 16 July 2003.

¹³ See the text of the "Declaration on allied cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Armenia directed toward the 21st century", signed in Moscow on 26 September 2000, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/docs/55/a55439.pdf>.

¹⁴ Plus the Mars plant manufacturing electronic components and three research institutes that belonged to the Soviet military-industrial complex.

¹⁵ See: Hayk Gevorkyan, "Armenia's Energy System Handed Over to Russia", *Ayakan Zhamanak*, 6 November 2002. As Armenia totally depends on the Russian company Itera for its supplies of natural gas, the sale of the Razdan power station, which produces 40% of the country's electricity consumption, triggered much controversy in the local press.

¹⁶ The project is based on two options: construction of a 141 km gas pipeline linking Armenia to Iran, costing 120 million dollars, or construction of a gas pipeline four times longer, extending to Georgia, at an estimated cost of 306 million dollars. "Armenia, Iran discuss Gas Pipeline Project", *Interfax*, 29 May 2003.

¹⁷ "Baku Not Happy with Russian Increased Military Presence in Armenia", *Interfax-AVN*, 26 May 2003.

¹⁸ Especially about the participation of certain units of the Russian army in military operations alongside the Abkhaz, the granting of Russian passports to the Abkhaz population, the partial implementation of the mandate of the Russian CIS troops deployed in the region, and the opening of the railway line between Russia and Abkhazia, from Sochi to Sukhumi.

¹⁹ Under the terms of the joint Russo-Georgian declaration of Istanbul, adopted on 17 November 1999, Russia agreed to dismantle its two military bases located at Vaziani and Gudauta by 1 July 2001, while Georgia promised to grant Russia the right to maintain two Russian bases "temporarily" at Batumi and Akhalkalaki. For the text of the declaration, see: <http://www.osce.org/docs/english/1990-1999/cfe/cfeinact99e.htm>. However, having withdrawn its forces from Vaziani, Moscow failed to fully dismantle the base in Gudauta. Tbilisi and Moscow still argue about the other two bases and the length of time they should be maintained: Georgia wants to limit maintenance of the Russian bases to three years, while the Kremlin wants to extend it to eleven years.

²⁰ These points were listed in the presentation given by ambassador Levan Mikeldadze on the status of Georgia's relations with Russia at the *Carnegie Endowment for International*

Peace, on 1 October 2002, available on the website of Georgia's embassy in Washington, <http://www.georgiaemb.org>.

²¹ From 11 to 22 June 2001, Georgia hosted PfP naval and land exercises in the Black Sea for the first time. From 5 to 11 November the same year, training courses took place in Azerbaijan aimed at improving military interoperability between the partners.

²² For references to the speeches given at the meetings of the EAPC, see NATO's website, <http://www.nato.int>.

²³ Interview given by Vafa Guluzade to the press agency *Turan*, 18 January 1999.

²⁴ See Irakli Menagarishvili's speech at the EAPC meeting held in Brussels on 19 December 1999. In order to be "security provider", and not only "security consumer", Azerbaijan and Georgia have contributed to NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR) since 1 October 1999. Their contingent is tied up with the Turkish battalion and part of the Multinational Brigade South-West.

²⁵ These restrictions, defined in Section 907 of the *Freedom Support Act*, were passed by Congress officially because of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the blockade exercised by Azerbaijan against Armenia. The reason given for their suspension by the US administration was Azerbaijan's contribution to the war in Afghanistan and the fight against terrorism.

²⁶ This programme (GTEP - *Georgian Train and Equip Program*) is based on a 64 million dollar budget and provides for the dispatch - in several stages - of a force of 150 US instructors to Georgia to train four battalions of 850 Georgian soldiers and officers. In addition, on 21 March 2003, after lively public debates, the Georgian parliament ratified a defence agreement granting exceptional rights to US military personnel entering Georgian territory. Irakly Aladashvili "Georgia Grants US Military Privileges", *Caucasus Reporting Service*, 27 March 2003, No 172.

²⁷ Quoted by Tamam Bayatly, "BTC Pipeline Embarks on Construction Phase", *Azerbaijan International*, Autumn 2002, Vol 10, No 3.

²⁸ "Provisional stability" is a phrase set by Grigor Suny, describing post-Soviet identities studied as a variable dependent on national policies, see Ronald Grigor Suny, "Provisional Stabilities - The Politics of Identities in Post-Soviet Eurasia", *International Security*, Winter 1999/2000, Vol 24, No 3, pp139-178.

²⁹ See the speeches given by Vartan Oskanian on 21 May 1998 at the American University of Armenia in Yerevan, and in June 1999 at the CSIS in Washington, available on the website of the Armenian Foreign Ministry.

³⁰ Armenia receives substantial assistance from the United States under the *Freedom Support Act*, which - as a ratio per inhabitant - represents one of the largest aid programmes granted by Washington to a foreign country.

