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POLICY PERSPECTIVES ON THE SILK ROAD REGION

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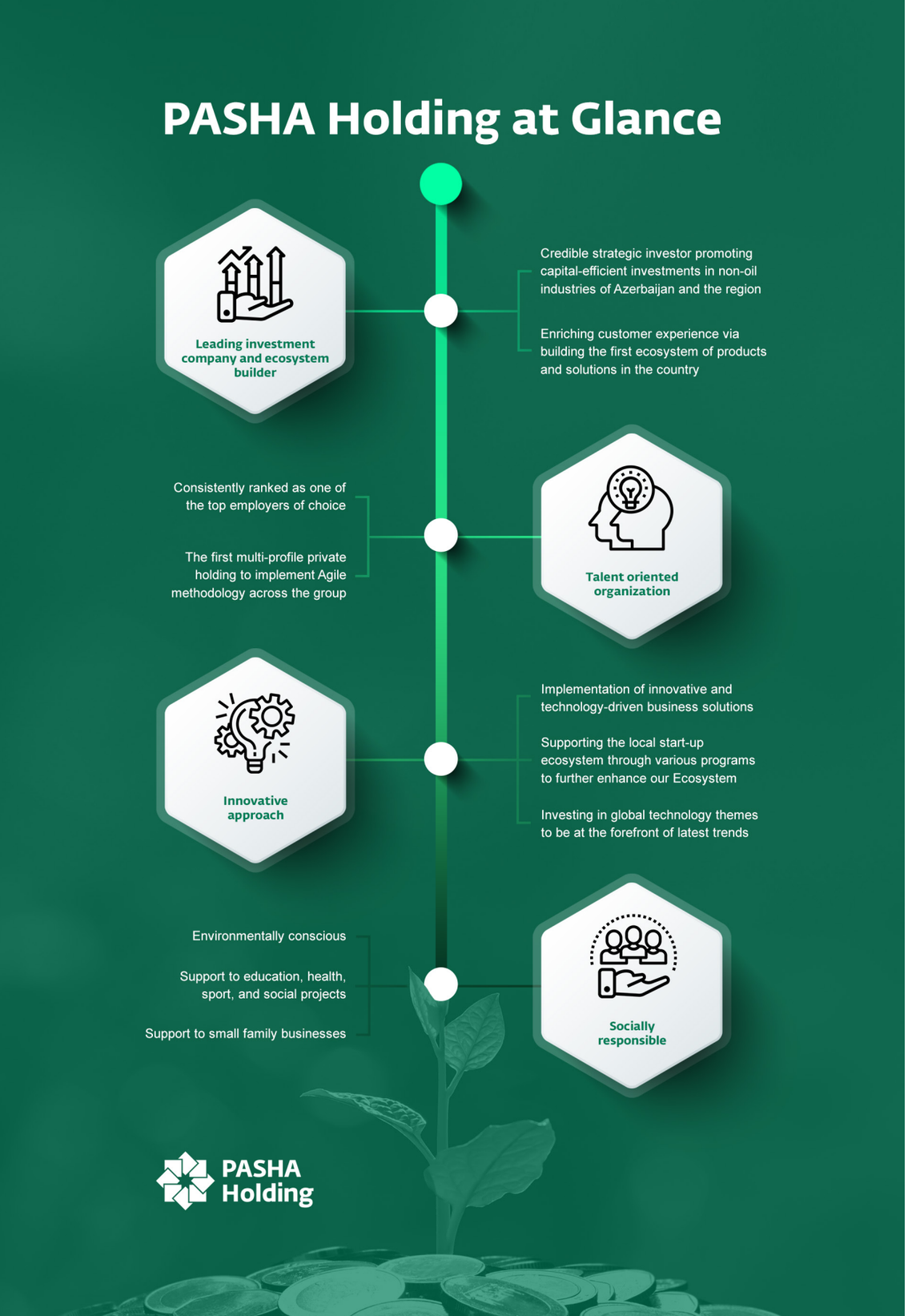

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Jala Garibova

Whether in everyday conversations, media discussions, or social media, not infrequently do we hear assorted debates regarding the use of the term ‘Azeri’ in reference to the titular ethnic group and the titular language of the Republic of Azerbaijan (as well as those who belong to this same group and speak this same language beyond its borders). While the use of ‘Azeri’—although restricted to certain domains—can be traced back many years, debates around the use of this term (and its derivatives) have intensified within the framework of national revival tendencies in post-Soviet Azerbaijan. The main focus of these debates is whether using ‘Azeri’ versus ‘Azerbaijani’ as the name of the titular group and/or language is correct, appropriate, and conceptually comprehensive.

Some find the term ‘Azeri’ fallacious; others produce arguments in its support on the basis of various sources, notably including the *Prose Edda*—an Old Norse account of historical sagas and mythologies written or compiled in Iceland by 13th-century scholar and politician Snorri Sturluson. Proponents of the latter approach point to certain toponyms and ethnonyms found in that text—including ‘Asgard,’ ‘As(as),’ and even ‘Asia,’ as well as to the deity name ‘Æsir’—and on that basis claim the existence of a relationship between these, on one hand, and the root of the word ‘Azer/Aser,’ on another hand. To this can be added the fact that, aside from being the term used to identify the principal pantheon of Nordic mythology, ‘Æsir’ is also used in the *Prose Edda* to designate people from Asia. Moreover, Sturluson himself claims the existence of a link between ‘Æsir’ and the origin of ‘Turks/Tyrks,’ the people who lived in “Tyrkland.” According to this medieval Scandinavian historian, the former left Troy (an ancient city immortalized by Homer and located on the present territory of the Republic of Turkey), where ‘Turks/Tyrks’ lived, to settle in Europe and, in particular, in Scandinavia.

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The main focus of these debates is whether using ‘Azeri’ versus ‘Azerbaijani’ as the name of the titular group and/or language is correct, appropriate, and conceptually comprehensive.

Still others go back to certain reference made by various medieval Islamic scholars and travelers (including Ahmad Al-Ya’qubi, Al-Masudi, and Ibn Hawqal) to languages spoken in northwestern Iran to link them with the terms ‘Azeri/Azari,’ which, according to this point of view, are either of Iranian or Turkic origin.

We will certainly not discuss in detail the veracity of the claims made by Sturluson or the medieval Islamic authors, as this would require an approach far different from one appropriate to a policy journal such as *Baku Dialogues*. We will, however, attempt to shed light on the elements of identity construction discourse in post-Soviet Azerbaijan—of which references to the above-mentioned claims are a part—and also on the reasons the term ‘Azeri’ has produced active debates and sometimes resulted in misunderstandings and even disagreements, both in Azerbaijan and abroad. In order to have a comprehensive picture of the realities (both synchronic and diachronic) surrounding these debates, we have incorporated some degree of a historical-comparative perspective into this article whilst avoiding as much as possible the use of technical and specialist terminology.

National Revival Dynamics

As post-colonial countries, the authorities of the former-Soviet Muslim states—Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan—have placed strong emphasis on national revival since achieving (or re-achieving) independence. In the wake of more than 70 years of having had to share a common Soviet identity—during which time national languages

and identities were constructed as umbrella identities to dominate over, and often suppress, national/ethnic identities of Soviet peoples (although to varying degrees)—the concept of language and affiliation (both ethnic and national) has acquired a significant role in the respective nation-building processes in the former-Soviet Muslim states. Thus in the early 1990s, language and identity became platforms from which to achieve national integration and societal cohesion. This has been sustained, to one degree or another, into the present in those six countries (and of course elsewhere in the Silk Road region). Even today, national revival remains quite an expressive tendency, as we observe the continuing development of linguistic policies and planning, identity politics, education policies, and public and social media discourse strategies taking place in many of these states.

Contemporary tendencies of identity construction in the former-Soviet Muslim States could be viewed as part of a unique post-Soviet phenomenon shaped on the basis of common features.

Overall, the post-Soviet quest for identity in all six of the aforementioned states reflected a tendency of self-redefinition (mainly through changing identity symbols), with a further common goal of achieving self-representation in a global (and regional) setting characterized by geopolitical and socioeconomic rearrangements. This generic tendency is rooted in the commonality of the historical experience of the six countries. Each entered its newest stage in history heavily burdened with the traumatic experience of the Soviet influence on their respective identities. In fact, one can plausibly assert that perhaps never and nowhere in the world but in the Soviet Union were aspects of the national identities of various nations manipulated so skillfully and with such obvious results—the repercussions of which are likely to be felt for generations to come.

The strategic goal of the Soviet nationalities policy was the creation of a unique *Homo Sovieticus* (to refer to the term coined by Alexander Zinoviev in his 1974 satirical monograph)—what the authorities called a "New Soviet Person" understood as an idealized, social archetype shaped by ideological conformity and cultural commonality. The Soviet political system needed such a commonality for the consolidation of the Union—an empire in all but name. A key element of this required the abolishment of existing identity repertoires (whether national/ethnic or corporate) of the nations or communities falling within the borders of the USSR. In spite of the implicit nationalistic tendencies of certain groups of people—mainly representing intelligentsia in the "sovereign" nations of the 15 constituent republics, but also in lesser administrative strata—Soviet decisionmakers were able to create and to some extent implant into the minds of the broad masses feelings of belonging to a large-group, supra-national identity.

For the New Soviet Person, this was expressed in the comprehension of the USSR as the primary motherland, and Russia as "the elderly brother." In fact, the collapse of the Soviet Union was unexpectedly shocking for many (even for those who had longed for it for years). First puzzled by the sudden disconnection with Moscow, the new states then embarked on journeys to establish their own independent polities, and the commonality of the historic experience in the Soviet Union informed not only the content but also dictated, to varying degrees, the direction of their respective future tendencies.

Language and Identity

Language has become an important angle from which political and social tendencies in the six post-Soviet Muslim countries are often analyzed. In fact, language has long been a contributing factor to both the politicization of society and social stratification within each of these states.

Nevertheless, language use and ethnic/national affiliation in Azerbaijan and Central Asia were not necessarily mutually dependable for many centuries, although language is often viewed as the main pillar for the construction of identity and the development of affiliation. Starting from the Middle Ages, the use of Persian, along with Arabic, was spread among educated Muslims. While Arabic was learned and used as the language of the mosque (being the language in which the Holy Quran was composed), Persian became the language of officialdom, literature, and culture in many Muslim states, including those established or run by Turkic clans. In particular, Persian was the cultural

language of Azerbaijani Turks and Central Asians until the beginning of the 20th century. The Turkic literary language, in which a huge number of precious literary works were created, had a significant share of Persian and Arabic borrowings. In reality, the use of the Persian language was a class marker: an indicator of social prestige and education level. It was not necessarily an expression of ethnic or national affiliation or identity.

A similar linguistic pattern of behavior was observed during the period when Russian was the dominant language on the territory of Azerbaijan and the five former-Soviet Central Asian states. More or less from the onset of Russian expansion into these areas, the Russian language became a means for receiving education, developing career opportunities, and, hence, becoming wealthier and more socially prominent. An intelligentsia from what were called the "backward Muslim communities" was being formed mainly thanks to those who had received education in Russia or in educational establishments where the language of education was mainly in Russian. Therefore, Russian was gradually securing a place in the repertoire of educated Muslims, which naturally contributed to positive changes in their linguistic attitude towards this language.

The widespread promotion of the Russian language in the Soviet Union resulted in the decrease of available domains for the expression of native languages, particularly in urban settings. Since the Russian language opened opportunities for better education and cultural development—mainly in the face of lacking native language resources and worse equipped, or totally lacking, native language schools—native languages in urban circles were often looked down upon and associated with backwardness and rural belonging.

The continued use of national languages in rural settings in the peripheries during the Soviet era was among the strongest factors preventing the disappearance of the everyday use of these languages. In Kazakhstan, for example, people in rural areas even credit themselves for preserving the native language and culture, which is obvious from their referring to urban Kazakhs—many of whom do not (or at least did not until recently) know the native language—as "asphalt Kazakhs."

In Azerbaijan, the situation was somewhat more favorable for the native language. Azerbaijani was always used as a language of instruction not only at the primary and secondary

school level but also in higher education. (Azerbaijan was one of only three constituent Soviet republics—the other two were Georgia and Armenia—that recognized its titular language as a state language in its own constitution.) Moreover, Azerbaijani was a required subject in Russian-medium instruction schools at all levels. Therefore, if the urban elites in Central Asia (especially in Kazakhstan) were, for most part, Russian monolinguals, in Azerbaijan they were mostly bilingual, although in many cases their Russian was much better than their Azerbaijani, and some of their family members either did not want or were not able to use their native languages in everyday discourse.

The continued use of national languages in rural settings in the peripheries during the Soviet era was among the strongest factors preventing the disappearance of the everyday use of these languages.

However, both in Azerbaijan and the Central Asia states, language preference shifts of any degree were not expressions of shifts in ethnic affiliation (although these were, as noted above, strong social markers); the bottom line was that linguistic aptitude in Russian did not mean one had become Russian. This was due at least in part to the fact that the Soviet regime did not aim at making everyone Russian; rather, the purpose was to shape a Soviet citizenry (along the New Soviet Person archetype) able to communicate in a common language yet representing differing ethnic backgrounds.

Painting in broad strokes, one could say that the Soviet nationalities policy was based on the recognition and development of distinct nationalities (understood within acceptable ideological parameters) with distinct cultures and languages. Hence, the spread of Russian, which was promoted to dominance over other languages spoken by the various nationalities inhabiting the Soviet Union, did not imply the elimination of national languages. The nationalities were to keep their national languages and create literature and art in these and with a sort of native spirit. This would reach out to the broad masses in order to spread the Soviet ideology among them. Certainly, the results of the prevalence of the Russian language—particularly in the main cities of Azerbaijan and the five Central Asian republics—often

led to Russian monolingualism and resulted in shifts from native language usage among city elites; and in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan this additionally brought about sweeping changes in urban language ecologies (in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan demographics were another significant factor, as the major cities in these republics became heavily populated by Russians). In fact, the Soviets had to mainly rely on peripheries in the enforcement of their nationalities policy: on people who were powerful channels in transmitting folklore, music, customs, traditions, and literature in their respective native languages, the content of which was also ideologized.

An interesting illustration of the Soviets' appeal to national spirits in shaping the Soviet identity is a 1948 Politburo resolution regarding the ethnic-Georgian composer Vano Muradeli's opera *The Great Friendship* that had recently had its premier. While the main target of the criticism in that resolution was the alleged falsification of historic facts in the libretto (Stalin took a personal interest in this affair, which reminded him of the suicide of one of his formerly close collaborators, after attending one of the opera's first performances in Moscow), a number of composers (among them Dmitri Shostakovich and Sergei Prokofiev) were also slammed for formalism, rejection of melody, and for engaging in some anti-art and anti-people directions that the denied traditional foundations of music and high expectations of the Soviet peoples. The resolution called on "Soviet composers to imbue themselves with the high spirit and refined taste with which the Soviet people make demands on music and [...] to ensure such an upsurge in creative work that will quickly move the Soviet musical culture forward."

National languages were also prime sources and useful instruments for spreading Soviet ideology among the masses. Moreover, the Soviet version of Russian culture was not able to make significant inroads into the core of existing socio-cultural practices as manifested on occasions like weddings, funerals, cuisine, music, dances, marriage patterns, naming practices, and so on. Even preserved religious affiliations remained strong. Although attending religious ceremonies was banned in various phases (and when allowed, always frowned upon), people nevertheless continued to follow religious rituals associated with holiday in familial settings. Nor was the Russian language able to penetrate into traditional practices. Even those who

were not fluent in Azerbaijani used that language (though at the informal level), not Russian, for the performance of wedding speeches, for the expression of best wishes during traditional holiday gatherings, for the conveying of condolences during funerals, and so on.

On the contrary, Russian generally served—as we have already noted—as a language that provided better opportunities for education and employment in the entire region. It was, hence, viewed as a social, not national marker, and was not equivalent to national identity. At most, it was a marker of "being urban" and "more cultural," and was utilized as an instrument of prejudice against the non-urban. And, of course, it served as the pan-Soviet *lingua franca* (Russian continues to perform this function across most of the former-Soviet space today).

So, in reality, the linkage between language and identity in the former-Soviet Muslim states is, first of all, of a social character. Thus, in the context of social integration and national solidarity, what mattered (and still does) is not only who you are and what language you speak; what is also at least of equal importance is how you (and others) define your ethnic belonging and native language.

The Case of Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan, one of the five Turkic-speaking (and one of the six majority Muslim) sovereign republics of the Soviet Union, regained its independence in 1991. As in the case in all former-Soviet republics, the drive for independence was, in one form or another, partly (and implicitly) initiated by processes that had begun to emerge in embryonic form in the late 1980s, especially through the implementation of the policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika*.

However, the degree to which the immediate post-Soviet nation-building processes were smooth or painful, quiet or intensive, slow or speedy, soft or radical could be linked to various factors. These included previous statehood experiences, previous or existing territorial or ethnic conflicts, history of socio-cultural development, literary traditions, history of media, as well as the status, use, and development of the literary language. All these factors, whether taken one at a time or collectively, varied among the former-Soviet Muslim countries. Azerbaijan was among the countries where the nation-building process was accompanied with vigor and expressiveness, but also with a degree of pain and trauma due to the onset and

subsequent outcome of the First Karabakh War.

The major nation-building ideology of post-1991 Azerbaijan can be said to be what has come to be known as "Azerbaijanism," which constituted the core element of identity construction. A close review of nearly three decades of Azerbaijan's post-independence development shows three main strategies of identity reconstruction: policy formulation and legislation (laws, presidential decrees, etc.), construction of symbolic and discursive resources (creating or recreating narratives), and social engagement (active patriotism). The first two strategies were more characteristic of the first two decades after independence, while the third one gained more salience during the third decade of independence. The main focal point in identity construction, in particular in the early years of independence, was language and national/ethnic affiliation." Interestingly, one of the strongest points of debate for Azerbaijanis was not only the issue of language use per se, but also the issue of its name, to which both of the below questions were simultaneously relevant: a) how do (and should) we call ourselves and our language; and b) how do (and should) others refer to us and our language.

The major nation-building ideology of post-1991 Azerbaijan can be said to be what has come to be known as "Azerbaijanism," which constituted the core element of identity construction.

The years immediately following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in Azerbaijan saw intensive Turkification in almost all spheres including politics, foreign relations, language policy, and narrative shaping. These were years characterized by strong and highly expressive tendencies of romantic nationalism, when Turkism took prevalence over other identity paradigms: the term 'Türk' was a preferred form of reference, both for the country's titular ethnic group and its language. It appeared in formal documents, laws, media, textbooks, and public discourse, thus replacing the term 'Azerbaijani' for a time.

Clearly, this was a response to the identity trauma caused by Soviet identity politics and a tendency that both resulted from and then accompanied (but also

enhanced) the process of de-Sovietization. Supported mostly (and often in its more radical form) by more nationalistically oriented political groups (and the political elites represented by these groups), Turkification tendencies lost their intensity when the New Azerbaijan Party, headed by Heydar Aliyev, came to power in 1993—although here it must be stressed that the recognition of the Turkic roots of Azerbaijan's titular nation was not denied and continues to remain a significant background element in the country's identity discourse.

The debates over the terms 'Azerbaijani' versus 'Turkish/Turkic' lost salience with the adoption of the 1995 Constitution, which stated the name of the titular language to be 'Azerbaijani.'

The debates over the terms 'Azerbaijani' versus 'Turkish/Turkic'—but also those centered on adopting the existing Turkish alphabet versus a distinct Azerbaijani one as part of the process of shifting away from the Cyrillic script that had been in use throughout most of the Soviet period—lost salience with the adoption of the 1995 Constitution, which stated the name of the titular language to be 'Azerbaijani.' However, this also produced a concessive paradigm of 'Azerbaijani Turk' ('Azərbaycan Türkü') as the name of the country's titular group and 'Azerbaijani Turkish/Azerbaijani Turkic' ('Azərbaycan Türkcəsi') as the name of the country's titular language. Both became reference points for groups for whom Turkicness was an important part of identity expression. While these terms did not make inroads into official domains in the country, they did become part of public discourse and scholarly parlance and were (and still are, in some quarters) used simultaneously (and somehow competitively) with the term 'Azerbaijani.'

What has often produced intensive debates in traditional media (television, print) and on various social media channels was not so much related to the competition between proponents of these two categories of terms but rather to their competing representations in formal and informal discourse. Both terms appear in two forms, where we encounter either the element 'Azerbaijani' or its reduced form 'Azeri.' Here we come to the crux of the matter.

The term 'Azeri' is basically used by foreigners, including citizens of Turkey, and most frequently in reference to the name of Azerbaijan's titular language. While many foreigners that opt to use the form 'Azeri' genuinely believe they employ the correct term for referring to the country's titular language, the use of this reduced form usually sparks an emotional reaction among Azerbaijanis. To some, the reduced form—particularly if used formally—is considered a disparagement, as it allegedly depreciates the importance of the name of the nation and its language. Thus, these people take it as a mark of disrespect towards the people of Azerbaijan and their language. Others believe that many foreigners use the reduced form because they think this is the right one to use and that these foreigners simply need to be informed about the correct form. Still others see the term 'Azeri' as dangerous, as it implicitly links Azerbaijan's titular ethnicity to some hypothetical group that would be, by implication, non-Turkic (we will come to a discussion later on about how this hypothetical ethnicity is termed 'Azer' by some). Consequently, these people prefer the use of a term that can be directly associated with at least the geographical origin of the titular nation (i.e., with Azerbaijan) in the absence of the name that would clearly show the Turkic origin of the titular nation.

History of Identity Construction

Let us now take a step back by examining the nature of these debates in the context of the historic route along which the terms describing the ethnic name and language of the titular group took shape. Historically, the titular ethnic group in Azerbaijan was 'Turk,' although the majority of Azerbaijanis used the word 'Muslim' as self-reference. As a result of great power competition and several wars and resulting peace treaties, the geographic space inhabited by ethnic-Azerbaijanis became divided between the Russian and Persian empires in the early 19th century (around the time the Napoleonic Wars were being fought in Europe). At some point thereafter, Azerbaijanis living in the Russian Empire also came to be called 'Tatars,' a term imposed by imperial discourse. Azerbaijanis living in Iran, on the other hand, were and still are referred to as 'Turks.'

Historically, the titular ethnic group in Azerbaijan was 'Turk,' although the majority of Azerbaijanis used the word 'Muslim' as self-reference.

Again, for Azerbaijanis living in the Russian Empire the popular form of self-reference was 'Muslim.' The word 'Turk' gained significance among Azerbaijanis in the Russian Empire only towards the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, when the intelligentsia began to promote Turkicness (affiliation with the Turkic root) as a platform from which to promote a national awakening. Turkicness (or Turkism) was not promoted as a political platform but rather as a liberal socio-cultural movement within the framework of which the intelligentsia representing the Turkic communities, including Azerbaijanis (or Azerbaijani Turks), tried to solve problems of literacy and education within their communities, establish media in local languages, and launch alphabet/language reforms.

Turkism also became an important element in the national-liberation movement of the Azerbaijani intelligentsia at the beginning of the 20th century—the movement that led in the formation of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR), which existed between 1918 and 1920. The ideology on which the Republic was grounded incorporated Turkism as one of the basic elements—the other one being Azerbaijanism. The name 'Azerbaijan' was introduced by the ADR's founders on the basis of linguistic and cultural proximity with the population living in the Azerbaijan province of Iran. Mahammad Amin Rasulzade, whose words and deeds stood at the root of the ADR's state ideology, also claimed that the south-eastern part of the Caucasus was also historically referred to as "Azerbaijan." Historians claim that the name 'Azerbaijan' as a political term based on geographic affiliation was chosen also for the purpose of accommodating non-Turkic minority groups: thus 'Azerbaijan' was also seen as a supra-ethnic identity from the perspective of the ADR's founders.

Thus, the paradigm that incorporated Turkism as an ethno-cultural affiliation together with Azerbaijanism as a citizenship affiliation played a significant role in shaping the national identity of Azerbaijanis in the first decades of the 20th century. That Turkism was a strong element—and that it was promoted also within the context of Azerbaijanism—is obvious from even a cursory examination of *inter*

alia the constitution, laws, official declarations, and parliamentary speeches of the two years during which the ADR existed. On the other hand, an examination of the literature and journalism produced during those and surrounding years also reveal, for the most part, a type of discourse elevating Turkism as a strong element of ethnic affiliation together with Azerbaijanism as a framework of a societal/statehood affiliation within which Turkism should be promoted.

Turkism was still a strong point of discourse even in the first years of Soviet state-building and language-planning initiatives. In official domains, the name of the titular nation and its language was known as 'Türk' (Turkish/Turkic) and textbooks teaching the mother tongue were published under the title *Türk Dili* (meaning "Turkish/Turkic language"). In particular, during the years of what was known as "indigenization" (or "rootedness" or "nativization"—the term in Russian is 'korenizatsiya'), members of the local intelligentsia were coopted, their native language-promotion and literacy initiatives were favored, and local cadres with knowledge of the local titular languages were trained and incorporated into the nomenklatura. Inspired by this (but probably also by the close relations between Ankara and Moscow in the early days of both the Republic of Turkey and the USSR), the local intelligentsia placed strong emphasis on Turkism as a building element for language and alphabet reforms, including the development of a common Turkic script and terminology, which would bring all Turks of the Soviet Union closer together and allow them to benefit from one another and from certain achievements in Turkey in relevant fields.

This sort of thinking was also given pride of place at the First Turkology Congress, which was held in Baku in 1926. In retrospect, however, this event came to represent the beginning of the end of the "Turkism era" in the Soviet Union. Those who were active promoters of Turkic language unification and who referred to the cultural and linguistic closeness of all Turks were labeled as "Pan-Turkists" and punished severely. Many of them went on to become victims of Stalin's Great Purge of the late 1930s.

In this period, the term 'Turkish/Turkic' came to be squeezed out gradually from public discourse and replaced by the term 'Azərbaycan,' which stands for both 'Azerbaijan' and 'Azerbaijani' (e.g., 'Azərbaycan dili' meaning 'Azerbaijani' or the 'Azerbaijani language'), as well as the term 'Azərbaycanlı,' which stands for the word 'Azerbaijanian' or 'Azerbaijani'—a reference to ethnic affiliation. It has been noted in several sources, though, that before late 1930s (when the term 'Azerbaijani' came to be used to refer to the titular ethnic group), the term was used to cover the entire population of Azerbaijan. The late 1930s thus represents the start of a historic stage that marked the onset of an era of identity reshaping for the people of Azerbaijan: affiliation with the Turkic world began to wane, whether this be understood in terms of language, history, or culture. Histories were rewritten to overshadow or de-emphasize the titular nation's Turkic roots and its natural links with the Turkic language and culture. As a result, the titular ethnic group of Azerbaijan was gradually pulled away from recognizing its ethnic roots, true history, and longstanding affiliation with the greater Turkic world.

Although some claim—based on a few cases of the usage of the term 'Azerbaijani' as a reference to a citizen of Azerbaijan (in particular before late 1930s)—that the word 'Azerbaijani' was invented as a corporate term to encompass all ethnicities living in Azerbaijan, Soviet-era records and statistical accounts clearly show that ethnic minorities had retained their original names. Thus, in the Soviet era, the word 'Azerbaijani' was not an umbrella term for the entire population of Azerbaijan, but only for the titular ethnic group; and it was only the titular group whose name had undergone intervention. As such, even in contemporary Azerbaijan, minorities can formally claim both ethnic and citizenship identity levels whilst for the titular group there is no such two-layer identity paradigm—at least at the level of formal discourse (understood as official documents, legislation, decrees, speeches by state leaders, and so on).

Certainly, self-perception among representatives of the titular group became more nuanced in the process of de-Sovietization. This process, we can note, saw a huge shift in historical narrative with regards to the ethnic roots of the titular nation, as well as produced a *rapprochement* in bilateral relations with Turkey not only in political but also in educational and cultural spheres, in turn contributing to an overall *rapprochement* between the two countries and the heightened popularity of the phrase "one nation, two states." Thus, more and more Azerbaijanis, in particular those of younger age, emphasize the underlying Turkic identity of the titular nation and make a relevant reference to it in informal

discourse, media debates, and social media interaction. This has also been affected by Azerbaijan's increasing role in the activities of Turkic integrative academic and cultural networks like the International Organization of Turkic Culture (Türksoy), but also the Turkic Council.

However that may be, the use of the word 'Azerbaijani' to refer to a supra-ethnic identity is predominantly a new, post-Soviet approach. The term 'Türk,' which laid at the foundation of the immediate post-Soviet identity construction in Azerbaijan, was not met with unequivocal favor, however, and was contested by some groups for whom 'Türk' referred only to the Turks of Turkey. Of course, Soviet nation-building had done its job: for many, true knowledge about the ethnic composition of the titular nation had already gone into oblivion.

The use of the word 'Azerbaijani' to refer to a supra-ethnic identity is predominantly a new, post-Soviet approach.

Certainly, there were other groups in Azerbaijan that, while recognizing the historic roots of the titular group, still preferred the term 'Azerbaijani' as a discrete identity that had already been shaped as a distinctive paradigm over a period of decades. This position was also defended by minority groups and Russian-speaking Azerbaijanis for whom the terms 'Azerbaijani' was a safer paradigm in terms of preserving their ethnic or cultural identity.

Azerbaijaniness as an ethnic identity began to be enhanced in 1993 with the adoption of a series of laws and legislative acts. The 1995 promulgation of a new Constitution—whereby the name of the ethnic group and its language was officially established as 'Azerbaijani'—represents a further milestone. Separately, the term 'Azerbaijani' is also used to imply the entire people of Azerbaijan, including both the titular group and the country's ethnic minorities—although the titular ethnic group is still referred to as 'Azerbaijani' (not 'Turk') in formal discourse and many people in Azerbaijan prefer to identify themselves as Azerbaijanis to explicitly distinguish themselves from the Turks of Turkey. In other words, according to this latter conception, an 'Azerbaijani' is defined as a citizen of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Our observations of the discourse dynamics of the past few months have revealed a strengthened self-perception of identity as 'Azerbaijani' in the context of the return of Karabakh and the restoration of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity brought about by its victory in the Second Karabakh War. This historic event has not just become a factor in restoring national sentiments of justice and dignity for Azerbaijanis; it has also strengthened the concept of citizenship identity that has come to express not only peaceful co-existence between the titular and minority groups in Azerbaijan but also contributed to the further unification of all ethnic groups living in the country by providing an opportunity to genuinely come together in common cause.

Here we can also note other factors that have contributed to the enhancement of the citizenship identity among Azerbaijanis. Multiculturalism, which was declared as Azerbaijan's state strategy in 2013 and has been communicated through various national pride initiatives since then, should be seen as an additional factor shaping a stronger citizenship identity. Although much remains to be achieved in the practical sphere, this strategy has generated a significant level of discourse within the country regarding not only tolerance but also, more broadly, the cross-cultural dimensions of Azerbaijani society; this has in turn generated feelings of pride among Azerbaijanis and deepened the harmonious coexistence of different cultural, linguistic, and religious group within the country.

Efforts undertaken in the construction of an agentive identity through engaging social agency, as noted above, should also be viewed as another serious factor enhancing citizenship identity. With the progress of nation-building, top-down identity policies themselves produce and encourage social engagement by enabling social agency. Social agency includes the incorporation of active involvement by various groups and the contribution of various types of experience into the overall identity ideology. Discourse in the country has recently focused on social agency and action as expressions of national spirit and patriotism, which, in turn, has been accompanied by a number of important steps taken to engage younger citizens as active participants in the construction of a new Azerbaijani society.

Such steps include the financing of the education abroad and the recruitment of young people (including those educated through

such sponsored education programs outside Azerbaijan) in newly established social service structures (such as the DOST Agency, the ASAN service), government offices, research think-tanks, and international culture and sporting events. Recent political discourse has also emphasized the importance of constructive patriotism for modern nation-building. It can be predicted that the country's citizenship identity shaped through such and similar processes will become a strong stimulus for further enhancing citizens' self-perception as 'Azerbaijani.'

Here it might be useful to add that similar tendencies of redefinition have recently been taking place in Kazakhstan: although observed mainly among Russians, there is a new trend in the country to use the term 'Kazakhstani' (i.e., someone or something from Kazakhstan) interchangeably with the term 'Kazakh' (the term used for the titular ethnic group of the country). The term 'Kazakhstani' is used in popular and sometimes academic literature, mainly in the Russian language, as a reference to the entire population of the country. As a reaction to this, there even appeared some debates in the country's press as to whether the name of the country should be changed to something like 'Qazaq eli' ('Kazakh land').

