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**Azerbaijan: Permanently Between
Scylla and Charybdis?**

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Key Points

- * The return of territory occupied by Armenia and vertical subordination of Karabakh to Baku are of prime importance to Azerbaijan.
- * The USA and Russia are vital players in the process of reaching a solution on Karabakh.
- * The unresolved problem will continue to have an increasingly disruptive effect in Azerbaijan and in the region as a whole, stimulating radical and extremist movements.
- * Baku has no option but to pursue a policy of oscillation between Moscow and Washington: history and geography versus economic growth.
- * Russia needs Azerbaijan's assistance in its counter-terrorism campaign: Azerbaijan itself faces an upsurge of radical Islam.
- * Washington views Azerbaijan as a vital regional key in American strategic interests.
- * Azerbaijan's position is complicated by relations between Washington and Teheran, in addition to its own delicate relationship with Iran.
- * Baku has a treaty obligation with Teheran not to allow a third party to use Azerbaijan territory to attack Iran.
- * Iran provides transit facilities and supplies natural gas for the isolated Nakhichevan autonomous republic, and has a large ethnic Azeri minority.

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Introduction

A paper I wrote in 1998¹ identified some of the threats to the future stability of the Caucasus Region and Caspian Basin, which could hinder the creation of the stable political and social environment essential for the economic development of the region. It also outlined the dangers of miscalculation and collision due to certain mutually inter-related and overlapping factors. These were

- Declining Russian power.
- Legal confusion over the Caspian Sea's status.
- Traditional regional power rivalries and proxy manipulation by minor players on account of the potential to attract major power interest, either through their hydrocarbon and mineral deposits or due to the location and suitability of their territory for the transportation of oil.
- Extension of Western influence through the presence of North American power, investment and global corporate experience together with the return of traditional European commercial interest, acumen and technical expertise.
- Relations between Russia and the Islamic World.
- Environmental and ecological issues in and around the Caspian Basin.

This paper will concentrate on the third and fourth group of factors, which have particular relevance today with regard to Azerbaijan. It concentrates on Russian sources, as these offer significantly different perspectives from those normally found in the west.

Around the beginning of May 2006, Azerbaijan again demonstrated its adherence to a policy of “swinging to and fro”, the foundations of which were established by Geydar Aliyev in creating post-communist Azerbaijan long before the current (third) president of the republic Ilkham Aliyev came to power. *“The ability to be with both Washington and Moscow was an exceptional characteristic of Azerbaijani post-soviet foreign policy.”*²

It was also a significant achievement, due in large measure to Azerbaijan's position on the Caspian Sea, where the offshore Azeri shelf is endowed with significant, obtainable hydro-carbon deposits and the capacity to provide a not-insignificant volume of oil now, and a substantial amount of natural gas in the longer term. The principle of ‘oscillation’ in Azerbaijani foreign policy helped to establish and secure its newly-founded independence from Moscow during the mid-1990s, when it could be said: *“Azerbaijan desires escape from Russia, while at the same time does not seek in its place a new ‘Big Brother’ relationship with Turkey, but is anxious to secure approval and partnership with the West, in particular with the United States, together with the return of Nagornyy Karabakh under Baku's vertical control and the restoration of territory currently under Armenian occupation.”*³

From the 1990s to the present, there can be no doubt that by projecting itself simultaneously to several world centres of influence and power, Azerbaijan increased its geopolitical importance. The recent agreement between Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan for “7.5 mln tons of Kazakh oil to be passed through the (Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan) pipeline,”⁴ having been brought from Aktau to Baku by sea⁵ is one of the latest signs of its continued importance.

Whilst the new Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline avoids transit of oil through Russia, in this instance the coincidence of timing is significant. The date scheduled for signing the agreement coincided with the visit of President Putin to Astana for the opening of the second summit of the Conference on Cooperation and Confidence Measures in Asia (SVMDA). A poignant reminder to Moscow that its former, almost total monopoly of westward flowing routes in the Caucasus-Greater Caspian Basin is not only being eroded, but Astana’s dependence on Moscow is being weakened: “in this both the leadership of Kazakhstan and countries of the West including the USA are interested”.⁶ Despite ecological and environmental objections,⁷ of which doubtless there will be many from Russia and Iran, it might only be a matter of time before the traffic between Aktau and Baku is improved by a Trans-Caspian pipeline, reducing transportation costs and enhancing Baku’s position as an oil ‘hub’.

There is the vision too that Baku could develop into a leading commercial trading centre in the region, well-placed on one of the gateways into Central Asia and beyond. But one must not forget Azerbaijan’s southern boundary and the somewhat inhibiting presence of Iran, placing Baku to some extent ‘between a rock and a hard place’ in its relations with Teheran and Washington: a lesser repetition of the “Scylla and Charybdis syndrome”⁸ already present in Baku’s balancing act between Washington and Moscow.

Official Baku has been at pains to learn ways to improve relations with Teheran,⁹ despite the former Soviet Union’s earlier attempt to create a satellite state there in 1945,¹⁰ subsequent misconceptions and the current areas of concern in Azerbaijani-Iranian relations, not least of which concern the southern sector of the Caspian Sea¹¹ and the potential problem of Southern (Iranian) Azerbaijan¹², which has a sizeable ethnic Azeri population centred on Tabriz.¹³ Here, the Iranian government has pursued a policy of cultural discrimination by excluding the official use of the Azeri language in schools, the judicial system, government departments, the military and even the prohibition of certain forms of cultural expression.¹⁴ However, Baku’s initiatives towards Iran must also be seen against the background of the recent, serious increase in tension between the United States and Iran over the latter’s intention to continue work in nuclear research and development.

