

# BAKU DIALOGUES

POLICY PERSPECTIVES ON THE SILK ROAD REGION

Vol. 7 | No. 2 | Winter 2023-2024

## Heydar Aliyev, 1923-2003 Assessment His Legacy, Part Two

Heydar Aliyev's Energy and Infrastructure Strategy  
Vitaliy Baylarbayov

Statesmanship in  
the Silk Road Region  
Rodrigo Labardini

Karabakh and  
Azerbaijani Statecraft  
Michael M. Gunter

## The Emergence & Mainstreaming of Public Diplomacy

What Is Public Diplomacy?  
Alan K. Henrikson

## Visions for a Shared Future

Time to Dream?  
Alpaslan Özerdem

The 3+3 Formula  
Vasif Huseynov

## A Very Good Question

Can the West Eliminate Armenia's Critical  
Economic Reliance on Russia?  
Orkhan Baghirov

## A Philosophical Reflection on a Sempiternal Predicament

War, Peace, and Law  
Miguel Ayuso

[bakudialogues.ada.edu.az](http://bakudialogues.ada.edu.az)



ISSN Print: 2709-1848  
ISSN Online: 2709-1856

# BAKU DIALOGUES

POLICY PERSPECTIVES ON THE SILK ROAD REGION

Vol. 7 | No. 2 | Winter 2023-2024

## Heydar Aliyev, 1923-2003 Assessment His Legacy, Part Two

Heydar Aliyev's Energy and Infrastructure Strategy  
Vitaliy Baylarbayov

Statesmanship in  
the Silk Road Region  
Rodrigo Labardini

Karabakh and  
Azerbaijani Statecraft  
Michael M. Gunter

## The Emergence & Mainstreaming of Public Diplomacy

What Is Public Diplomacy?  
Alan K. Henrikson

## Visions for a Shared Future

Time to Dream?  
Alpaslan Özerdem

The 3+3 Formula  
Vasif Huseynov

## A Very Good Question

Can the West Eliminate Armenia's Critical  
Economic Reliance on Russia?  
Orkhan Baghirov

## A Philosophical Reflection on a Sempiternal Predicament

War, Peace, and Law  
Miguel Ayuso

[bakudialogues.ada.edu.az](http://bakudialogues.ada.edu.az)



# BAKU DIALOGUES

POLICY PERSPECTIVES ON THE SILK ROAD REGION

[bakudialogues.ada.edu.az](http://bakudialogues.ada.edu.az)

Published by  
Institute for Development and Diplomacy, ADA University  
Baku, Azerbaijan

Under the editorial direction of  
Dr. Fariz Ismailzade, Editor-in-Chief  
Vice Rector for Government, External, and Student Affairs, ADA University  
Director, Institute for Development and Diplomacy

In conjunction with  
Mr. Damjan Krnjević Mišković, Co-Editor  
Director for Policy Research, Analysis, and Publications, Institute for Development and Diplomacy  
Professor of Practice, ADA University

And through the counsel of the Editorial Advisory Council of *Baku Dialogues*

H.E. Dr. Hafiz Pashayev, chairperson  
Mr. Nasimi Aghayev  
H.E. Mr. Hikmet Çetin  
H.E. Mr. Tedo Japaridze  
Prof. Dr. Jeffrey D. Sachs  
H.E. Mr. Sodik Safayev  
Prof. Dr. Samad Seyidov  
Prof. Dr. S. Frederick Starr  
Mr. S. Enders Wimbush

---

Mr. Fikrat Malikov, Layout, Digital and Print Production  
Manager for Creative Services, ADA University

Mr. Murad Taghizada, Designer  
Specialist for Graphic and UI Design, ADA University

Mrs. Shabnam Maharramova, Communications and Content Management  
Manager for Public Relations, Communications, and Digital Content, ADA University

---

Please direct all inquiries, submissions, and proposals via email to [Baku-Dialogues@ada.edu.az](mailto:Baku-Dialogues@ada.edu.az).  
Submission guidelines are available on the *Baku Dialogues* website: [bakudialogues.ada.edu.az](http://bakudialogues.ada.edu.az).

The content of *Baku Dialogues* is copyrighted by its publisher. All rights reserved. Copyright © 2023 ADA University. No part of this publication may be reproduced, hosted, or distributed, in whole or in part, in any form or by any means, without prior written permission from *Baku Dialogues*. To seek permission, please send an email to [Baku-Dialogues@ada.edu.az](mailto:Baku-Dialogues@ada.edu.az).