Avowed vs. Ascribed Identity

If we consider the identity repertoires of Azerbaijanis through the lens of avowed versus ascribed identities—in other words, if we look at the identity repertoires as they are expressed by various social groups themselves—then we can observe that there is no single choice of identity format for Azerbaijanis in terms of ethnic/national affiliation. Moreover, what is most frequently observed is a co-existence of, and sometimes a clash between, different identity paradigms in a single repertoire. We must note here that while identity is certainly a multi-layered phenomenon in itself—and that each identity paradigm undoubtedly includes several components—the historical record suggests that one or two of its components emerge as most distinct and most salient in most cases. Thus, it is possible to distinguish at least five distinct identity paradigms, each of which will be examined briefly in turn.

First, the discrete national identity format of Azerbaijanism. This format is most preferred by those within the titular group who wish to identify themselves discretely and distinctly as Azerbaijanis and reject Turkism as a format which, according to them, overshadows the discrete Azerbaijani identity. For them, identification with Azerbaijan as a geographical term and/or as the name of a state is a basis for identifying the titular ethnic group: most important is the territory and the state to which they belong rather than to the greater Turkic world from which their ancestors originate. Also, some of those who adhere to the term 'Azerbaijani' reject the term 'Turk' because they think that the ethno-genetic structure of Azerbaijanis is a complex one, since the dominant Turkic element in the ethno-genesis of Azerbaijanis has mixed with a variety of other elements (including Iranian and Caucasian ones) through many centuries following the migration of the Seljuk Turks from Asia in the 11th century (and possibly earlier migrations of Turks, as many scholars in both Turkey and Azerbaijan claim the presence of Turks in this part of the world long before then). This identity format is also preferred by those groups, whether titular or minority, for whom the citizenship identity is prior to the ethnic identity. These groups see Azerbaijanism as an umbrella paradigm covering both titular and minority groups at the level of citizenship. In this context, it is possible to view this paradigm also as a social/societal identity format.

Second, the corporate identity format of Turkism. This paradigm is mostly preferred by groups representing the titular ethnicity for whom affiliation with a larger group is more important than the identity provided by citizenship. It should be noted in this context that various corporate identity models based on religious, cultural, ethnic, and sometimes geographical ties have emerged in Azerbaijan at different stages of history and played a powerful role in the structuring of the states that emerged on the territory of today's Azerbaijan (and the north-west part of Iran), as well as in the development of national or social identity. Today, however, the most salient corporate identity among Azerbaijanis is Turkism. Although a corporate Muslim identity has also emerged as a post-Soviet phenomenon, it is not as widespread and not active due, first of all, to the prevalence of secularism in Azerbaijan.

Third, a mixed identity format that has various representations, including Azerbaijani+Turkic; Azerbaijani+ ex-Soviet; Azerbaijani+ ethnic non-Turkic; Azerbaijani+ Caucasian, Azerbaijani+cosmopolitan, etc. This paradigm is claimed by those who prefer to identify themselves through a dual or a more complex affiliation. For some (in particular for minorities

living in Azerbaijan), this duality is constructed as ethnic+national/citizenship identity; for others, this is a paradigm that has at least two layers: a primary ethnic (or ethnic-national with respect to those for whom Azerbaijani is both ethnic and national identity) layer and a secondary one that is associated with a broader geography (e.g., Azerbaijani+Caucasian, which is the least popular but may emerge as a growing tendency in the context of post-Second Karabakh War peacebuilding endeavors and the growing emphasis on regional co-existence), a grander ethnic layer (in particular, Azerbaijani+Turkic), a cultural past (Azerbaijani+ex-Soviet or Azerbaijani+Russian), a mixed family background (Azerbaijani+Russian, Azerbaijani+other ethnic minority, etc.), or an international education background that adds cosmopolitan elements into the identity paradigm (Azerbaijani+American). Unlike the corporate identity format, wherein the smaller segment merges into the bigger one, the mixed identity format accommodates two or several segments, which allows these to co-exist more or less without tension.

Fourth, an ethnic identity format that is claimed by two groups: a) representatives of ethnic minorities for whom ethnic affiliation is prior to their citizenship identity; b) representatives of the titular group who consider the term 'Azerbaijani' as an ethnic identity to be delusive since it implies a geographical as opposed to an ethnic affiliation. These groups identify themselves as Turks of Azerbaijan, and their identification is different from those for whom being a Turk is a more generic concept that equals to being a member of a common Turkic family. As distinct from the latter, the former recognizes and adheres to a distinct format of Turkicness that has developed on the territory of Azerbaijan for centuries. To a degree, this can be compared to another discrete Turkism paradigm—namely, Turkestani Turkism—claimed by Central Asians, in particular by Uzbeks, who often claim that they, not the Turks of Turkey, are the world's real, pure, and authentic Turks.

Fifth, identity as an individual that is claimed by a small, marginal group composed mainly of young people with liberalist, libertarian, or sometimes anarchist tendencies. Individuals belonging to this category—especially those identifying themselves as libertarian or anarchist—reject any kind of affiliation with the nation-state, or with national or citizenship identity, and prefer to identify themselves as individuals qua individuals, and even avoid any strong emphasis on ethnic affiliation.

'Azeri' or Not 'Azeri'

Here we should make an additional yet critically important point. None of the above discussed identity paradigms imply any relationship with the aforementioned old ethnic Iranian group that falls under the moniker 'Azer(i)/Azar(i)' that—as alleged by one of the founders of Pan-Iranism, the Iran-based scholar Ahmad Kasravi, in his famous treatise *Azari or the Ancient Language of Azerbaijan* (1925)—were ancient Persians and lived in Azerbaijan before the arrival of the Seljuk Turks and were then assimilated by Turks to become present-day Azerbaijanis/Azerbaijani Turks, losing their original language in the process. (Here we can add that Kasravi basically had in mind the province of Azerbaijan, which occupies the north-western part of Iran, as he never accepted the name 'Azerbaijan' for the territory on the other side of the Arax river, namely, the present-day Republic of Azerbaijan identified by him as Caucasian Albania.) Neither do any of the five paradigms imply any relationship with the would-be language under the name 'Azeri' spoken by this alleged 'Azer/Azeri/Azari' group.

Kasravi's ideology, known also as Kasravism in Azerbaijani scholarship, is rejected by many scholars, writers, and public figures in Azerbaijan (including Adalat Tahirzade, Nasib Nasibli, Aydin Balayev, Gazanfar Kazimov, and Shirvani Adilli) who do not accept the delusive term 'Azeri' to denote an extinct Iranian language. They see Kasravi's hypothesis as a strategy towards denying Azerbaijanis' Turkic roots and presenting them as Turkified Persians: Kasravi claimed that Azerbaijanis were of Iranian, not Turkic origin, and that their language was Turkified with the migration of the Seljuks when the influx of Turkic words into their native 'Azeri/Azari' language began. Following the above-mentioned Azerbaijani scholars and writers, we would like to emphasize here that there is simply no basis on which to prove this hypothetical 'Azeri' language. In fact, Kasravi and his followers (some also from Azerbaijan) have not provided any illustration whatsoever confirming the existence of the 'Azeri/Azari' language or a particular ethnic group speaking this purported language. Kasravi claimed that 'Azari/Azeri,' or 'Old Azari/Old Azeri' is

an ancient Iranian dialect that was once widespread in almost the entire province of Azerbaijan (in Iran) up to the Arax river and became extinct after the migrations of Seljuks. Some scholars who came in his wake and expanded his hypothesis (particularly Boris Miller) claimed that 'Old Azeri/Old Azari' was spoken in Ardabil, a city in northwestern Iran, and that some Tati varieties spoken in Iranian Azerbaijan (in particular, Harzandi and Karingani) are remnants of this extinct language.

Moreover, there are scholars in Azerbaijan who claim that the Talysh language is also a descendant of this alleged 'Azari/Azeri' language. First, it is unlikely that a widely-spoken language would go extinct without leaving any traces (it takes a long time even for less widely-spread languages to go extinct): if Iranian languages and dialects of various scopes and breadths have survived in Iran and Azerbaijan since ancient times to our days, then how come such a widely-spoken language—namely, the hypothetical 'Azeri/Azari'—has not survived at all? Also, as Shirvan Adilli indicates, in the medieval period when verbal (as opposed to written) communication prevailed, assimilation was hardly possible: quite simply, it is difficult to imagine the rapid assimilation of an entire ethnic group and its widespread language disappearing without a trace. If a language is to be considered extinct, then there will be no lingering remnants. Furthermore, the Tati language, with its varieties, is a language in its own right and its different dialects have been spoken in northwestern Iran for ages: Tats are mentioned as early as in Herodotus' account of the Achaemenids, and, with the sole exception of the hypothesis put forward by Kasravi and his followers, they have never been identified as 'Azeris/Azaris' in any historical record. As far as the Talysh language is concerned, the term 'Talysh' has been existent in history since ancient times and the origin of the ethnonym is linked to the term 'Cadusi,' an ancient Iranian group, which is also mentioned in Strabo's work. These facts speak against both the Tati and the Talysh languages being secondary to, and descending from, an illusionary language identified by the term 'Azeri.'

Kasravi and his supporters refer to a few medieval Arabic scholars and travelers who, it is claimed, used the word 'al-Azariyya/al-Adariyya' (the Arabic letter representing the second letter of the word 'Azariyya' is pronounced somewhat between *z* and *d*, like the English dental sound represented by the letter combination *th* as in in the word 'that,' hence the two versions of spelling) when describing languages spoken in some parts of the territory of present-day northwestern Iran—historically known as Atropatene, a kingdom established by the Persian/Achaemenid satrap Atropates in 323 BC, which according to some scholars, including Tadeusz Swietochowski, also lies at the source of the name 'Azerbaijan.'

However, although these Arabic sources refer to different languages spoken on the territory of Atropatene, these references do not imply any linkage between the word naming a language and the name of an ethnic group speaking that same language. For example, the Arabic sources to which Kasravi refers describe these languages using such collocations as 'al-Azariyya/al-Adariyya,' 'al-Fahlaviyya/al-Pahlaviyya,' and 'al-Dariyya.' None of these are the names of ethnic groups (at least during the time when these sources appeared) or the names of languages pertaining to a particular ethnic group: Pahlavi (although the term derives from the form *Parthawik*, which means "Parthian") was known as the official language of the Sassanid Empire but was also used by medieval scholars as a reference to the Iranian dialects spoken in the western and northwestern parts of Iran. 'Dari,' which literally means "court language," is a political name given to New Persian since the 10th century but is also used by medieval-era scholars as a reference to the Iranian dialects spoken in the eastern and northeastern parts of Iran. It is thus evident that the medieval Arab scholars and travelers to whom Kasravi referred were making references to particular areas where those languages and dialects were spoken or to particular populations living in those areas, and not to ethnicities. Nothing more.

As far as 'al-Azariyya/al-Adariyya' is concerned, many scholars claim that this is a reduced, modified, or distorted form originating from a longer name 'Azerbaijan,' which evolved from the word 'Atropatene' while being subject to various transformations in Arabic and Persian including *Aturpatkan, Adurbadagan, Adarbadgan, Âzarâbâdagân*, etc. Moreover, as Kazimov indicates, in a number of Arabic sources the above-mentioned collocation appears in the form 'al-Azarbi(yya)/al-Adarbiyya' or 'al-Azarbicide/al-Adarbicide' (Kazimov refers to one medieval source where the author uses the collocation 'ba-l-Azarbicide/ba-l-Adarbicide' to imply "in the language of people of Azerbaijan"). Also, as we examine

the scholarly interpretations of the reports made by medieval Islamic authors, we see that only a restricted number among them—including Al-Masoudi (10th century) and Yaqut al-Hamawi (12-13th centuries)—referred to 'al-Azariyya/al-Adariyya'; there were others—e.g., Ibn-al-Muqaffa (8th century), Ibn-Hawqal (10th century), Hamza Esfahani (10th century), and Al-Moqaddasu (10th century)—who mentioned other names when describing the languages of northwest Iran. For example, Ibn-al-Muqaffa mentioned that the languages spoken in the Azerbaijan of Iran were called 'Pahlavi/Fahlavi' and Ibn Hawqal referred to them as 'al-Farisyya' (Persian languages). Al-Moqaddasi stated that the languages and dialects spoken in the Azerbaijan of Iran were partly Dari and partly convoluted, all of which are known as Farsi. The word 'al-Azariyya' is indeed mentioned by Ya'qubi (9th century), but again as a reference to Persians from a particular area: "The people of Azerbaijan are a mixture of Ajams of 'al-Azariyya/al-Adariyya' and old Javedanis." (To clarify, 'Ajam' is an Arabic word meaning a non-native of Arabic often used to indicate Iranians, and 'Javedanis' is used to identify followers of Javidan, the leader of the Khurramites, a 9th-century Iranian political and religious movement.)

However obscure this journey into scholarly disputations may appear to some readers, it is in many ways necessary to refer to them notwithstanding the fact that this essay should not be considered to be an extension of the debate about whether the languages referred by the aforementioned Arabic authors belonged to Turkic, Iranian, or some other language family/group; in fact, this issue should be of no importance with respect to the main points of the present essay. Indeed, these Arab travelers could have encountered a variety of languages and dialects belonging to both Iranian and Turkic language families spoken on the territory of today's Iranian Azerbaijan at that time.

When speaking about different vernaculars, Al-Masoudi refers to the spread of these varieties on a vast territory stretching from Azerbaijan (in Iran) and Derbent across to Armenia, Arran, and Baylaqan. Al-Masoudi refers to these languages as being "Persian," which was a generic term used at that time also to replace the term 'Iranian': it is certain that what Al-Masoudi had witnessed across such a vast territory were not only vernaculars of Iranian origin. On the other hand, while the Turkic languages gained dominance as they expanded throughout the vast territory, indigenous Iranian languages and dialects continued to be present, and some even thrived: if they disappeared, this most probably happened due to intra-family language contact rather than due to the Turkic influence.

It should also be noted that many Arabic scholars pointed to the difference between 'al-Azariyya/al-Adariyya' and other vernaculars spoken on the territory of Atropatene—sometimes these languages were so different that they were mutually unintelligible—which might well mean that what they had actually encountered was either a Turkic language or a hybrid code formed from the mixture of Turkic and Iranian vernaculars, or even code-mixing between Turkic and Iranian vernaculars. Taking the fact of unintelligibility into account, many scholars (including Kazimov) consider that what the medieval authors referred to as 'al-Azariyya/al-Adariyya' were in fact Turkic language(s).

There is no basis to accept the existence of a particular ethnic group identified as 'Azeri/Azari' that spoke a particular 'Azeri' language and that disappeared with the Seljuk expansion.

The general point we have attempted to make in the last few paragraphs is that there is no basis to accept the existence of a particular ethnic group identified as 'Azeri/Azari' that spoke a particular 'Azeri' language and that disappeared with the Seljuk expansion. The historical record is clear that the Seljuk Turks who migrated to Asia Minor were protectors rather than eliminators of Iranian languages and cultures. The Persian language was always highly esteemed and embraced by the Turkic ruling elites, first as the language of high poetry (the rules of Persian poetry became the very foundations of the elite Divan literature) and then as a social marker defining high social hierarchy.

Furthermore, if Azerbaijanis (or Azerbaijani Turks) are descendants of Iranians, what then happened to the Turks who massively migrated to, and settled in, their multiple states, empires, and kingdoms on the territory of northwestern Iran? Who and where are *their* descendants? Therefore, what the medieval scholars implied by referring to the term 'al-Azariyya/al-Adariyya' was most probably some combination of languages, dialects, and vernaculars—whether Turkic, Iranian, both, a hybrid between them, or mixture thereof (mixed codes)—spoken on the

territory that was known as Azerbaijan. Last but not least, even if, somehow, a hypothetical 'Azeri' ethnic group could be imagined and a link could then be established between this alleged group and its hypothetical (extinct) language, this would still not demonstrate a link between this purported group (or its would-be language) and the toponym 'Azerbaijan,' as the segment '-baycan' does not denote affiliation with, or belonging to, a geographical place (as does, for example, the element '-stan'). Neither would it serve as a basis for speculating about any relationship between the hypothetical 'Azeri' language and the name of today's Azerbaijani, which is (politically) formed as a name given to an Oghuz Turkic language on the basis of geographical affiliation. To be clear: we do not debate the possibility of less popular dialects or smaller vernaculars (into which we certainly cannot place Kasravi's hypothetical 'Azari/Aseri') disappearing or merging into stronger and wider-spread ones as a result of language contact. What we question here is the identity of a particular language and an ethnic group with the name 'Azeri,' which was clearly fabricated by proponents of the aforementioned hypothesis with the purpose of denying Azerbaijanis in Iran their Turkic roots.

Thus, the term 'Azeri' as a reference to the language or ethnic affiliation of Azerbaijanis, at least as promoted by Kasravi, is illusory. Therefore, all possible informal references by Azerbaijanis themselves, or by foreigners, to the name of the nation or its language in the form of 'Azer' or 'Azeri' should be seen, first of all, as nothing but patterns resulting from shortening in accordance with the Principle of Least Effort, which in the context of linguistics claims that language changes or evolves because speakers simplify their speech in various ways, including by the use of abbreviations.

The use of the shortened form by foreigners can also be explained by a lack of etymological knowledge regarding the word 'Azerbaijan' (plus derivatives) and its structural peculiarities. On the other hand, it is also possible for foreigners to come across the shortened form in the speech of Azerbaijanis themselves or to read it from media (including social media), where this form appears sometimes even as part of formal discourse. Certainly, many Azerbaijanis could have heard this version from their elderly family members and relatives who lived in the immediate post-Stalinist years, when the term 'Azeri' was used in both official and public discourse. In this period,

textbooks were published under the title *Azəri dili* (meaning "Azeri language"), and media texts, literary pieces, and formal documents also contained the word 'Azeri.'

This usage, however, should be understood as part of the language policy of those years, which was to a great extent informed by the theories of the Georgia-born linguistic paleontologist Nikolai Marr. Although the term 'Azeri' did not live long in official parlance, it did make its way to certain sources and literary works. According to Marr's theory, all the languages of the world are related to each other and concepts such as proto-language, root language, and parent language do not hold up. Marr claimed that the development of languages was not a process of one language further fragmenting and splitting into many "newborn" languages. Rather, as Marr claimed, languages were formed as an outcome of a clash of different varieties from different parts of the world, resulting from factors like migration and language contact, with further fusion into one language. Thus, according to Marr, the genetic relationship of languages was not a valid theory.

Marr also claimed that the fusion of all of the languages of the world would be completed in the era of communism. His theory had considerable influence on Azerbaijani linguistics, in particular, in the 1930s and 1940s. One of Azerbaijan's famous Soviet-era linguists, Mammadagha Shiraliyev, assigned much credit to Marr's theory, referring to it as the "New Language Theory." This is how Shiraliyev explained the root of the Azerbaijani language based on Marr's theory in 1939: "The closeness between the Turkic system of languages is not the result of a false 'mother tongue' concept, but rather a historical combination of different tribal languages."

Alienation of Azerbaijanis from their Turkic roots constituted a part of the Soviet Union's politics of nation-building. The rejection of the Turkic origin of Azerbaijan's titular group was also exercised through holding to false ethnic terms such as 'Azer/Azeri,' even though some of the proponents of this approach would, as a result, need to artificially link the titular nation to Iranians or Caucasians. In a word, everything that was not Turkic was considered to be suitable. The term 'Azer/Azeri' also resonated with the historical narrative of those times, which focused on depriving the ethnogenesis of Azerbaijanis of their Turkic elements.

Thus, the use of the term 'Azeri,' which was associated with Kasravi's theory claiming the Iranian origin of Azerbaijanis, did not con-

flict with the nation-building discourse that the Stalinist regime had designed for Azerbaijan.

The same destiny had reached Ahiska or Mesketian Turks who formerly lived in Meskheti, a highland area in Georgia, before they were deported from Georgia to Central Asia in 1944 under Stalin's decision accusing them of treason and espionage during World War II. Their destiny during Soviet times is broadly discussed by Ayşegül Aydıngün, Çiğğdem Balım Harding, Matthew Hoover, Igor Kuznetsov, and Steve Swerdlow in their 2008 paper titled "Meskhetian Turks: An Introduction to their History, Culture, and Resettlement Experiences." As the authors indicate, the identity of Ahiska Turks was manipulated in several different ways with the establishment of the Soviet regime in Georgia in 1921. The early years of this regime saw the persistent denial of the Turkic roots of the Ahiska Turks: they were proclaimed and presented as ethnic Georgians who were Turkified and adopted Islam during various Ottoman invasions of Georgia. They were nevertheless allowed to study in Turkish at school.

Beginning in the mid-1920s, Soviet policymakers started to call them 'Turks' and thus returned their Turkic identity to them. Interestingly, between 1935 and 1939, Meskehtian Turks were identified as Azerbaijani and during this period the Azerbaijani language was introduced as the language of instruction at their local schools. Later, starting in 1939, the Soviet regime again reidentified Ahiska Turks as Islamized and Turkified Georgians. We should also note that the term 'Azerbaijani' was used to imply some other Turkic groups living in the USSR (probably mostly in the South Caucasus), not only the Ahiska Turks. Thus, an editor's comment to the 1939 Soviet population census reprinted in 1992 reads: "Many Turks living in the USSR were registered as Azerbaijani in 1939. This was due to the policy of Azerbaijanization of Turks starting from 1926. During the passportization of 1930s, many Turks were registered/recorded as Azerbaijani."

We should note, however, that the term 'Azeri' was not a pure creation stemming from the Stalinist era. As underscored a few years ago by Badirkhan Ahmadli of the Nizami Institute of Literature of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, the term 'Azeri' was used by one of the founders of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, Mahammad Amin Rasulzade, in a 1919 article entitled "Azerbaijan and Iran" and elsewhere. The word 'Azeri' was further used as a synonym for the word 'Azerbaijani' by writers, media representatives, and scholars living both in the times of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic and in early years of the Soviet regime.

We should also note that this very fact—namely, that the word 'Azeri' was used not only as a reference to the hypothetical Iranian ethnic group but was also encountered in the discourse of the founders of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic—has encouraged some intellectuals, including Ahmadli himself, to propose the consideration of the term 'Azer' as an ethnic name for Azerbaijan's titular nation. These views are also based on the fact that the word 'Azerbaijan' is a geographical name and that the derivative form 'Azerbaijani' does not necessarily imply an ethnic affiliation. Ahmadli's opinion is supported, on a slightly different level, by some other scholars, including Gazanfar Kazimov, who, as we noted above, think that the term 'Azeri/Azari,' which appears as 'al-Azariyya/al-Adariyya' in medieval Arabic resources, was used to denote the language of a Turkic population that inhabited northwestern Iran and that, therefore, the term 'Azeri' should have been inherited to identify the Turks of Azerbaijan. We can certainly see these opinions supporting the aforementioned fourth identity paradigm, through which attempts are made to justify a lengthy history of the discrete Turkic identity of Azerbaijani people.

There are other scholars—including philologist Firudin Jalilov, who served as Azerbaijan's education minister in the early 1990s—that claim the term 'Azer' is traceable back to the root 'Az/As,' which was allegedly the name of an ancient tribe within the Turkic ethnic group. The tribe with the name 'Az/As' is encountered in ancient Turkic texts (more precisely, on ancient monument inscriptions), is mentioned by renowned Turkologists such as V. V. Bartold and is referred to in the Old Norse work *Prose Edda* (a reference to which served the starting point of this essay). Jalilov also claims that the element 'az/as' has survived not only in the toponym 'Azerbaijan,' but also in some other toponyms such as 'Astrakhan,' 'Astara,' 'Kazan,' and 'Kaspi.' Whether or not the aforementioned Iranian ethnic group 'Azer' and the Turkic tribe 'Az/As' has ever existed in history is a separate issue of inquiry, and we will not consider it here. (Moreover, it is not possible to say, based on references made by literally a few medieval scholars, whether the form 'al-Azariyya/al-Adariyya' implied

Iranian-proper or Turkic-proper languages: both would be ideologically (and probably also politically) imbued positions.) However, as many scholars also claim, no substantial ground has been uncovered thus far to allow us to link any of these two alleged groups to the toponym 'Azerbaijan.'

Fostering Cohesion

Consequently, prevailing public and scholarly opinion in contemporary Azerbaijan does not support the use of the term 'Azeri.' Some have sought to compare it to the shortened form 'Brit,' which has come to be used interchangeably in some circles (primarily in the UK) with the term 'British.' To many this comparison is fallacious, confusing, artificial, and, frankly, to some degree degrading.

There is also the argument that the term 'Azeri' can neither be linked to any ethnicity, geography, or ideology, and therefore should be avoided. Moreover, the use of the term 'Azeri' is also discouraged in public discourse, and it does not appear in official domains. Neither is it consistent with the official language policy of Azerbaijan, with the country's Constitution, and with any relevant legislation, according to which the correct term for referring both to the titular nation and to its language is 'Azerbaijani.'

Here it is useful to recall that in the early 2000s discussions took place both at the governmental level as well as in popular media outlets in the context of a process to create localized versions of Microsoft products. Many academic voices came out against using the term 'Azeri' in Microsoft interfaces and commands, and some operational regimes were even considering changing the form 'Azeri' into 'Azerbaijani.' The initiative seems not to have been supported by the company's implementation plan, as many operating systems still use the form 'Azeri.' Many do not regard the interface-level appearance of the word 'Azeri' as an important problem and think the reduction is applied for the purposes of linguistic economy.

Consequently, prevailing public and scholarly opinion in contemporary Azerbaijan does not support the use of the term 'Azeri.'

We also cannot fail to mention that the opposition to the term 'Azeri' to denote language is also continually

observed among Azerbaijanis living in Iran who call themselves 'Turks.' This rejection has recently been made manifest more frequently in public discourse, in particular among Iran's intellectuals and political activists who are ethnically Turks. During recent television debates organized for presidential election candidates in Iran, Mohsun Mehralizade, an ethnic-Azerbaijani Turk candidate, protested the use of the term 'Azeri language' used by his competitor, Ebrahim Raisi, a candidate from the conservative wing, who thanked Azerbaijani Turks for supporting him during his election campaign. Mehralizade opposed Raisi with the following words: "I would like to bring a correction to the word 'Azeri' used by Mr. Raisi. We don't have people who speak Azeri in our country. Both in Western and Eastern Azerbaijan [i.e., two Iranian provinces], across from Hamadan, Zanjan, Isfahan, Ardabil, Khorasan, and Huzistan, we have people who speak Turkic, not Azeri. Therefore, I think the respected presidential candidate should be more careful when using the word 'Azeri.'"

Using the term of identity contained in the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and thus established as the formal name of the titular nation and its language, should remain the unified reference word in formal documents and scholarly literature.

On the basis of this brief examination of identity in Azerbaijan, one can conclude that we are far from imposing the use of this or another term as reference or self-reference in informal discourse. People identify themselves the way they feel comfortable or confident, and they certainly choose—for the purpose of identifying themselves (and sometimes their compatriots)—a linguistic form that appeals to them for a variety of reasons. Someone might choose to use the word 'Azeri' just because it is easier and shorter. Some may opt for the 'Azeri Turk' form (instead of 'Azerbaijani Turk') for the same reason. Others may wish to identify themselves as 'Turks,' as a reference to their Turkic roots. Moreover, as much as people are free to choose a linguistic form, so they are free to oppose a term ascribed to them.

We will certainly continue to bear witness to informal discussions, social media debates, and even media disputes sometimes imbued with high emotions, mutual accusations, annoyance, and indignation.

However, as far as formal discourse is concerned, standardization in usage is that towards which we should continue to aim. Using the term of identity contained in the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and thus established as the formal name of the titular nation and its language, should remain the unified reference word in formal documents and scholarly literature. As some other ethnonyms (e.g., Norwegian, Ukrainian) show, terms established as references to an ethnic group and/or its language do not always follow a logic within which an ethnonym may be justified linguistically. Furthermore, some languages take their names from ethnic groups that are formed—often politically, as part of a nation-building or national identity-construction strategy—by a principle that German linguist Heinz Kloss identified as "Ausbau" (translated variously as 'expansion,' 'development,' or 'shaping').

None of these or other similar reasons has ever been considered as a justifiable reason for the arbitrary use of the name of an ethnic group or its language in formal discourse, once such name has officially been established. Azerbaijani is the official name determined for Azerbaijan's titular ethnic group and its language. While debating these terms in academic journals or elsewhere is normal and should cause no concern, and while the use of a shortened form is normal in informal discourse, the use of these various debated or contracted terms as references in both official and scholarly discourse may add to confusion and inconsistency and should, naturally, be avoided. BD

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Achieving Full Resolution to the Karabakh Conflict

Steven J. Klein

Azerbaijan's decisive defeat of Armenia in the Second Karabakh War is certainly cause for optimism that any remaining issues between the two countries can be resolved through diplomacy rather than military might. After all, Azerbaijan managed to recover all the territories outside the Karabakh enclave captured and occupied by Armenia since the 1990s—as well as parts of the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast itself—in addition to forcing Armenia to withdraw all its troops from sovereign Azerbaijani territory. However, past indisputable successes in other conflicts indicate that Azerbaijan must be careful not to overestimate its capabilities to translate the recent military triumph into full resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

While it is tempting to declare the conflict over and to talk strictly of post-conflict construction and development, a handful of countries have painfully learned that such declarations can be premature. For instance, in August 1982 Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin predicted that the imminent defeat of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in Lebanon portended 40 years of peace; and in May 2003 U.S. President George W. Bush declared "Mission Accomplished" after ousting Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq. Both of these declarations came back to haunt the respective countries that had believed they had put behind them the conflict at issue.

The crucial element that both of the aforementioned leaders had missed was that they did not control completely the fate of the conflict they chose to treat as being resolved.

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In Israel's case, the PLO relocated to Tunis, from where it was able to rebuild its power base and receive support from the Soviet Union, while Hezbollah—which didn't even exist at the time of the defeat of the PLO in 1982—arose with the support of Iran to become a much more formidable and menacing force in southern Lebanon than the PLO had been. In the case of America's wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the resulting power vacuum allowed numerous external forces to enter the picture and disrupt the plans of the United States. Moreover, corruption and disorganization within the governments established with American help contributed to the deterioration of stability in the region.

These failures provide a stern reminder to be cautious about prematurely declaring a conflict to be over. Leaders still need to evaluate the post-victory reality and all the geopolitical factors that could get in the way of translating their military accomplishments into permanent political gains. Then, based on the assessment of their means and alternatives, they can plot out a strategy based on the options that are realistically in their power to control.

A note on language before proceeding: language is symbolically powerful, particularly in social and political conflicts in which words convey meanings and values. In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, for example, the territories captured by Israel in 1967 are known alternately as Judea and Samaria, the West Bank and Gaza, or the Occupied Territories. Sometimes the preference of one term over another for the same geographic area implies partisanship, but at other times it is seen as a sign of neutrality even at the risk of offending one side or another. In the case of the territory still under nominal ethnic-Armenian control in Azerbaijan, it will be referred to here as Nagorno-Karabakh, in line with the November 10th, 2020 statement by the leaders of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Russia.

And a caveat: as with any regime, we in civil society who are not privy to the inner-workings and thinking of political leaders cannot know whether its leaders truly want peace or merely engage in rhetoric to cover up their true intentions to engage in military force to attain their goals. This paper takes at face value statements made by Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev at an April 2021 conference in Baku, co-organized by ADA University and the Center of Analysis of International Relations (AIRCenter) under the banner "New Vision for South Caucasus: Post-Conflict Development and Cooperation."

Aliyev expressed there a commitment to resolve outstanding issues through negotiations and to reabsorb the Armenians of Karabakh in a spirit of peace and reconciliation, reserving the military option only in the eventuality that Armenia should signal preference for belligerency.

State of Play

Regarding Nagorno-Karabakh, the interests of Azerbaijan are arguably simple and easily achievable: to reestablish full sovereignty over all of its internationally-recognized territory, presumably once the Russian peacekeepers withdraw from the parts of the enclave in which they are now present; to repopulate those lands; and to revitalize the regional economy. However, sovereignty is but one component. There is also the question of what will be the future of the residents of Nagorno-Karabakh. Aliyev has stated that he considers Karabakh Armenians as Azerbaijani citizens. This is an important statement signaling that Azerbaijan does not wish to drive out ethnic-Armenians from the region—a gesture that will require action in order to assuage a people traumatized by the recent fighting and steeped in a narrative of grievance that dates back decades.