Azerbaijan and the USA

There can be little doubt about how the United States publicly views Azerbaijan and its president. On the eve of the official visit of President Aliyev to Washington in April 2006, the White House press service lavished compliments on “*the leader of this Southern Caucasus republic, for Azerbaijan was named as a key ally in a strategically important area of the world,*”¹⁵ and as being “*A valued partner, offering important assistance on Iraq*”.¹⁶ Zbigniew Brzezinski described the area as “*a large chessboard*”. Russian commentary added: “*on which Azerbaijan more openly, if not cynically is called the vitally important ‘cork’ which controls free access to the bottle with riches from the Caspian Sea and Central Asia*”.¹⁷

There was at the same time an interesting absence of critical comment on such subjects as the “*state of democracy in the republic . . . the parliamentary elections which slipped by in November 2005*”,¹⁸ and even no mention of human rights, for in reality “*The days of the American-Iranian dispute are forcing Washington to devote a preference to Realpolitik and not to ideological predilections*”.¹⁹ As Sokhbet Mamedov speculated: “*At the present time NATO aircraft flying to Afghanistan and Iraq refuel at Baku’s Geydar Aliyev International Airport. . . Analysts in Baku did not discount the fact that new Azerbaijani airports would be necessary for the USA in the preparation of operations against Iran*”.²⁰

However, despite all Washington’s blandishments, on the eve of President Aliyev’s visit to the USA, the Azerbaijani deputy foreign minister Araz Azimov stated that his country had no intention “*of being a member of a coalition against anybody and wished to build friendly relations with all the countries in the region*”.²¹ There was nothing unexpected about Azimov’s remark, for it reflected the long-held view of the five Caspian riparian states that they do not want foreign military presence in the region. As Dr Steven Main noted concerning the question of support from the Azeri population living in Azerbaijan for US military action against Iran, “*60% of those polled said that they would not support such a policy*”.²²

A week before the Azerbaijan president’s visit to Washington, the Iranian defence minister Mostafa Mohammed Najjar had visited Baku. During the three day visit, Najjar met President Aliyev, the Azerbaijani defence minister Safar Abiyev, the speaker of the Azerbaijan Parliament Oktay Asadov and the minister for foreign affairs El’mar Mamed’yarov to prepare for the visit of the Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinezhad. It would not be surprising if points for discussion had included ways to deter the formation of an anti-Iranian coalition, the possibility that President Aliyev could help to explain the Iranian position, perhaps an oblique reminder that Azerbaijan belonged to the Islamic world.²³

During the meetings in Washington over the period 24-28 April 2006, President Aliyev underlined the adherence of Azerbaijan to the ideals of a secular state, economic and social modernisation, a personal interest in collaborative effort in the military sphere, the fight against terrorism and the development of energy. Aliyev is said to have acknowledged²⁴ that without the support of the USA, Azerbaijan would not have succeeded in transforming its energy sector into the main instrument for the development of the country’s economy. As Sokhbet Mamedov recalled in underlining the US assistance in the development of Azerbaijan’s economy, credit in fact was due to former US President Bill Clinton.²⁵ The USA initiated the concept of the BTC main export pipeline as a result of the compelling need to bypass Russian territory, to realise an alternative to the Baku-Novorossiysk oil pipeline,²⁶ and thus nullify Russia’s ability or propensity to use an economic weapon in the pursuit of political advantage. Recent events concerning Ukraine’s and Europe’s energy supplies have all too clearly demonstrated there are still valuable lessons to be learnt.

The Azerbaijan president did not see any possibility of Baku participating in any kind of operation in neighbouring Iran, but Aliyev also gave the Americans to understand that the future development and strengthening of American-Azerbaijani relations depended directly on the attitude and position of the USA towards the normalisation of Nagorno-Karabakh and the readiness of Washington “*to lean on Yerevan*”.²⁷ Aliyev reiterated that the first priority was the rehabilitation of Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity, which in his opinion “*was recognised by everyone except Armenia*”.²⁸

On the Iranian question, President Aliyev and Foreign Minister Mamed'yarov both cited Iran's role in the provision of transit facilities and supplies of natural gas to the Azeri enclave of the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic²⁹ under the terms of the 2002 Teheran-Baku agreement to boost economic cooperation.³⁰ They also referred to a *"treaty which stipulated that neither country shall allow hostile actions from its territory against the other"*.³¹ However, President Aliyev also made the remark that *"in the event of a breakthrough on the Karabakh direction Baku would be ready to be more compliant on the Iranian question"*.³²

The Karabakh Negotiations

Despite the Bucharest Presidential Summit meeting between Armenia and Azerbaijan at the beginning of June 2006, according to Sokhbet Mamedov³³ by late June the peace process was under the tight control of the Americans. The US State Department had changed its Co-Chairman in the OSCE Minsk Group. Ambassador Steven Mann's place was taken by Matthew J Bryza.³⁴ Unlike his predecessors and co-chairmen, Ambassador Bryza refused to be open with the press, except to say on *Radio Svoboda* that *"at the present time on the negotiating table lies a prepared, concrete document, which they are refusing to accept at the moment"*.³⁵ Nevertheless as Mamedov later noted *"American attempts to cool the hot heads in Baku and Yerevan and persuade the sides towards a compromise in a solution of the Karabakh problem were not crowned with success"*.³⁶ The proposal for a peaceful settlement delivered to Aliyev and Kocharyan provoked a stormy reaction from both presidents.

Bryza had suggested to politicians not to trivialise and comment on each point in the document, inasmuch that the published principles had been developed by the co-chairmen in the course of the last two years with the direct participation of both presidents. Nevertheless, President Aliyev's position remained crystal clear: *"Territorial integrity could not be the subject of compromise. Compromise could only stand in the event of the arrival of peacemaking forces... The efforts of negotiators to achieve a compromise are certainly in doubt in the current year"*.³⁷

For Baku, 'normalisation' of Nagornyy-Karabakh is not an abstract humanitarian issue: neither could it be with more than 1,000,000³⁸ refugees in camps. Such camps are breeding grounds for disaffection amongst the dispossessed, acting as 'cradles' or 'nurseries' for catching the young and later as 'academies' in the ongoing processes of selection, training and development of militant activists.³⁹ Azerbaijan with a population of 7,961,619⁴⁰ is highly vulnerable to social unrest and exploitation by religious extremists due to the wide disparity in living standards and the absence of a general sense of well-being.

The Armenian occupation of the seven Azeri rayony, amounting to 13% of Azeri territory, not only remain an insurmountable obstacle to normal relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, but have become a poison warping the mind of people in Azerbaijan at an individual level.⁴¹ Whilst there may be serious bones of contention in different strata of Azerbaijani society concerning the central government, electoral fraud, suppression of human rights, intimidation during peaceful demonstrations, frequent examples of police and militia brutality against minority ethnic groups, such as the Lezgins,⁴² or at another level the concerns of the Talysh⁴³ with central government over the preservation of their language and ethnicity, or problems facing the Meskhetian Turk⁴⁴ in trying to develop a living from farming highly saline soil, **nevertheless, Azeris and representatives of different ethnic groups in Azerbaijan are all united against the continued Armenian occupation of Azerbaijani territory.**⁴⁵

In a sense the problem of Karabakh (Artsakh) facing President Aliyev has some similarity with those faced by President Mikhail Saakashvili of Georgia in connection with Abkhazia and South Osetia, where both peoples have no wish to be subjugated to the direct control of Tbilisi. Long memories of the imperialist tendencies of the Georgian government against Abkhazia in 1918⁴⁶ were reawakened by the authoritarian actions of President Zvyad Gamsakhurdia during 1991 and remain unabated, in part due to the bellicose attitude and statements of the Georgian defence minister Irakli Okruashvili. Similarly, the Armenian people of Artsakh for broadly similar reasons do not wish to be under the vertical control of Baku, but will accept lateral connections with it. There is also a strong wish amongst the Azeri military to regain the 'lost' seven rayony: a potent factor which the Azerbaijani president has so far resisted despite restive public opinion increasingly demanding restoration of the territory by force of arms. So it was not surprising that President Aliyev put forward a proposal "Concerning a high status of autonomy for Karabakh within a single Azerbaijani state" when he was in Washington in April. But what would be the upper limit of this status? How it would be expressed in the formal language of jurisprudence? Furthermore, how could be guaranteed?⁴⁷ Any form of trust will require years to become established between the two sides, if it ever will.