*Baku Dialogues* is an independent policy journal. The content of each issue of the journal (e.g. essays, interviews, profiles, etc.) thus does not represent any institutional viewpoint. The analyses provided and viewpoints expressed by the authors featured in *Baku Dialogues* do not necessarily reflect those of its publisher, editors, consultants, Editorial Advisory Council members, and anyone else affiliated with ADA University or *Baku Dialogues*. Our sole acceptance of responsibility is the provision of a forum dedicated to intellectual discussion and debate.

# Table of Contents

Vol. 7 | No. 2 | Winter 2023-2024

## Essays

- 6 Heydar Aliyev's Energy and Infrastructure Strategy  
*Vitaliy Baylarbayov*
- 18 Statesmanship in the Silk Road Region:  
Reflections on Heydar Aliyev's Achievement  
*Rodrigo Labardini*
- 36 Karabakh and Azerbaijani Statecraft  
*Michael M. Gunter*
- 48 Time to Dream?  
Toward a 'Shared Future' Perspective  
for the South Caucasus  
*Alpaslan Özerdem*
- 72 Revitalizing the 3+3 Platform:  
A Formula for a New Regional Security Order?  
*Vasif Huseynov*
- 86 Armenia's Critical Economic Reliance on Russia:  
Can the West Eliminate It?  
*Orkhan Baghirov*
- 98 What Is Public Diplomacy?  
Fostering Cooperation, Countering Disinformation  
*Alan K. Henrikson*
- 120 War, Peace, and Law  
*Miguel Ayuso*

# Heydar Aliyev's Energy and Infrastructure Strategy

*Vitaliy Baylarbayov*

National Leader Heydar Aliyev had an exceptional understanding of foreign policy and national security dynamics. Through his strategic vision, he was able to lead the Republic of Azerbaijan from a situation of state collapse at independence to one characterized by political, economic, and security viability. Moreover, Heydar Aliyev's geopolitical strategy enabled Azerbaijan to conduct independent policies, not dictated by any regional or global power. In support of his geopolitical strategic vision, Heydar Aliyev conceived of and executed an energy and infrastructure strategy that enabled Azerbaijan to become a major oil and natural gas producer and, in turn, to change the energy map of the Caspian region

and the European continent. The core of this policy was the establishment of the East-West corridor from the Caspian region through Georgia and Türkiye to the West.

## *Azerbaijan's Strategic Position at Independence*

The Republic of Azerbaijan holds a strategically significant geopolitical position. Being landlocked, Azerbaijan necessitates fostering good relations to facilitate trade and transportation links to global markets. Upon the restoration of its independence in 1991, Azerbaijan confronted the challenge of war initiated by Armenia, resulting in the occupation of nearly twenty percent of its

*Dr. Vitaliy Baylarbayov is the Deputy Vice-President of the State Oil Company of the Republic of Azerbaijan (SOCAR). He also currently heads the Southern Gas Corridor Gas Value Chain Integration Team, while serving as the Chairman of the Boards of Directors SOCAR-UNIPER LLC, the South Caucasus Pipeline Company Ltd., SOCAR Midstream Operations LLC, and International Pipeline Company Sarmatia. He is a member of the Association of International Petroleum Negotiators and has held executive positions in negotiating and managing several major oil and gas projects. The views expressed in this essay are his own.*

territory. When Heydar Aliyev assumed the leadership of Azerbaijan in June 1993, one in nine Azerbaijanis were either refugees or Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs): on the eve of the country's independence, Yerevan evicted over 300,000 ethnic-Azerbaijanis from its territory, who fled mostly to Azerbaijan. These refugees were joined by over 750,000 additional Azerbaijani IDPs that Armenia expelled as it conquered Azerbaijan's territories in the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast and seven surrounding regions. In 1993, Heydar Aliyev inherited a collapsed state characterized by the breakdown of most state institutions: economy, judiciary, education, and health systems.

Despite this dire situation in the early independence period, Heydar Aliyev identified a grand strategic path forward for Azerbaijan. This strategy included balanced relations with competing alliances and the adoption of an ambitious energy export and infrastructure policy, which

supported his multi-directional foreign policy.