Thus, the pursuit of Azerbaijan's interests requires managing its relationships with the Armenian residents of the rump Nagorno-Karabakh as well as Armenia and Russia. Comparatively speaking, the latter two relationships are easier, as demonstrated by President Aliyev's participation in three-way talks with President Vladimir Putin and Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in January and the establishment of a high-level trilateral working group. Nagorno-Karabakh is more challenging because Azerbaijan, reasonably, does not recognize the legitimacy of the self-declared Republic of Artsakh that claims to represent the residents of the enclave, and also because this same enclave, protected by Russian peacekeepers, has declined to engage with Azerbaijan in any regard, even basic trade. Yet, the onus remains on Azerbaijan to make a convincing case that the enclaves' present residents will be better off remaining and being reintegrated into Azerbaijan rather than abandoning their homes and relocating to Armenia or elsewhere.

The pursuit of Azerbaijan's interests requires managing its relationships with the Armenian residents of the rump Nagorno-Karabakh as well as Armenia and Russia.

Armenia is less of a hindrance to Azerbaijan's overall goals in the wake of its military defeat. The country is in political disarray (and this will unlikely come to an end in the wake of the June parliamentary election). It has to digest the realization that it cannot compete militarily with Azerbaijan and has no prospects of regaining the territories it had seized in the 1990s. Moreover, it cannot compete economically with Azerbaijan. One hopes that Armenia would grasp that restoring diplomatic and economic relations best serves the long-term interests of its people, but it will take some time to recover from the trauma of losing the Second Karabakh War. In the meantime, Armenia is in no position to interfere with Azerbaijan's plans to redevelop the liberated areas or to reassert in practice its claims over the remainder of Nagorno-Karabakh. Nor can it be expected to be particularly helpful with repairing relations between Azerbaijan and the Karabakh Armenians, since its interest consists in arguing a case on the international stage that Nagorno-Karabakh must remain outside direct Azerbaijani sovereignty.

In contrast, Russia is, at the very least, key to Azerbaijan reasserting full authority over the enclave—if not engendering a thawing of relations between Azerbaijan and the Karabakh Armenians. It should also be recognized that Russia has the capability of occupying Nagorno-Karabakh beyond its five-year mandate. While the November 10th, 2020, peace deal makes extension of Russia's peacekeeping mission contingent on mutual agreement by both Azerbaijan and Armenia, Putin has a record of ignoring diplomatic agreements in favor of advancing Russia's own interests. In 2008, Russia de-recognized Georgia's territorial integrity in order to justify its intervention in South Ossetia, and in 2014 Moscow de-recognized Ukraine's territorial integrity in order to justify its annexation of Crimea and its intervention in Donbass. If Russia decides to stay past the expiration of its peacekeeping mission, there is virtually nothing Azerbaijan can do to force it to leave.

Russia is already positioning itself as the patron of Nagorno-Karabakh, which styles itself as the unrecognized Republic of Artsakh. In March 2021, Duma parliamentarian Konstantin Zatulin, a member of the ruling United Russia party, met with two

members of the unrecognized parliament in Nagorno-Karabakh in order to develop inter-parliamentary relations, a step that could not have been taken without Putin's consent. Then, in April 2021, Moscow reportedly summoned Arayik Harutyunyan, the self-declared president of Artsakh, for unofficial talks (Russia does not officially recognize the enclave) in order to scold him for being too subservient to Pashinyan because doing so does not serve the enclave's interests. And, in late April 2021, Russia donated 15,000 doses of its Sputnik V vaccine against COVID-19 to the enclave. All these moves clearly position Russia as the protector of Nagorno-Karabakh. Considering that Putin envisions Russia reasserting in some fashion the power it held when it formed the nucleus of the Soviet Union (and before that, imperial Russia), it stands to reason that just as Russia has reestablished a presence in the former Soviet Socialist Republics of Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine without showing any signs of withdrawing, it will be reluctant to give up its foothold in Azerbaijan, no matter the reason for its initial re-entry.

Azerbaijan must therefore tread carefully regarding Nagorno-Karabakh in order to advance its own interests there.

Preferences and Realities

President Aliyev has already expressed that his first preference is to settle remaining issues through negotiations. While it seems at first glance that Azerbaijan holds all the cards and could finish the job, as it were, through military means as it started the job last year, the presence of Russian peacekeepers severely restricts this alternative. Given the aforementioned moves Russia has made to position itself to make Nagorno-Karabakh its political protectorate, it is reasonable to conclude that Moscow will not tolerate another military campaign the way it did in late 2020. This scenario has important repercussions not only on Azerbaijan's military prospects to reassert sovereignty in practice over the remainder of Karabakh but also its maneuverability in negotiations.

The reason for Azerbaijan's bargaining position being weaker than it would seem to be at first glance can be found in crisis management theory. The premise of this theory is that one party to a conflict violates the status quo in order to advance its own interests. In the case of Nagorno-Karabakh, the status quo of Azerbaijani sovereignty was violated. The aggrieved side then has a choice to respond diplomatically or militarily. The policy dilemma is that seeking a purely diplomatic solution requires accepting damage to one's own interests because one is choosing not to force the other side to back down, unless one can bluff well enough to convince the other side that the use of military force is imminent. If Russia communicates to the Armenians that it will not abandon them in the eventuality of a diplomatic stalemate, then Azerbaijan will not be able to threaten credibly military intervention and will thus have to accept some damage to its interests, which can be defined as reintegrating Nagorno-Karabakh fully into the Azerbaijani political system without any special p rivileges for the enclave.

Azerbaijan is attempting to be the first country to peacefully regain sovereignty over rebel-held territory that has acted as an unrecognized country for an extended period of time.

It may also help to remember that despite the international principle of the right of sovereignty, Azerbaijan is attempting to enter into unchartered waters in the post-World War II era: to be the first country to peacefully regain sovereignty over rebel-held territory that has acted as an unrecognized country for an extended period of time. Aside from Nagorno-Karabakh, the list is longer than some may be aware: Taiwan, Northern Cyprus, Western Sahara, Transnistria, Somaliland, South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and Kosovo. When the UN tried to broker talks between Serbia and the ethnic-Albanian authorities in Kosovo, the youngest of the nine entities mentioned above, the Finnish mediator Martti Ahtisaari told the Serbian negotiators in 2006 that after being free of Serbian administration for seven years, there was no going back. If the idea of restoring Serbian rule over Kosovo seemed so daunting after just seven years, one could imagine the resistance of Karabakh Armenians must feel after living without Azerbaijani rule for 30 years.

With these challenges in mind, let us consider constructive steps Azerbaijan can take on its own in order to bring the long-term conflict to a satisfactory conclusion. Recall that it should not count on reciprocity from Yerevan, which is the least likely to make concessions but is also ultimately the least relevant to reintegrating Nagorno-Karabakh into Azerbaijan. So, the focus will

be on steps in communicating Azerbaijan's intentions to the Karabakh Armenians and to Moscow. The less safe the enclave's ethnic-Armenian residents feel about living again under Azerbaijani rule (in whatever form), the less likely Russia will be willing to agree to withdraw its peacekeepers. On the other hand, if Russia will be convinced that the security of Karabakh Armenians is guaranteed—and that it has nothing more to gain by an extended occupation—then it will be more likely to withdraw and allow Azerbaijan to reassert full control of the enclave.

The first priority should be to continue signaling Azerbaijan's readiness to reengage with the Karabakh Armenians, which can be conducted unilaterally. However, Azerbaijan has to consider how such messages would be interpreted on the Armenian side. Given the low level of trust, the Armenians are likely to reactively devalue Azerbaijani gestures. East Jerusalem Palestinians and Golan Druze living in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967 have refused Israel's offer to apply for citizenship as a diplomatic trap, because doing so would be conceding to Israel that it has the right of sovereignty over their respective areas. For Karabakh Armenians, Aliyev's seemingly generous offer to receive Azerbaijani citizenship is likely to be interpreted as a similar trap. And, as many Palestinians refuse to do business with Israel as part of a greater anti-normalization campaign, so it seems that Karabakh Armenians are avoiding normalization with Azerbaijan.

In Nagorno-Karabakh, we are witnessing already negative attitudes toward Azerbaijanis hardened over 30 years of occupation, a consequence of which is that, notwithstanding the outcome of the Second Karabakh War, very few ethnic-Armenians consider friendship to be possible with Azerbaijanis or seem willing to do business with them. The departure of ethnic-Armenians from the areas retaken by Azerbaijan during the fighting or ceded back to Azerbaijan through the agreement to end the war indicates the lack of trust they have in the Azerbaijani regime. Karabakh Armenians clearly suffer from a security dilemma, fearful of and opposed to a future in Azerbaijan because they appear to be unable to conceive how such a future would work.

However, Armenian intransigence need not deter Azerbaijan. As the official sovereign authority, breaking down that resistance is practically its duty if it wants the best chance of Karabakh Armenians to submit to Azerbaijani authority. Moreover, messaging is a necessary if not a sufficient condition for reconciliation.

Consistency is also crucial. The Palestinians have long undercut their own credibility by making pro-peace pronouncements abroad in English but belligerent and antisemitic remarks in Arabic at home in public speeches, on local media, and in the school system. When preparing one's people for potential war, as Azerbaijan did in recent years, such mixed messaging is more understandable because the outcome of the conflict is uncertain. However, in a post-conflict environment mixed messaging undercuts peace and reconciliation efforts whilst signaling that violence is still a preference despite protestations to the contrary.

Azerbaijan is a case in point. In years past, even as Azerbaijan pursued the diplomatic route to resolving the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, the country's leadership, including President Aliyev, also engaged in anti-Armenian or belligerent messaging. Such examples include pardoning Ramil Safarov, who was convicted of axing to death an Armenian soldier with whom he was training as part of a NATO exercise and welcoming him back as a national hero in 2012; referring to or likening Armenians to fascists, dogs, barbarians, or vandals; and calling for an active struggle with Armenia. The ubiquitous billboard campaign that Karabakh is Azerbaijan—albeit in response to Pashinyan's statement that Karabakh is Armenia—was also a rallying cry for Azerbaijanis to back the campaign to regain territory that they otherwise may not have felt due to its geographic isolation. All these gestures and slogans served a purpose in unifying Azerbaijanis behind last year's war, but they were also not lost on the Karabakh Armenians, who fear what the implications are for their long-term well-being should they be reintegrated into Azerbaijan.

The starkness of the mixed messaging may have grown even greater in wake of the war. Azerbaijan seems to be doubling down on its messaging, in particular with the War Trophies Museum. While the intent may be to glorify last year's victory and reinforce support for the war itself in the Azerbaijani psyche, some outside observers have been shocked and disappointed by what they perceive as a dehumanization of Armenians. For Armenians, the public display provides

further confirmation for their biases against Azerbaijan as a regime that cannot be trusted to resume rule over Nagorno-Karabakh. Meanwhile, the continued "Karabakh is Azerbaijan" campaign also reinforces the perception among Karabakh Armenians that they have no future in Azerbaijan.

What Can Baku Do?

What can be done to ease the anxiety of Karabakh Armenians and increase the confidence of Russia without compromising on Azerbaijani interests? Doing so requires a multi-step process that involves more than trying to convince Karabakh Armenians that they have nothing to fear but rather letting them know that they and their concerns are being heard and addressed. Messaging should focus on the notion that Karabakh Armenians will be able to maintain some measure of control over their lives, that they will be able to enjoy economic prosperity, and that they will enjoy political and civil rights.

What can be done to ease the anxiety of Karabakh Armenians and increase the confidence of Russia without compromising on Azerbaijani interests?

It would be helpful for Azerbaijan to set up a team on reestablishing communication with Karabakh Armenians as part of a greater truth and reconciliation commission. It should be clear on the message that there will be no retribution for the events of the 1990s—if Azerbaijan is willing to make that concession—but also that it wants to hear from the Karabakh Armenians their grievances and experiences to understand what fears prevent them from being willing to live under Azerbaijani rule.

While it is reasonable to expect Azerbaijan to continue to be critical of the Armenian government, distinction should be made between the regime and the people. Eliminating Armenophobic comments is a simple solution, especially for leaders so sensitive to the Turkophobia that prevails in Armenia. Going a step further would involve messaging that emphasizes Azerbaijan's multiculturalism and its commitment to finding a place for Karabakh Armenians in Azerbaijani society.

Such positive rhetoric needs practical reinforcement to be perceived as credible. This goal can be achieved by investing in Nagorno-Karabakh's microeconomy with Russia's help. While Azerbaijan's primary concern in the region must be and naturally is focused on the repopulation of its liberated lands, this process will take years. In the meantime, Azerbaijan can exploit its renewed access to Nagorno-Karabakh by offering trade opportunities to its residents, even though it is expected to be rebuffed in the near future.

Trade is one area in which Nagorno-Karabakh may follow Armenia's lead if Azerbaijan can make progress on that front with its neighbor. The further along plans to develop east-west trade extending beyond the Lachin corridor and north-south trade based on the old Soviet-era trade routes, the more tempted Karabakh Armenians will be to access these opportunities, especially if Armenia is exploiting them.

The paradox of self-rule is that the greater the competencies granted, the more levels are created for peaceful bargaining, the less likely a region is going to be secessionist.

Still, it must be recognized that trade on Azerbaijan's terms can also be viewed by wary Karabakh Armenians as recognizing the legitimacy of Baku's sovereignty. Thus, they may see their interests in continued resistance and making the case to their Russian protectors that trade is a peace trap that fails to address their security dilemmas once they are at the mercy of Azerbaijani authorities.

The most effective strategy for Azerbaijan to make the case that Karabakh Armenians can feel safe and secure under its rule is to offer a form of local self-governance. However, Azerbaijan is hardly inclined to make such an offer. After all, Armenia rejected previous offers of autonomy for Nagorno-Karabakh in the failed negotiations of the 2000s and 2010s. Azerbaijan is in a strong enough position to deny Nagorno-Karabakh self-governance and no longer needs to make such a concession to Armenia, which is powerless to stop it from imposing its own rule. Aliyev himself has ruled out such an arrangement in the wake of victory. The most he seems inclined to offer is cultural autonomy, which was mentioned during the war in October 2020. Besides, autonomy is often perceived as an invitation to secessionism, the last thing Azerbaijan would want to encourage.

However, fears of self-governance, which can run the gamut from granting limited local authority over schools and health services to full autonomy, are misguided. In fact, the paradox of self-rule is that the greater the competencies granted, the more levels are created for peaceful bargaining, the less likely a region is going to be secessionist. Increased autonomy weakened the secessionist movement in Canada's Quebec and the UK's Scotland, while efforts to restrict autonomy in Spain's Catalonia and Yugoslavia's Serbian province of Kosovo raised secessionist fervor in those countries. States like Sri Lanka that denied minority calls for federalism or local autonomy faced greater civil unrest or even civil war.

Azerbaijanis might look at their Soviet past as an example of a federation that broke up, but federal arrangements like the ones in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia had been established without the consent of the leadership (and residents) of the individual federal and autonomous units. That is why these sham federations spurred grievances and separatism in places like Nagorno-Karabakh.

While Nagorno-Karabakh is too small and too weak to demand self-governance, the issue remains on the table because its withholding will lead to one of two scenarios: either the Russians will refuse to withdraw from Nagorno-Karabakh or, if Baku can still prevail upon Moscow to pull out, the Armenians will empty out Nagorno-Karabakh. If Azerbaijan is fine with the prospect of a depopulated Nagorno-Karabakh, that is its prerogative. This paper proceeds upon the presumption, based on President Aliyev's recent statements, that he would prefer that they remain there, as Azerbaijani citizens, in which case he will need to offer some form of self-governance.

What would be the ideal form of self-governance, one that serves both the interests of the central government in Baku and the future residents of Nagorno-Karabakh?

What would be the ideal form of self-governance, one that serves both the interests of the central government in Baku and the future residents of Nagorno-Karabakh? The most successful arrangements involve full autonomy in exchange for a binding agreement that rules out the option of secession. The model agreement is South Tyrol in Italy. One of the keys to South Tyrol's autonomy agreement is that disputes within the region are submitted to the International Court of Justice in the Hague. The arrangement has allowed it to become a prosperous area that is a bridge to trade between Italy and Austria and contributes significant tax revenue to Rome—truly a win-win situation.

This option, while in many ways ideal, is in all likelihood not an arrangement the current leadership in Azerbaijan would entertain for a number of reasons. Besides the fact that such arrangements have been agreed between friendlier countries that enjoyed relative parity in power, Baku would be understandably loathe to give favorable status to an ethnic-Armenian enclave that had rebelled against its authority.

A second option would be to award Nagorno-Karabakh autonomy on the same level as the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, as per Chapter VIII, Articles 134-141 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan. This would, of course, require a constitutional amendment, but President Aliyev could sell this arrangement to the Azerbaijani public as a grand gesture to the people of Nagorno-Karabakh, the vast majority of whom did not have a say in the decision of the Armenian government or the Karabakh Armenian rebel leaders to invade the enclave. Moreover, it would not enjoy any favorite status above that of Nakhchivan, so there is a precedent for such an arrangement. However, given the statements made by Azerbaijan's president, this option is less likely to be considered despite the advantages it offers.

A third option then is to focus on local self-governance. The basis would be Chapter IX of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan. However, adhering strictly to Chapter IX seems unlikely to allay the fears of Karabakh Armenians. It may require communicating with Karabakh Armenian representatives through the Russians and selling a package deal that Moscow find acceptable, which the Kremlin in turn could convey to the Karabakh Armenians as a take-it-or-leave-it offer before the inevitable handover of power.

A more favorable arrangement would expand the powers of the local government beyond those elicited in Chapter VIII, Article 144 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Enhanced powers could include judiciary powers for strictly local affairs, providing administrative services, health services, education, and policing. Returning ethnic-Azerbaijanis would receive proportional

representation. The unrecognized Artsakh regime already handles all these competencies, so it could transition to doing so under supervision of and in conjunction with the central authorities in Baku, after adjustments for Azerbaijani licensing and regulatory standards, curricula, and laws. To fulfill Aliyev's idea of cultural autonomy, a permanent joint antiquities authority should be established to preserve ethnic-Armenian heritage as well as the heritage of other ethnic communities in Nagorno-Karabakh.

The biggest steps short of autonomy, however, would be to close the circle on the divisions of the First Karabakh War, which include the abolishing of the original Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast and the redistribution of its territory among the neighboring administrative raions. Such adjustments and commitments could also go a long way in keeping Karabakh Armenians in place, once they realize that absorption into Azerbaijan is inevitable. The administrative boundaries could be redrawn to keep the Armenian towns together. Legislation could be passed to guarantee that the district head appointed by the president will be a local resident, i.e., a Karabakh Armenian. Finally, a consociational type arrangement could be made whereby the Armenian-dominated raions would have veto power over any laws that adversely affect ethnic-Armenian heritage or language rights in their districts—of course, in exchange for ethnic-Azerbaijanis returning to those raions having equal veto rights over the local government regarding any local bylaw adversely affecting their own heritage or language.

Speaking of which, language would be an issue, so provisions would have to be made to allow initially for the use of Armenian in the legal sphere, even though Azerbaijan is the state's sole official language. Article 45 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan does state that "everyone has the right to use his/her native language" and that "nobody may be deprived of right to use his/her mother tongue." Thus, it would not be a stretch to make a special provision for Armenian to be used in an official capacity within Nagorno-Karabakh. Help should be offered with translation services—at least during a transition period—in order to help comply with requirements to use the official language in official documents, state enterprises, and organizations, or to understand official statutes and rulings, as noted in Articles 8-14 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Modus Vivendi

Would any these arrangements be acceptable to either Azerbaijan or the Karabakh Armenians? I expect resistance on both sides due to Azerbaijan's current perception of its bargaining power and the lack of trust on the Armenian side. However, somewhere in between them lies the only modus vivendi. If there is no viable bargaining zone, either Russia will choose to retain its peacekeepers in Nagorno-Karabakh, to Baku's chagrin, or the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh will choose to depart with the Russians, which would be a human tragedy.

The period between now and November 2025 is crucial. As long as the accepted wisdom is that the peacekeepers will leave at that point (in line with the terms of the peace deal), Azerbaijan has the upper hand in the negotiations. However, should they stay in defiance of Baku's wishes, the Karabakh Armenians would then be able to up their demands. Thus, if the Azerbaijani state truly wants the Karabakh Armenians to remain within a reunited Azerbaijan, it is ultimately in Azerbaijan's interest to find that modus vivendi sooner rather than later. It will take much hard work to regain the resident Armenians' confidence, and if not theirs, then at least that of the Russians so that they would be willing convincingly to sell the idea to the Karabakh Armenians.

Ultimately, Azerbaijan holds the fate of the Karabakh Armenians in its hands, and one can only hope that it will choose to turn the page on the recent bloody history of the two peoples and usher in a new era of peace, prosperity, and fruitful coexistence. BD

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Spotlight on Normalization

Armenian-Azerbaijani Relations in the Wake of the Second Karabakh War

Gulshan Pashayeva

More than half a year has passed since the end of the Second Karabakh War and the signing of the Moscow-brokered trilateral statement by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, and the President of the Russian Federation on a complete ceasefire and a cessation of all hostilities in the zone of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

These developments have ended the almost 30-year-long illegal Armenian occupation, restoring Azerbaijan's territorial integrity. They have also contributed to the ultimate implementation of numerous decisions and resolutions adopted by various international organizations, including four resolutions of the UN Security Council (822, 853, 874, and 884) demanding the immediate, complete, and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian armed forces from the occupied Azerbaijani territories. At the same time, a new political reality has emerged in the region as a result of the war. This has brought about at least seven implications:

First, for the first time, an occupation was brought to an end through a combination of military and political means in one of the protracted ethno-territorial conflicts in the post-Soviet space.

Second, for the first time, a peacekeeping operation was initiated in this conflict zone. According to the terms of the aforementioned November 10th, 2020, trilateral statement, 1,960 Russian peacekeepers are deployed for at least five years along the contact line in Nagorno-Karabakh and along the Lachin corridor route to provide security arrangements for the Armenian minority residing in the mountainous part of Karabakh.

Third, Turkey and Russia, representing two different intergovernmental military alliances—namely, NATO and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)— for the first time formalized cooperation anywhere in the post-Soviet space through the establishment of a joint Turkish-Russian Center for control over the ceasefire and the cessation of all hostilities in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict area, in compliance with a memorandum signed by the defense chiefs of both countries on November 11th, 2020.

Fourth, by signing a second trilateral statement on January 11th, 2021, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, and the President of the Russian Federation paved the way for the development of cross-border transportation routes and boosting economic growth to benefit the overall region.

Fifth, today, consistent work by Azerbaijan towards post-conflict reconstruction is ongoing in the liberated territories. This is an extremely important process for the future return, in the coming years, of Azerbaijani internally displaced persons (IDPs)—originally from the Jabrayil, Fuzuli, Zangilan, Gubadli, Agdam, Kalbajar, and Lachin districts, as well as from the territory of the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO)—to their permanent places of residence that were occupied by Armenian armed forces. The UNHCR has been assigned to oversee this task. At the same time, Armenians from the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict area who fled to Armenia during the Second Karabakh War have also been gradually returning to their homes.

Sixth, there is now a window of opportunity for the normalization of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations if Armenia concentrates on its own internationally recognized sovereign territory and withdraws territorial claims against Azerbaijan. After recognizing one another's territorial integrity, Armenia and Azerbaijan can, in the future, sign a formal peace treaty.

Seventh, Armenia and Turkey could also normalize their bilateral relations if Armenia withdraws its territorial claims against Turkey and both countries find common ground relating to the tragic events of 1915. The reconciliation of these

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two nations could also, eventually, become very beneficial for the further development of the South Caucasus.

Thus, if the processes of normalization between Armenia and Azerbaijan and between Armenia and Turkey take place, these could lead not only to the opening of the borders between them but also contribute to regional stability and development as well as lead to trans-regional cooperation among the three South Caucasian states and the wider region. At the same time, it would create an enabling environment that could be more conducive for future dialogue and interactions between Armenians and Azerbaijanis, on the one hand, and Armenians and Turks, on the other.

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However, today there are certain thorny issues that create obstacles to moving from war rhetoric into a peace agenda, which are closely intertwined with the different post-conflict environments established in Azerbaijan and Armenia after the Second Karabakh War.

On the one hand, there is a common understanding in Azerbaijan that the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict in and around the Karabakh region has been resolved. "Now we need to look into the future. Despite 30 years of occupation and large-scale destruction and devastation on the liberated territories, Azerbaijan is ready to look to the future—to plan its future as part of an integrated South Caucasus region," stated Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev during an online discussion organized by the Nizami Ganjavi International Center on May 20th, 2021.

On the other hand, the situation is in stark contrast in post-conflict Armenia. The humiliating defeat of this country in the Second Karabakh War not only shattered the myth of the invincibility of the Armenian Army but also caused political turmoil and plunged the country into a political crisis amid the apathy of the population.

Such a reaction from Armenian society is unsurprising because, over the years, the Azerbaijani territories occupied during the First Karabakh War were presented in Armenia as a return of "historical lands" and a restoration of historical justice. In fact, by mythologizing the past, Armenia's ideologists tried to establish Armenian ethno-nationalism. However, the people who utilize such mythological manipulation subsequently become the victims of their own construct, losing touch with reality as a result. Incidentally, in a November 2020 interview with the BBC, Gerard Libaridian, who served as an adviser to the first president of Armenia, Levon Ter-Petrosian, touched upon the main reasons behind the defeat of Armenia and underlined that the origins of Armenia's current problems are connected with the fact that the elite—in the interview he uses the pronoun "we"—gave the people incorrect information and erroneous analysis, offered unrealistic scenarios as possible solutions, and pushed nationalism instead of statehood.

Unfortunately, the process of serious reflection on the causes of Armenia's failure in the Second Karabakh War has not yet begun in Armenia.

Unfortunately, the process of serious reflection on the causes of Armenia's failure in the Second Karabakh War has not yet begun in Armenia because, for such recognition to occur, it is necessary first to destroy many fundamental myths that underlie modern Armenian statehood.

Following the resignation of the Armenian Prime Minister, Nikol Pashinyan, a snap parliamentary election will take place on June 20th, 2021 (this essay was finalized in the days before this election). However, the situation in Armenia is unstable, and a struggle for political leadership is currently under way.

There are also questions regarding the future role of the OSCE Minsk Group, which has been involved in the mediation process of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict in and around the Karabakh region since 1992. After the Second Karabakh War, the role this institution could play going forward seems rather uncertain. Today, it is mainly Russia that is active in the region as a peacekeeper and mediator of the various issues breaking out between Armenia and

Azerbaijan. It is very likely that this dissatisfies the two other Co-chairs of the Minsk Group, namely France and the United States: presumably, they too would like to be engaged in these processes. However, on the one hand, after the Second Karabakh War France's support for Armenia's position to a certain degree jeopardizes its impartiality as a Co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group. On the other hand, the recognition in April 2021 by U.S. President Joe Biden of the 1915 events as a "genocide" could also have a negative impact on the normalization of the Armenian-Turkish relationship and could also complicate relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Thus, despite the (so-far) near-complete implementation of both the November 10th, 2020, and January 11th, 2021, trilateral statements, certain pressing issues and concerns still remain unresolved, which complicate the normalization of relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia. In the short term, Armenia's refusal to provide information about minefield locations, complications in the delineation of the Armenian-Azerbaijani international border, misinterpretation by Armenia of the situation with respect to the Armenian detainees remaining in Azerbaijan's custody, politicization of protection of religious and cultural heritage, impediments to opening of transport and economic communications, and raising the question of the so-called issue of Karabakh's "status" by Armenia, and a divergence of opinion on the future role of the OSCE Minsk Group are among the most contested subjects. Meanwhile, in the mid-to-long term, the reintegration of both Azerbaijanis and Armenians into Azerbaijan's newly rebuilt Karabakh region should be considered.

Security Challenges

In the period between the First and Second Karabakh Wars, only ethnic-Armenians lived in the decimated Azerbaijani towns and villages of the former NKAO and the seven occupied Azerbaijani districts adjacent to it. During this period, Armenia "exercise[d] effective control" over the entirety of the then-occupied territory, as the European Court of Human Rights' judgment in *Chiragov and Others v. Armenia* (2015) made clear. Only after the Second Karabakh War and the November 10th, 2020, trilateral statement is there now a prospect of visiting these territories and grasping the full scope of the reality hidden from the Azerbaijani people's eyes for almost three decades.

To date, the negative effects of the Armenian occupation have only started to come to light. The facts on the ground are heartbreaking, owing to the enormous extent of the destruction committed by Armenians in the occupied Azerbaijani territories. Although there was some information from books written by foreign authors and video footage from international media sources on Karabakh, the dawning of the reality is nevertheless almost beyond comprehension. Not only were virtually all the homes of around 700,000 Azerbaijani IDPs destroyed, but in complete ruin also lie public buildings, schools, hospitals, mosques, cultural and historical monuments, and cemeteries in the liberated territories.

The Azerbaijani government has made it clear that the total material damage caused to the Azerbaijani territories when they were under Armenian occupation will be calculated with the participation of international institutions so that Armenia could be held accountable to pay compensation before international courts in the future.

At the same time, following the November 10th, 2020, trilateral statement, the Azerbaijani government has started a process of reconstruction and restoration of all its conflict-affected territories. Thus, for the year 2021, $1.3 billion has been allocated for the restoration of infrastructure—in particular gas, water, electricity, and communications, as well as cultural and historical monuments. Work related to the finalization of a state program on "The Restoration and Sustainable Development of Territories of the Rpublic of Azerbaijan Liberated from Occupation for 2021-2025" is also nearing completion.

It is envisaged that these territories will be turned into a green energy zone. In fact, the construction of "smart villages" and "smart cities" in the liberated Zangilan district has already been announced by the Azerbaijani government. The first "smart village" pilot project will cover three Aghali villages of the Zangilan district, where 200 individual houses are planned to be built initially. This project will be implemented within the following five components: housing, manufacturing, social services, "smart agriculture," and alternative energy. Additionally, all residential houses, social facilities, and public catering facilities will be provided with alternative energy sources.

Concurrently, work has already begun on the construction of new highways, railways, and airports—

precursors to developing master plans for rebuilding cities in the liberated areas in order to accelerate the process of the safe and dignified return of Azerbaijani IDPs to their places of origin. At the time of writing, approximately 600 km of roads in seven directions and 158 km of railways in two directions are being built; also, one airport is already being built in Fuzuli and two more airports will be built in Zangilan and Lachin districts in the time ahead. Here we can add that the master plan for the reconstruction of the city of Agdam has already been developed and approved.

Minefields

However, there are certain pressing security challenges that need to be overcome in realizing these goals. One of them is *Armenia's refusal to fully provide information about minefield locations*. The liberated Azerbaijani territories are one of the world's most mine-contaminated areas, containing numerous anti-personnel and anti-tank mines as well as unexploded ordinance (UXO). Hundreds of thousands of landmines were planted there by Armenian forces throughout the years of occupation and during the agreed withdrawal from these territories in the immediate wake of the Second Karabakh War.

Following the liberation of its territories, Azerbaijan has started to carry out operations to clear the mines, unexploded munitions, and other hazards left behind by Armenian forces. As of early June 2021, nearly 35,000 mines and UXOs have been cleared from over 9,106 hectares in the liberated territories.

Nevertheless, the provision of detailed and accurate information about the location of the mines is paramount to save human lives and accelerate the post-conflict reconstruction process. Between the end of the Second Karabakh War and early June 2021, more than 120 Azerbaijanis, both servicemen and civilians, have been injured or killed in mine explosions in the liberated territories.

It is obvious that without this data, tragic deaths and injuries on the liberated territories will continue happening. Just recently, on June 4th, 2021, a vehicle carrying a group of Azerbaijani journalists was struck by an anti-tank mine in the liberated Kalbajar district. As a result, two journalists and one public servant were killed, and four others were hospitalized with various injuries.

But again, to reiterate: Armenia has, until now, refused to fully provide information about minefield locations to Azerbaijan. Over 15,000 people have signed a petition calling on Armenia to release the location of mines and UXOs in the liberated territories, and this is one of the most signed petitions on the change.org website to date.

On February 22nd, 2021, Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov wrote to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and requested that he urge Armenia to release the location of minefields in Azerbaijan's liberated territories. In his letter, the minister stressed that "Armenia's consistent disregard of our repeated appeals to release information on the location of the minefields seriously questions that country's sincerity for a normalization of relations with Azerbaijan on the basis of mutual recognition of and respect for each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and inviolability of international borders."

Armenia's refusal to fully provide information about minefield locations creates a serious obstacle for effective demining and the prevention of further casualties.

Recently Azerbaijan also lodged its second interstate application against Armenia with the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), informing the Court that the continuing refusal by Armenia to hand over the location of the minefields in the liberated territories of Azerbaijan results in the gross violation of the rights and freedoms envisaged in the ECHR. Azerbaijan also requested that the Court urgently grant interim measures and place an obligation on Armenia to submit the maps and all relevant information indicating the location of landmines.