Summary

So far Azerbaijan believes that up till now not enough effort has been made to resolve the problem of Nagornyy-Karabakh through the American joint chairmanship of the OSCE Minsk Group. Second, there is a fear in Azerbaijan that it is in danger of becoming a passive bystander or an unwilling participant in a war between the USA and Iran. The presence of ethnic Azeris in Southern (Iranian) Azerbaijan tends to heighten uncertainty in both places. It is acknowledged that an overt, permanent US or NATO armed presence in Azerbaijan could further alienate Moscow and Teheran.

On the positive side, it is difficult to envisage the USA initiating any form of military action from Azerbaijani territory against Teheran which could endanger the BTC pipeline, let alone in the event of an armed conflict contemplate the transfer of Iranian territory to Azerbaijan in exchange for Azeri relinquishment of claims to Karabakh as suggested by some Russian commentators.⁴⁸

However, Azerbaijan has become the key link in Western plans for the delivery of hydrocarbon fuel which bypasses Russia. It was perhaps surprising that Washington did not during the visit of President Aliyev make public reference to any trans-Caspian engineering projects from the Caspian's eastern littoral,⁴⁹ due to the future volume of oil from Kazakhstan which will require transportation by pipeline.⁵⁰ Both Russia and Iran for their own reasons would be unlikely to approve any disruption of the seabed in the Caspian,⁵¹ therefore with continuing uncertainty over Iranian nuclear research and the need to have the positive assistance of Moscow, Washington wisely forbore from highlighting the question of a trans-Caspian pipeline. Moreover, it is the right of Caspian states to make the decisions concerning the laying of pipelines on their sector's seabed. Nevertheless, it must not be forgotten that it is the USA which has helped to bring present benefit to the republic, but will the future revenue tie Azerbaijan within the Western fold permanently?

Azerbaijan and Russia

There is some truth in the statement that Russian interests in Azerbaijan are much the same as those underpinning the American pro-Azerbaijan lobby's interest.⁵² Russia also needs a secular, politically stable and forward looking state which is interested in modernisation, but also one in which authoritarian methods are not entirely discarded in the containment and eradication of terrorism. As well as the situation in Chechnya and the present terror campaign against ethnic Russians in Ingushetia, Moscow is also faced with a serious upsurge of violence in Dagestan and therefore wishes to see beyond its southern border a state prepared to assist the Russian counter-terrorist campaign: as Markedonov rather skilfully put it "*with an understanding which entails a certain step-back from democracy and human rights*".⁵³

Campaign against Terrorism

A regular exchange of information between the interior ministries of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia and Russia has been a Russian priority since at least 1999. Despite the geographical position of Chechnya and Georgia with a common border, a regular input and presence of Georgia is perhaps not so likely at the present time, but there are regular political and military contacts between Moscow and Yerevan, and one would expect a considerable degree of contact between Baku and Moscow on the question of counter-terrorism as it is undoubtedly in both their interests to maintain those links. The objectives of Baku hoping to avoid the growth of radical Islam and terrorism are analogous to those of Russia:

*"It is not difficult to understand the reasons for the Azerbaijani authorities' alacrity in pushing Chechens out of the country. The Chechen community presents a threat to the country's internal balance. The radical outlooks of many of them, as well as their military background, could easily be used by external or internal forces to destabilise the situation in Azerbaijan. Active recruitment of local Azerbaijanis for fighting in Chechnya could have a detrimental effect on the future of the country. Azerbaijanis who go to fight in Chechnya could return home with radical ideas combined with the zeal to change the country's regime."*⁵⁴

Therefore one would expect continued surveillance of the Chechen community in Baku, but also it would appear that on occasion this can be accompanied by threats to Chechen refugee families by persons or organisations unknown, even resulting in a bid for asylum in Finland by the family of the late Aslan Maskhadov, the former legally elected President of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria who had settled in Azerbaijan.⁵⁵ One would expect special attention to be focussed by the Azerbaijani authorities on routes in and out of Dagestan and Georgia,⁵⁶ together with the monitoring of passengers on regular shipping and ferry routes across the Caspian, routes in and out of Turkey via Nakhichevan and routes to and from Iran. Azerbaijan's activities against Chechen refugees could be seen as evidence that Baku is striving for constructive relations with Moscow, in contrast to Tbilisi which has announced its intention of moving towards European-Atlantic integration and to escape from the Russian imperial legacy.

On a wider plane but very much connected to the Chechen issue, the Azerbaijani authorities and traditional religious leaders are viewing with growing concern an increasing radicalism fuelled by Wahhabis, radical Shiites, and followers of Nursism, a Sufi sect, exported to Azerbaijan from Turkey.

“Today in Azerbaijan there are some 355 religious organisations, of which only 29 are not associated with Islam and in the country every day the number of mosques increases. According to certain data there are more than one and a half thousand. By far the greatest danger are the forces attempting to spread Islamic fundamentalism in its worst conception in Azerbaijan...In Azerbaijan they are grouped around charitable funds, religious establishments and printing organs. According to certain sources, today the number of followers of this movement amount to 25,000 people.”⁵⁷

The same article quoted the concerns of the Chairman of the Committee of the Organisation for Religious Affairs, Rafik Aliyev: *“Unfortunately, today religion does not serve the strengthening of Azerbaijani statehood. In the country there are a series of religious organisations which do not hide their intention to build an Islamic state in Azerbaijan.”*

Understandably from the Azerbaijani government’s point of view, a prohibition has been imposed on young people going to Iran, Syria, Egypt, Malaysia, Pakistan, Turkey and several other countries to receive religious education. This is not only to stop them picking up harmful and mistaken ideas from religious extremists, but, probably of far greater importance to the authorities, to prevent them receiving paramilitary training in special camps such as those reported to have been established in Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, this may come to be seen as an additional violation of human rights, and in the longer term prove counter-productive.