³¹ Quoted by Emil Danielian, "Armenia: Yerevan Courts Unlikely New Security Partners - The US and Iran", *RFE/RL*, 29 March 2002.

³² Interview given by Serge Sarkisian, *Rossiskaya Gazeta*, 12 February 2003.

³³ See in particular the interview given by Vartan Oskanian to *Mediamax* press agency, 23 April 2003.

³⁴ Speaking on 26 June 2002 at the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation in Istanbul, he said: "Neighbours are more important than even family and those relations must be nurtured. It is not different for states. No matter what else, we must talk to each other, deal with each other, visit each other, trade with each other", *op cit*.

³⁵ "Armenian Foreign Minister in Favor of Normalizing Ties with Turkey", interview with Vartan Oskanian on the Armenian television, Yerevan, 2 July 2003, transcribed by *Armenian News Network*, 4 July 2003.

³⁶ Including the creation on 3 May 1997 of the Turkish-Armenian Business Development Council, chaired by two company directors (see: <http://www.tabc.org>), and the establishment on 9 July 2001 in Geneva of the Turkish-American Reconciliation Commission (TARC), partly consisting of former Turkish and Armenian officials.

³⁷ This is the position adopted in particular by the ARF-Dashnaktsutiun. See: Ashot Yeghiazarian, "Prospects of Armenian-Turkish Economic Relations", *Yerkir Online*, 18 July 2003.

³⁸ This change was sanctioned by the signature of a joint Russian-American declaration on 24 May 2002, under which President Bush and President Putin claimed to have in Central Asia and the Caucasus a "common interest in promoting the stability,

sovereignty and territorial integrity of all the nations in this region ... The United States and Russia will cooperate to resolve regional conflicts, including in Nagorno-Karabakh and Abkhazia ...".

³⁹ It was on this occasion that Vladimir Putin symbolically handed to Heydar Aliyev a copy of the certificate the latter had obtained at the University of Saint Petersburg, well-known for having trained KGB agents during the Soviet era. Having also attended this university, the Russian President then referred to the Azerbaijani President as a "compatriot", *Itar-Tass*, 10 January 2001.

⁴⁰ "Russian President Starts Russo-Azeri Relations", *Azernews*, No 2 (187), 2001.

⁴¹ Giving up the idea to jointly exploit the energy resources in the Caspian Sea, the Russian authorities reached a compromise with the Azerbaijani leaders, making a distinction between division of the seabed and mineral resources into national sectors and common use of the sea's waters and surface.

⁴² Interview given to *Itar-Tass* on 26 January 2002.

⁴³ This anti-missile warning system, built in 1985 to warn of attacks from the Persian Gulf to the Indian Ocean, had remained *de facto* under Russian ownership since the collapse of the Soviet empire. It is now officially recognised as belonging to Azerbaijan. Moscow also agreed to repay Baku a 31 million dollar debt for operation of the base from July 1997 to December 2001, and to upgrade Azerbaijan's air defence systems, *Turan*, 28 January 2002.

⁴⁴ "Azerbaijan and Russia Signed Agreement on Military-Technical Cooperation", *Baku Today*, 28 February 2003.

⁴⁵ See in particular President Shevardnadze's weekly radio interview, 25 November 2002. For further details about these interviews, see the website of the Georgian embassy in Washington.

⁴⁶ "Georgian Opposition Leader Protests Against Planned Russian Takeover of Gas Company", *Prime News Agency*, 27 August 2002. Having purchased the Georgian company Sakgazi, Itera already had a monopoly on gas sales in Georgia.

⁴⁷ President Shevardnadze's weekly radio interview, 16 December 2002.

⁴⁸ "Gazprom to Carry Out Major Investment Projects in Georgia", *Itar-Tass*, 29 July 2003.

⁴⁹ President Shevardnadze's weekly radio interview, 28 July 2003. Commenting also on the prospect of the sale by US company AES to Russian company UES Nordic of 75% of the shares in Telasi (Tbilisi electricity generator), the Georgian President admitted that no other competitors had shown any interest in acquiring a stake.

⁵⁰ Two days before the CIS summit in Chisinau, the Georgian government extradited a number of Chechens captured on the republic's territory.

⁵¹ President Shevardnadze's weekly radio interview, 3 February 2003.

⁵² President Shevardnadze's weekly radio interview, 10 March 2003.

⁵³ We prefer the term constraint to the term obedience used by Dietrich Jung. The author actually proposes four types of dependence as shown by peripheral foreign policies: obedience, consensus, counter-dependence and compensation, cf Dietrich Jung, "Le retour de la culture : l'analyse des politique étrangère "périphériques", *op cit*, p101.

⁵⁴ As demonstrated more generally by Pascal Boniface in his book entitled *La volonté d'impuissance: la fin des ambitions internationales et stratégiques*, Paris, Seuil, 1996, p197.

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