Thus, Armenia's refusal to fully provide information about minefield locations creates a serious obstacle for effective demining and the prevention of further casualties. As this edition of *Baku Dialogues* was going to press, a welcome development took place that appears to represent a harbinger for a more constructive approach on this and the related issue of detainees.

On June 12th, 2021, after extreme pressure was applied on Armenia by various countries and international organizations, the Armenian side agreed to transfer the maps of 97,000 anti-tank and anti-personnel mines planted during its occupation in the Agdam district of Azerbaijan in exchange for 15 Armenian detainees in Azerbaijan's custody.

Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry expressed its appreciation for the support of the Georgian government headed by the Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Garibashvili, for the implementation of this humanitarian action. It also acknowledged the mediation role of U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Philip Reeker, the President of the European Council Charles Michel, and the Swedish Chairmanship of the OSCE for their respective contributions to the process.

Hopefully, this process will continue and the Armenian side will fully provide information about minefield locations to prevent further civilian casualties.

Border Delineation

The second pressing security challenge currently is the *delineation of the Armenian-Azerbaijani international border*. Because of the Armenian occupation, Azerbaijan was able to control only partially its international border with Armenia. At the same time, neither delimitation nor demarcation processes have been implemented between these two states over the years.

After the Second Karabakh War and the subsequent Moscow-brokered trilateral statement of November 10th, 2020, when the seven districts adjacent to former NKAO previously occupied by Armenia fell back under Azerbaijan's control, this section of the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan returned to its previous, Soviet geography. Thus, the Armenian-Azerbaijani international border now borders the Syunik, Vayots Dzor and Gegharkunik provinces of Armenia and the Zangilan, Gubadli, Lachin, and Kalbajar districts of Azerbaijan. However, it is still difficult for local Armenians to readjust to this new reality and reconcile themselves to this new landscape.

In fact, there have been recent tensions along the Armenian-Azerbaijani international border. The situation was exacerbated on May 12th, 2021, when the Armenian side accused Azerbaijan of deploying hundreds of troops on the eastern border of Armenia around the Karagol/Sev lake area; however, the Azerbaijani side has denied crossing the border, stating that its forces were only defending their sovereign territory and that Azerbaijan was restoring its internationally recognized borders.

Commenting on this border incident, Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry spokesperson Leyla Abdullayeva has stressed that Azerbaijan merely continues to strengthen its border protection system within the framework of the country's territorial integrity, adding that this process is performed based on maps defining the borderline between the two countries, which the Armenian side also has. Abdullayeva further noted that any disagreements between the parties on border issues should be resolved by political and diplomatic means.

However, for more than a month the Armenian side has tried to politicize these border tensions as well as aggravate the situation further by various provocative acts and statements. For example, on several occasions Pashinyan has appealed to the CSTO to hold consultations on this issue (in doing so, he cited Article 2 of the organization's Treaty), as well as a number of other heads of state.

Interestingly, the CSTO's response has been quite restrained: no support has so far been forthcoming to Yerevan's position, notwithstanding the fact that Armenia, unlike Azerbaijan, is a member state of this military alliance. On the other hand, countries such as France have called for Armenia's territorial integrity to be respected and for Azerbaijan to pull back its troops.

In contrast, Russia had proposed setting up a joint Armenian-Azerbaijani commission on the delimitation and demarcation of borders, with the participation of Russia as a consultant or mediator. However, Armen Grigoryan, Secretary of the Security Council of Armenia, has said that demarcation work could not start until Azerbaijani troops leave what he termed Armenian territory. On the other hand, Azerbaijan backs Russia's proposal to establish a trilateral commission on the delimitation and demarcation of the Azerbaijani-Armenian border, as Azerbaijan's Prime Minister Ali Asadov made clear at the meeting of the CIS Council of Heads of Government that took place on May 28th, 2021, in Minsk.

One day earlier, the Azerbaijani Defense Ministry announced that it had detained six Armenian servicemen near the village of Yukhary Ayrim in the Kalbajar district. These soldiers stand accused of trying to mine supply routes leading to the positions of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces deployed at the state border with Armenia. The Armenian Defense Ministry, in its turn, confirmed that six of its soldiers had been taken prisoner, but emphasized that they were trying to carry out engineering work in the border

area of the Gegharkunik province of Armenia. At the same time, Pashinyan urged international observers to be sent from Russia or other OSCE Minsk Group countries to this section of Armenia's border with Azerbaijan.

On June 1st, 2021, another provocation was prevented by Azerbaijani Armed Forces when about 40 Armenian soldiers penetrated into Azerbaijan's territory near the village Armudlu of the Kalbajar district. With no use of weaponry, they were immediately driven back from the territory of Azerbaijan.

These and similar developments showcase that, perhaps, there are certain political circles in Armenia that are interested in causing provocations in the areas bordering Azerbaijan in order to increase tensions and internationalize the issue of delineating the Armenian-Azerbaijani border. At the same time, it is clear that this issue became even more complicated due to the electoral campaign in Armenia.

Here we can refer to a letter sent to UN Secretary-General Guterres by Azerbaijan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Yashar Aliyev on June 7th, 2021. Therein, the Azerbaijani diplomat indicates that Baku and Yerevan have been working to clarify the borderline between the two states based on relevant official maps. This process, he continued, is carried out through direct technical contacts between the parties and with the participation of border services, as a result of which border issues in the liberated Gubadli, Kalbajar, and Zangilan districts have been resolved. Furthermore, the letter goes on to say, even after the joint demarcation of the border in those geographies, Azerbaijan allows Armenian citizens to use the Goris-Kafan highway, part of which passes through the territory of Azerbaijan. Against this background, it seems highly likely that Armenia's provocative campaign in the Karagol/Sev lake area is mainly aimed at furthering domestic political goals in Armenia's pre-election process.

Detainees

The third security challenge revolves around the *situation regarding Armenian detainees remaining in Azerbaijan's custody*. Unfortunately, due to the misrepresentation and distortion of facts by the Armenian government, this issue has not been perceived clearly and objectively by the international community to date.

Article 8 of the Moscow-brokered trilateral statement of November 10th, 2020, that ended the Second Karabakh War clearly states that the "exchange of prisoners of war and other detainees and bodies of the dead shall be carried out." Since that time, in accordance with its obligations under this agreement, Azerbaijan has released and repatriated more than 70 Armenians in its custody who were entitled to POW status. Azerbaijan also found and handed over to the Armenian side the bodies of nearly 1,600 Armenian soldiers. However, Armenia has not yet released information on the whereabouts of close to 4,000 Azerbaijanis who went missing during the First Karabakh War.

On the other hand, in the period after the trilateral statement was signed, various Armenian sabotage groups have tried to cross illegally into Azerbaijan with the aim of engaging in sabotage and terrorist activities. One of such groups, consisting of 62 Armenian citizens, was detained on December 13th, 2020, as a result of a joint anti-terror operation conducted by Azerbaijan's State Security Service and its Ministry of Defense. Prior to its capture, this group had been suspected of committing a series of terrorist attacks against Azerbaijani military servicemen and civilians in the country's Khojavend district, causing the deaths of four servicemen and inflicting serious injuries on one civilian. Of these 62 saboteurs, 14 were charged under the relevant articles of the Criminal Code of Azerbaijan, and the indictment approved by the country's Deputy Prosecutor General was sent to court for consideration. In addition, a criminal investigation has been completed against 13 other suspected members of this illegal armed group and has also been sent to the court in Azerbaijan. Meanwhile, as a humanitarian gesture, Azerbaijan released and repatriated first ten then an additional four members of this group back to Armenia.

However, provocations along the Armenian-Azerbaijani international border have continued: reconnaissance-sabotage groups were sent to the territory of Azerbaijan by Armenia on May 27th, 2021, and then again on June 1st, 2021. While six Armenian servicemen from two reconnaissance-sabotage groups were detained while planting mines on May 27th, 2021, 40 Armenian servicemen who were trying to infiltrate into Azerbaijani territory were, as mentioned previously, immediately driven back by the Azerbaijani Army with no use of weaponry on June 1st, 2021.

In addition, the court convicted an ethnic-Armenian citizen of Lebanon who had been charged on

three counts under the Criminal Code of Azerbaijan: participation of a mercenary in a military conflict or military operation (article 114.3); terrorism by a group of persons, organized group or criminal organization (article 214.2.1); and illegal crossing of the state border (article 318.2). In imposing its 20-year sentence, the court indicated he will serve five years in prison before being transfered to a maximum-security correctional facility for the remainder of his incarceration. Over the course of the investigation it was revealed that the accused had accepted to take part in military operations as a mercenary in the de-occupied territories of Azerbaijan in exchange for $2,500, together with other mercenaries.

Thus, all of the aforementioned cases demonstrate that the Armenian detainees remaining in Azerbaijan's custody at the moment cannot be considered POWs, because they have been charged with engaging in sabotage, terrorist and mercenary activities in the period after the signing of the November 10th, 2020, trilateral statement. Investigations with regards to these unlawful acts by Armenian servicemen is ongoing; their criminal liability under Azerbaijani law clearly falls outside the scope of Article 8 of the Moscow-brokered November 10th, 2020, trilateral statement.

Concurrently, as discussed above, on June 12th, 2021, Azerbaijan released 15 Armenian detainees remaining in Azerbaijan's custody in exchange for providing Azerbaijan with maps of 97,000 anti-tank and anti-personal landmines in the Agdam district. It should be mentioned that the investigation concluded that the detainees repatriated to Armenia had not committed serious crimes against Azerbaijan and its citizens.

Politicization of Heritage Protection

For almost three decades, the separatist regime operating in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan tried to distort the origin and use of cultural and religious heritage located there. In early July 2020, one of Azerbaijan's top diplomats serving abroad, Nasimi Aghayev, published an essay in *Medium* in which he argued that "almost all once Azerbaijani-populated towns, villages, and even streets, have been renamed after the occupation, and Armenianized, in a vicious attempt to erase any traces of Azerbaijanis' age-old presence in Karabakh."

It is well known that the deliberate destruction of cultural and religious monuments of any nation is regarded as a war crime under international law. According to the 1954 Hague Convention, occupying forces have to respect and preserve cultural property and prevent the theft of said property in the event of an armed conflict. Unfortunately, during the period of Armenian occupation these guidelines were ignored. As Aghayev put it, "the scope of this destruction could make even Daesh jealous."

As noted by the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry in April 2021, "as of today, the Ministry of Culture of Azerbaijan has identified more than 400 monuments that have been destroyed in the liberated territories. The total number of monuments in these territories is up to 3,000. Cultural and religious property belonging to Azerbaijan has been looted, desecrated, altered, and illegally exported to Armenia. Twenty-two museums and museum branches with over 100,000 artefacts on the liberated territories have been destroyed." Additionally, based on the data of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, out of 67 mosques located on the territory of the former NKAO and the seven adjacent Azerbaijani districts, 63 were completely destroyed and four were damaged. In other words, not a single mosque was left untouched by the Armenian occupation.

Despite Azerbaijan's repeated claims that Azerbaijani cultural and religious heritage, such as mosques, museums, libraries, theatres, and so on were destroyed under the Armenian occupation, repeated calls over many years to send fact-finding missions remained unanswered by international organizations such as UNESCO. Only after the Second Karabakh War came to an end—that is to say, only once the Armenian side had expressed a concern about the fate of Armenian cultural and religious heritage sites in liberated Karabakh—did UNESCO suddenly call for a mission to be sent to Azerbaijan. This appears to indicate the existence of a double standard when it comes to Christian and Muslim cultural and religious heritage. Such blatant application of political hypocrisy is, obviously, regrettable and, quite frankly, beyond comprehension.

In late December 2020 interview, presidential adviser Hikmat Hajiyev pressed this point home: "UNESCO is an intergovernmental organization and must carry out its activities in accordance with its mandate in an objective and impartial manner. UNESCO officials should not be preoccupied with advancing the national agenda of the countries they are citizens of. UNESCO should not become an

instrument of political influence of any state. This is a great blow to his authority and independence. The protection of cultural heritage is a universal obligation and should not be used for political purposes."

Azerbaijani authorities have underlined that, as a multi-cultural and multi-confessional country, it has striven to protect the religious heritage and culture of all of its people. The most recent example of this was the inclusive nature of the Kharibulbul Music Festival, which was organized on the theme of "Multiculturalism in Azerbaijani Music" and took place in liberated Shusha, the cultural capital of Azerbaijan, in mid-May 2021. The festival brought together musical performances of various ethnic and national groups living in Azerbaijan. Addressing the audience at the opening of the festival, President Aliyev underlined that all people in Azerbaijan coexist in an atmosphere of "friendship, brotherhood, and solidarity; and this 44-day war showed again that there is national unity and national solidarity in our country." Thus, it is clear that Azerbaijan neither intends to destroy Armenian heritage in Karabakh nor opposes the visit of the UNESCO mission to the liberated territories; what Baku does demand, however, is that any such mission is carried out under relevant procedures and in accordance with international law. Claims to the contrary, raised by the Armenian side, only serve to politicize deleteriously this sensitive issue.

Impediments to Cooperation

Over the past few decades, Azerbaijan has been involved actively in the process of launching regional connectivity projects covering not only east-west but also north-south and north-west trajectories. The full implementation of the November 10th, 2020, trilateral agreement would bring Armenia into this regional fold, so to speak. Indeed, the end of Yerevan's transportation and economic isolation would transform the South Caucasus and potentially the entire Silk Road region into a world-class economic, logistics, and tourism hub.

The end of Yerevan's transportation and economic isolation would transform the South Caucasus and potentially the entire Silk Road region into a world-class economic, logistics, and tourism hub.

After the Second Karabakh War, the idea of revitalizing the transportation corridor that could reunite mainland Azerbaijan with its exclave, the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic (NAR), has become much more concrete. Coined the "Zangazur transportation corridor," Azerbaijan is keen to see the associated road and rail infrastructure built in 44-km territory within Armenia in order to connect Asia and Europe.

In fact, Article 9 of the November 10th, 2020, trilateral statement stipulates the unblocking (the term used in the document is "restoration") of "all economic and transport links in the region." (With respect to mainland Azerbaijan and NAR, the purpose of renewing all Soviet era links is indicated as being the "unimpeded movement of citizens, vehicles, and goods in both directions.") Article 9 also provides an explicit assurance (the phrase in the document is "shall be ensured") that "new transportation communications linking the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic with the western regions of Azerbaijan" will be constructed.

The entirety of the follow up January 11th, 2021, trilateral statement focuses on the implementation of Article 9 of the November 10th, 2020, one. To that end, a trilateral working group headed by the deputy prime ministers of the three signatory countries was established. This high-level working group is tasked with leading a technical process devise concrete plans on "railway and automobile communication" as a matter of priority and submit them to the leaders of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Russia for approval. Several meetings have been held at various level in this regard.

In anticipation of the fulfillment of the aforementioned trilateral agreements, Azerbaijan has already begun work on various connectivity projects in the liberated areas and other parts of the country. For instance, work is currently under way on the construction of the Horadiz-Agbend railway, the foundation of which was laid by President Aliyev in February 2021. It will connect Horadiz (located in the Fuzuli district) to Agbend (located in the Zangilan district) where the borders of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Iran meet. Moreover, work has begun on those part of the corridor in NAR that require renovation and will be completed in less than three years, with the rest having remained operational over the years. However, the most complicated part of the establishment of the Zangazur transportation corridor, at least from a political and economic

perspectives, is the section that needs to pass through Armenia's Syunik province. Railway and automobile communications that existed along this route during USSR will need to be restored, as these were dismantled by Armenia during the period of occupation of Azerbaijani territories.

Notwithstanding other impediments to the construction of the Zangazur transportation corridor reconnecting mainland Azerbaijan with NAR, route projections indicate that both railway and automobile communication are likely to pass through the town of Meghri on the Armenian side of the border with Iran located on the Aras river. This appears to be one of the reasons that the November 10th, 2020, trilateral statement indicates that, although Armenia "guarantees the safety of [these] transport links, [...] control over transport shall be exercised by the bodies of the Border Guard Service of the Federal Security Service (FSB) of Russia."

In remarks made at the joint news conference following the trilateral meeting in Moscow on January 11th, 2021, that produced the second trilateral statement, President Aliyev emphasized that the "opening of transport communications serves the interests of the peoples of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Russia, and our neighbors. I am confident that neighboring countries would also actively engage in the establishment of a diversified network of transportation corridors and arteries in our region. We must continue to identify areas of activity that are effective and result-oriented in the short term."

Pragmatically, the re-opening of transport and economic communications is beneficial not only for Azerbaijan and Armenia, but also for neighboring states, namely Russia, Iran, and Turkey.

Pragmatically, the reopening of transport and economic communications is beneficial not only for Azerbaijan and Armenia, but also for neighboring states, namely Russia, Iran, and Turkey. Understandably, this issue is heavily politicized in Armenia, due in no small measure to the parliamentary election campaign. Once the results are announced and a government is formed, it might be possible for planning and work on the portion of the corridors passing through the territory of Armenia to move forward more smoothly.

The OSCE Minsk Group and the "Status Issue"

The Minsk Group has spearheaded the OSCE's efforts to find a peaceful solution to the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict in and around the Karabakh region since March 1992. Despite the ceasefire agreement reached by the conflicting parties in May 1994, successive mediation efforts led by the Co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group were unsuccessful in achieving any breakthrough in the negotiation process.

The future destiny of the OSCE Minsk Group seems rather uncertain today.

Following the Second Karabakh War and the November 10th, 2020, trilateral statement, Armenia's presence as an occupying force in the territory of Azerbaijan was annihilated; Azerbaijan's territorial integrity has now been restored.

Thus, as President Aliyev stated at a joint press conference held with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on January 11th, 2021, "the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has been consigned to history and we must think about the future, how to live together as neighbors, how to work to open transport arteries and strengthen regional stability and security."

Seen against this backdrop, the future destiny of the OSCE Minsk Group seems rather uncertain today. From Azerbaijan's perspective, the Armenian occupation has been brought to an end and the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict in and around Karabakh has been resolved. The so-called "status" issue is thus no longer relevant—and certainly not subject to the mediation activities of the Minsk Group.

On the other hand, Armenia is eager to keep the OSCE Minsk Group alive for its own ends. From Armenia's perspective, the conflict has neither yet been resolved nor has the "status" of Nagorno Karabakh yet been determined. Therefore, a negotiation process should be continued with Russia and the other two Minsk Group Co-chairs.

Obviously, this means that there is a certain divergence of opinion on the role of the OSCE Minsk Group at the moment.

To this should be added the assessment that its previous work neither very productive nor particularly meaningful. This was

once again confirmed on December 12th, 2020 during a meeting in Baku between President Aliyev and the Minsk Group Co-chairs (or at least their Western members; the Russian member's "inability to travel" meant that Russia was represented by its ambassador to Azerbaijan). He was clear: "the Minsk Group did not play any role in the resolution of the conflict, although the Minsk Group had a mandate to do it for 28 years. [...] And this is a reality." Azerbaijan's president also added that his country had "resolved" the conflict by itself: "by defeating Armenia on the battlefield," he continued, "we forced the aggressor to admit its defeat, to sign a declaration that we consider as an act of capitulation of Armenia. [...] The conflict is resolved [and] Azerbaijan did it by military-political means."

At the same time, it seems likely the Minsk Group will not simply dissolve itself. Thus, in order to justify its continued existence, some new roles and responsibilities will need to be brought forth: new tasks and functions will be conceived, thus enabling this mechanism to carry on its work in the near future.

On this point President Aliyev has also made his views known. For instance, during an in-person international conference co-organized in Baku by ADA University and the Center of Analysis of International Relations (AIR Center) in mid-April 2021, he noted that "there could be some areas where [the Minsk Group] could play their role in the post-conflict situation—not as a group which needs to help to resolve the conflict." In elaborating his answer, he put the onus on the Minsk Group to "think [up] something creative; to be supportive; not to do something which can damage this fragile peace; not to give some unrealistic promises to Armenia; and to try to be neutral; to try to be impartial and to try to seal this situation." He also noted that in the event Armenia would wish to engage in talks on a "future peace agreement," then "there could be a lot of room for international players. There are the issues of demarcation, delimitation, interaction," he concluded.

President Aliyev's point was a sequential one: the process of normalization of interstate relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan should begin by tackling the three aforementioned issues, as well as other thorny ones; their resolution would open the way for the signing of a peace treaty. And in this context, he made it clear that "a lot of room" could be provided to "international players" to play their roles.

Azerbaijan has mobilized all efforts to restore and make habitable its conflict-affected territories and to ensure the safe and dignified return of Azerbaijani IDPs to their places of origin in the Karabakh region. The government is also determined to reintegrate its citizens of Armenian origin who reside in the territories that are currently under the control of the Russian peacekeepers. Thus, in order to restore the peaceful co-existence of all of citizens affected by the conflict, considerable additional efforts will need to be made.

Building trust between two societies divided by conflict for decades requires a significant amount of time, understanding, and patience. The level of trust obviously needs to be dramatically increased. It will also be crucial to reduce the sense of victimhood and to humanize the image of the adversary. All this will be an arduous and long-term process. Confidence-building measures will be essential and it seems likely that their implementation will require the interaction of Track One and Track Two diplomatic endeavors. BD

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Winning the Peace

Azerbaijan's Karabakh Reintegration Challenges

F. Murat Özkaleli

The Karabakh conflict was not resolved peacefully. Decades of unfruitful negotiations held under the auspices of the Co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group (France, Russia, and the United States) produced no diplomatic solution. The 30-year-long stalemate ended when Azerbaijan re-gained its occupied territories with a decisive military victory after 44 days of fighting. After the Second Karabakh War, Azerbaijan restored its territorial integrity in conformity with four UN Security Council resolutions.

Formally, Azerbaijan's sovereignty over all Karabakh was restored through the signing of a trilateral settlement that was reached between Azerbaijan and Armenia on November 10th, 2010, with Russia being the facilitator and third signatory. The settlement, which is more than a conventional truce but less than a full peace agreement, ensured the return of the remaining five occupied Azerbaijani areas immediately. A five-kilometer-wide corridor connecting Armenia to Karabakh was opened through Lachin, with control granted to a newly-established Russian peacekeeping force, which also took over control of Khankendi and some surrounding areas populated by ethnic-Armenians. Despite some delays, the trilateral settlement is being enforced and the Armenian occupation of 20 percent of Azerbaijani territories came to an end in early 2021. Other provisions of the settlement, such as the establishment of the free movement of all Azerbaijani persons, services, and capital to the region, is to follow.

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After winning the war, Azerbaijan now faces another big task: winning the peace. This consists in ensuring the territorial, economic, social, and political reintegration of Karabakh into Azerbaijan, while at the same time ensuring that regional peace and stability is kept intact. Peace and security in the region would allow for the flourishing of much-needed investments in infrastructure and the revitalization of Karabakh's economy. And yet, this is a particularly challenging task, for Armenians continue to reject Azerbaijan's sovereignty over Karabakh. The presence of Russian peacekeepers is generally interpreted by the Armenian leadership as a shield for the practical maintenance of their *de facto* control over the areas within the Russian peacekeeping zone, against Azerbaijan's *de jure* authority in the region.

> *Winning the peace consists in ensuring the territorial, economic, social, and political reintegration of Karabakh into Azerbaijan, while at the same time ensuring that regional peace and stability is kept intact.*

Breaking the Security Dilemma

In a 1996 *International Security* article entitled "Containing Fear: The Origins and Management of Ethnic Conflict," co-authors David Lake and Donald Rothchild argue that "intense ethnic conflict is most often caused by collective fears of the future"—in particular, the prevalence of fears that the physical security of a given ethnic group is threatened.

Fear of a lack of secure future in the South Caucasus is an extension of what the past has brought. As Stuart J. Kaufman observed in his book *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War* (2001), the longstanding conflict over Karabakh represents a fundamental clash between the Armenian myth-symbol complex fueled by historical fears and the corresponding Azerbaijani one that emphasizes a desire to protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Consequently, containing fears with respect to Azerbaijan's sovereignty and territorial integrity is the crucial component for breaking the cycle of the security dilemma in Karabakh, which requires both the effective management of information and dealing with credible commitment problems.

For three decades, Baku had refused to negotiate with Karabakh Armenians, as it would have been interpreted as having

granted quasi-political recognition to the breakaway entity, whose "independence" was both unilaterally declared prior to the breakup of the Soviet Union and remained completely unrecognized internationally in the subsequent decades. Even Armenia itself never formally recognized the entity proclaimed by the Karabakh Armenians.

The fact that Azerbaijan has ensured its territorial integrity as a result of the outcome of the Second Karabakh War suggests that Baku's primary engaging party in the time ahead will now be the Karabakh Armenian community, whose members are citizens of Azerbaijan. Of course, crucial roles will also need to be played by Yerevan and other external stakeholders in terms of providing support in the management of "ethnic fear," to refer to Lake and Rothchild's terminology.

Ancient hatreds spanning centuries, the traumas associated with the First Karabakh War, the effects of nearly three decades of occupation, and the recent liberation of the occupied territories by a combination of the use of force and diplomatic brinksmanship make it extremely difficult, in the immediate term, to expect that this ethnic fear (and the myriad problems derived from it) can be overcome. Still, the gradual reintegration of Karabakh into Azerbaijan is vital for protecting Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and reintegrating the country's ethnic-Armenian citizenry into the fabric of society while at the same time ensuring peace, security, and prosperity in the South Caucasus. As Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev has stated on numerous occasions since the Second Karabakh War came to an end, the country aims to sustain peace in the region and is ready to normalize relations with Armenia. In other words, the peace can be won with hard work, expressions of mutual tolerance, and conciliatory steps.

Audience Costs

Baku's ultimate goal is to fully reintegrate Karabakh into the rest of Azerbaijan; yet this can only be done in stages and will take years to complete. Aside from material obstacles, the Azerbaijani leadership will likely face a situation of complex "audience cost" with respect to the reintegration of Karabakh. (Generally speaking, audience costs in international relations theory are the costs that leaders pay from backing down before their opponents in interstate disputes.) The leadership in Baku will need to balance domestic audience costs against external audience costs; the latter further requires balancing Russia against the Western powers — most importantly, the United States and France. The two-level game structure of Azerbaijan's future Karabakh policies, along with possible signaling problems towards the competing Minsk Group Co-chairs, adds layers of complexity to the situation. Should the Azerbaijani leadership be seen to be backing down or even making compromises, it will face domestic audience costs; likewise with respect to increasing international pressure to have ethnic-Armenians included in the governance of Karabakh, where it seems likely that Russia and the United States will have conflicting demands.

The reintegration of Karabakh into the rest of Azerbaijan requires a multi-layer, sequential policy approach characterized by a high tolerance for contingent and adaptive alternatives.

All these complex audience costs make it imperative for Baku to work on sustainable governance and power sharing structures for achieving peace and prosperity in the Karabakh of the future.

The reintegration of Karabakh into the rest of Azerbaijan, therefore, requires a multi-layer, sequential policy approach characterized by a high tolerance for contingent and adaptive alternatives. There are multiple factors that set the context in which Azerbaijan's authorities will have to operate. Each of these factors should be dealt with in two ways simultaneously: distinctly on their own and as part of an overall whole made up of the cumulation of all such factors and their effects.

Put succinctly, the territorial, social, economic, and political reintegration of Karabakh will require controlling audience costs, both domestic and external. A whole-of-government, coordinated effort will obviously be required, necessitating the need for the emergence of a highly complex matrix for policy planning.

Property, Reconstruction, and Resettlement

Inevitably, the Azerbaijan government will organize the return of more than 600,000 internally displaced people to their homes. This is an evidently daunting task not only because of the sheer numbers involved (the re-mobilization of between 5 and 10 percent of the

entire population of Azerbaijan is in and of itself a logistic nightmare), but also because many of these IDPs' dwellings were destroyed by Armenian forces during the occupation.

Roughly speaking, the urban terrain of the occupied territories can be divided into three major clusters, when the pre-1989 demographics and the current situation are compared: (1) areas that had an ethnic-Armenian majority and are still populated by Armenians (e.g., Khankendi, Khojavend, Agdere); (2) areas that had an ethnic-Azerbaijani majority and were populated by ethnic-Armenians between the First and Second Karabakh Wars (e.g., Shusha, Kelbajar, Lachin, Kubatli, Zengilan, Jabrail); (3) areas that had an ethnic-Azerbaijan majority but were uninhabited or became uninhabitable (e.g., Agdam, Fuzuli).

Agdam was the center of the Karabakh region until the early 1990s, with population of more than 130,000. Its current situation can only be compared to Hiroshima, Warsaw, or Dresden after the devastations of war. Similarly, Fuzuli—a settlement once home to nearly 90,000 people—is now a complete ghost town. Ethnic-Armenians populated the Kelbajar district after the First Karabakh War but most of the dwellings formerly inhabited by ethnic-Azerbaijanis were burned to the ground with contagious frenzy right before the district was transferred back to Azerbaijan as a part of the November 10th, 2020, agreement. Moreover, virtually all of Karabakh's cultural and religious sites, including the ones located in Azerbaijan's cultural capital of Shusha, were destroyed during the occupation. While some of these monuments of world heritage can be rebuilt, many are beyond repair.

Due to this wholescale urbicide, most cities and towns in Karabakh will need to be built back up from scratch. This is obviously a long-term and costly proposition that will pose significant economic and social challenges for Azerbaijan.

Furthermore, hundreds of thousands of anti-personnel and anti-tank mines, coupled with countless booby-traps and pieces of unexploded ordnance, were laid in these districts by the forces of Armenian occupation. Like in Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen, and elsewhere, heavy mine contamination not only prevents the immediate return of civilians but poses a threat to the resumption of normalcy for a period of decades after the guns have been silenced. The case of Vietnam is illustrative: 20 percent of the country remains contaminated by landmines and unexploded ordnance, and more than 100,000 people have been killed or injured due to contact with such armaments since 1975).

The return of IDPs to their homes will necessarily have to be a gradual and controlled process—one that can begin in earnest only after the cleaning of explosives has been completed and infrastructure has been rebuilt—both requiring heavy and sustained state investment.

Until then, most of the liberated Karabakh region will remain under the administration of Azerbaijani security forces, as the regeneration of civilian life may take considerable time. This may turn out to be a blessing in disguise from a public administration perspective. For instance, a new Immovable Property Administration may be introduced (or the country's existing one may be given a broader mandate) with objective of making a comprehensive assessment of assets in the Karabakh region. All the buildings must be counted and categorized, and land and property titles must be re-issued.

There will be tens of thousands of applications from Azerbaijan's IDP community to reclaim lost property. In many instances, their property will have been destroyed either by neglect, purposefully demolished by the forces and agents of the Armenian occupation, or resettled by ethnic-Armenian occupants. Categories need to be set carefully and cartographic inventories must be thoroughly prepared. In this context, certain decisions made by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) should be carefully examined. Its decisions in *Demopoulos and Others v. Turkey* (2010) may be of particular significance, as the rulings sought to balance between former and current property owners: the court indicated that returning properties to the old owners should not result in human right violations for the current owners. After a three-decades long occupation, property issues have become very complex and therefore must be dealt with diligently.

In short, Karabakh today needs a massive infrastructure overhaul, but such an effort cannot be limited to the reconstruction of demolished homes and towns. Time has been frozen since the early 1990s in many parts of the liberated region. Power, water, and sewage systems are all outdated and damaged. Existing roads and railways require major repairs and new ones will need to be built. Construction of new airports has already begun. All these efforts also face problems related to minesweeping and funding. All-

told, all of Karabakh will become one giant construction site.

Minefield Maps as a Key to Peace

Unfortunately, Armenia has so far refused to provide all the minefields maps in its possession. The welcome exception, which took place as *Baku Dialogues* was going to press, was the surrender of maps for the Agdam district. But this represents only a "tiny part of the maps we have," as the acting prime minister of Armenia, Nicol Pashinyan, admitted soon thereafter.

The demining process would gain significant pace if full Armenian cooperation were to be secured for humanitarian purposes, as the untold number of remaining explosives pose a clear and present danger to civilian lives. Neither Azerbaijan nor Armenia is a party to the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, which came into force in 1999. Thus, the issue requires bilateral negotiations. Georgia facilitated the handover of the Agdam maps (with the support of the United States, the European Union, the Swedish chairmanship of the OSCE, and perhaps Russia) but there is much more work still to be done. Moscow might step up on its own; or join hands with the other two Minsk Group Co-chairs; or the actors involved in the Agdam arrangement could build on their success.