Karabakh

There are many people in the Azeri government, beginning with the president himself, who give high credence to Russia’s potential for resolving the deadlock that has existed in Karabakh since 1994. The possibility of deploying Russian peacemakers to the conflict zone was the subject of much favourable speculation by many in Baku in early 2006. Whilst Azerbaijan does not have such a close relationship with Russia in the military and political spheres as Armenia, the administrative-territorial boundaries were delineated under Moscow’s control during Soviet times.⁵⁸ The practical, methodical approach of Ambassador Vladimir Kazimirov⁵⁹ has the double merit of a gradual return of territory to Azerbaijan whilst at the same time acknowledging Armenian concerns and providing safeguards to cover the security needs of the Armenian side.⁶⁰ Furthermore, he has repeatedly stated that there was only one option: in *“continuing the search for peace in Karabakh, it is important to single out the prime task for 2006 realistically – to bury the idiotic idea of a forceful resolution of the conflict”*.⁶¹

Despite the even handed and fair approach of Kazimirov, between Moscow and Baku there are definite divergences on the question of the Russian-Armenian strategic partnership, and a fear in Azeri minds that Russia could provide more support for Armenia to the detriment of Azerbaijan over Karabakh. The fact that Azerbaijan is a member of GUAM, an active aspirant for NATO membership and a collaborator with America helps to foster a Russian pro-Armenian orientation, in addition to the existence of strong historical, religious, military and cultural ties together with a deep respect for the Armenian natural ability to drive hard bargains. Baku fears an escalation of the Armenian-Azerbaijan confrontation with the presence of Russian military units and subunits in Armenia enhanced by the withdrawal and redeployment of units from Georgia. A disagreement with Moscow would also be an auspicious political lever for the opponents of President Aliyev.

GUAM

Azerbaijan is an active participant in several regional organisations. Besides GUAM, (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova) Azerbaijan belongs to Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) whose members include: Albania, Armenia, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine. Azerbaijan is also a member of the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank (BSTDB), whose membership mirrors that of BSEC. It should be noted that whilst Russia is a member of BSEC and BSTDB, Russia is not a member of GUAM. Russian views on Azeri membership therefore offer an illuminating example.

From the perspective of some Russians GUAM is an organisation “*The main aim of which is to campaign against Russian influence in the post-soviet space, but for the creation of a cordon of states from the Baltic to the Caspian Sea, in the first place orientated on the interests of Western countries. If the participation in this organisation of Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia is fully understood, then the role of Azerbaijan and its declared friendly attitude toward Russia raises questions. Baku, like many others tries to sit on two stools, obtaining the maximum benefit. But is such a game favourable to Russia and is it worth the Kremlin closing its eyes to this?*”⁶²

The brunt of argument is the fact that Baku over many years has succeeded in convincing Moscow of its friendship and interest in mutual cooperation, despite the occasional attempt by Baku to blackmail Russia over the possibility of establishing NATO bases on Azerbaijani territory. In some Russian eyes, Azerbaijan as a member of GUAM is part and parcel of an organisation which serves as a counterweight to Russian influence in the ‘near abroad’. “*The first violins’ Ukraine and Georgia play the main opponents of Russia*”⁶³ in a regenerated GUAM. In contrast to Uzbekistan, it was not prepared to leave the organisation “*even after the attempt by the West to stimulate in Baku a certain ‘flower revolution’*”,⁶⁴ a reference to criticisms of electoral fraud by observers in the Azerbaijani elections in autumn 2005.

It is important to return to the reason for a “Union of Four” being transformed into GUAM in the late 1990s (it was recognised by the UN in September 2000). At that time it had become evident that there were serious problems in the functioning of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and it was felt by the “four” that there were two possible variants for future development. One was quasi-integration within the commonwealth. The second and obviously more attractive means of development was on the basis of practical cooperation in the economic or political-military spheres, still within the CIS, as a subgroup within a much more compact area. The creation of the European-Asia Economic Union (EurAzES) in 2001 had a similar regional focus.⁶⁵

At the end of May 2006 at a summit meeting in Kiev, the leaders of the member states changed the organisation’s title to “For democracy and economic development – GUAM”.⁶⁶ The headquarters and secretariat would be based in Kiev, with coordination by committees of heads of state, foreign ministers, national coordinators and permanent representatives, and the plan of action for the following year was also confirmed. In particular a decision was made for the introduction of free trade, in time extending to the creation of a unified customs service, which would “*in fact block participation by members of the new organisation in other economic formations on the territory of the CIS*”.⁶⁷

However, in relations towards the CIS and separately with Russia there was a notable fissure in the new union. During the joint press conference, the four

presidents stuck to different lines of policy. Whilst Saakashvili took Russia to task, by making several blunt attacks about its economic blockade of Georgia which had forced Georgians to search for help in GUAM, Aliyev more than once emphasised the fact that Azerbaijan intended to revive and develop relations with Russia despite the complications which had arisen during the 1990s.⁶⁸ As an example, evidently not by accident, he brought up the matter of Russian support offered to Armenia in the past. Yushchenko reminisced about the former close knit Ukrainian-Russian economic-trade links which required a political component. The main component of Voronin's address was the return of Transnistria.

It was significant that Aliyev arrived at the summit some considerable time before the Georgian and Moldovan delegations and that both his address and that of Yushchenko were pointedly not so critical of Russia. With the active participation of Azerbaijan in a reinvigorated GUAM the organisation's anti-Moscow momentum will not be so pronounced. In turn this might ameliorate the attitude of sceptics in Moscow concerning Baku's intentions and policies.

Azerbaijani Diaspora

It is useful to remember age-old Russian contempt for and prejudice against people of 'Caucasian nationality',⁶⁹ which often renders them vulnerable to being randomly stopped, questioned, searched or arrested by the police, particularly in Moscow. (One method of avoiding police interest and intrusion is to carry a newspaper, magazine or journal.)