## *Infrastructure Strategy*

Infrastructure played a large role in Heydar Aliyev's strategic thinking. He integrated infrastructure projects into Azerbaijan's foreign policy and national security policies. This contrasts with the approach of most leaders in the West, who by and large delegate infrastructure development to the private market and rarely form infrastructure strategies, let alone those that serve to reinforce foreign policy and

*Western leaders think of virtual mechanisms to facilitate trade and transportation like trade agreements, while Heydar Aliyev's strategic approach emphasized the importance of establishing concrete, physical infrastructure to enable new routes of cooperation.*

national security goals. Western leaders think of virtual mechanisms to facilitate trade and transportation like trade agreements, while Heydar Aliyev's strategic approach emphasized the importance of establishing concrete, physical infrastructure to enable new routes of cooperation.

Heydar Aliyev was a main architect of the East-West energy and transportation corridor that

enabled the states of the South Caucasus and Central Asia to cooperate with the West. His vision was clear: if the new states emerging from the collapse of the Soviet Union were to be dependent on any state for their transportation and trade, then they would not be able to conduct independent foreign policies. Thus, Azerbaijan needed to establish multiple, concrete trade routes to the West to complement its infrastructure connections with its immediate neighbors.

Heydar Aliyev's East-West corridor vision was not limited to the South Caucasus but extended to Central Asia. Accordingly, infrastructure projects, such as the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline (BTC), were built with extra capacity beyond Azerbaijan's needs, so that it could also accommodate Central Asian oil exports at a future point. When deliberating in the early 2000s on the proposed capacity of the BTC, Heydar Aliyev decided that the capacity should be larger than the needs for Azerbaijan's peak oil export, because, as he put it, "Central Asia's oil will come in the future."

Heydar Aliyev believed that the Central Asian producers would eventually decide to export significant oil volumes across the Caspian to the West and that Azerbaijan's

pipeline infrastructure should be built with this in mind. Heydar Aliyev invited Kazakhstan to sign the inter-state agreements that established the East-West corridor.

Heydar Aliyev's vision proved correct: in recent years, significant volumes of crude from Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have been exported via the Caspian Sea through the BTC pipeline to international markets.

### *Energy Export Strategy*

Azerbaijan—the birthplace of the modern oil industry—played a pivotal role in producing half the world's oil during the early twentieth century. Accordingly, it was natural that increasing Azerbaijan's oil and natural gas production would contribute greatly to jumpstarting the Azerbaijani economy in its post-independence period.

However, there were several impediments to the establishment of major oil and natural gas production in Azerbaijan following the collapse of the Soviet Union. First, Azerbaijan's landlocked status necessitated establishing a reliable export route, adding both risk and costs to exports. Second, when Azerbaijan sought foreign

investment in its oil sector, the global oil price averaged just \$12 a barrel, diminishing commercial interest in costly new production projects. Third, Azerbaijan's conflict with Armenia, as well as other conflicts taking place in Azerbaijan's neighborhood, introduced an additional layer of risk to investments in Azerbaijan.

Despite these challenges, Heydar Aliyev persevered and succeeded in attracting major international investments to Azerbaijan's oil and gas sector. In September 1994, Azerbaijan signed the Contract of the Century with 11 major oil companies from seven countries. Heydar Aliyev's keen geopolitical understanding produced exceptional policies that succeeded in attracting investment to Azerbaijan's energy sector whilst generating extensive international geopolitical support.

Collaborating with Georgia's President Edward Shevardnadze and Türkiye's President Süleyman Demirel, Heydar Aliyev effectively conveyed the geopolitical

significance of the East-West Corridor to the global community. Unlike many other foreign policy issues, bipartisan support from both the United States and Europe has sustained the promotion of the East-West energy and transport corridor for over three decades.

Heydar Aliyev formulated the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan route for its main oil export based on key principles. Being a landlocked state, Azerbaijan needed its main export route to transit through allied countries. In addition, he reasoned that the

---

*Unlike many other foreign policy issues, bipartisan support from both the United States and Europe has sustained the promotion of the East-West energy and transport corridor for over three decades.*

---

route should pass through states that are *not* major oil exporters, as these countries might prioritize their own oil shipments.

Thus, alongside existing routes through Russia and Georgia, a new major oil export route through Georgia and Türkiye emerged. Türkiye, a NATO member, brought to bear the weight of the Alliance's interest in establishing an energy export stream from the Caspian to the West. As Heydar Aliyev stated during the BTC pipeline laying ceremony in September 2002,



The number of pipelines increases. Of course, these are of a very large economic nature. But not only *economic*, we believe that what we do, Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan bears a *political* character. This project and its implementation can be a guarantor of peace, tranquility, and security in the Caucasus region. This pipeline, this steel pipe, will connect Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey more closely.