What is certain is that Yerevan did not give away these maps for nothing: they were essentially traded for 15 Armenian detainees in Azerbaijani custody. Its policy may become more flexible after the June 20th, 2021, parliamentary elections are held in Armenia. On the other hand, Yerevan's reluctance to provide all the minefields maps it possesses may be considered a purposeful delaying tactic for Azerbaijani resettlement. But such a tactic can only slow down this process, not prevent it from proceeding.

Whatever lies behind Yerevan's reluctance to act, Armenia will be held responsible for all the human and material loss resulting from landmine explosions covering the areas where it has refused to hand over the maps: both Azerbaijan and Armenia have been parties to the European Convention on Human Rights since 2002, which gives the ECHR jurisdiction. Other international courts can be petitioned, as well.

However that may be, providing the minefield maps to Azerbaijan would constitute an excellent gesture on the part of the Armenian side, signaling a willingness for cooperation. At the same time, of course, it could lead to considerable audience costs on the home front, making a unilateral handover nearly impossible. In this regard, some sort of bilateral Commission on Humanitarian Matters could be established under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the Minsk Group, or, as discussed above, the actors involved in facilitating the Agdam landmines map arrangement. Whatever the modality, the Azerbaijani side can expect to be presented with demands from the Armenian side—humanitarian or otherwise.

Revitalization and Reparations

Revitalizing the economy and putting on solid ground the public finances of the liberated areas constitute two other critical steps Azerbaijan can take to reintegrate the region successfully into the rest of the country as well as transform it into both a politically peaceful and economically gainful part of the South Caucasus.

Karabakh is rich in natural resources, including gold and coal reserves. Karabakh also contains an abundance of renewable energy sources. The Azerbaijan Energy Regulatory Agency (AREA) reports that one quarter of Azerbaijan's water resources—about 2,56 billion cubic meters of water per annum—is generated in the Karabakh region. AREA also indicates that Karabakh's strong streams feed not only the Tartar, Khudafarin, and Giz Galasi hydroelectric power plants but also the Sarsang/Sugovushan water reservoir, which is one of Azerbaijan's tallest dams. In short, AREA estimates that the occupied territories were contributing as much as 30 percent to Armenia's annual GDP.

While the Sugovushan water reservoir is likely to make a considerable contribution to Azerbaijan's agricultural output in the time to come and the reintegration of Karabakh's gold reserves promises to strengthen Azerbaijan's currency, which was devaluated in 2016 due to low oil prices. And overall, the wholescale reconstruction of the liberated areas will also make a significant contribution to the country's economy.

This revitalization is good for the Karabakh Armenians as well, increasing the likelihood for the

onset of sustainable prosperity—something that they never had during the period of occupation. Lastly, economic revitalization can establish a base for enduring peace between Karabakh Azerbaijanis and Karabakh Armenians. Like Alsace-Lorraine or South Tyrol after World War II, Karabakh has the potential to turn into a signifier of peace and cooperation instead of remaining a synonym for conflict and division.

There are, however, some outstanding issues that need to be resolved urgently. First, Azerbaijan's currency, the manat, should replace all foreign currencies in Karabakh even though foreign ones such as the Russian ruble, the U.S. dollar, or the euro may be used in the Russian peacekeeping zone during the transition period established by the November 10th, 2021, trilateral statement.

While some tax exemptions may be provided for the liberated areas during this same transition period, Azerbaijani's taxation regime should be introduced eventually in order to levy taxes on income and property. Customs should also be regulated in conformity with the rest of Azerbaijan's international borders so as to avoid creating a quasi-state within the state. A further important detail regarding the region's financial reintegration into Azerbaijan is paying the salaries of state employees in Karabakh with the manat—especially those hired by the Armenian occupation forces (e.g., schoolteachers, medical doctors, nurses, police officers, local government employees, and so on). In short, regenerating local income streams and redistributing resources from the central budget in Baku require making serious public finance plans for Karabakh. The region's financial reintegration also requires reintroducing Azerbaijan's banking system into the region. Thus, opening branches of the Azerbaijani Central Bank as well as Azerbaijani retail and commercial banks all over Karabakh, including in places like Khankendi, may become a priority for Baku in the near future. Such moves may be crucial to revitalizing Karabakh's local economy through the provision of loans and other services.

Azerbaijan suffered extensive losses to its national earnings potential during the period of the Armenian occupation: the unilateral seizure and exploitation of natural sources (mining, electrical production, etc.) clearly constituted a breach of international law. At the same time, the forests of Karabakh were devastated during occupation, such that senior Azerbaijani officials have used the word "ecocide" to describe the plight of countless tress over the nearly 30-year period.

All of these losses bring the necessity of compensation to the forefront. Nevertheless, the question of war and occupation reparations is a bilateral issue between Armenia and Azerbaijan; it is not directly relevant to the issue of how to reintegrate Karabakh (and the Karabakh Armenians) into Azerbaijan. In fact, the reparations issue may serve the cause of justice and satisfy the demands of the Azerbaijani public, but it may also impede the much-needed process of reconciliation.

Dealing With Ancient Hatreds

One of the key distinctions to be made regarding the nature of the Karabakh conflict is that how to define and explain it. Partisans of the Armenian position tend to describe the nature of the Karabakh conflict as primordial and innate. This has even been reflected in Yerevan's official population policy, which sanctioned the expulsion of all non-ethnic-Armenians from Armenia and the occupied areas as well as initiated forced assimilation programs such as the closing of schools that follow a Russian language curriculum.

In contrast, schools and universities where the language of instruction is Azerbaijani, Russian, Georgian, Turkish, and so on operate without hindrance in Azerbaijan. More broadly, Azerbaijan is a proudly multiethnic, multiconfessional, and multicultural society made up not only of ethnic-Azerbaijanis but also many ethnic Russians, Lezgis, and Jews. There are nearly 100,000 ethnic-Armenians living in Azerbaijan. Thus, Azerbaijan is well equipped to reintegrate the Karabakh Armenians into its already diverse social, economic, and education system.

Karabakh Armenians had lived in an unrecognized entity for nearly three decades, which makes them, at best, reluctant to be reintegrated into the Republic of Azerbaijan. In this regard, reorienting the rhetoric of the Armenian elite towards coexistence and cooperation is a vital condition for reconciliation to be able to move forward. The potential for reconciliation is high, if the sides demonstrate a genuine willingness to prioritize regional development—both economic and social.

Azerbaijan's willingness to focus on the economic development of the region provides a unique opportunity for peace and prosperity for the entire South

Caucasus to take hold. Nevertheless, it requires two to tango, as the saying goes. Even though reconciliation and economic revitalization would be beneficial for the Karabakh Armenians, more than seven months after the trilateral agreement came into force the rhetoric of the Armenian elite has shown virtually no sign of reconciliatory or cooperative sentiments. Quite the contrary, for the most part it remains stuck in the past and continue to stumble into pitfalls of overextension by relying heavily on what Jack Snyder called "myths of empire" (the title of his 1993 book): an admixture of domestic politics and expansionist ambitions.

Moreover, Armenia has yet to deal with its diaspora issue. No other nation has a greater disconnect between the power of its state and the power of its organized diaspora, as a result of which the latter plays a uniquely disproportionally strong role in designing the country's policies. The organized Armenian diaspora—especially those branches based in the United States and France—often impose their ultranationalist, even bellicose rhetoric into the country's public discourse and policymaking process, instead of leveraging their evident influence to help establish peace and prosperity in the South Caucasus.

The point here is that the steps various steps that Azerbaijan may take to reintegrate Karabakh Armenians through a complex institutional design will likely face resistance by the organized Armenian diaspora. Baku will need to figure out how to overcome both the challenge of its outreach initiatives being dismissed immediately and counter accusations of wanting to assimilate the Karabakh Armenian community.

Thus, the "ethnic outbidding" that Timothy D. Sisk defined in *Power Sharing and International Mediation in Ethnic Conflicts* (1996) as "extremist ethnic group leaders who decry moderation with enemies as a sellout of group interest" presents a genuine threat to Baku's reintegration plans. In fact, one could expect to see that the more successful these have a chance of becoming, the more likely it is that they will be rejected by both the government in Yerevan and the organized Armenian diaspora coming together to pressure the Karabakh Armenian leadership to retain an uncompromising, ultranationalist stance. Moreover, other external powers that have historically supported Armenian political causes are unlikely ever to be fully satisfied with Azerbaijan's reintegration plans to the point that—if past behavior can serve as a predictor of future action—demand after demand can be expected to be made until Baku's effective sovereignty over Karabakh is seen as being compromised.

Last but not least, Baku's reintegration policies are likely to face domestic opposition. Azerbaijani public opinion is also not immune to emotional stimuli: some circles are likely to attempt to frame the government's reintegration plans as constituting concessions to the 'enemy.'

The process of ethnic conflict de-escalation in Karabakh should begin with identifying particular conflict triggers and precipitating events and their management through the implementation of well-designed and carefully implemented integrative policies.

All this carries with it the danger of turning mutual ethnic outbidding into a combative dialectic that turns into a pretext for the reemergence of yet another round of violent conflict. Hence, the process of ethnic conflict de-escalation in Karabakh should begin with identifying particular conflict triggers and precipitating events and their management through the implementation of well-designed and carefully implemented integrative policies.

Governance and Power Sharing

What Karabakh's new governance structure will look like probably represents the single most speculated topic in the knot of issues that need to dealt with in order to achieve the full reintegration of the region into Azerbaijan.

The power sharing question—or, more broadly, the question of the political inclusion of Karabakh Armenians—may become an even more perplexing one should it become a pretext for external meddling and, in turn, be seen as a challenge to Azerbaijan's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Even with no or at least limited outside interference, however, power sharing in a multi-ethnic setting is an evidently thorny issue: it could lead to the fragmentation of a state (e.g., Yugoslavia) or nurture democratic secessionist aspirations (e.g., Quebec, Scotland, Catalonia). Either way, power sharing is an extremely difficult but ultimately necessary subject to be discussed for ensuring the full reintegration of Karabakh into Azerbaijan.

It could be very well argued that the concern with respect to Karabakh is exclusively "governance," not "power sharing," since

even if the approximately 100,000 ethnic-Armenians (no one really knows the exact population number) that resided in the region during the occupation were all to return (or remain, as the case may be) would not constitute a sufficiently sizeable minority in a country with a population of over 10 million. Obviously, a minority population that makes up more or less 1 percent of a country's total population is quite unlikely to warrant the granting of any serious form of power sharing at the central government level, except perhaps the allocation of a guaranteed number of seats to ethnic-Armenians in the country's parliament.

Obviously, a minority population that makes up more or less 1 percent of a country's total population is quite unlikely to warrant the granting of any serious form of power sharing at the central government level.

Nevertheless, Karabakh's particular political history adds both complexity and context to the situation. In the wake of the Second Karabakh War, virtually the entire Karabakh Armenian population is now located in a small pocket of territory in and around the city of Khankendi. Still continuing their effective control there thanks to the presence of Russian peacekeepers, the leadership of the Karabakh Armenian community would hardly accept any governance structure that excludes their active participation in the local administrative bodies. There is no serious question that this position will be supported by all three Minsk Group Co-chairs and other international actors like European Union.

In his aforementioned book, Timothy Sisk provides a typology for conflict-regulating practices that may provide a starting point for thinking about this issue. He argues that "the consociational and integrative approaches can be fruitfully viewed as conceptual poles in a spectrum of specific conflict-regulating institutions and practices that promote power sharing."

Sisk goes on to provide five consociational conflict-regulating practices: *one*, granting territorial autonomy and creating confederal arrangements; *two*, creating a polycommunal, or ethnic, federation; *three*, adopting group proportional representation in administration appointments, including consensus decision rules in the executive; *four*, adopting a highly proportional electoral system in a parliamentary framework; and *five*, acknowledging group rights or corporate (nonterritorial) federalism.

He also provides five integrative conflict-regulating practices: *one*, creating a mixed, or nonethnic, federal structure; *two*, establishing an inclusive, centralized unitary state; *three*, adopting majoritarian but ethnically neutral, or nonethnic, executive, legislative, and administrative decision-making bodies; *four*, adopting a semi-majoritarian or semi-proportional electoral system that encourages the formation of pre-election coalitions (vote pooling) across ethnic divides; and *five*, devising ethnicity-blind public policies

While Sisk's two approaches may provide a general conceptual framework for conflict-regulating practices, other particular factors ought to set more practical parameters for Karabakh's political reintegration into Azerbaijan. These include: the political history of the Karabakh region, Soviet-era administrative structure, comparative examples in the post-Soviet space (especially Russia's experience), and the current public administration structure of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

A New Public Administration Structure

Azerbaijan needs to establish a new political structure for Karabakh. The design of such a structure will necessarily have to be incorporated into the existing Azerbaijani political system. One alternative is to create a bicommunal public administration system in Karabakh based on the facts on the grounds, a component of which could involve the establishment of a distinct local ethnic-Armenian representation schema. There are crucial components for such a bicommunal administration. An initial task is to define the boundaries and population of Karabakh. If the boundaries of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) from the Soviet era may be taken as a starting point, then these consisted of five administrative districts (Askaran, Hadrut, Mardakert, Martuni, and Shusha) that, taken together, correspond more or less to the operational area of the Russian peacekeeping contingent—the notable and highly symbolic exception being Shusha, which was regained by the Azerbaijani Armed Forces in the last days of the Second Karabakh War.

A single category of Azerbaijani citizenship is necessary to maintain, although a special kind of

residency status may be negotiated for those who choose to reside in (or return to) Karabakh. Soviet-era census data may be taken as the principal basis for determining residency status. Soviet-era sources indicate that around 145,000 ethnic-Armenians and nearly 41,000 ethnic-Azerbaijanis lived on the territory of the NKAO in 1989. Azerbaijan may seek to pursue policies that could reverse the region's ethnic osmosis. During the Soviet period, Karabakh was able to sustain an ethnically-mixed population: ethnic-Azerbaijanis and ethnic-Armenians coexisted for decades in relative peace. Once Shusha is repopulated with returning ethnic-Azerbaijanis, the population balance in Karabakh may be restored. In turn, ethnic-Armenians may expect to maintain ethnically-Armenian homogenous towns in Karabakh.

A new census would need to be conducted in order to determine the exact number of ethnic-Armenians still living in Karabakh—notwithstanding the risk of heightened tensions due to the fact that such a census would only include those ethnic-Armenians eligible for citizenship of the Republic of Azerbaijan. It is a commonly known fact that Yerevan pursued a settlement policy in the occupied territories: ethnic-Armenians from Armenia and other countries (including Syria) were moved to the region. Thus, ethnic-Armenians ineligible for Azerbaijani citizenship may be asked to leave; yet this also requires a careful planning in order to prevent the onset of a new political crisis being generated on a humanitarian basis, which could serve as a pretext for foreign meddling.

In 2017, the secessionist regime operating in the occupied territories enacted a new "constitution" for their unrecognized state. A "presidential" system was established and a 33-seat unicameral "parliament" formed the legislative branch. These political bodies aimed to earn some legitimacy for the regime operating in Karabakh, notwithstanding their non-recognition by Azerbaijan and the rest of the international community. Declaring these to be illegal is one thing; abolishing them is another. Eventually, institutions formed within the constitutional and legal framework of the Republic of Azerbaijan must be established in Karabakh; in all probability, the new legal structures provided by Baku will try, as much as possible, to follow the footsteps of past and current practice by Karabakh Armenians.

Securing the consent of the Karabakh Armenians is desirable but at the same time very difficult,

as ultranationalism still prevails among the ruling elite, which considers the Russian peacekeeper contingent as their community's protector and guarantor of the status quo. Without the at least implicit consent of the Karabakh Armenians, however, peace and prosperity in the region—and in the South Caucasus in general—will be virtually impossible to achieve; its absence would increase the likelihood that bullets not ballots would again become the determining factor of political ends.

Three Keys to Karabakh's Reintegration

In the Spring 2021 issue of *Baku Dialogues*, Laurence Broers argued that the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict has yet to be resolved. Instead, he suggested it would be more accurate to state that it has been "repackaged and embedded in a new, highly complex, and unpredictable web of linkages."

The present trajectory of the dispute is such that it may indeed come to be seen in retrospect as having constituted the continuation of the conflict, with new violent additional episodes taking place in the future. This would put the South Caucasus on a path similar to the one resulting from the protracted conflict between Israel and the Arab states. However, there is also a chance for reversing the tide and winning the peace. This depends on three major factors: the governance and power sharing initiatives that Azerbaijan will take in the process of Karabakh's reintegration; Armenian reactions to these initiatives; and the role of, and relationship between, external actors in the overall context of determining the balance of power between Russia and the United States over the geopolitically pivotal South Caucasus region.

Once a region of contention and ongoing wars between Germany and France, today Alsace-Lorraine is a home of the European Parliament and the Council of Europe—the region is now a symbol of conflict transformation and peacebuilding. Alsace-Lorraine can become an inspiration for Karabakh. Aside from its practical effectiveness, as applied by visionary politicians like Jean Monnet, Robert Schuman, and Konrad Adenauer, the European experience can also provide a theoretical alternative, namely Ernst B. Haas's "neofunctionalism"—an eclectic yet highly influential approach to integration that combined David Mitrany's functionalist insight and Monnet's pragmatism. As pointed

out by Philippe C. Schmitter in a 2006 review article that appeared in the *Journal of European Public Policy*, Haas's neofunctionalism addresses how to use specialized experts by focusing on economically fruitful topics at the sub-national level as the basis for creating spill-over effect to gradually solve other politically charged issues. In short, neofunctionalism is a theory that suggests the possibility of creating collaborative atmosphere between former belligerents.

In this regard, starting from the efficient provision of the most basic services (e.g., postal delivery, banking, electrification, gasification, potable water), an inter-communal cooperative spirit may evolve, in turn producing a spillover pattern that would increasingly spread to other public services. Instead of trying to accomplish everything at once, a step-by-step, sequential approach may be more advisable. Sensitivities to local reactions would be factored into policymaking; thus the model should be highly receptive and institutionally capable of adapting to contingencies on the ground as well as external remonstrations.

A probably more realistic alternative to the idealism of the European neofunctionalist approach is to be found in the various writings of G. John Ikenberry, whose historically enlightened "strategic restraint" approach provides important insights applicable to winning the peace in Karabakh. In this regard, Azerbaijan, as the unequivocal victor of the Second Karabakh War, can nurture a constitutional order that "serves the weak as well as the powerful," as Ikenberry put it in the revised edition of his book, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars* (2019).

While taking into account the importance of ensuring a regional balance of power, the new institutional design for the Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan could adopt the main principles of multiethnic governance and power sharing. Setting the administrative boundaries of the new public administration structure for Karabakh may represent an initial step for ensuring the spatial component of the new public administration. Enshrining the protection of the rights of the ethnic-Armenian population, with legal guarantees, would also constitute a crucial human component in this regard.

All told, a delicate balance between political order (i.e., sustaining Azerbaijan's sovereignty) and securing the representation of ethnic-Armenian citizens of Azerbaijan in Karabakh's governance and power sharing bodies needs to be established. As Ikenberry emphasizes, the basic problem of order formation is coping with the "asymmetries of power." As the victorious side, Azerbaijan now has a better chance to break the security dilemma by taking concrete steps for including ethnic-Armenians in a new governance and power sharing regime in the process of the reintegration of Karabakh. Nevertheless, the ethnic-Armenian side also has to adopt a cooperative spirit for winning the peace in Karabakh.

Here it could be instructive to examine the example of Cyprus, whereby in 2004 the United Nations put forward a comprehensive peace proposal known as the Annan Plan in which thorny issues such as property, citizenship, residency, and identity were dealt with. Of course, from a legal standpoint, there is a crucial distinction between the status of the Turkish Cypriots and the Karabakh Armenians, as the former was a constitutive community of the Republic of Cyprus (along with the Greek Cypriots). Thus, the UN had to recognize their political equality even though sovereignty had been exercised exclusively by the Greek Cypriots since 1964 (or, as some argue, since 1974).

Still, the Annan Plan and its annexes—which was prepared by international experts in the context of bicommunal negotiations between Turkish and Greek Cypriots that had gone on for decades—includes many useful aspects for dealing with the present situation. So without losing sight of the *sui generis* nature of the Karabakh situation, casting a glance back at parts of the Annan Plan may still be helpful in developing an integrative approach to governance and power sharing.

The first key element derived from the Annan Plan is in a way the most basic: recognizing ethnic-Armenians' right to exist in Karabakh—something that has already been granted by Azerbaijan. Baku can turn this recognition into practice by including ethnic-Armenians in Karabakh's new governance and power structure. In turn, and this is the second key element, the ethnic-Armenian side needs to recognize Azerbaijan's sovereignty over Karabakh—which is something that has not been acknowledged, yet.

Unfortunately, Yerevan has renounced neither its territorial claims over Karabakh nor the political identity built upon this

refusal—what Broers calls "augmented Armenia." All the major powers and international organizations recognize Karabakh as a part of Azerbaijan—and have done so since the country regained its independence in 1991. Thus, Armenia's present attitude prevents it from benefiting from the main commitments of international society whilst further delaying the onset of a process to secure peace and prosperity in the South Caucasus.

The third key is the position of the relevant external actors. Turkey and Russia have become "frenemies" over the past decade, competing in various geographies such as Syria, Libya, Ukraine, and Georgia whilst simultaneously cooperating in various other domains, especially on the critical energy issue. The Turkish-Russian balance over Karabakh has been carefully sustained by Baku. Azerbaijan also maintains a careful diplomatic posture towards Iran, despite the country's increasing level of military cooperation with Israel. The United States and France, in contrast, have been largely left out of the picture. As the Biden Administration has been trying to reinstitute Washington's posture of global hegemony—which contradicts Russia's polycentric understanding of the world—Karabakh can easily turn into another flashpoint between these two great powers, in addition to Ukraine and Georgia. On the other hand, the Karabakh issue can become a theater in which Moscow and Washington can cooperate—or at least avoid further tension—as had notably been the case during the time of President Heydar Aliyev's brilliantly crafted diplomatic achievement that produced the Contract of the Century that paved the way for the delivery of Azerbaijani oil to world markets.

For decades the Azerbaijani side had sought to win the war in Karabakh, and Baku succeeded. There is now an opportunity to win the peace, however elusive it may at first glance appear to be at present. BD

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Georgia After the Second Karabakh War

Security and Economic Implications

Mamuka Tsereteli

The outcome of the Second Karabakh War between Azerbaijan and Armenia significantly transformed the geopolitical reality in the South Caucasus, with implications for the wider Black Sea-Caspian region. The unsettled political geography of the South Caucasus and the ethno-political separatism fueled by external actors since the early 1990s left bleeding wounds on the bodies of the newly re-emerged sovereign states of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. These conflicts have determined the trajectory of the geopolitical developments of the region for the last 30 years, including on the foreign policy orientations of these new states.

The conflicts in the South Caucasus were the primary challenge for transforming the strategic assets of this region into greater political and economic success. Three major conflict areas in the South Caucasus were former autonomous regions, created in the early Soviet period: Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, and the Tskhinvali region, what was called South Ossetia. (Briefly: the latter term was introduced by the Soviets in the 1920s as a name for the newly created autonomous area in Georgia, populated by Ossetians alongside ethnic Georgians. The historic homeland of Ossetians is located to the north of the Greater Caucasus mountains. Following the Soviet tradition of planting ethno-political time bombs, Ossetia proper—located in the Russian Federation—was named North Ossetia, while the Tskhinvali region of Georgia—with the Ossetian population at the time concentrated in the border areas with Russia—was named South Ossetia.)

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As of today, all three of these areas are self-proclaimed independent states, are formally ruled by *de facto* governments, and saw fierce military confrontation in the early 1990s. In 2008, the Tskhinvali region became the battleground between Russian and Georgian forces. In 2020, Azerbaijan regained through a combination of military action and diplomatic brinksmanship all seven regions outside of Nagorno-Karabakh that had been occupied by Armenia, as well as one-third of the former Nagorno-Karabakh region. In the case of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, as of mid-2021, these territories remain, in reality, governed by Russian occupational forces. The Russian military influence was inserted into Karabakh after the war that ended on November 10th, 2020, with Russian peacekeepers playing an increasing role in the governance of the region.

In terms of geopolitical orientation, Armenia willingly allowed Russian troops onto its territory, seeing them as a security guarantee and deterrent against Azerbaijan. Georgia aligned itself with the Western powers, determined to join NATO and the EU. The conflicts on Georgian territory are seen as punishment from Russia for Georgia's pro-Western focus. As a result, there has been a heavy Russian military presence in the separatist areas of Georgia since the Russian invasion to Georgia in 2008.

Azerbaijan has a more nuanced foreign policy, balancing between Russia, Turkey, and the West. Azerbaijan also has substantial hydrocarbon wealth located in the Caspian Sea, with major oil and natural gas fields already connected to the Black Sea and Mediterranean through pipelines, ports, railroads, and so on. Azerbaijan and Georgia are allied with Turkey in energy projects and in trade. Azerbaijan had no Russian troops on its territory until the resumption of the military conflict in 2020 and, more precisely, the follow-up peace deal, which allowed Russian peacekeepers to separate Armenian and Azerbaijani forces in Karabakh.

Despite the conflicts of the early 1990s, the first decades of independence after the breakup of the Soviet Union were marked by the strengthening of the sovereignty and statehood of all three South

Caucasus states. The United States strongly supported this process in partnership with its NATO ally Turkey, facilitating energy infrastructure development in the region as a foundation for the economic sovereignty of these countries. American and Turkish support was enforced by multiple economic and transportation initiatives from the EU. These efforts brought about the development of vibrant energy, trade, and transit connections between the Black Sea-Caspian region and the Mediterranean, delivering huge economic and political benefits to all the energy producing and transit countries of the region: Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. Turkey was, and continues to be, the major beneficiary of the economic, political, and security benefits of the East-West energy and transportation corridor, as well as of the expanding pipeline, railway, highway, and port infrastructure linking the country to Caspian resources and markets. But due to a weakening U.S.-Turkish alliance since the start of the Second Iraq War and the overall decline of America's presence and leadership in the region, Russia has regained significant power and influence in the Black Sea region and the South Caucasus.

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The prelude to Russia's increased role in the Black Sea region was the 2008 invasion of Georgia and subsequent military occupation of significant parts of the country. This was followed by the annexation of Crimea in 2014, which allowed Russia to exponentially increase its military presence in the Black Sea region, as well as to establish a platform for power projection that aimed not only at the Black Sea but the Mediterranean as well. By controlling Crimea, Russia has now almost complete strategic dominance over the Black Sea. This situation, however, re-emphasized the importance of NATO membership for Turkey, despite the deterioration of Turkey's bilateral relationships with several leading NATO member states.

After the Second Karabakh War, Russia increased its military presence in the South Caucasus, adding 1,960 peacekeepers in Karabakh to an already significant military presence in Armenia and in Georgia's two breakaway regions. This military presence can allow Russia to establish military control over parts of the South Caucasus on relatively short notice. After the use of military force in Georgia in 2008 and in Ukraine in 2014, this threat is not merely perceived, but real. Military success in Georgia and Ukraine also emboldened Russia to move more aggressively in the Middle East, especially with its presence in Syria. The strategic significance of the weak Western response to Russian aggression in the South Caucasus and the Black Sea region has become more evident as time has passed.

Broader Implications of the Second Karabakh War

The outcome of the military conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia in Karabakh also has significant implications beyond the regional perspective. The war demonstrated that with great power consent (in this case, from Russia and Turkey), smaller actors (in this case, Azerbaijan) can achieve their national objectives with military means more efficiently than with diplomacy. Russia, by maintaining neutrality in the military conflict, obtained some leverage over Azerbaijan while further increasing Armenia's security dependence on Russia. While Turkey now has a greater role in the affairs of the South Caucasus, it is no longer seen as necessarily the channel of Western interests in the region; Turkey rather appears to be representing its own national interest the way President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his domestic allies understand it.

As a result, we are moving towards a new and yet still forming status quo in the South Caucasus, with different actors facing different challenges as well as opportunities.

Azerbaijan achieved a significant military victory and territorial gains, more than it ever realistically hoped to achieve at the negotiating table. Seven regions outside of Nagorno-Karabakh, previously occupied by Armenia, returned to Azerbaijani control. These include the entire length of the Azerbaijani-Iranian border in the south of the country and regions between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, except for a 5-kilometer-wide transportation corridor known as the Lachin Corridor, that remains under the control of the Russian peacekeeper force. About one-third of the former Soviet-era Nagorno-Karabakh

Autonomous Oblast reverted to Azerbaijani control, including the town of Shusha—a medieval citadel of utmost military and cultural-historical importance to both sides.

This military success will help Ilham Aliyev, Azerbaijan's president, to further consolidate power domestically and gain more respect internationally, particularly in the wider Black Sea-Caspian region where strong leaders traditionally garner greater respect.

At the same time, Azerbaijan's success is not without cost. Azerbaijan had to agree to delegate part of its sovereign rights to the Russian military over some parts of *de jure* Azerbaijani territory (for a five-year period, according to the November 10th, 2020, trilateral agreement between Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Russia that ended the war). The unstated implication of the aforementioned document is that the majority of the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast will remain under Armenian administrative control—of course now secured by Russian military peacekeepers. The access road via Lachin from Armenia to Armenian-controlled territories in Karabakh will also be under Russian control. In addition, one important segment of the trilateral document is that border troops of the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) will be in charge of safeguarding access from Azerbaijan to Nakhchivan via Armenia. The agreement does not specify the size and operational modalities of those troops, however.

All of these elements of Russian military engagement represent gains for the Russian Federation and were the result of compromises made by the Azerbaijani side. The geopolitical consequences of this decision are yet to be seen and understood. Meanwhile, at this stage Azerbaijan clearly wants to work with Russia to achieve what it considers a priority national objective. This sends a positive message from the Russian perspective: you have a better chance of success in the conflict if you are on good terms with Russia. This contrasts with the Western effort of mediation, which has not delivered any meaningful results for Azerbaijan for three decades.

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Consequently, Russia is a beneficiary of the outcome of the war; while this should not be exaggerated, it cannot be disregarded either. It is now back in the role of the arbiter and peacekeeper in the Azerbaijani-Armenian conflict, with the ability to change the status quo again in the future at its discretion. Most importantly, with its peacekeeping role in the conflict and the necessity of keeping logistical and supply lines open, Russia is establishing a long-term military presence in the region.

Both the Second Karabakh War and the November 10th, 2020, trilateral agreement concluded between Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Russia represents major diplomatic failures for the West.

The military defeat caused significant internal political tensions in Armenia. It weakened the country's reform-minded leadership, headed by Prime Minister Nicol Pashinyan, who came to power through one of President Vladimir Putin's much-despised color revolutions. To the extent that an Armenian leader can be independent-minded vis-à-vis Russia, Pashinyan was perceived as such, but also as being more Western-leaning compared to his predecessors. Reminding him about Russia's role in the security interests of Armenia seems to be one explanation for the limited and slow Russian response to the conflict.

Meanwhile, Turkey moved further away from the role of channeling Western interests in the region to the role of pursuing sovereign Turkish interests in the South Caucasus and wider Black Sea-Caspian region—essentially neglecting the opinion of its Western partners. Turkey is very happy with the outcome of the war, as Erdogan has stated on many occasions. If all the points of the trilateral agreement are implemented, Turkey will have direct access to mainland Azerbaijan via Nakhchivan and Armenia, hypothetically leading to normalized relations with Yerevan and the opening of its borders with Armenia as well—one of Erdogan's longtime objectives. Due to these interests, it appears that Turkey is not overly concerned with the Russian peacekeeper presence in Azerbaijan.

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Russia represents major diplomatic failures for the West. The absence of the United States and the European Union (as well as the OSCE Minsk Group) from the process of negotiating the modalities of the peace agreement demonstrate that the international framework for conflict settlement was replaced by a *de facto* Turkey-Russia format. The two Western co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group in charge of the conflict (namely France and the United States), were completely ignored by its third co-chair (namely Russia) in the talks that determined the timing and the outcome of the war (enshrined in the trilateral agreement). The West and NATO were also ignored by NATO ally Turkey, which provided support to Azerbaijan without consulting its NATO partners. The diminishing role of Western institutions in developments in the Russian neighborhood has been in Russia's interest for more than two decades.

A potentially significant development for the region may be the eventual re-opening of the direct railway line between Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Turkey as a consequence of the post-war settlement. Obviously, it will take time, investment, and significant political will to implement this element of the trilateral agreement. But if and when it is fully implemented, this transportation route may attract Russian cargo destined for Turkey along with some volume from Central Asia, which would mean that Georgian Black Sea ports would be bypassed. Also, there may be some volumes redirected from the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars (BTK) railway toward the Baku-Nakhchivan-Turkey direction, although these volumes are insignificant; transshipments on the BTK railway in 2020 amounted to only 10,500 TEU, a tiny fraction of the railway's planned capacity of 6.5 million tons.