The fall of the Soviet Union resulted in an unprecedented influx of Azerbaijanis to Russia, where they actively became involved in business and were able to transfer large sums of money back home. Wage remittances from Moscow or elsewhere in the Russian Federation still provide a valuable source of income at the grass roots level in Azerbaijan. According to some data the amounts are comparable with all the revenues that Azerbaijan receives from oil, the main source of income to the Azerbaijani budget. At the last all-Russia census in 2002 the Azerbaijani population in Moscow officially amounted to 95,583 people,⁷⁰ and, for instance, Azerbaijanis numbered in the main administrative-territorial entities in the Southern Federal Okrug 85,921 (Dagestan – 111,656; Krasnodar kray – 11,944; Stavropol' kray – 15,069; Astrakhan oblast' – 8,215; Volgograd oblast' – 14,257; Rostov oblast' – 16,498); and in the Volga Federal Okrug 84,183.⁷¹

This has three main effects according to Serges Mukheyev.⁷² First, Azerbaijanis in the main are occupied in the fruit and vegetable trade, largely Russian produce. Mukheyev claims that the monopoly of this market leads to a substantial rise in prices. The small retail character of the trade also makes it easier to avoid payment of taxes,⁷³ so there are at least two grounds for a feeling of resentment against Azerbaijanis by Russians in general and Muscovites in particular.

Secondly non-Slav national diasporas in Russia do not become integrated into Russian society. In time this leads to a state within a state and upsets the ethnic balance in the country. Mukheyev commented that it is very strange that Russian civil servants do not understand a simple truth, that to control a mono-ethnic country is basically simpler than a country saturated by a mass of large national diasporas, which exist according to their own laws, and of course customs and religious practices.⁷⁴

The third point mentioned by Mukheyev concerns the question of loyalty to the country in which the person has decided to work and hence the need for a reciprocal loyalty to Russia from the person's country of origin.⁷⁵ The presence in Russia, particularly in Moscow, of a huge number of migrant workers from Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia,⁷⁶ is of interest when from Moscow's standpoint there is considerable anti-Russian rhetoric emanating from these countries. If Russia should clamp down on workers from the GUAM states it would adversely affect Azerbaijan's economy, particularly at the local level.

Summary

Whilst it is no longer in quite the same negative position that prevailed in the 1990s, questions continue to arise over Baku's relationship with Moscow as a result of its 'oscillating' policy. The fact that Azerbaijan is becoming well-established within the compass of the USA and other western powers is due first and foremost to the presence of hydro-carbon deposits on the Azerbaijani shelf of the Caspian Sea, their ongoing successful exploitation, and the development and completion of the BTC pipeline. The position of Baku will become even more important if an oil pipeline is constructed under the Caspian between Aktau and Baku. This is likely to draw a strong, if not angry response from both Russia and Iran, who argue that it must be agreed by all five riparian states: the pipe-laying operation could very well interfere with both the anti-clockwise feeding migration of sturgeon and their clockwise spawning movement. Sturgeon stocks are in great danger from over-exploitation by poachers.

Azerbaijan's presence and participation in the newly-styled GUAM seems strange to people in Russia, but there could well be a silver lining for Moscow: it is certainly not in Azerbaijan's interests to be associated with Georgian rhetoric. The influence of Azerbaijan could dampen criticism of Moscow. Moreover, a rich Baku in time may be able to help with development in Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova.

On the positive side Baku's interests in the counter-terrorist sphere are synonymous with those of Moscow. Efforts by the Baku government to minimise the arrival and onward movement of Islamic radicals northwards will be welcomed by Moscow, as will the ban on the 'young' going abroad for religious education. Karabakh remains a difficult issue for Moscow, but settlement should acknowledge internal boundaries set by the Soviet Union together with the need for a gradual evacuation of Azerbaijani territory by the Armenians with checks and safeguards at each step.

Conclusions

There can be little doubt that the USA is publicly content with the leadership of President Ilkham Aliyev. He has brought to the office of president an assuredness and confidence of manner enhanced by a proficiency in English and political skills due to his father's experienced tutelage and his own graduation from "*the prestigious Moscow Institute MGIMO*",⁷⁷ which has helped to bring him respect and ease of passage among Russian political elites. Whilst there has been criticism of Aliyev's policy of oscillation from certain sectors of the Russian media particularly over Azerbaijani membership of GUAM, one cannot but think that his attitude will bring positive, forward direction to the organisation and reduce the volume of rancorous rhetoric aimed against Russia.

For Azerbaijan the most important point in its relationship with the USA and Russia is the return of the Karabakh and the seven rayony currently occupied by Armenians and their vertical subordination to Baku. To achieve this, Baku needs the efforts of both Washington and Moscow. At some stage Armenia will have to relinquish the occupied territories, if international law and United Nations are to be observed.

A stable Azerbaijan is important, not only for Azerbaijan itself, but also for Russia, the other two Southern Caucasus states, Central Asia, and for American and Western interests. It is vital that the issue of Karabakh is solved because subversive elements of radical Islam are busily exploiting the grievances of dispossessed Azeris and the not-so-fortunate in Azerbaijani society.

However, the attitude of Iran in following a course of wilful disregard to the world community in its nuclear programme together with the turmoil in the Levant, instigated, planned and facilitated by Teheran through its proxies Damascus and Hezbollah, leaves a shroud of uncertainty hanging over Turkey, the South Caucasus and the Caspian Basin.

Baku is to some extent 'between a rock and a hard place' in its relations between Teheran and Washington, in some respects replicating Baku's balancing act between Washington and Moscow. Whilst for Baku the issues in the Washington-Baku-Moscow relationship are of a wide strategic nature, the Washington-Baku-Teheran relationship constitutes a menacing, thorny predicament for Azerbaijan, which shares with Iran a complicated history; religious roots (but Azerbaijan is a secular state whilst Iran is an Islamic one); a 618 km land border as well as ill-defined maritime zones in the Caspian Sea; and finally the presence of a large Azeri population in Southern (Iranian) Azerbaijan.

Whilst relations with Teheran have not enjoyed great harmony in the past due to Iranian assistance to Armenia, some progress in reconciliation between Baku and Teheran has been made in the last two years, with Iran now providing transit facilities and energy support for Nakhichevan and Baku signing a treaty with Iran banning the use of their respective territories for the launch of an attack on the other country.

Endnotes

¹ C W Blandy "The Caucasus Region and Caspian Basin: "Change, Complication and Challenge" S36, CSRC, April 1998, and idem "The Caspian: Comminatory Crosscurrents" S40, CSRC, January 1999.

² <http://www.politcom.ru/article.php?id=2655> 3 May 2006 "Azerbaijan, kotoryy nuzhen vsem" by Sergey Markedonov.

³ Blandy "The Caspian: Comminatory Crosscurrents" S40, CSRC, January 1999, page 8.

⁴ *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 1 June 2006 page 5 "Astana prisoyedinyayetsya k bakinskoy trube" by Saken Salimov, Yekaterina Gurkina.

⁵ Since 2002 before the pipeline even came into operation an amount of Kazakh oil was transported by oil tanker to Baku from Aktau and was then transferred by rail tank wagons from Baku via Tbilisi to Supsa on the Black Sea Georgian coast for onward passage by oil tanker to Western markets.

⁶ *NG Dipkur'yer* No 11, 26 June 2006 page 18 "Bakinskaya truba dotyagivayetsya do Blizhnego Vostoka" by Sokhbet Mamedov.

⁷ See Charles Blandy "The Caspian: A Catastrophe in the Making – The destruction of a Unique Ecosystem" S32, CSRC, September 1997, page 14, Movement of Sturgeon

(Osetr), and idem, *The Caucasus Region and Caspian Basin: "Change, Complication and Challenge"*, S36, CSRC, April 1998, pages 24-26.

⁸ Perhaps an analogy can be drawn between an Azerbaijan overshadowed geopolitically by the United States and Russia with tales in Greek mythology concerning the perils facing mariners transiting the Straits of Messina: in Homer's "Odyssey" Circe advised him to stay near Scylla, the lesser of two evils but he had to sacrifice six men of his crew. Charybdis, the whirlpool, might cost him his crew and his ship.

⁹ Op cit <http://www.politcom.ru/article.php?id=2655> 3 May 2006.

¹⁰ Ibid. "In 1945 the Soviet Union attempted to create a soviet republic on the territory of Southern Azerbaijan headed by D. Pishevari. However after the departure of the soviet military contingent from Iranian territory this republic was liquidated by Iranian government authorities".

¹¹ http://english.people.com.cn/200107/26/eng20010726_75815.html *Peoples Daily* 26 July 2001 "Iran, Azerbaijan Mired in Wrangling Over Caspian Oil Exploration".

¹² <http://www.politcom.ru/article.php?id=2655> 3 May 2006. "At the beginning of the 1990s many politicians and public figures expressed the importance of a united South and North Azerbaijan. This aim was included in the political programme of the National Front of Azerbaijan (NFA). The last supporter of the idea of "unification" was Abulfaz El'chibey (and in his short period as president, and after retirement). The Iranian government immediately expressed displeasure to the Baku organisers of Iranian Azeris (National-liberation movement of Southern Azerbaijan). In 1999 G. Aliyev signed a decree granting Azerbaijani citizenship to P. Dilyanchi, one of the leaders of the irredentist organisation of Iranian Azeris. According to Azerbaijani politicians the Iranian authorities were combined in supporting radical Islamists within Azerbaijan. However in practice today's elite have no political resources for unification plans of Azeri nationalist radicals."

¹³ <http://www.politcom.ru/article.php?id=2655> 3 May 2006. "A large Azerbaijani community lives there which exceeds the population of Azeris in the Azerbaijan Republic. In respect to the number of Iranian Azeris no one opinion exists. The number varies from 11.5 million (official data of Iranian census) to 34 million (Aliyev junior recently quoted a figure of 30 million)." See also Dr Steven J Main "The Bear, The Peacock, The Eagle, The sturgeon and the Black, Black Oil: Contemporary Regional Power Politics in The Caspian Sea", CSRC Caucasus Series 05/67, page 18 and page 25 endnote 80.

¹⁴ Internet version Nasib Nasibzade "The Azeri Question in Iran: A Crucial Issue for Iran's Future" page 3 of 5.

¹⁵ Op cit <http://www.politcom.ru/article.php?id=2655> 3 May 2006.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 22 May 2006 page 7 "NATO nuzhny azerbaidzhanskyye aerodromy" by Sokhbet Mamedov. "According to certain periodicals, the USA is interested in modernising these aerodromes and has even put aside US\$ 400 mln for bringing these objects up to NATO standards."

²¹ <http://www.politcom.ru/article.php?id=2655> 3 May 2006.

²² Dr Steven J Main, op. cit. page 18.

²³ <http://www.politcom.ru/article.php?id=2655> 3 May 2006.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 30 May 2006, "Baku otvyazalsya ot rossiyskoy truby" by Sokhbet Mamedov. "It was considered that the idea of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline belonged to Geydar Aliyev. However, recently it became known that the initiator of this project in the 90s of the last century was Washington. In an interview by the Azerbaijan telecompany ANS with Bafa Guluzade (at the time Geydar Aliyev's head of the department for international relations in the presidential administration) [Guladze said] 'Ex-president of the USA Bill Clinton made the first of such proposals to the Azerbaijani leader in a telephone conversation. . . Clinton denoted the route of the pipeline through Georgia to the Turkish port of Ceyhan. For us it was an unexpected proposal, but Geydar Aliyev in a few seconds of considering 'for' and 'against' agreed.

Later Aliyev senior repeatedly called the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan “*My whole life’s work*”.

²⁶ Glen E. Howard “*NATO and the Caucasus: The Caspian Axis*” page 154 in “*NATO After Enlargement: New Challenges, New Missions, New Forces*”, edited by Stephen J. Blank, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, September 1998, “The cornerstone of Western energy security concerns in the Caucasus is the strategic 1,650 km Baku-Ceyhan pipeline which will play a key role in ending Russia’s monopoly over energy routes from the Caspian and offer the West an alternative means for transporting Caspian oil outside of Russian control”.

²⁷ <http://www.politcom.ru/article.php?id=2655> 3 May 2006

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ http://Chechnya.jamestown.org/edm/article.php?article_id=2371043 “*Azerbaijan’s president in Washington*” (Part 2) by Vladimir Socor.

³⁰ <http://www.payvand.com/news/05/oct/1142.html> Payvand’s Iran News, 16 October 2005 “Iran to start gas shipment to Nakhichevan”. “Baku, Oct 16, IRNA - Head of ‘Azeri Gas’ company said here Saturday that Iran will start shipment of natural gas to Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic [NAR] next month...Ali Khan Melikov added that Iran plans to export 350 million cubic metres of natural gas annually to [NAR]...The Teheran Baku agreement calls for exchange of natural gas between the two nations. The Haji Ghabol-Astara pipeline is under construction and will carry gas to Iran.” See also Internet version of Central Asia-Caucasus Institute – Analyst 26 January 2005, “*Iran and Azerbaijan: Toward Normal Relations?*” by Dr Hooman Peinami of CICS, Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford: “Iranian President Mohammad Khatami’s August 2004 visit to Baku resulted in the signing of a security agreement whose specifics are not fully known... As acknowledged by both Baku and Tehran, the visit and its security agreement helped further consolidation of the Iranian-Azerbaijani relations, particularly in the struggle against narcotics, organised crime and terrorism. Security considerations aside, Iran and Azerbaijan have since undertaken many small scale joint projects, including those facilitating land transportation between the two countries. As a recent example on 3 December 2004 the ministries of roads and transportation of Iran and Azerbaijan agreed to build two bridges between their countries for the total value of \$11 million, namely the Pole Dasht-Shah Takhti bridge between Iran and Azerbaijan’s Autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan and the Julfa bridge between Iran and Azerbaijan’s mainland”.