While very important for Azerbaijan—and potentially for the normalization of Armenian-Azerbaijani-Turkish relationships going forward—the real transit potential of the Nakhchivan corridor will be limited for the foreseeable future due to political, geographic, infrastructural, and financial reasons. At the same time, this potential normalization significantly improves the strategic position of Azerbaijan while also opening up opportunities for Armenia, which has found itself in a very painful position after its military defeat in Karabakh.

In terms of Russia's use of the Nakhchivan corridor, it is more realistic to expect greater utilization by Russia of Iranian infrastructure

to trade with India and China via the Iranian ports of Bender Abbas and Chabahar. This north-south trade route is a major competitor with the Caspian-Black Sea route, since it may also attract increased volumes of Central Asian cargo destined for Asian markets. The Nakhchivan corridor may be attractive for some volumes of specific Russian cargo going to Turkey, but Russia would prefer Iran as a transit partner to access Asian markets, and its own Black Sea ports to access the Eastern Mediterranean and Europe.

For Georgia, the goals of European and Transatlantic integration remain the same, but the new reality in the region calls for reevaluating and reassessing Georgia's strategy more than ever in the past.

Security and Economic Implications for Georgia

The impacts for Georgia of the outcome of the Second Karabakh War are multiple and Tbilisi needs a new strategy to adapt to new realities: consideration must be taken of the gains and losses of the conflict's active participants as well as of post-conflict developments. For Georgia, the goals of European and Transatlantic integration remain the same, but the new reality in the region calls for reevaluating and reassessing Georgia's strategy more than ever in the past. What follows is an assessment of the principal challenges that Georgia needs to take into account in the formulation of its new strategy whilst keeping in mind that previous strategies did not result in tangible (and credible) security guarantees for the country.

The major and most obvious challenge is the increased Russian military presence in the region. In addition to the larger geopolitical implications of this fact, it has direct military-security implications for Georgia itself. Russian peacekeepers in the region will need logistical support; thus, Georgia may find itself pressured to open air or land access for Russian military supplies. Georgia was already asked to open its airspace to transport Russian peacekeepers on November 10th and 11th, 2020—immediately after the signing of the trilateral peace statement. As was reported, requests to allow overflights of Russian military planes were made by both the Armenian and Azerbaijani governments.

Another important challenge is the renewed call for a six-party cooperation platform featuring the three countries of the South Caucasus plus Iran, Russia, and Turkey—a proposal first introduced by Erdogan as the Pact for Stability and Cooperation in the South Caucasus after Russia's invasion of Georgia in 2008. While in Baku to attend the Victory Day military parade in December 2020, Erdogan stated that this initiative has the support of all three major regional powers (namely Russia, Turkey and Iran). During his January 2021 regional tour, Iranian foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said in Moscow that this initiative was the "most important goal of this regional trip" for Tehran.

By construction this initiative would exclude Western institutions and countries from the affairs of the South Caucasus; and this indeed appears to be one of its central objectives. At the same time, this initiative recalls for many in the Caucasus the successful collaboration between two newly-established states—the Soviet Union and the Republic of Turkey—emerging from the ashes of two fallen empires more than a century ago to keep Western powers out of the Caucasus. It is a dramatic understatement to say that this collaboration did not end well for the independence and sovereignty of the three young South Caucasus states that were extinguished by the machinations of Moscow and Ankara, allowing the Bolshevik regime to annex of all three of the Caucasus' nascent states.

But the interest of the Russian Federation in the 3+3 initiative, as it has been called by some, has not been confirmed by any official statement or comment from Putin, or by any other top Russian official, for that matter. Some Russian observers have been openly negative about the initiative because it would institutionalize Turkey's growing influence in the region, which they perceive as a danger to their country's interests.

However, one indirect positive indication may be gleaned from this statement made by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov at a press conference held after meeting Zarif during the latter's aforementioned visit to Moscow:

> You asked me whether the three countries will face challenges on the road to peace. If you have in mind Russia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia, they are not the only ones that are interested in a calm, peaceful life and prosperity in the region. Iran, Turkey, and Georgia (I mention Georgia as well, as being a part of the South Caucasus) have the same interests. In general, initiatives are being made to motivate the three republics of the South Caucasus to build their relations with the participation of their neighbors—Russia, Iran, and Turkey—in the context of the new reality where there is no war and all parties agree to lift the embargos and other restrictions on normal life in this important part of the world. There is no doubt that the Islamic Republic of Iran is interested in joining all of these projects.

This should, however, be read alongside the final part of his answer, in which he speaks of Russia taking a "direct part in the efforts envisioned by the agreements on unblocking economic and transport connections" before adding that,

> in addition to Russia, Iran, and Turkey, many countries, including several European states, are willing to join the efforts to restore the economy in Nagorno-Karabakh and around it. I think this intention can only be welcomed. The bottom line is that all external participants must realize that now it is important to create, strengthen, and make reliable and durable the economic foundation of future life in the South Caucasus.

One interesting detail is that there is no mention of either Abkhazia or the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia as political entities in the South Caucasus in the context of the 3+3 initiative's discussion among Russian policymakers and observers (as a reminder, Russia technically recognizes these parts of Georgia as "independent states"). There are different interpretations as to why this may be the case. The obvious one is that even Russia doesn't really see these regions as independent states. A less obvious reason is that Russia is sending a message to Georgia—you settle with us, and, like Azerbaijan, you may have a chance for some territorial gains as well.

So far, there is no clarity concerning the official Armenian or Azerbaijani attitude with regards to this 3+3 initiative, but Georgia affiliates itself with Western institutions and, realistically or not, desires greater Western participation in the affairs of the South Caucasus. Obviously, Turkey is a part of NATO and supports Georgia's NATO membership as well, so participation in this new initiative doesn't necessarily mean closing the door to all Western institutions for the participant countries.

But the question remains: what value could this new grouping bring to Georgia? Would it help to restore the country's territorial integrity?

Would Russia move its troops out of Georgia's *de jure* sovereign territory and reverse its decision on recognizing the independence of the separatist regions of Georgia?

These are highly unlikely developments, which makes Georgia's participation in this type of initiative impossible.

In the context of opening transportation links between Azerbaijan and Armenia as part of the post-conflict settlement outlined in the November 10th, 2020, trilateral statement, an initiative may arise to consider re-opening the rail link between Russia and Georgia through the separatist region of Abkhazia, which is currently under the effective control of the Russian military. This link would be important for Armenia, and for many years both Yerevan and Moscow have called on Tbilisi to allow its operation to restart.

Georgia has always wanted this issue to be linked to both the withdrawal of Russian troops from Georgian territory and the return of the displaced ethnic Georgian population to Abkhazia, which constituted a majority of the region's pre-conflict population. In the past, Azerbaijan opposed the opening of this railway connection between Russia and Armenia out of fear that it could become the source of additional military supplies to the latter. But given new geopolitical realities that include Azerbaijan itself planning to allow Russian transit to Armenia, the Georgia-Russia rail link may become less of a sensitive issue for Baku.

However, Georgian preconditions for opening the railway are unlikely to change significantly. In addition, Russia's real appetite to open this railway was always at question, as any normalization between Georgians and Abkhazians would be seen as a threat to Moscow's ability to manipulate the situation in Georgia's occupied regions.

The next challenge is the increased Russian pressure on the separatist leadership in Abkhazia to give up whatever domestic power it has on local affairs in the Georgian breakaway region. The case of Karabakh has shown to Abkhazian separatists, as well as to others, that Russia carries a big stick yet a very small carrot for those 'allies' that fully depend on Moscow. It should come as no surprise, then, that when the leader of the Abkhaz separatist regime met Putin on November 12th, 2020, he began to discuss multiple concessions that had been unacceptable previously to this same regime, including steps towards greater economic integration, the rights of Russians to own property in Abkhazia, and so on. These concessions, if materialized, would ease the *de facto* annexation of the region by the Russian Federation.

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Georgia's Response

As it responds to these and other national security challenges (including the ongoing and expected negative economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic) it is important for Georgia to reevaluate and redefine its national security strategy and create functioning mechanisms for its optimal implementation. The best possible way forward for Tbilisi would be to conceptualize national objectives in light of new realities, formulate the basic principles of its national security strategy on this basis, and engage its international partners in designing a detailed action plan with assigned resources and organizational mechanisms of implementation.

Georgia's security priorities should remain moving forward with regards to both EU and NATO integration in the multilateral sphere, as well as deepening bilateral security ties with key strategic partners like the United States, Turkey, and Azerbaijan as well as the country's Black Sea neighbors (namely Ukraine, Romania, and Bulgaria). But it is essential for Georgia to understand how far outside support can go, and to not exaggerate expectations while trying to extract as much as possible from international partnerships. With the help of partners, Georgia should continue to focus on developing its territorial defense capabilities and on acquiring advanced, more efficient and cost-effective defensive technologies and weapons.

This focus on hardcore security needs to be complemented with meaningful cooperation on regional infrastructure development and EU-Black Sea-Caspian connectivity. The new reality in the region cannot change Georgia's role as *the* critical transit country for energy resources.

Put simply: Caspian oil and gas will continue to flow via Georgia to outside markets for many years to come; and the South Caucasus corridor will remain the shortest transportation link between Central Asia and the Black Sea and Eastern Europe.

Moreover, it will be important for Georgia and Azerbaijan—as well as other partner countries—to continue working together on issues of container and general cargo transit. Georgia needs to take a proactive position in this process. Attracting cargo for European markets from the broader Silk Road region, which extends into Western China, Afghanistan, and perhaps the Indian subcontinent, is a realistic target if all the transit countries can collaborate. Significant public funding invested in Caspian ports and other infrastructure in Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan, as well as private investments in Georgian ports, can only be justified if those cargo volumes are attracted by lower cost and efficient movement of cargo. An increased role in bridging the Silk Road region with Europe and the states of the Mediterranean littoral would represent a key factor of stability for Georgia.

This process will require major diplomatic effort and coordination, along with political leadership. In the past, the most successful infrastructure projects in the energy sector became possible with leadership and strong diplomatic effort from the United States, backed by Turkey and regional leaders. The region's countries need to make extra efforts to re-engage with major actors. Particular attention should be paid to reaching out to the European Union, which may be a major beneficiary of the additional access routes to markets and resources.

The region's countries need to make extra efforts to re-engage with major actors. Particular attention should be paid to reaching out to the European Union, which may be a major beneficiary of the additional access routes to markets and resources.

In the absence of active support from the outside, greater regional coordination is crucial. Georgia needs to adopt a more proactive posture and invite partner countries and institutions to play an active role in facilitating trade and transit between the Caspian and Black Sea countries. It is important for Georgia and Azerbaijan to achieve the same degree of understanding and collaboration on issues of general cargo transit as they similarly had (and continue to have) on the development of energy transit infrastructure. International donor institutions, like the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, and the Asian Development Bank can play positive roles not only in this coordination effort but also in funding projects that will facilitate transport as well as digital and energy connectivity. These institutions, together with the EU, could also help Georgia to capitalize on its Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement with the EU.

The Second Karabakh War has drastically changed geopolitical and geo-economic realities in the South Caucasus, with different moving parts whose shapes are still evolving whilst proceeding in the general direction of a new tectonic of regional stability.

Moreover, the re-arrangement of global supply chains in the post-pandemic world could open opportunities for Georgia to attract industries that are oriented towards European markets. The economic security of Georgia will depend on its openness and ability to attract more export-oriented industries and activities. Collaborative efforts with Georgian partners would allow regional companies to be a part of this process during the post-pandemic recovery.

When it comes to internal development, Tbilisi's priority should be structural reform, which can reduce the state's role in the economy and help to unleash the creative entrepreneurial capacity of Georgians. In times of dealing with the consequences of global crises, the privatization of state assets is the only way that Georgia can attract international and domestic capital and transform passive state assets into productive assets.

Internal political stability and the full mobilization of intellectual, organizational, economic, military/political, and diplomatic resources are all essential preconditions for the successful planning of Georgia's national security for several, very difficult years to come.

The Second Karabakh War has drastically changed geo-political and geo-economic realities in the South Caucasus, with different moving parts whose shapes are still evolving whilst proceeding in the general direction of a new tectonic of regional stability. Georgia needs to adapt to these new emerging realities by expanding its horizon for alliances whilst deepening relations with its strategic partners. Stability in the South Caucasus in general, and in Georgia in particular, needs to be seen as being in the interest of many different actors. Such a development represents the only conceivable way for Georgia to ensure its security in the absence of full NATO membership or the credible issuance of bilateral security guarantees from its strategic partners. BD

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What Do Energy Sanctions Say About the World?

Aurélie Bros

Statecraft is often understood as the art of conducting state affairs in order to exert a direct influence on other actors in the international system in order to get them to do what they would not do otherwise. To achieve their goals, policymakers are able to employ a variety of levers such as diplomacy, propaganda, military statecraft, and economic statecraft. According to Elizabeth Ellis of the Inter-Disciplinary Ethics Applied Centre of the University of Leeds, the latter category encompasses all economic means—including recourse to economic sanctions—that might be used by international actors with the intention of (i) preventing objectionable policy or behavior, (ii) sending a message, or (iii) punishing unlawful policy or behavior.

Princeton University's David A. Baldwin wrote in 1985 that economic sanctions are divided into two main categories: those with a punitive function and those aimed at encouraging or rewarding. He also noted that they impact trade (e.g. embargo, quotas, and (un)favorable tariff discriminations) as well as capital (e.g. aid suspension, controls on imports or exports, and (dis)advantageous taxation), and that they can be used wisely or unwisely, justly or unjustly, depending on the situation at hand.

Although economic sanctions have a long history, with origins in Antiquity, they are unequally distributed over time. For example, their use greatly increased during the post-World War II era, especially in the energy sector. This increasing use of energy sanctions has been particularly noticeable since the early 1970s. Over the past several decades, they have essentially become a way for energy producers and consumers to exert disapproval over one another and to weaken those considered to be morally responsible for objectionable policies (not always related to energy issues). Energy sanctions, therefore, are often paired with non-energy economic sanctions targeting a large array of goods and services. For example, an oil embargo can take place in tandem with nuclear-related sanctions aimed at stopping military use of civilian nuclear power technology—as in the Iranian case.

The use of economic sanctions greatly increased during the post-World War II era, especially in the energy sector.

Energy sanctions are always deeply rooted in a wider political and economic environment, reflecting the global order of their time. This essay will focus mainly on the bipolar international system led by the United States and the Soviet Union between 1947 and 1991, which was followed by a post-Cold War international system in which the United States assumed the role of the world's leading power, supported by Western-dominated organizations. Nevertheless, this unipolar, rules-based order is now under pressure, perhaps even duress—some argue it is coming to an end. Certainly, its geopolitical underpinnings have dramatically changed, as rising powers seek to recalibrate their respective voices in order to rewrite global rules that, they assert (with at least some justification), they did not have much of a hand in designing. In such a changing environment, the mechanisms, the achievements, and the moral permissibility related to energy sanctions—in addition to their enormous and long-lasting resulting pain that goes well beyond the economic sphere—have come under increasing criticism in different parts of the world.

This essay will explore the system established during the 20th century that legitimized (in certain cases) the use of energy sanctions, as well as the partial loss of their efficiency and legitimacy caused by a progressive shift towards a polycentric global order. Since oil and gas-related sanctions constitute the majority of energy sanctions, these two resources will stand at the heart of the analysis.

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The first part of the essay looks at the origins of economic sanctions and the progressive establishment of a world order wherein certain nations decided to make use of them. The second part analyses the sudden rise in importance of oil and gas in foreign policymaking and the unfolding tugs-of-war between consuming and/or producing countries. Understanding the historic and significant role of the United States, the Russian Federation, and relevant Middle East states forms an important part of this analysis. The third and final section scrutinizes the scope and characteristics of energy sanctions nowadays, noting that these are being called into question due to the rise of new great powers in an international context characterized, *inter alia*, by a rising awareness of the perils of climate change.

The mechanisms, the achievements, and the moral permissibility related to energy sanctions have come under increasing criticism in different parts of the world.

Rise of Economic Statecraft

In the aftermath of World War I, the major Allied Powers advocated a higher use of economic statecraft that encompassed coercive policy tools, such as economic sanctions, in the hope that recourse to military statecraft could be prevented. U.S. President Woodrow Wilson became one of the main architects of economic sanctions. By promoting the League of Nations, he endowed the first intergovernmental organization with the mission to maintain peace in the world and the right to enforce economic sanctions against those that break the rules.

Secondly, he supported a system in which Western countries took center stage in the exercise of power. This saw the "Principal Allied and Associated Powers" of the Versailles Treaty—which included the original text of the Covenant of the League of Nations—namely "the British Empire, France, Italy, and Japan," (the United States was also listed but famously did not ratify the treaty, notwithstanding Wilson's support, and was thus never a member of the League) becoming permanent members of the now all-but-forgotten League Council, a type of executive body directing the organization's business whose main function was to settle international disputes. Finally, during Wilson's address at the Coliseum at the State Fair Grounds in Indianapolis in September 1919, he framed a narrative that emphasized economic sanctions (his term: "absolute economic boycott") as the League's "central machinery," portraying it as a more humane and peaceful alternative to war as well as a means of deterring aggression.

To some extent, the system promoted by Wilson was a source of inspiration after World War II. The United Nations became the new principal international organization, whose first enumerated purpose was to "maintain international peace and security." It enshrined economic sanctions, while the Security Council—whose five permanent members were China, France, the Soviet Union (later Russia), the United Kingdom, and the United States—centralized the act of decisionmaking. Owing to the increasingly total nature of warfare, economic sanctions aroused interest because they were perceived by sanctioning states as a lower-cost and lower-risk course of action. This also confirmed the overwhelmingly Western-character of the exercise of power, and above all, led to the concentration of power in the hands of the world's two superpowers: the United States and the Soviet Union.

In the environment of the Cold War, where the prospect of all-out nuclear war had inhibited the main powers in using military statecraft against one another whilst allowing client states to do so (e.g. Vietnam, Afghanistan), economic sanctions became an attractive option. In Soviet eyes, this kind of sanction made it possible to tighten the stranglehold over the sphere of influence of the USSR via (un)profitable quotas, embargos, and price-fixing. To some extent, this can be described as a stick-and-carrot approach, which gave Moscow room for maneuver since each positive sanction was a fertile ground for subsequent negative sanctions that could be introduced on a whim. Outside of this territory, Moscow enjoyed a more limited set of measures due to the structural problems of the Soviet command economy that had worsened over time and prevented the economic system to compete effectively on the global stage. In other words, imposing effective economic sanctions on Western nations was no easy task.

The situation was fairly different in the United States. The reason was as follows: in the aftermath of World War II, Washington controlled two-thirds of the world's gold reserves and was the sole power whose economy had escaped the conflict relatively unscathed.

Furthermore, the conclusion of the Bretton Woods Agreement in July 1944 and the establishment of its institutions (the International Monetary Fund and what became the World Bank Group) strengthened the central role of the U.S. currency. Progressively, America tightened its influence over the economy of other countries by cementing the role of the U.S. dollar as the world's reserve currency, and thus as the world's leading currency. Last but not least, the country rapidly became an undisputed technological and commercial power due to its capacity to create, develop, and deploy new technologies. Such a privileged situation allowed the United States to impose stringent and sometimes long-lived economic sanctions against the Soviet Union (later Russia) and its allies, third countries, and even its own allies, such as when France, Israel, and the UK concerted to invade Egypt in 1956 in the wake of the nationalization of the Suez Canal.

In the immediate post-Cold War period, the United States became the unchallenged superpower: in the famous terminology provided by Charles Krauthammer, during what he called the "unipolar moment," the United States enjoyed total hegemony. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, sanctions have become the dominant tool of statecraft of the United States and its European allies. (This has sometimes been authorized by the UN Security Council, which means that in some instances sanctions have been endorsed by both China and Russia as representing acceptable—that is to say, legitimate—tools of contemporary statecraft.)

American political scientist Jonathan Kirshner lists four reasons for this development: *first*, multiplying tensions and/or conflicts between participants in the former anti-Soviet alliance; *second*, an increasing number of market economies vulnerable to economic statecraft; *third*, refusal of some great powers' practice to resort to force in some cases (e.g. Germany); and *fourth*, using sanctions as "an early method to influence in a conflict."

This shows that a policy of economic sanctions remains a privilege enjoyed by a handful of countries.

Energy Sanctions Emerge

The oil industry as we know it today was born in the mid-nineteenth century in Azerbaijan and the United States. "Particularly around Baku, technological advancements helped to power petroleum's viability," as historian Brian C. Black puts it in *Crude Reality: Petroleum in World History* (2012). Despite the progressive transformation in mobility of people and goods via the invention of the automobile, oil had limited commercial uses. This natural resource truly became a strategic commodity on the eve of World War I when the American and British navies converted from coal to oil-use in order to increase warfighting capability, as Black explains. Unsurprisingly, other powers followed suit. In historian Daniel Yergin's classic book, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power* (1991), the author notes that the control of oil had been a key factor in determining the victors of World War II, adding that the conflict buttressed the strategic nature of oil. It became an indispensable material for lubricating machineries and guns, manufacturing synthetic rubber for use as tires for airplanes or jeeps, laying runways, and so on. The list goes on.

An expanding use of this resource in the military sector coupled with a ravenous oil appetite to fuel post-war recovery led to the need to secure physical access to oil resources. As the world's leading oil producer at the end of World War II, the United States could count on sufficiently high domestic oil production to supply its domestic market. But the increasing western European need for oil immediately began raising concerns in Washington. On the one hand, Americans feared that skyrocketing demand in western Europe would cause supplies at home to reduce. On the other hand, the Americans feared the possibility of western European countries signing agreements with the energy-rich Soviet Union. After all, at that time, the USSR was a leading hydrocarbon producer and was supplying oil and natural gas to its satellites in central and eastern Europe.

As a result of this context, the Middle East generated increasing interest from outside powers for its oil, which was uniquely plentiful and easy to produce. For example, on his way back from the February 1945 Yalta Conference with Stalin and Churchill, having only weeks to live, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt famously initiated a strategic alliance with the founder of Saudi Arabia, King Abdulaziz ibn Saud, during a secret meeting held onboard the USS Quincy anchored in the Suez Canal.

This led to the establishment of what came to be known as the "petrodollar," which saw U.S. dollars paid to oil-exporting countries in exchange for oil. This was made possible thanks to the aforementioned Bretton Wood Agreement. According to

Georgetown University's David S. Painter, this agreement led to the establishment of a system whereby American oil companies began to invest heavily in that part of the world to supply America's western European allies, which in turn indirectly supported the internationalization of these companies whilst establishing American preeminence in the postwar international system. The two main beneficiaries of this were Standard Oil (later Exxon)—in 1948 it gained a 30 percent stake in the Arabian-American Oil Company (Aramco, later changed to Saudi Aramco)—and of course the Kingdom Saudi Arabia itself.

The Middle East's oil-producing countries grew more richer and their respective shares in world hydrocarbon production continued to increase. Nevertheless, control over exports and marketing of oil and gas remained under the control of Western international oil companies. Naturally, over time these countries sought to gain greater control over their own resources, as related in some detail by Peter Mansfield and Nicolas Pelham in their book, *A History of the Middle East* (1991). Iranian prime minister Mohammad Mossadegh's attempt to get rid of British influence and nationalize his country's oil industry so as to regain sovereignty over the development of its natural resources in the early 1950s constituted the first, although unsuccessful, try.

While the Middle East progressively became the biggest non-communist oil exporter (with the Persian Gulf states collectively leading the way, headed of course by Saudi Arabia), the United States made access to oil reserves the pillar of its foreign policy due to the West's rising dependence on hydrocarbons extracted from that region. In order to contain various Soviet political breakthroughs in the region in the wake of the Suez Crisis, U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower in early January 1957 proclaimed American readiness to provide military and economic aid to any government in the "general area of the Middle East" that needed help in resisting "international communism." This came to known as the Eisenhower Doctrine and represents a milestone in U.S. foreign policy in that it not only expanded the geographic scope of containment but also declared that policy to be, henceforth, a means of securing access to, as he put it, "petroleum products."

In 1959, Western international oil companies cut crude oil prices in Venezuela and the Arab oil producing countries without consulting the host governments. Understandably, this caused an uproar and took a heavy toll on relations between the Middle East and the West. It also led to the creation of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) the following year. The members of the newly-formed cartel viewed the acquisition of knowledge and experience in the oil and gas industry of paramount importance. It was, after all, a means of reducing their dependence on the West. Soon thereafter, Arab countries followed the Iranian example and started establishing national oil companies with the aim of establishing cooperative relations with Western international oil companies. Slowly but surely, they succeeded in turning the oil market in their favor. OPEC managed to influence the international price of oil by raising or lowering production levels. This placed significant responsibility on Saudi Arabia due to the fact that the kingdom was responsible for a significant proportion of the OPEC's output and had spare capacity.

In 1973, OPEC wielded its power even further by initiating an oil embargo against a number of Western countries—including the U.S., the UK, Canada, The Netherlands, and Japan (but not France or West Germany, although of course they too felt its effects)—identified as supportive of Israel in the Yom Kippur War against Syria and Egypt. By doing so, the cartel showed the world that it could use its control over oil production to influence a political agenda. Oil prices skyrocketed (by the time the embargo was lifted in March 1974, the global price of oil had risen nearly 300 percent).

In response to this situation, Western countries initiated a project to diversify oil import sources (e.g., the North Sea), and natural gas turned out to be a serious alternative to oil, notably in western Europe. The decrease in oil output in the wake of the 1979 Iranian Revolution reinforced this trend and brought energy efficiency to the fore. Increasing concerns about the West's high dependence on Middle East oil and gas also led to the development of new hydrocarbons extraction methods—including fracking in the United States—in an attempt to achieve greater energy independence. However, it also pushed several western Europe countries towards the Soviet Union. The USSR's oil and gas imports contracts multiplied from the 1970s onwards and led to serious tensions inside the Western bloc (more on this below).

The dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 left the United States standing as the world's sole superpower. Soon non-OPEC countries, starting with the

Russian Federation, seized the opportunity to challenge the supremacy of oil-producing countries from the Middle East. Russia tried to reinforce its position on the European market by increasing exports, multiplying its export corridors (including by bypassing former-Soviet republics like Ukraine), and penetrating the natural gas value chain. It also started to acquire shares in the Asian market, where energy demand was booming and prices were skyrocketing, as well as by attempting to supply gas to the U.S. market—this option remained wishful thinking—through new gas fields such as the Shtokmanovskoye field located in the Barents Sea.

What has come to be known as the "shale revolution" (leading to an increase in oil and gas production) combined with a gradual shift towards low-carbon sources and renewables supported by the Obama Administration constituted a game-changer: the United States was on its way to self-sufficiency and thereby stood to increase its national stability in a volatile global economy. When Donald Trump came into the White House in January 2017, the United States stood on the cusp of energy independence. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, the country became the world's largest natural gas producer in 2011 (surpassing Russia) and the world's largest oil producer in 2018 (surpassing Saudi Arabia). By putting forward the concept of energy dominance, the Trump Administration transformed the United States into a global energy superpower. This strategy accorded with the "America First" doctrine—a pullback strategy of sorts, reflecting decreasing American tolerance for the global role the United States embraced after World War II (without considering the likely consequences).

Donald Trump was a one-term U.S. president. The November 2020 election of his successor, Joe Biden, has been saluted as a return to "rules-based international order," especially by America's European allies. When it comes to energy, however, Biden has continued his predecessor's strategy of making America self-sufficient through the reduction of hydrocarbon imports. On the other hand, Biden differs from Trump in having launched initiatives to reboot—in a fairly unique way—the role of the United States in fighting climate change. In addition to defining objectives aimed at lowering American greenhouse gas emissions and encouraging research support into cutting-edge technologies, Biden's proposed infrastructure plan could (i) strengthen U.S. energy security, (ii) increase social justice, and (iii) revive the economy in a post-pandemic world. In other words, Biden is embarking on a modernization drive that ought, ultimately, to allow his country to remain a great energy power, in both hard and soft power terms.

Rebalance of Power

The global rebalance of power has had at least three consequences on the use of energy sanctions. In the context of the Middle East, this has manifested itself as a loss of efficiency rather than a loss of legitimacy. In the Russian context, the country's influence is decreasing but remains solid in the post-Soviet space. Lastly, the end of the "unipolar moment" has resulted in a loss of legitimacy in the new world order for the West. Each of the three consequences will be examined in turn.

First, the Middle East. As noted above, OPEC had recourse to what was called the "oil weapon" time and again in decades past. Each embargo and cut in production produced fears of shortages in industrialized countries and led to an increase in the price of oil. In a sense, energy sanctions had their expected impact, but this turned out to be a double-edged sword. One of the main downside effects of OPEC's success in wielding this "weapon" was the demonization of its member countries in the Western media. This led to widespread hostility and resentment and nourished the idea of "oil blackmail." In such an environment, diversification and energy efficiency policies gained in importance in Western countries. For example, the American quest for energy independence needs to be understood as a means to draw a line under the country's dependence on Middle East hydrocarbons.

The global rebalance of power has had at least three consequences on the use of energy sanctions.

Furthermore, diversification was all the more crucial because of the recurrent use of military statecraft against energy infrastructure during armed conflicts. Two striking examples include the Iraq-Iran war during the 1980s and the First Gulf War, when Iraqi forces set fire to Kuwaiti oil fields after Baghdad's invasion of the country.

Over the past few decades, we have observed a progressive loss of power of OPEC, which consequently makes the use of sanctions implemented by the cartel less effective, if not

unnecessary. Since the 2014 drop in global oil prices, the cartel, led by Saudi Arabia, has placed particular emphasis on keeping control of oil prices in a bid to counterbalance American and Russian influence over prices. Implementing sanctions against consuming countries has not been on the agenda for quite a while. Rather, the past few years have witnessed a greater focus on market forces.

Second, Russia. Following the collapse of the USSR, the Russian Federation inherited the former Soviet Union's energy obligations, including those related to trade in the energy sector. Former Soviet republics as well as former satellite states inherited a high dependence on Russian energy. In the late 1990s, a large majority of former COMECON countries, plus the Baltic states, sought to align their oil and gas contracts with western European standards (this included switching from cost-plus pricing to net-back replacement value gas pricing with oil-product indexation). It was perceived as a safeguard against the aforementioned stick-and-carrot policy—i.e., (un) profitable quotas, embargos, and price fixing that can be changed on a whim. This pivot towards the West was always accompanied by membership applications to NATO or the European Union (or both) in a bid to gain protection against any kind of Russian military and economic statecraft.

The stick-and-carrot policy led to mixed reactions in other post-Soviet republics like Belarus and Ukraine, but also in the three South Caucasus and five Central Asia states—what the editors of *Baku Dialogues* identify as the core of the Silk Road region—that emerged from the breakup of the Soviet Union. After achieving independence, most of the former Soviet republics signed economic agreements with the Russian Federation, which also included security issues (a legacy of the Soviet system). By doing so, they maintained the combination of positive and negative sanctions.

Numerous energy crises unfolded from this imbroglio. The April 2010 Agreement between Ukraine and Russia on the Black Sea Fleet in Ukraine (commonly known as the Kharkiv Accords) is a prime example. The context goes back to May 1997, when Ukraine and Russia signed a partition treaty allowing the Russian Black Sea Fleet to stay in Sevastopol until 2017. After long and arduous negotiations, Moscow and Kyiv came to an agreement in 2010: the Russian fleet would stay in Crimea until 2042, with a possible five-year extension. In return, Ukraine would benefit from a significant discount on the price of Russian gas. After the annexation of the peninsula by Russia in 2014, Russia cancelled the Kharkiv Accords, which immediately led to a spiraling increase in gas prices in Ukraine. Since then, Kyiv has acted in a way so as to protect itself against Russian influence: furthering its rapprochement with the West while applying European energy regulations.

Other former Soviet republics took a decision to maintain their respective links with Russia. Here we can list Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan, all of which joined the Eurasian Economic Union in 2014 or 2015. A regional energy market began to take shape under the auspices of this economic union. However, negotiations have been arduous for although Moscow has been keen to abolish some positive sanctions that were considered too expensive for the Russian budget, other members of this union supported such sanctions. Though positive sanctions can be disruptive over a long period of time because they are the basis for negative sanctions, they can also be financially attractive in the short term.

The future of energy sanctions in post-Soviet states largely depends on the desire of these nations to maintain economic, political, and military relations with the Russian Federation.