³¹ http://Chechnya.jamestown.org/edm/article.php?article_id=2371043 “*Azerbaijan’s president in Washington*” (Part 2) by Vladimir Socor.

³² *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 24 May 2006 page 3 “*Sud’bu GUAM budet reshat’ Ilkham Aliyev*” by Tat’yana Ivzhenko.

³³ http://www.ng.ru/2006-06-26/7_armenia.html *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* June 2006 “*Mirit’ Aliyeva*” and “*Kocharyana budut po-amerikanskiy*” by Sokhbet Mamedov.

³⁴ Ibid. Matthew Bryza previously had been working in the State Department as an assistant to the US Secretary of State on questions relating to Europe and Eurasia.

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ <http://www.ng.ru/cis/2006-07-03/karabakh.html> *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 3 July 2006 “*Brayza nashel retsept dlya karabakhskoy problemy*” by Sokhbet Mamedov.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 6 September 1997 “*Sud’ba bezhentsev do sikh por neyasna*” by Mekhman Gafarly. “Today more than 1.2 million refugees from Nagornyy Karabakh and Kel’badzhar, Lachin, Kubatly, Zangelan, Dzhabrail’, Fizuli and Agdam rayony are scattered throughout the whole republic.”

³⁹ On the question of the growth of radical Islam in Azerbaijan, it is interesting to note a sense of growing concern amongst Azerbaijan’s Jewish community of some 15,000-40,000. According to the Jewish Telegraph Agency (15 February 2006 internet version) “Azerbaijani Jews are worried over the strengthening of radical Islamists in their small country, and said they feel the anti-Jewish hostility here is growing. . . [This is a sad development] ‘when Jews and Muslims have been living alongside each other in the Caucasus for more than 1,000 years. . . There are many new people who have arrived in Baku recently’ she [Somaz Yusifova, Director of the Hava center a woman’s

organisation in Baku] said. "They look at us and say, "Why should the Jews live in fancy houses when we have nowhere to live"."

⁴⁰ July 2006 estimate http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Azerbaijan.

⁴¹ The author has witnessed prejudice, hostility and discrimination against 'Armenians' in Baku.

⁴² The Lezgin ethnic group is split by the Russian Federation border, between Dagestan and Azerbaijan. There has been a constant clamour for a Lezgin autonomy which would unite the two communities into a separate entity. Lezgins in Azerbaijan feel that they are under constant pressure from the authorities. See Blandy "*Dagestan: The Gathering Storm*", S38, CSRC June 1998, page 21-22 and "*Dagestan: Birth of Presidential Republic: "Amidst Escalating Tension, Violence and Terror"*" and also <http://reporter-ufu.ru/article.cfm?issue=66&article=1284> *Yuzhnyy Reporter* No 53, 5 May 2006. On 25 April 2006 in the village of Usukhchay, Dokuzparinskiy rayon 700 villagers, mainly Lezgins, blocked the road Usukhchay-Akhty with the demand that the rayon head Kerimkhan Abasov relinquish his post on the grounds that he had violated the law by falsifying election results. Dokuzparinskiy rayon is one of the southernmost of Dagestan, bordering Azerbaijan and is peopled in the main by Lezgins. Any flare up near the Russo-Azerbaijan border is potentially dangerous.

⁴³ <http://worldfacts.us/Azerbaijan.htm> "The Talysh in Azerbaijan whose numbers varied from 21,000 in the official census to their own estimates of 200,000 to 300,000 are an Iranian people living in south eastern Azerbaijan and contiguous areas of Iran. Like the Lezgins, the Talysh have called for greater rights since Azerbaijan became independent."

⁴⁴ The Meskhetian Turks were deported by Stalin from Georgia in 1944 to Uzbekistan. As a result of a pogrom in the Fergana valley in 1989 they suffered a further deportation. Only a very small number were allowed to return to Georgia, some were given land in Azerbaijan and the remainder went to an uncertain life in Krasnodar kray. For the background to problem of Meskhetian Turks and the reasons for the presence of some of them in Azerbaijan, see Blandy "*The Meskhetians: Turks or Georgian? – A People without a Homeland*", S34, CSRC, February 1998.

⁴⁵ Personal interview, 2003.

⁴⁶ C.E. Bechhofer, "*In Denikin's Russia and the Caucasus 1919-1920*" London, 1921, page 14. "The 'Free and Independent Social-Democratic State of Georgia' will remain in my memory forever as a classic example of an imperialistic 'small nation', both in the matter of external territorial seizure and in bureaucratic tyranny within the country. Its chauvinism passes all bounds."

⁴⁷ See C W Blandy "*Impact of Baku Oil on Nagornyy Karabakh: Waxing Western Influence: Waning Russian Power*" S33, CSRC, November 1997.

⁴⁸ For example, <http://www.politcom.ru/article.php?id=2655> 3 May 2006 "It is fully possible that Washington in the event of a liberation campaign against Iran is ready for 'a change of chess pieces', that is the transfer of Southern Azerbaijan to the North in exchange for the 'delivery' of Karabakh to the Armenians."

⁴⁹ http://Chechnya.jamestown.org/edm/article.php?article_id=2371038 *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 1 May 2006 "*Azerbaijan on the West's new frontier of energy security*" (Part 1) by Vladimir Socor

⁵⁰ http://chechnya.jamestown.org/edm/article.php_id=2371194 *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 19 June 2006 "*Kazakhstan-Azerbaijan Oil Transport Agreement: Not yet historic, but might become so*" by Vladimir Socor, page 1 of 3 "Trans-Caspian shipments by small-capacity tankers should be seen as a short-term palliative. Kazakhstan's oil output is projected at 150 million tons annually after 2015, largely on the strength of the Kashagan offshore field, which is likely to start commercial production ("early oil") by 2009. Routing that field's output via Russia would be unacceptable from the standpoint of energy security for Kazakhstan and its partners in the transit and consumer countries. Shipping it by tanker to Baku would be the least cost-effective option. The necessary solution is a westbound pipeline on the Caspian seabed to handle the volumes from Kashagan. This can begin operating profitably at below 20 million tons annually, though it must be designed to carry a far larger volume. The output from Kashagan could amply support both the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline at its full capacity and a branch line in Georgia to reach the Black Sea for shipment to Ukraine or Romania".