In conclusion, the future of energy sanctions in post-Soviet states largely depends on the desire of these nations to maintain economic, political, and military relations with the Russian Federation. Quite often, the politico-economic emancipation of these countries is at the very heart of the emancipation process from Moscow's influence and energy issues are just a part of the whole picture, as described *inter alia* by Morena Skalamera in a 2018 article published by *Insight Turkey* and Margarita Balmaceda in her 2015 book *The Politics of Energy Dependency*. Answers have been varied, as recently observed in Belarus, but the reactions each time feed resentments and expose Moscow to the same realities that Middle-Eastern oil producing countries are facing: diversification and energy efficiency policies, and a tarnished image—especially in the West—with major political consequences.

Lastly, the end of the "unipolar moment" and the resulting loss of legitimacy has obviously also had an impact on the West with

respect to the use of energy sanctions. In recent years, the number of studies dedicated to analyzing the consequences of economic sanctions and illustrating their effects on sanctioned countries has grown significantly. The main conclusions of these studies have undermined the narrative—which had been mainly forged by the West during the 20th century—that legitimized their use. Economic sanctions, including energy sanctions, have often shifted the burden of harm from targeted states to civilians. In a 2016 article entitled "Ethics, International Affairs and Western Double Standards," former UN Assistant-Secretary-General Ramesh Thakur listed the three main side-effects of sanctions on civilians: premature deaths, food insecurity, and lack of medicines and medical equipment. Such facts have resulted in sharp criticism towards the use of economic statecraft by Western countries to achieve foreign policy objectives.

Economic sanctions, including energy sanctions, have often shifted the burden of harm from targeted states to civilians.

Energy sanctions also give rise to their morally questionable effects. Capital market restrictions, prohibitions of transactions dealing with new long-term debts, limitations on technical assistance, and access to cutting-edge technologies and know-how (the latter of which directly undermines the development of national oil and gas fields), have a domino effect that should not be underestimated.

Firstly, they exacerbate pollution levels during exploration and production of gas and oil fields as well as the transportation of natural resources, heightening the risk of ecological disasters. *Secondly*, they make large-scale investment in the expansion and/or modernization of energy grids much difficult, if not impossible, which contributes to slowing down the transition towards cleaner energy systems. *Thirdly*, they preclude the conversion of raw products into refined fuels (e.g., gasoline, diesel, and kerosene), which mostly leads to an increase in the consumption of low-quality fuels (due to the lack of an alternative). This leads to massive air pollution, which in turn results in major social and health crises.

Iran, the world's sixth-largest emitter of greenhouse gases in 2019, is a prime example: the country suffers from all three of these problems, which are heightened by

mismanagement. The key question is whether the Biden Administration and the EU—each hoping to lead the global transition to clean energy—will manage to keep up the fight against nuclear proliferation and other security threats without hampering the fight against climate change.

The central role of the United States in the process of imposing and implementing economic sanctions is also a cause for concern for other regional and global powers. American extraterritorial sanctions have become the primary vehicle for signaling and even implementing U.S. political objectives.

The central role of the United States in the process of imposing and implementing economic sanctions is also a cause for concern for other regional and global powers.

To put it simply, Washington has given itself jurisdiction to impose economic sanctions—including energy sanctions—that target foreigners on foreign soil. Hence the use of the term "extraterritorial sanctions." This has been made possible mainly due to America's monetary and technological supremacy. The result is a comprehensive set of restrictions that either precludes business conducted in U.S. dollars or involves an American firm or individual (or both). For example, financial institutions, insurance companies, and energy companies cannot operate within Iranian and Russian jurisdictions unless under strict terms defined by Washington.

During Trump's presidency, energy sanctions tended to trigger adaptation measures in sanctioned countries much more than in the past. The case of Russia is certainly one of the most interesting. Moscow's adaptation now hinges on the pursuit of the following five policies: (a) launching new marketing choices towards Asia; (b) increasing cooperation with non-Western institutions, located for the most part located in Asia or in the Middle East; (c) implementing import replacement measures (via countries like China) aimed at tackling the country's more limited access to Western technologies; (d) developing its own technology; and (e) reducing the number of transactions denominated in U.S. dollars.

Nevertheless, even when put together these measures do not constitute a silver bullet. As in the days of the Soviet Union, Russia has limited room for maneuver due to structural problems of both its

economy and financial system. Thus, the country is trying to fight back by adapting itself with Chinese support, but Moscow is neither able to prevent the imposition of new sanctions nor compete at a financial and technological level with the United States in particular. Of course, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, Russia has the capacity to block UN sanctions targeting the energy sector of third countries, often receiving support from China in this regard. Over the past few years, China has positioned itself as a counterbalance to Washington's sanctions supremacy, while expending its position in the world economy and defending its economic interests.

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Last but not least, energy sanctions have become a bone of contention within the West itself. As previously earlier in this essay, the United States has interfered in European energy issues in the past. One of the most famous examples is when Ronald Reagan attempted to meddle with the energy import policies of western European countries by imposing unilateral economic sanctions on the Soviet Union in the 1980s. That situation generated tensions between Washington and its allies in western Europe without undermining Transatlanticism. But Trump's presidency did. Energy sanctions imposed by the United States were increasingly perceived by European states as a direct threat to their own economic interests (as well as to those of the European Union as a whole)—in particular those restricting European companies from doing business in Russian and Iran. On that subject, the Nord Stream 2 pipeline has been a bone of contention between Washington and Brussels/Berlin. So far, a status quo seems to have been found. The Biden Administration has confirmed that it would not impose sanctions on corporations that built the gas pipeline; and the EU has not created mechanisms in order to shield itself from U.S. sanctions and possible interferences in its energy sector.

Weapon of the Rich and Powerful

Frequently criticized, even derided, economic and energy sanctions remain an alternative of choice to other policy tools when diplomacy is deemed insufficient and other tools of statecraft are judged to be too costly. Economic and energy sanctions have made it possible to avoid armed conflicts between heavily armed great powers, but they have not prevented bloodsheds at their peripheries. They are more a reflection of geopolitical realities rather than a set of high-minded moral values. To some extent, imposing sanctions has progressively become a privilege enjoyed by a few great powers, starting with the global energy superpower, the United States.

To a certain extent, war has become the weapon of the poor, while economic and energy sanctions have become the weapon of rich and powerful nations.

Throughout the 20th century, each power center has developed a narrative to justify the use of sanctions. The Middle East sought to regain its sovereignty over its natural resources. The Soviet Union wanted to support those states that embraced its ideological values. The West wanted to avoid wars. While each side cultivated its own sense of being right, sanctions have continuously led to escalating tensions because they have primarily become a means of exerting pressure through dependence (including technology, finance, and imports).

To a certain extent, war has become the weapon of the poor, while economic and energy sanctions have become the weapon of rich and powerful nations. In a unipolar world, energy sanctions reflected faith in U.S. leadership as well as the absence of reasonable alternatives. China's rise and Russia's promotion of multipolarity is bringing this to an end—if it has not already come. Certainly, the EU is looking for closer cooperation with the United States since Biden came to power, but this has not resulted in a snapback to 2016: Trump's hostility has not been forgotten. Only time will tell whether the United States will be able to retain its central role in the process of imposing economic and energy sanctions—especially in the context of ambitions to mitigate against the effects of climate change by weaning the world off its dependence on hydrocarbon sources of energy. BD

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor

Cementing Silk Road Dreams

Ali Haider Saleem and Arhama Siddiqa

The term Silk Road is used by scholars to describe a network of trading posts and markets linking East Asia to the Mediterranean. In terms of geographical context, the editors of *Baku Dialogues* define the region as the "geographic space looking west past Anatolia to the warm seas beyond; north across the Caspian towards the Great Plain and the Great Steppe; east to the peaks of the Altai and the arid sands of the Taklamakan; and south towards the Hindu Kush and the Indus valley, looping down around in the direction of the Persian Gulf and across the Fertile Crescent." States falling under this parasol include China, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, the five Central Asian republics, Azerbaijan, and Russia.

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which traverses several continents, is a long-term, strategic investment plan with the objective of facilitating economic integration of countries in line with the historic Silk Road. In April 2015, China's President, Xi Jinping announced the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which amounts to BRI's flagship project. This enterprise, which encompasses road, rail, and oil pipeline links, will help Beijing advance its influence across South and Central Asia.

Over the past six years, CPEC has helped Pakistan in overcoming many obstacles in the way of the country's economic and social progress. These obstacles include tackling the energy shortage, scanty infrastructure, and limited capacity to support social welfare programs. As China and Pakistan look to strengthen their economic relationship, many issues are being addressed through joint efforts. Pakistan is keen to learn from China's experience in eradicating poverty and developing an industrial base. At the same time, China has a keen interest in various sectors of Pakistan's economy, which can benefit the peoples of both countries.

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Over the past six years, CPEC has helped Pakistan in overcoming many obstacles in the way of the country's economic and social progress.

Presently, CPEC is transitioning into its next phase. The primary focus of the initial stage was energy and infrastructure development. Pakistan's economy was stagnant due to critical deficiencies but Chinese investments in various projects have reinvigorated the economy. More than 12,000 MW of energy has been added while the country's GDP reached $314 billion in 2018, as compared to $244 billion in 2014. Moreover, what have been called the "Early Harvest" projects created 30,000 jobs for locals. Also, the prolonged energy crisis has largely been overcome much to the relief of local industries. Finally, development work on roads and ports has increased market access and provided avenues for more people across the country to integrate in the economy. The success of these and other projects has paved the way for further cooperation between the two countries and there is a growing interest in China's business community to explore opportunities in Pakistan.

Pakistan's vibrant agriculture sector and proposed Special Economic Zones (SEZs) under CPEC are the main target areas for Chinese investments in the coming years. A number of initiatives have been undertaken to modernize Pakistan's agriculture sector with the help of Chinese support. In January 2021, for example, an online platform was launched to facilitate both agricultural and industrial cooperation. In reference to this, Chairman of the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council Muhammad Azeem Khan stated that such "cooperation will not only improve crop production and ensure food security, but it will also be a fate changer for the people of Pakistan." Moreover, the Government of Pakistan is determined to promote equitable and inclusive growth; hence, it is pushing for cooperation in areas beyond financial incentives. Speaking at the second Belt and Road Forum held in April 2019, Prime Minister Imran Khan revealed that the next phase of CPEC

would focus on socio-economic uplift, poverty alleviation, agricultural cooperation, and industrial development. The development of the first Special Economic Zone within the CPEC framework is now underway, promising to create millions of jobs and boost output. In March 2021, the Chinese embassy in Islamabad hosted the China-Pakistan Seed Industry Cooperation and Exchange Forum with the aim of strengthening collaboration in seed production between the two countries. Boosting Pakistan's seed production capacity will save millions of dollars on imports.

Standard modernization theory casts development as a uniform evolutionary route that all societies follow, from agricultural, rural, and traditional societies to post-industrial, urban, and modern forms. It looks at the internal factors of a country while assuming that with assistance, "traditional" countries can be brought to the level of developed countries. Another definition of modernization, authored by sociologist Piotr Sztompka, reads thusly: "a society advancing in an intentional, premeditated, [and] planned way towards a recognized model of modernity, usually to the standard of an existing society regarded as modern." This theory is applicable since Pakistan aims to follow China's path towards development and modernity.

The tilt towards socio-economic development under the framework of CPEC shows that basic human needs and standard of living cannot be ignored at the expense of industrial and infrastructural development. During the most recent election campaign, the current Pakistan government promised to promote inclusive growth and had identified CPEC as a prospective contributor towards achieving this goal. By examining the state of social and economic indicators of Pakistan, this essay will explain the reasons that led to the inclusion of such projects under CPEC. Moreover, the Chinese side has also expressed its willingness to help raise the standard of living in Pakistan, which makes China more than a foreign investor in the country. All this suggests a new avenue of cooperation between the two countries, and this essay will also explore the incentives for China in supporting socio-economic progress in Pakistan.

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In short, the aim of this essay is to evaluate the prospects of the socio-economic projects that fall within the scope of CPEC as well as the wider implications of CPEC on socio-economic development for Pakistan. It will also give an overview of how BRI, and CPEC, can fit in with the plans of countries that make up the South Caucasus, with a sharp focus on Azerbaijan.

The Silk Road, BRI, and CPEC

As mentioned above, the Silk Road is the historical link between China and the West. It has been carrying goods and ideas from one place to another for a millennia and more. Places that came in between also benefited from the exchanges, increasing both their relevance and prosperity. For many years China had been dubbed as a sleeping giant, as Western countries become stronger economically and militarily in the 20th century. In recent decades, however, China has regained its influence in the Silk Road region (and beyond) on the back of sustained economic and social progress. China's rapid industrialization has turned it into the largest manufacturing country in the world and is now called in some circles the world's factory. As before, the Chinese leadership considers trade and regional integration a cornerstone for sustainable economic prosperity. This approach also reinforces Chinese principles of peaceful coexistence, which it maintains forms the basis of its foreign policy.

BRI was launched in 2013. By some accounts, this grand project flows in two trajectories: an overland economic belt, which comprise six development corridors, and a maritime route. China's President, Xi Jinping, launched BRI to revive the ancient silk route and enhance economic cooperation with the region. The overland corridors include—in Chinese terminology—the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC); the China, Mongolia, Russia Economic Corridor; the New Eurasia Land Bridge Economic Corridor (NELB); the China-Central and West Asia Economic Corridor (CCWAEC); the China-Indochina Peninsula Economic Corridor (CICPEC); and the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor. Out of these six corridors, CPEC is the only bilateral corridor and is considered as the flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Again, referring to Chinese terminology, BRI consists of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-century Maritime Silk Road, which, taken together, will make it more expansive than the ancient Silk Road. It will also include countries in Southeast Asia and Latin America but China will prioritize westward expansion from Xinjiang. In this regard, China's National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) has underlined plans to make "good use of Xinjiang's geographical advantages and its role as an important window of westward opening up, making it a key transportation, trade, logistics, culture, science, and education center and a core area on the Silk Road Economic Belt.

The axiomatic point that derives from the above is that the countries of Central Asia and the South Caucasus will inevitably be vital parts of BRI-associated projects.

Undoubtedly, CPEC is one of the most ambitious components of the Belt and Road Initiative—a fact that can be evidenced in how this multibillion-dollar project has been named, time and again, a "game changer" for Pakistan. BRI connects China's western province of Xinjiang with Pakistan's flagship Gwadar port. The aim is to stimulate bilateral trade as well as enhance connectivity with the broader region through this route.

China has invested heavily in Pakistan's energy sector and infrastructure development, and is also supporting the country's industrialization and its socio-economic development through this flagship endeavor. The projects being undertaken in Pakistan under the framework of CPEC indicate clearly that the Chinese leadership is committed to advancing the socio-economic progress of its partner countries. Moreover, both Pakistan and China have invited other countries to be a part of CPEC in the pursuit of regional development.

According to analyst Andrew Korybko, "CPEC is the spinal cord of the emerging multipolar world order because it provides China with reliable non-Malacca access to the Indian Ocean, which in turn connects China with the Mideast, European, and African marketplaces without having to worry about any possible trade disruptions through the Malacca Strait." He opines that northern, western, and southern branch corridors can be developed "off of the original CPEC core to strengthen integration with the nations of Central Asia, West Asia (Mideast), and Africa." This idea has also been taken up by various Pakistani academics and policymakers at bilateral and multilateral forums alike.

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Since its inception, CPEC has been the subject of much international scrutiny relative to any other BRI project. This comes as no surprise, since if it is completed as envisioned, CPEC will have a substantial impact on China's global geopolitical and economic interests.

Socio-economic Progress in China

Socio-economic development takes into account public concerns in executing social and economic policy initiatives. The aim of these initiatives is to bring about sustained improvement to the living conditions of a society as well as provide better economic opportunities. In the past few decades, China has managed to achieve many of its development targets and its society is continuously progressing materially.

The economic transformation that has taken place in China is nothing short of miraculous. In the early decades of the People's Republic, poverty was widespread and economic opportunities were limited. A large portion of the population suffered from hunger and lived without basic necessities for life. Before the economic reforms initiated by Deng Xiaoping in 1978, 250 million people rural inhabitants of China lived below the poverty line. Literacy levels were low and entire regions of the country posed a serious burden on the national economy.

With Deng's economic reforms, the situation began rapidly to change for the better. Hundreds of millions were lifted out of poverty due to modernization, industrialization, and opening up. China recorded impressive GDP growth over a number of years. From less than $150 billion in 1978, China's GDP crossed $13 trillion in 2019.

Chinese workers came to be provided with adequate facilities and knowledge, which turned them into productive members of society. The Human Development Index (HDI) assesses three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, access to knowledge and a decent standard of living. It increased from 0.423 in 1980 to

0.752, which places China in the high human development category.

Socio-economic Projects Under CPEC

CPEC's original focus was twofold: improving Pakistan's infrastructure and resolving its energy crisis. While these two areas are critical for any emerging economy, issues related to malnutrition, illiteracy, and unemployment cannot be ignored.

As a key generator of achieving prosperity in Pakistan, CPEC has enabled the government to commit further on improving the social wellbeing of the populace. Honoring this commitment is particularly important for the prime minister, who is well-known for his social work. The fame Imran Khan earned as cricketer helped him to successfully carry out his philanthropic and humanitarian campaigns since retiring from his playing career. He had been mainly involved in education and healthcare, and his efforts in these fields contributed to his political rise. During both the 2013 and 2018 election campaigns, Khan drew attention to Pakistan's deteriorating living conditions. He expressed particular concern about the issue of stunted growth, where poor hygiene and poor nutritional intake prevents the mental and physical growth of children.

Understanding the preferences of Pakistan's government and its leaders, the Chinese have opened up possibilities for bilateral cooperation in areas of social development. As a result, in April 2019, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between China and Pakistan with respect to promoting technological advancement in the agricultural sector, improving healthcare facilities, and providing quality education and vocational training. China's then ambassador to Pakistan, Yao Jing, stated that "by meeting the Pakistani people's needs, China-Pakistan cooperation will bring more tangible benefits to Pakistanis."

This sentiment was also expressed by the Chinese side during the 9th Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) held in Islamabad in November 2019. The Chinese delegation, led by NDRC Vice-Chairman Ning Jizhe, made it clear the socio-economic projects will be given high consideration under CPEC.

In an interview with CNBC in 2020, Prime Minister Khan said that "Pakistan is grateful to China, as it helped us in difficult times by making investments. [...] We were at rock bottom when the Chinese [government] came and rescued us." Moreover, he has repeatedly praised the Chinese development model and recently said that "if we can learn from any one country in the world, it is China. Their development model suits Pakistan the best."

Overcoming Pakistan's Development Constraints

To fully appreciate CPEC's transformative opportunity for Pakistan, it is necessary to examine in some detail the state of Pakistan's development situation. We can begin with the World Bank's poverty headcount ratio—a useful indicator to assess the state of progress in a society. This ratio consists of the percentage of the population of a given country living below its national poverty line. Pakistan's poverty headcount ratio in 2015 was 24.3 percent whereas China's poverty headcount ratio was only 5.7 percent. In 2019, Pakistan's Voluntary National Review of the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development highlighted the role of CPEC in both alleviating poverty and helping the country achieve its target. In this context, Sania Nishtar, Prime Minister Khan's Special Assistant on Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection said that "not only is CPEC a remarkable demonstration of our time-tested friendship, but it is also an ideal milieu for socio-economic development which will contribute to uplifting people and graduating them out of poverty."

To fully appreciate CPEC's transformative opportunity for Pakistan, it is necessary to examine in some detail the state of Pakistan's development situation.

The Human Capital Index (HCI) measures the amount of human capital that a child born today can expect to attain by age 18, given the risks of poor healthcare and poor education that prevail in the country in which he or she lives. Pakistan is positioned in the bottom quartile, with a score of 0.39, whereas China finds itself in the second quartile, with a score of 0.67.

Pakistan's score indicates that opportunities are still lacking for the majority of children in Pakistan. According to Pakistan's most recent *Human Development Report*, inequality in education stands at 46.2 percent. This goes to show that any progress made in Pakistan has not been inclusive.

A number of reasons help explain Pakistan's lack of progress in the socio-economic development sphere. The country has faced political instability virtually from the moment it gained independence, in 1947. It has been observed that in countries where the chances of a government collapsing are higher, the achievement of robust economic growth is correspondingly lower. In an unstable political environment, investment diminishes and development activity slows down. The trickle-down effects are borne by the entire society. Without serious policy continuity, achieving the desired results of public development projects becomes almost impossible.

Pakistan is the sixth most populated country in the world. Its population density is even greater than that of China. Limited resources and poor governance have made things worse. Many people across the country do not enjoy a decent standard of living, with inequality and non-inclusive policies hampering the country's socio-economic progress. Almost two-thirds of Pakistanis lives in rural areas (63 percent), which are mostly deprived of public goods and basic necessities. Moreover, poor education enrolment rates and a low rate of female participation in the labor force also contribute to poor living standards.

The policies adopted by successive Pakistani governments to address these issues have, for the most part, not succeeded due to poor implementation plans and corruption. There is a strong relationship between good governance and poverty reduction. Poor governance has been a key reason for Pakistan's unsatisfactory social and economic development.

Moreover, huge chunks of public sector development funds are redirected to members of assemblies as "discretionary funding," who then invest them on politically motivated projects and schemes in their respective constituencies. Unfortunately, they are not held accountable for the detrimental outcome of such projects and are often re-elected.

Transparency International's *Corruption Perceptions Index 2020* gave Pakistan a score of 31 out of 100. This score reveals the perceived levels of public sector corruption according to experts and businesspeople on a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean. Pakistan's score was lower than the average score of 43. It can be concluded that the Pakistani society usually does not benefit from state institutions as much as could be expected.

A path-breaking recent book by Ishrat Husain, a former Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan and Prime Minister Khan's Adviser on Institutional Reforms and Austerity, provides an explanation of how the country's elitist model operates and damages the economy. Entitled Pakistan: *The Economy of an Elitist State* (2019), the book argues that elite state capture and market capture has resulted in the "creation of a vicious cycle of inefficiency and inequitable distribution of wealth." In *Why Nations Fail* (2012), Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson discuss how nations fall when the public institutions operate to serve the interests of the elite. According to them, extractive economic institutions and self-serving representatives impede economic growth and unleash poverty.

Cultural and religious issues have also kept the country from developing. The female literacy rate is much lower than male one. Similarly, a much fewer number of women are active in the workforce as compared to men. According to Sher Verick of the International Labor Organization, "female labor supply is both a driver and an outcome of development. Women's supply of labor increases household incomes, which helps families escape poverty and increase their consumption of goods and services. At the same time, as countries develop, women's capabilities typically improve, while social constraints weaken, enabling women to engage in work outside the home." *However, the Global Gender Gap Index Report 2*021, published by the World Economic Forum, ranked Pakistan 153 out of 156 countries in terms of gender parity.

Illiteracy not only affects an individual's destiny; it also has an impact on society. High levels of illiteracy also hamper the functioning of democratic institutions, as it reduces the likelihood that voters can inform themselves properly about the issues at stake. It also limits their participation in various decisionmaking processes and increases the likelihood of their concerns being marginalized and even neglected.

External factors have also posed impediments to Pakistan's economic and social progress. Pakistan's relations with its neighbors, except for China, have not been smooth. It has gone to war with India on three occasions and has been involved in the war on terror for close to two decades. The state's security and defense engagements have been prioritized over the general wellbeing of the public.

Pakistan's reliance on aid and loans from Western institutions has also played its part. The conditions attached to their programs force the government to cut spending on development projects. The development projects they sponsor have made only a limited contribution towards social and economic advancement in Pakistan.

On the other hand, Pakistan-China economic cooperation in general and CPEC in particular focuses on key areas for Pakistan's development. Islamabad and Beijing have both demonstrated a strong commitment towards the timely completion of all agreed projects. The people of Pakistan have benefitted from the construction of energy projects and highways. Unlike the Western model, there is confidence at both the policymaking and popular level that the Chinese model will be able to help Pakistan achieve its development targets. With fewer conditions, Pakistan can bank on Chinese investment to attain its true economic potential.

In line with modernization theory, Pakistan has been able to achieve considerable economic and social progress thanks to Chinese assistance. Moreover, the leadership in Pakistan is keen to emulate the success of Beijing in eradicating poverty. The inclusion of a socio-economic component within the framework of CPEC is also going to boost the progress of Pakistani society.

Action Against Climate Change

According to Germanwatch's *2020 Global Climate Risk Index* report, Pakistan lost 9,989 lives, suffered economic losses worth $3.8 billion, and witnessed 152 extreme weather events from 1999 to 2018. The same report also raised the alarm that Pakistan's vulnerability to climate change is increasing. Experts such as Boston University's Adil Najam concur, pointing the finger both at a legacy of negligence and lack of action.

The construction work and expansion of industrial activities under CPEC will further stress the environment. Given that the leadership of both countries strongly committed to fighting climate change, measures are now being taken to reduce the harmful effects on the environment of CPEC-related activities. Both sides are also working on sustainable projects, like building renewable energy plants and promoting greener agricultural practices in Pakistan. Public transport infrastructure is also being expanded under CPEC, which will reduce pollution caused by vehicles.

During a December 2020 meeting held between Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam and China's current ambassador to Pakistan, Nong Rong, it was agreed that efforts will be made to turn CPEC into a model green belt initiative. The senior Chinese diplomat stated that there is a huge scope and opportunities of working jointly to promote a common green vision for enhanced environmental sustainability and climate resilience against the adverse impacts of the climate change.

Growing cooperation between the two countries within the CPEC framework has also led to increasing collaboration between Pakistani and Chinese academic institutes as they look to address challenges faced by the society. To that end, the China-Pakistan Joint Research Centre on Earth Sciences has also been launched by the Chinese Academy of Sciences in collaboration with the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan. It has brought together Chinese and Pakistani scholars to conduct research on ecology, climate change, and sustainable development in Pakistan. It is also providing capacity-building opportunities for Pakistani scientists.

Lastly, the development of vocational training centers and technology transfers will also help Pakistani society to shift towards modern and eco-friendly economic practices.

Chinese Commitments

The Chinese do not ignore the fact that socio-economic conditions of Pakistan require serious attention. They have made firm commitments to provide support to the Pakistani government. The second phase of CPEC incorporates the government's agenda for inclusive and sustainable development, as discussed above. China has also supported Pakistan in combatting the COVID-19 pandemic by sending out medical teams and relevant equipment. In addition, China has sent millions of vaccine doses for free, which has helped Pakistan significantly in keeping the outbreak under control. Moreover, progress on CPEC projects did not slow down noticeably due to the pandemic.

In June 2019, it was announced that China would provide a $1 billion grant for the socio-economic uplift of Pakistan. The funds are being allocated to the key sectors identified by

the Pakistani government. Projects include scholarships for Pakistani students to study in Chinese universities, the construction of a desalination plant in Gwadar, the establishment of hospital in Gwadar, solar powered lighting equipment for households in Baluchistan, and the upgrading of vocational training institutes. China will also assist Pakistan in modernizing its agricultural sector.

Chinese agricultural experts have visited the country since then and composed a short-list of projects in Pakistan after holding discussion with local experts. Chinese companies have also expressed interest in relocating to Pakistan and hiring Pakistani workers. Thousands of Pakistani students have already availed themselves scholarships offered by the Chinese government, while many others have undergone specialized training in China in various fields and returned back to Pakistan to work on CPEC-related projects.

China realizes that the success of CPEC will ultimately pave the way for the successful implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative. By actively supporting socio-economic projects in Pakistan, China aims to contribute concretely to the country's social and political stability. The Chinese have witnessed for themselves the importance of a stable political environment in ensuring economic prosperity and have demonstrated a welcome seriousness in passing on their experience to colleagues in Pakistan.

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Pakistan also has a large youth population and accommodating the millions of new entrants into the labor force each year poses a huge challenge. The country's current economic growth rate is not sufficient to absorb this youth bulge. Everyone knows by now that unemployment is a major driver of social and political instability. Such an environment becomes vulnerable to rival external forces.

The most underdeveloped province in Pakistan is Baluchistan. For a number of reasons, it probably has the most critical role to play in ensuring the success of CPEC. This flagship BRI project has given the government and people of Baluchistan a much-needed chance to turn things around for the better.

At the same time, whoever seeks to disrupt CPEC's progress has set their sights on the province. The 2016 capture of Indian spy Kulbhushan Jadhav by the Pakistani authorities and the contents of his confession statement is a case in point. India has persistently raised objections against CPEC and is using all the considerable means at its disposal to halt its progress. India not only wants to instigate instability in Pakistan, but New Delhi is doing all it can to place obstacles in the way of China's expansion in the region and beyond.

Given the scale of both the geo-economic and geopolitical implications of BRI, regional and global powers have become alarmed. Countries such as the United States, Japan, and India have not endorsed Beijing's plans. They are fearful of Chinese expansion at their expense. Some of the suspicions regarding the viability of CPEC have been propagated by these countries.

China believes that there is a planned and sponsored propaganda against BRI and therefore continuously makes efforts to address concerns. Since CPEC is regarded as the flagship project of BRI, the outcome of Chinese investments in Pakistan will go a long way in determining the fate of the BRI initiative. CPEC's success will pave way for more countries to fully endorse BRI and reject the negative claims of rival actors in the region.

To avoid foreign intervention, it is essential to engage the younger generations and provide them with adequate economic opportunities. Both China and Pakistan are working diligently to create jobs for locals people and address any doubts regarding the inclusivity of various CPEC projects. This will lead to peace and social stability in Pakistan, which also serves the interests of China.

With the United States and its allies aggressively executing their Indo-Pacific strategy to curtail China, Beijing has to maneuver its economic and diplomatic efforts tactfully. Pakistan's geographical location and its deep-rooted ties with China make it a critical theater in which Beijing is able to play its cards properly.

When an American official voiced her criticism of CPEC's financing mechanism as well as expressed concern regarding its harmful impact on the people of Pakistan, the Chinese were quick to refute her claims. They also made it clear that they will never put Pakistan under any financial stress. So far, they have kept their word.

Beijing is aware that Pakistani society is vulnerable to foreign intervention, which can turn into a security threat that could negatively affect not just their projects but the entire region as well. By focusing on the social and economic development of Pakistan, China can help avert security-related challenges. By establishing peace in Pakistan, China can extend its win-win strategy into the wider region more smoothly.

Azerbaijan and BRI

This is a good place to discuss Azerbaijan's place in the Belt and Road Initiative as well as briefly touch upon its bilateral relationship with both China and Pakistan. In the Fall 2020 edition of Baku Dialogues, Director-General of the Port of Baku Taleh Ziyadov wrote about Azerbaijan's unique connectivity potential: "The country's strategic location at the crossroads of major Eurasian land and air transport corridors is entrenching its status as a vital Silk Road region trade and logistics hub."

Both China and Azerbaijan regard BRI as a great development opportunity. As Tsinghua University's Yu Hongjun has written in these pages (also in the Fall 2020 edition, as it happens), Azerbaijan is viewed as an integral part of the China-Central Asia-West Asia Economic Corridor (CCWAEC)—principally the Trans-Caucasus Transit Corridor (TCTC), which links China to Turkey and Europe. In the past few years, Azerbaijan has made several investments along the TCTC. Included in these is the new Port of Baku and upgrades to the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway.

Trade between China and Azerbaijan has also significantly increased in the past few years. The latter accounts for nearly $1 billion of China's FDI. At present, the two countries cooperate in a number of projects in the petrochemical industry and are moving towards collaborating in avenues of transportation, communication, and tourism. China and Azerbaijan have also participated in several high-level forums related to BRI and have also signed various agreements in this regard. For Azerbaijan, taking full advantage of all that BRI has to offer is a high priority.

Similarly, China also views Azerbaijan as an important BRI partner. Following Azerbaijan's participation in the second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in 2019, the two sides signed ten agreements related to energy, worth a total of $821 million, as well as a number of non-oil investment projects. These included a Strategic Partnership Agreement between the Azerbaijan Railways Company and the Chinese Continental Bridge International Logistics Company as well as a Strategic Memorandum of Cooperation on ICT infrastructure development between AzerTelecom and China Telecom. At present, Baku and Beijing are in the midst of negotiations on a bilateral preferential trade agreement.

Participation in BRI will help in boosting Azerbaijan's trade, drawing in foreign investment and amassing aggregate income. A recent World Bank study shows that in the long run, BRI could increase Azerbaijan's GDP by up to 21 percent. However, for such positive effects, it is important for complementary policies to be put in place so as to support the gamut of investment projects on offer. Right institutional reforms and policies will not only help deepen regional integration but also accelerate and substantiate the benefits arising from BRI.

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Bilateral Relations & Regional Integration

Pakistan-Azerbaijan ties are based on a mutuality of respect and trust, bounded by the profession of a common faith. Pakistan was amongst the first countries to recognize the independence of Azerbaijan and played an instrumental role at the UN Security Council with respect to the adoption of four resolutions pertaining to the Karabakh issue. Pakistan's support for Azerbaijan in the liberation of Karabakh was second only to Turkey—something that has also contributed to raising the bilateral relationship to a new level.

Another thing that brings both countries together is their desire for development and progress. CPEC can be a common development fulcrum for both countries since it represents in many ways an ideal integration platform. CPEC can turn Pakistan into a global pivot state. Similarly, Azerbaijan's cornerstone dedication to promoting and

deepening cooperation in the Silk Road region—both within the context of BRI and more broadly, including its formal support for establishing a 3+3 platform that would include all its neighboring countries—makes it an increasingly attractive hub for BRI projects. The expansion of BRI routes will invariably bring enormous socio-economic benefits in the region

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During the January 2021 trilateral meeting between the foreign ministers of Pakistan, Azerbaijan, and Turkey in Islamabad, the feasibility of connecting the countries via CPEC's westward expansion was discussed in detail. Another topic of discussion was Azerbaijan's victory in the Second Karabakh War, which opens the way for the establishment of the Zengazur transportation corridor relinking mainland Azerbaijan with its Nakhchivan exclave. This project, which is an integral part of the trilateral agreement that ended the war, would strengthen both the foundations and the geo-economic logic of the China-Central Asia-West Asia Economic Corridor (CCWAEC)—one of BRI's six designated development corridors.

The main goal for both Pakistan and Azerbaijan should be to build upon this strategic partnership. Investors in Azerbaijan should explore opportunities of joint ventures within the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) that are being set up under CPEC, as this would help bolster bilateral business cooperation and accelerate economic development in both Pakistan and Azerbaijan.

Looking Ahead

The Chinese investments pouring into Pakistan under the CPEC framework have offered the country a lifeline. Prior to the April 2015 agreement, foreign countries were reluctant to undertake any largescale projects in Pakistan. Pakistan faced political instability and a destructive war on terror. Apart from foreign investment drying up in the country, the local economy was in a downturn. Many businesses were shutting down or relocating to other parts of Asia. The energy crisis further intensified the stressful position of the economy.

CPEC did not go down well with some countries, as it had the potential to uplift the economic and social conditions in Pakistan. A struggling country becomes more vulnerable to foreign interventions and can be easily exploited to carry out the vested interests of external players. Although China and Pakistan have enjoyed strong military and diplomatic relations, economic cooperation was very restricted prior to CPEC. The multi-sector development work being undertaken under CPEC has certainly given Pakistan a greater sense of economic security. It is up to Pakistan's leaders to get the most out of this alternate source of development assistance. So far it looks like things are moving in the right direction.

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CPEC projects must not be initiated in isolation; rather, they should meet the requirements of the overall development strategy. The economic and social objectives of the government, as underlined by the Planning Commission of Pakistan, are to promote the welfare of the people, raise the standard of living of the common man, prevent the concentration of wealth and means of production in a few hands, and secure social justice and equal opportunity for all.

The CPEC projects have the potential to deliver all those objectives. However, careful planning and implementation is necessary to minimize risks and maximize benefits. CPEC has kick-started a number of projects simultaneously, which makes planning and management quite strenuous. As Aristotle noted millennia ago, "well begun is half done." Accurate planning, implementation, and sustainability should be emphasized over the pace of project completion. It must also be ensured that projects are primarily initiated to facilitate public rather than political interests.

Employment generation will be the key determinant of the success of CPEC. At present, the economy is not growing at a rate that can absorb the labor force. In the coming years, it will continue to be a daunting challenge for policy-makers. The non-socio-economic projects of CPEC also have a vital

contribution to make. They have the capacity to provide jobs to millions of workers in Pakistan. There are high hopes that in the near future, the economy will pick up its pace on the back of CPEC, which in turn will generate even more economic opportunities. If CPEC falls short of this promise, then there could be dire social and economic consequences.

Youth unemployment is a recipe for social and political instability. The educational and training programs under CPEC must be extended. In Pakistan, there are limited linkages between industry and academia. University graduates do not acquire the necessary skills during the course of their studies to meet the demands of the job market. This gap needs to be filled through collaborations at various levels. A more able and skillful workforce can attract more foreign investment in the future.

Islamabad's policymakers should realize that the model adopted by China has to be adjusted to make it work for Pakistan. Undoubtedly, Pakistan can learn a great deal from Chinese expertise and benefit from their support, but a sustained increase in Pakistan's standard of living can only be ensured if a well-designed, long-term development policy catering to public concerns and changing circumstances is put into practice.

The economy is burdened with external payment obligations due to the mismanagement of resources. The cycle of looking for aid each time there is a financial crisis needs to be broken. What Pakistan should learn from China is how to optimally mobilize domestic resources and a provide for a robust governance system.

Challenges like climate change and COVID-19 require a collective approach. China has taken considerable steps to counter them and is in a position to support other countries. China has always supported Pakistan during testing times and Pakistan should continue to work closely with China to address these challenges.

The bottom line is simple: the smooth implementation of CPEC can lead to further possibilities of economic growth and prosperity in the Silk Road Region, benefiting not only China, obviously, and Pakistan but also Azerbaijan and a whole host of other countries. BD

Profile in Leadership

Azerbaijan's Educator-Statesman at Eighty

Hafiz Pashayev and His Vision of ADA University

S. Frederick Starr

S. Frederick Starr is Chairman of the Central Asia Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, a research and policy center affiliated with the American Foreign Policy Council in Washington, DC and the Institute for Security and Development Policy in Stockholm. He is also Distinguished Fellow for Eurasia at the American Foreign Policy Institute. He co-founded the Kennan Institute of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, served for 11 years as President of Oberlin College, and served in the early 2000s as pro-tem Rector of the University of Central Asia. He is a trustee of ADA University, the recipient of an honorary doctorate in the humanities from ADA University, and a member of the Baku Dialogues Editorial Advisory Council.

Hafiz Pashayev—scientist, diplomat, educator, and citizen of modern Azerbaijan—has many admirers and friends, including the author of this portrait, which is written in celebration of his distinguished subject's 80th birthday. All know Hafiz Pashayev as someone who has used his talents in the fields of science, diplomacy, and education to champion his country's interests in a post-Soviet world. His mild and accessible temperament encourages those around him to focus on whatever issue is at hand, without pausing to enquire into his ruling values and the aspirations that arise from them. This is unfortunate, for in both areas he has much to say.

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One's values and goals in life can arise from many sources, among them being childhood influences, religious or philosophical affirmations, study of the past or personal crises, efforts to peer into the future, or sheer chance. In the case of Hafiz Pashayev, they flowed organically from highly diverse yet intermeshed influences that began in his parents' home and extended through his adult life.

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Hafiz Pashayev's father, Mir Jalal Pashayev, was a self-made scholar, professor, and writer who as a child was brought by his parents into northern Azerbaijan from across the Araz river in the final decades of the Russian empire. He completed his initial studies in Ganja where he became a teacher before going on to earn a doctorate for his studies of the great Azerbaijani 16th-century thinker and poet, Fuzuli. He subsequently went on to write immensely popular stories of daily life in his homeland, most of them gently poking fun at Soviet bureaucracy. He had studied his subject at first hand and had no illusions about the system under which he lived and toiled, but channeled his views into wry tales, not protests. Though a member of the cultural establishment, Mir Jalal was a loner amidst a wide circle of friends, a man who preferred drinking tea with family and colleagues to becoming "Dried Up in Meetings," to cite the title of one of his droll tales. Understanding the drift of Soviet life, he encouraged two of his sons (Hafiz as well as Arif, his older brother), to study physics, not literature, whilst the third, Agil, studied philology.

It was no mean achievement to rise to the upper levels of physics in the Soviet Union, as young Hafiz quickly did. He did doctoral research at

the Kurchatov Institute of Atomic Energy in Moscow, which at the time was the world's premier institution for the study of thermonuclear fusion and plasma physics. In the mid-1970s he was allowed to go abroad to conduct postdoctoral research at the University of California at Irvine. Hafiz's impressions of America were heady and extended far beyond the realm of physics to include universities, education in general, and social life in all its dimensions. His father prudently counselled him to keep his observations on America to himself. He did, spending three decades at the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (ANAS) where, in the course of time, he came to serve as Director of the Metal Physics Laboratory at the ANAS Institute of Physics whilst continuing his research and publishing scores of scientific papers in leading international journals.

To this point, Hafiz was a rising Soviet scientist in a prestigious field, a member of the elite by any measure. Though from an academic family, he was also the son of a noted and quietly independent writer who, rather than flaunting any skepticism about Soviet rule he may have harbored, translated it into wry and even absurd tales rooted in the reality known to all readers of the Azerbaijani language. And, it should be noted, though Mir Jalal Pashayev followed his own stars, he was part of an impressive Azerbaijani intelligentsia with a strong cultural memory that stretched back to the post-World War I era Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, which had ended only with the Red Army's invasion in 1920.

The cultural memory to which Hafiz Pashayev was heir extended back still further, to the oil boom of the late 19th century, when Baku became a sophisticated outpost of Europe, and even beyond that, to great writers and poets who wrote in Azerbaijani, not Russian.

The cultural memory to which Hafiz Pashayev was heir extended back still further, to the oil boom of the late 19th century, when Baku became a sophisticated outpost of Europe, and even beyond that, to great writers and poets who wrote in Azerbaijani, not Russian. Though a member in good standing of the Soviet intelligentsia and fully integrated into the world of Russian language and culture, Hafiz stood proudly as a son of Azerbaijan and part of a generation of well-educated Azerbaijanis who felt that it was high time to reclaim their intellectual and cultural heritage. He could see that earlier generations of Azerbaijanis had produced bright and

independent personalities who were committed to their communities and to civic betterment. Though neither they nor Hafiz commonly used the word, they were free citizens, not subjects.

Meanwhile, the underpinnings of Soviet rule in Azerbaijan were shaking. This reached a climax when the neighboring Republic of Armenia seized Azerbaijani territory in and around Karabakh, and when bloody ethnic confrontations broke out across both countries and in Baku itself. National feeling in Baku ran high and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, fearing complete chaos and outright secession, declared a state of emergency there. On January 19th, 1990, Gorbachev declared the city to be in a state of emergency and sent in more than 25,000 interior forces of the Red Army to quell the large crowd that had assembled in the Azerbaijani capital. Three days of fighting left hundreds of Azerbaijanis dead or injured. Hafiz Pashayev witnessed it all and concluded that Soviet rule was collapsing, and that Azerbaijan henceforth would be on its own.

Even then, Hafiz returned for several years to his scientific work and to the professorial life in which his father had preceded him. More published papers flowed from his research. However, the collapse of the Soviet Union left Azerbaijan and the other non-Russian republics adrift, and without the means to support such basic institutions as schools, hospitals, universities, and research institutes. Besides, physics in Azerbaijan had been intimately linked with Moscow, a relationship that had clearly been suspended and possibly would be terminated. Meanwhile, a new and independent government had formed and was sending out ambassadors to represent independent Azerbaijan to the world. Hafiz, with his American experience, was the obvious candidate to serve as Azerbaijan's first ambassador to the United States. The appointment was made in late 1992 and he was 51 years old.

Hafiz Pashayev was not the only Soviet-era physicist who retooled as a diplomat or statesman. Another to do so was Stanislav Shushkevich, a physicist and engineer who in 1991 became the first head of state of independent Belarus after it seceded from the Soviet Union. Still another was Meret Orazov, a younger physicist from Turkmenistan who went on to become his country's ambassador to Washington. These and other former Soviet physicists all followed in the footsteps of Russian physicist Andrei Sakharov, who did more than anyone else to broaden the calling of scientist to include civic and

patriotic activity independent of the state. Many of the Soviet Union's rising physicists, Hafiz among them, chose not to engage in politics directly. Yet scores of them exhibited a commitment to civic betterment, public service, and to full participation in the cultural and intellectual currents of the day in Europe and America.

Hafiz Pashayev took up his ambassadorial duties in Washington in February 1993. He and his beloved wife, Rana, were outsiders in a city where many long-resident foreign diplomats were accepted as insiders. Further complicating his life were the two major issues that confronted him even before his arrival. The first was British Petroleum's contract with the government of Azerbaijan to vastly increase the country's production of oil and the concomitant project—equally vast in scope—to build a pipeline for the export of Azerbaijan's oil from Baku to the West. Even though American oil firms were not directly involved in either of these projects, they had profound implications for American diplomacy of, and especially for, Washington's increasingly fragile relations with the post-Soviet government in Moscow. Precisely because both governments saw both of these projects as breaking Russia's monopoly control over the South Caucasus, Washington welcomed and supported the initiatives whilst Moscow opposed them.

The second issue that further complicated his life, as it were, was to redress the losses that Azerbaijan had suffered during what is now called the First Karabakh War that Armenia had waged against Azerbaijan from 1992 to 1994. The war had ended with Armenia in control not only of the enclave of Karabakh and one fifth of Azerbaijan's territory, but with tens of thousands of deaths on both sides and 740,000 Azerbaijanis having been expelled from their homes. Never mind that the UN Security Council passed four resolutions "reaffirming the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Azerbaijani republic" and "demand[ing] [...] the immediate, complete, and unconditional withdrawal of the occupying forces" from Karabakh and the surrounding regions. The Armenian government was staunchly committed to holding onto its wartime gains at all costs and to using diplomacy to thwart Azerbaijan in every way possible.

Either of these issues would have challenged even the most seasoned diplomat. But Hafiz was, he freely admitted, both a neophyte in diplomacy and a newcomer to the political and social labyrinth of Washington. Worse yet,

the political valence of each of these issues differed radically, with the oil and pipelines eliciting warm support from those responsible for America's national security and economic interests but skepticism and even opposition from what was then called the "human rights lobby." Meanwhile, the Karabakh question caused Armenia, its diplomats, and members of the large Armenian emigration in the United States to mount a vehement and well-organized opposition to everyone and everything associated with Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan's supporters and opponents on the two issues differed radically. For obvious reasons, the main supporters of the development and transport of Azerbaijan's oil to the West were British and American businessmen and the few specialists in geopolitics in the U.S. Congress and academia, while the most vociferous forces aligned against Azerbaijan on the Karabakh issue were the large and well-organized communities of Armenian emigres and their descendants in California, New England, and elsewhere in America. The former tended to work quietly and behind the scenes; while the latter mounted one of the largest, most expensive, and most visible domestic American lobbying efforts on any foreign policy issue.

It is a gross understatement to say that these two projects demanded diametrically different skillsets and techniques from the embassy of Azerbaijan. No one, including Hafiz Pashayev, could have been expected to possess them all. In his engaging memoir, *Racing Up Hill* (2006), Pashayev provided a compendium of documents and impressions that shed light on what he admits was an uphill struggle. Suffice it to say that his method was to gather on his staff a talented group of young Azerbaijanis who focused on the more public dimensions of the agenda, while he himself addressed those matters that could best be advanced through face-to-face contacts on the basis of cordial personal relations. This method succeeded brilliantly. He selected the most promising young diplomats and trained them mainly by personal example, just as Mir Jalal Pashayev had done with young Hafiz. Members of his Washington staff went on to serve in Baku at the highest level of government, the diplomatic service, and academia. Meanwhile, the personal links Hafiz Pashayev formed with many key American politicians and statesmen proved immensely productive at the time and were to endure through the years.

In the end, the battle to counter the work of the Armenian government and their co-nationals among the American citizenry proved the most vexing.

In a brilliant and deeply injurious move, the two groups collaborated to put forward a seemingly minor revision to the U.S. Freedom Support Act (1992) that would prevent the United States government from extending any form of direct aid to the government of Azerbaijan. But would anyone in the U.S. Congress actually introduce this legislation, which was so clearly at odds with America's own interests?

The person who championed this damaging initiative in Congress was Senator John Kerry, who had been successfully lobbied by organized Armenian groups in his home state of Massachusetts. Never mind that President Bill Clinton, a fellow Democrat, opposed Kerry's move, and that neither Kerry nor his staff bothered to gain a more thorough and accurate picture of the situation in Karabakh or of developments in Azerbaijan itself. However casual its genesis, this ban made Azerbaijan the only post-Soviet state to be prevented from receiving direct aid from the United States government to facilitate economic development, political reform, and social advancement and stability.

I recently came across an interview Hafiz gave to an Azerbaijani publication in the fall of 2006 that I believe encapsulates an important thread of his thinking on this critical question:

> The U.S. government's decision to deprive us of assistance during the desperateness of our fundamental needs, was a devastating blow to us morally. One must view Section 907 in its historical and political context. Throughout those long years of the Soviet occupation of our country, we had looked to America as a beacon of hope, democracy, and justice. For us, America could be counted upon to be a strong defender of human rights. We had aspired to those life-affirming qualities; we dreamed of the day when government would look after our own people in the same way. [...] So [...] as we were trying to shake off Soviet oppression—an effort which the United States itself had actively endorsed and encouraged—we discovered that they, too, had shunned us, ignored our needs and abandoned us when we needed help the most. Psychologically, it was a demoralizing blow.

The battle over Section 907, as it came to be called, was less a partisan than a personal issue. Democrats in the White House and the State Department supported repeal but Democrats in Congress, led by Kerry, dug in their heels. In spite of endless letters and face-to-face meetings, Hafiz was never able to have Section 907 repealed, although he came very close on at least one occasion. Instead, those who supported repeal had to settle for an annual waiver, which continues to this day.

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There is nothing more bizarre than the fact that the struggle over Section 907 took place simultaneously with the development of an important strategic relationship between Azerbaijan and the United States, and that that relationship was to prove as enduring as the shell of Section 907. Fortunately, over the years the Kerry initiative has faded and the strategic links have only strengthened. Many people deserve credit for this legerdemain, including senior Washington figures Richard Armitage, Sam Brownback, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Dick Cheney, Bob Livingston, Strobe Talbott and, of course, Presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Heydar Aliyev, and Ilham Aliyev. But were it not for persistent but low-keyed efforts of Hafiz Pashayev, and for the many personal contacts he had developed with officials in the departments of State and Defense, as well as in Congress, it is doubtful that this happy state would ever have been reached.

The combination of oil and pipeline politics, security issues, and Section 907 not only took up the lion's share of Hafiz Pashayev's time in Washington, but these matters also dominated his memoir, in both the English and Azerbaijani editions. However, all these topics together do not comprise the sum of his activities while serving as Azerbaijan's ambassador to the United States. His life in Washington had confirmed his earlier impression that Americans were woefully ignorant not only of Azerbaijan but of the Caucasus as a whole and of Central Asia as well. Soviet rule had isolated his country and the region from the world and the world had reciprocated by ignoring those lands. At worst, many in the West assumed they were all somehow part of Russia. In order for independent Azerbaijan fully to take its place in the world, this ignorance had to be overcome, not only among elected officials and bureaucrats but among the populace of the West as a whole.

It was in such a mood that Hafiz Pashayev in 1996 learned from his friend Zbigniew Brzezinski that plans were underway to set up a "Central Asia

Institute" in Washington that the author of this sketch would head up. Hafiz immediately contacted me and suggested that the new institute should include in its purview the Caucasus as well, and I readily agreed. In subsequent discussions, I made it clear that this new institute would base its research purely on the evidence at hand and avoid advocacy on behalf of any of the countries under study. So enthusiastically did Pashayev agree to this principle that the newly-established Central Asia-Caucasus Institute invited him to deliver its first public address. Ever the scientist, Hafiz used his speech to champion the principle of scholarly independence, while at the same time urging his audience to pay closer attention to the Caucasus as a region.

Hafiz Pashayev served as Azerbaijan's ambassador to the United States for nearly 14 years. His experience had taught him several important lessons. First, it convinced him that lasting progress in international relations, as in all other spheres, arises not from adroit diplomatic maneuvers or clever theories but from the level of knowledge and general culture of the key actors and of the societies from which they are drawn. His experience in Baku and Washington left him in no doubt as to the positive role that leaders can play. Hafiz held Azerbaijan's president, Heydar Aliyev, in the deepest respect, and also admired the even temperament and tenacity of his son and successor, Ilham Aliyev. Of course, as an Azerbaijani he knew full well that the possession of natural resources could be a plus—in the short term at least. But Hafiz believed that even the wisest top-down changes and resource-driven boosts to the economy would be unsustainable without a breadth of knowledge and understanding among the society at large.

This perspective placed education not merely as an adornment of the good society but as the necessary precondition for its existence. Far from being a mere theory, Hafiz based this conclusion on his on-the-spot contacts with the curricula of schools and universities in the United States, Canada, and western Europe. He had found there no place for rote learning, or for dogmas to be accepted *a priori*. As his tenure in Washington drew to an end, his commitment to these truths was stronger than ever.

Long before returning to Baku, Hafiz Pashayev had concluded that the type and level of education that Azerbaijan had inherited from Soviet times would retard and distort all future progress. There were others in Azerbaijan and the other newly independent states who grasped this

truth, but few saw it so clearly as he did—both in terms of the need for an informed citizens and for the kind of study in the humanities and social sciences necessary to prepare them. He had had opportunity to discuss this matter with the country's new president, Ilham Aliyev, whose diverse career in academia and business—and also his extensive contacts with the West—had led him to the same conclusion. In March 2005—the second year of the new presidency and a year before Pashayev's return to Baku—a conversation between him and President Aliyev took a very practical turn. Since the author of this sketch was present at and participated in that discussion in the presidential office, it can be reported in some detail.

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Hafiz began by expressing his view that Azerbaijan's universities and preparatory schools were in need of fundamental reform. They needed to be free of all the impedimenta of Soviet higher education, he noted, before making the case that the country's future progress would largely depend on such changes being enacted. Only an educated public, Ambassador Pashayev said, could adapt to change and grasp the needs and possibilities of responsible citizenship. President Aliyev strongly agreed but noted in a somber tone that the bundle of laws on education that independent Azerbaijan had inherited from Soviet times could stifle any such initiatives. Rather than simply giving up, President Aliyev suggested what amounted to a laboratory test of the new thinking in education, one that could be launched immediately. Azerbaijan's government at the time was greatly expanding its representation abroad, opening several dozen new embassies all at once. Scores of future diplomats had to be recruited and trained. Why not apply to this task the new thinking in education, in order to test its validity and learn how best to apply it?

And so the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy was born. In order to cement the link between the new institution and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, President Aliyev named Hafiz Pashayev Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. The minister, Elmar Mammadyarov, had served under Pashayev at the Washington embassy. Launched in a building near the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "ADA," as it became known, quickly gained a reputation for

high competence and seriousness of purpose. Its courses addressed all the main issues facing Azerbaijan: the geopolitics of energy; the future of the Caspian region; great power competition; the evolution of global finance; and so forth. At the same time, it ventured into issues of history and culture that were commonly seen as the domain of the humanities. The original purpose of ADA was not merely to *train* diplomats in the craft of their field but to *educate* them to function effectively in a modern and sophisticated post-Soviet world. And the key to that education was an understanding of civic life and of citizenship, each integral to the achievement of what Hafiz has identified as ADA's strategic goal: the offering of a world-class education in Azerbaijan.

With English as the language of instruction, ADA was able to attract an international faculty from the outset. To further enrich the educational environment, Rector Pashayev invited several accomplished international figures to be in residence. Among these were the respected Georgian diplomat Tedo Japaridze, the Tatar-Russian plasma physicist and former director of the Space Research Institute of the USSR Roald Sagdeev, and former advisor to U.S. Secretary of State James Baker on Soviet nationality issues Paul Goble, whom Rector Pashayev named ADA's director of research and publications.

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Very early in its young life ADA began to accept other students besides rising Azerbaijani diplomats. Word spread quickly that an innovative new institution had opened on the shores of the Caspian and letters of enquiry began pouring in. To handle this rising tide of interest Rector Pashayev named a director of admissions and regularized the application process. Within a couple of years the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy was attracting advanced students from dozens of countries, including some immediate neighbors and various states whose geography encompasses the Silk Road region, but also from faraway nations like

Argentina, The Bahamas, Fiji, Mexico, and the United States, as well as from Azerbaijan itself.

The rising tide of applications from secondary school graduates within Azerbaijan posed a special challenge. In Soviet times, the culture of higher education included ample space for influential parents to weigh in on behalf of their children's applications. So pervasive was this corrupt practice that it was considered a normal benefit of rank and status. It was therefore only a matter of time before some minister or senior official would telephone ADA's rector on behalf of his son or daughter. This test came in the second year of ADA's existence and Hafiz passed with flying colors. Thanks to his tactful manner the rector was able to send a clear signal to the local elite, and without eliciting a backlash.

By its second or third year it was clear to all that ADA was evolving beyond its initial formal mission as a diplomatic academy and becoming a fully-fledged academic institution. The challenge was to plan and build a diversified undergraduate institution while at the same time continuing to develop the Diplomatic Academy. This had been the shared vision of President Aliyev and Rector Pashayev from the outset. Indeed, while still serving as Azerbaijan's ambassador in Washington, Hafiz had advanced this project along four important lines.

First, he actively studied European and American institutions in search of the most appropriate models for new institution in Azerbaijan. He felt that Azerbaijan lacked the range of talents needed to sustain a new mega-university of the American type, nor were the resources at hand to do so. Further, he realized that graduates of Azerbaijan's secondary schools were not adequately prepared to plunge directly into professional training, as is common in Europe. This left the American liberal arts college, with its emphasis on basic education in the humanities, social sciences, and physical sciences, as the most appropriate model.

In order to gain a more concrete understanding of such institutions, Hafiz (while still in Washington) had visited a range of liberal arts colleges, among them Swarthmore in Pennsylvania and Middlebury in Vermont. He also consulted with the author of this essay on his experience as president of Oberlin College, the world's first institution of higher

education to grant degrees to women and the training ground for several Nobel Prize winners.

The future rector drew a number of conclusions from this enquiry. Azerbaijan's new institution must embrace the arts, sciences, and humanities—not as pre-professional programs but in order to enable graduates to then go on to master *any* field. This meant rejecting all rote learning, an emphasis on rigorous interaction between students and faculty and among students, and the development of high competence in both writing and speaking. Such a program would be possible only in a residential institution, where living and learning would be combined. And it would require not only a broad and compulsory first year program but a preparatory year as well.

As he had done in both his scientific work and as ambassador, in building ADA Hafiz Pashayev began by assembling a team of gifted and energetic young people. He made sure they grasped his broad aims but otherwise allowed them great freedom of action. He also engaged an American architectural firm to begin planning a residential campus that would foster the educational program he envisioned. Finally, in order to create the basis for longer-term independence, Rector Pashayev established a permanent endowment and set up a foundation in Washington to raise and manage such funds.

Scarcely less noteworthy than the strategic plan for ADA University is the measured pace at which it has been developed. Instead of a Soviet-type crash program that initially dazzles but eventually reveals deep flaws in concept and execution, the establishment of ADA University has proceeded in a careful "step-by-step" manner. This more organic approach allows for rethinking along the way and for adjustments that respond to perceived realities. Such an approach is properly built not only with the skills of an engineer but also with the sensibility of a gardener. Sustainable growth, even if at times dizzyingly rapid, must remain holistic and organic. It must not succumb to an indolent, mechanical process but instead be cultivated prudentially and allowed to evolve naturally; it must set a pace for growth that is deliberate; it must make the most of every opportunity for renewal; and it must stay true to the purpose that animated its founding whilst taking care to allow for constant adjustment and adaptability. At bottom, this is the

story of ADA and Hafiz Pashayev's leadership. The result? An institution that will long remain a work in progress, in the best possible meaning of the term.

Such a measured approach does not exclude acting on targets of opportunity. Typically, while the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy was transformed into ADA University in 2014, it was only in 2020 that Hafiz became convinced the time had come to recruit the necessary personnel to establish on a permanent basis a scholarly rigorous policy journal focusing on international and regional affairs, namely *Baku Dialogues*.

Similarly, Pashayev took a regional approach from the outset and believed that the University should build strong ties with the nearby countries of Central Asia. Turkmenistan was an obvious starting point, but a long-standing dispute between Baku and Ashgabat over rights to exploit an oil deposit beneath the Caspian Sea prevented progress. So Hafiz Pashayev, in his dual capacity as ADA rector and Azerbaijani deputy foreign minister, made a low-keyed visit to the Turkmen capital in 2014. The president of Turkmenistan eventually paid a return visit to Baku and, in due course, the dispute concerning the extraction of undersea hydrocarbons was resolved. Students from Turkmenistan and other Central Asian countries now study at ADA University.

A third example has been the evolution of the idea—first raised in 2013 in the form of a proposal to host a technopark to encourage homegrown entrepreneurship—of establishing a Science and Technology Village adjacent to the main ADA campus. Originally conceived as a way to further the work of the university's School of Information Technologies and Engineering, the idea gathered momentum in early 2020 during President Aliyev's state visit to Italy. In conversation with Italy's prime minister, Giuseppe Conte, he suggested working together to set up an Italy-Azerbaijan University. Hafiz had been a member of the Azerbaijani delegation (he signed a Memorandum of Understanding on academic exchange programs), and by the time it had returned home, the two men had come to an agreement that ADA University would spearhead this project, which if all goes well is expected to launch in a few years' time. At present, the plan is to draw on the strengths of various top-notch Italian universities and offer dual degrees with a consortium of Italian universities in electrical engineering, design and architecture, IT

and computer sciences, business and management, agrobusiness and food science, and other related areas, while at the same time establish new collaborative models with private-sector industry and high-tech entrepreneurs headquartered in both countries. The idea is still in its planning stage and is likely to evolve further in perhaps unexpected ways before seeing the light of day. Whatever its final form, Hafiz Pashayev and ADA University should be credited for standing at the forefront of what may turn out to be yet another seminal development in the history of preparing Azerbaijan.

The mode and pace by which Pashayev has developed ADA University flowed naturally from his deep aversion to top-down social engineering. He had seen how this worked in Soviet times and knew well its flaws. He knew that effective modern societies require free citizens, and that Soviet pedagogy, based on authority, standardization, and conformity, could not produce them. Absent such a citizenry, the best efforts of political leaders and diplomats reinforce the very habits that long hampered social and personal development and that suppressed invention, innovation, initiative, and freedom.

> *The goal of Hafiz Pashayev's educational strategy is thus to develop free, independent, and modern* citizens, *not standardized* subjects.

The goal of Hafiz Pashayev's educational strategy is thus to develop free, independent, and modern *citizens*, not standardized *subjects*. This was the same philosophy that undergirded his father's life as a writer and teacher as well as his own role as the head of a major scientific institution in Azerbaijan. It informed his own work as a diplomat in Washington, where he was widely seen as an exemplar of such a worldview, and also pervaded in his role as Azerbaijan's deputy foreign minister and, of course, in his stewardship of ADA University.

Viewed from a great distance, it is easy to underestimate the impediments that can stymie anyone who champions such a philosophy in a developing country, even a sophisticated one like Azerbaijan. The central role of families in such traditional societies can create loyalties that are sometimes at odds with the free and equal exercise of individual citizenship. The rise of new wealth can also dim the voice of those who do not share it. Hafiz Pashayev has lived his life in such an environment. But his mild

temperament has distanced him from polemics and traditional politics. Instead, he has focused on what he is *for*, not what he is *against*. And the core of his philosophy as a scientist, diplomat, and educator has remained consistent throughout his life: to affirm the constructive role of free, educated, and independent men and women. During half his life he had observed how the Soviet system thwarted the development of such people, questioning their loyalty and undermining the meritocratic imperative, and he knew well the cost this had imposed on individuals and society. But instead of engaging in frontal combat with holdovers of the past, he has devoted his talents to creating better alternatives. In this mission he has been extraordinarily productive. We should rejoice in the fact that he continues to be so today. BD

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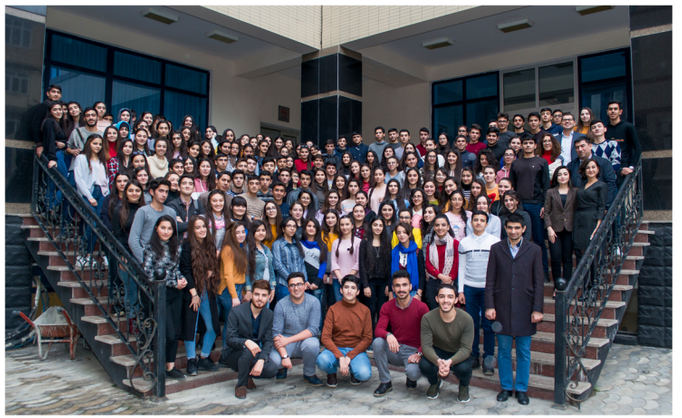

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