- ⁵¹ <http://dlib.eastview.com/searchresults/printarticle.jsp?art=31> "Times of Central Asia", 10 May 2001, "Caspian: April Summit Could Hold Key" "Moscow. Russia and Iran have drawn up a joint declaration on the Caspian Sea, in which they state their opposition to the construction of offshore oil and gas pipelines in the area. The document, signed during a visit to Moscow by Iran's President Mohammad Khatami, on 12 March [2001], also admits that treaties dating back to the 1920s and 1940s on the Caspian Sea's legal status need updating, but it does not say how."
- ⁵² <http://www.politcom.ru/article.php?id=2655> 3 May 2006.
- ⁵³ <http://www.politcom.ru/article.php?id=2655> 3 May 2006.
- ⁵⁴ http://chechnya.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?volume_id=416&issue_id=3733&article_id2371102 *The Jamestown Foundation* 7, Issue 20 (May 18, 2006) "Growing Anti-Chechen Sentiment in Azerbaijan" by Anar Valiyev. "Azerbaijan was one of the destinations where Chechen refugees went to avoid atrocities and persecution. Up to 3,000 Chechens, mostly women and children, found refuge in the country during 1994-1996. In the course of the second Russo-Chechen war, the number of refugees reached almost 10,000." "Both the second Russo-Chechen war as well as Putin's aggressive policy in the former soviet space forced Azerbaijan to change its attitude and policy towards the conflict."
- ⁵⁵ http://chechnya.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?volume_id=416&issue_id=3726&article_id2371081 *The Jamestown Foundation*, Issue 19 (May 11, 2006), "Maskhadov Family requests asylum in Finland".
- ⁵⁶ See C W Blandy "Chechen Caravan Trails" P21 CSRC April 1996, page 5, Box 2 and "Pankisskoye Gorge: Residents, Refugees and Fighters" P37, CSRC March 2002. But see also <http://www.politcom.ru/article.php?id=2777>, 25 May 2006 "Na ch'ey storone Baku" by Sergey Mukheyev: "Azerbaijan has never stopped the transit of Islamic radicals into Russia".
- ⁵⁷ http://www.ng.ru//courier/2006-06-26/15_baku.html *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 26 June 2006 "Kto vozvrashchayetsya v Baku iz zarubezhnykh medrese" by Sokhbet Mamedov.
- ⁵⁸ Ambassador Vladimir Kazimirov "We Must Remove Artificial Obstacles to Settling the Karabakh Situation" in "Shaping an Environment for Peace, Stability and Confidence in the South Caucasus", P39 CSRC October 2002, page 62: "I am not a lawyer, but it seems to me that in this instance Soviet Law should be accorded primacy, because these were, after all, Soviet internal administrative borders". For further background see also V. Kazimirov *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn'* No 5, 1996 "Karabakh. Kak eto bylo".
- ⁵⁹ Vladimir Kazimirov was appointed ambassador to the OSCE 'Minsk Group' by President Yel'tsin in 1994.
- ⁶⁰ Kazimirov, "We Must Remove Artificial Obstacles" page 64. "Neither the package solution ('everything at once!' advocated by the Armenians nor the pseudo-phased solution favoured by Baku is attainable. Genuine rather than bogus phasing patently requires balance between each side's gains at each stage. Progress by means of "small packages" (instead of one large one which is too heavy to lift) would gradually reduce tension in the region and give its peoples new hopes of firmly rooted peace... Moreover, such progress by small steps is not so susceptible, even during the election campaigns, to the general allergy to difficult but absolutely inevitable concessions and to attack by ultra-patriots."
- ⁶¹ <http://www.vremya.ru/2006/77/5/151249.html> *Vremya Novostey* No77 04 May 2006 "Karabakh: Pochemu noka nevozmozhen propyv k miru" page 4 of 6.
- ⁶² <http://www.politcom.ru/article.php?id=2777> Politcom.ru 25 May 2006 "Na ch'ey storone Baku?" by Sergey Mukheyev, emphasis added.
- ⁶³ <http://www.politcom.ru/article.php?id=2655> 3 May 2006.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid
- ⁶⁵ NG Dipkur'yer No 10 5 June 2006 page 13 "Ekspansiya svobody na postsovetskom prostranstve" by Alla Yaz'kova.
- ⁶⁶ Ibid.
- ⁶⁷ *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 24 May 2006 page 6 "Yushchenko stavit na transit" by Tat'yana Ivzhenko
- ⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ See Vanora Bennett *Crying Wolf - The Return of the War to Chechnya* Picador, 1998 pages 14-15: "Then came the 'black' republics: Mediterranean-looking Christians and Muslims from the three Transcaucasus republics over the mountain range on Russia's southern border, or Asiatic-looking visitors from the -stan republics. Yevgeniya had nothing good to say about any of them . . . Lower still were the 'black' mini-peoples who lived on the northern slopes of the Caucasus mountains and on the southern reaches of the Volga."

⁷⁰ Rossiyskaya Federatsiya Federal'naya Sluzhba Gosudarstvenoy Statistiki "Svodniye Itogi Vserossiyskoy Perepisi Naseleniya 2002, Volume 14, Moskva, Statistika Rossii, 2005, Table 4.2, page 278.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² <http://www.politcom.ru/article.php?id=2777> 25 May 2006 "Na ch'ey storone Baku?" by Sergey Mukheyev.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Rossiyskaya Federatsiya... Table 4.2, page 314 - 253,644 Ukrainians; 38,570 Moldovans, 54,387 Georgians.

⁷⁷ Dr Steven J Main op. cit. page 18.

Want to Know More ...?

See:

Charles Blandy "*The Caspian: A Catastrophe in the Making – The destruction of a Unique Ecosystem*" S32, CSRC, September 1997.

C W Blandy "*The Caucasus Region and Caspian Basin: "Change, Complication and Challenge"* S36, CSRC, April 1998.

C W Blandy "*The Caspian: Comminatory Crosscurrents*" S40, CSRC, January 1999.

Dr Steven J Main "*The Bear, The Peacock, The Eagle, The sturgeon and the Black, Black Oil: Contemporary Regional Power Politics in The Caspian Sea*", CSRC Caucasus Series 05/67.

Professor Stephen Blank "*Russia and the US in the Middle East: Policies and Contexts*" June 2006, CSRC Middle East Series 06/27.

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