The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan route had the added advantage of bringing oil to the Mediterranean region, which has multiple consumers—thus producing an additional diversification of markets—and a robust price environment. In addition, as the BTC was being developed, Baku developed cooperation with Israel, which expressed interest in being supplied with regular oil imports from Azerbaijan. Cooperation between Azerbaijan and Israel grew significantly over the years, developing into a strategic alliance.

Heydar Aliyev identified a strategy that successfully attracted foreign investments to Azerbaijan's oil and natural gas sector, despite the handicaps. He assessed that although there is oil and gas everywhere on the globe, what receives investment in the end is not set just by “below the ground” factors (geology) but

also by “above the ground” factors like legal protection and regulatory stability. Energy-producing regions that are successful over long periods are those that possess a stable regulatory framework. Thus, from the early days of Heydar Aliyev's presidency, Azerbaijan demonstrated a strong commitment to the sanctity of contracts. Azerbaijan has never attempted to revise the conditions of any of the Production Sharing Agreements (PSAs) Baku signed with foreign investors. Azerbaijan's parliament has gone so far as to adopt these PSAs as part of national legislation.

In addition, Azerbaijan was attractive for investment since it offered foreign investors specially designed PSAs. PSAs enabled foreign companies to “book” the volumes produced there, which was important per their traditional business model. The significance of this is quite important to understand. Companies can count oil volumes produced within a PSA or concession license as part of their reserves, which affects their company value. In contrast, oil volumes produced as part of service contracts, which is generally what was offered at the time by national oil companies to international oil companies, cannot be “booked” as volumes. In the years before the collapse of the Soviet Union, international oil

majors faced increasingly narrow opportunities to take ownership stakes in projects. In this period, few oil exploration and production basins were offering commercial conditions to foreign companies that would allow the companies to “book the volumes,” and thus Azerbaijan was an exception in this period.

Azerbaijan's energy production strategy also helped attract geopolitical support for the young state's independence. In the 1990s and 2000s, the United States devoted high-level political efforts to promoting Caspian energy exports. U.S. President Bill Clinton referred to the agreement to establish the BTC as one of the most important foreign policy accomplishments of 1999. Following the inauguration of the Baku-Supsa pipeline on 15 April 1999, Clinton declared:

The opening of the Baku-Supsa line fulfills a long-sought goal—a network of multiple pipelines to bring the Caspian region's oil and gas to world markets. But the benefits of this pipeline go far beyond the energy sector. The line will serve as the cornerstone of an East-West corridor that can promote economic cooperation and growth among the countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia.

While Heydar Aliyev succeeded in convincing many countries of the strategic value of the East-West energy corridor, Baku still had to contend with the investing companies that supported the shortest and what was perceived as the cheapest routes—through Russia to the Black Sea or through Iran to the Gulf. As stated at the time of the debate by Chevron Overseas Petroleum president Richard Matzke, “the Baku-Ceyhan option probably isn't the most rational solution at the moment.” Most of the involved international oil companies believed that exporting oil through Russia or Iran would be stable if Russia and Iran benefitted from transit fees. However, Heydar Aliyev insisted on maintaining the operation of multiple oil export pipelines in addition to BTC, so that Baku would not be dependent on a single route.

As part of its multiple pipeline policy, Azerbaijan has maintained oil export infrastructure through Russia via a northern route (the Baku-Novorossiysk pipeline). In addition, Azerbaijan maintains a pipeline to the Georgian Black Sea port of Supsa (the Western Route Export Pipeline) and also exports small amounts of oil by rail through the Georgian ports of Batumi and Kulevi.

Diversification is a cornerstone of an energy security policy, for both producers and consumers. Heydar Aliyev applied this principle to all aspects of Azerbaijan's energy strategy and major infrastructure. Accordingly, he viewed that the oil export projects would be more stable if "multiple flags" were attached to pipeline projects. Thus, Aliyev invited companies from multiple geographic locations and opposing alliance systems to invest in Azerbaijan's energy production and export infrastructure.

Like Azerbaijan's multi-directional foreign policy, Heydar Aliyev believed that Azerbaijan should trade energy and conduct business with different partners, with no discrimination. Thus, American, European, Indian, Iranian, Japanese, Russian, and other companies participate in Azerbaijan's strategic energy projects. Moreover, according to Heydar Aliyev, energy trade should not be used as a weapon to further geopolitical goals, but rather that an advantage of trade with Azerbaijan was its stability.

At the same time, Heydar Aliyev was keenly aware that in the energy trade, geopolitics is a factor motivating many players and that the country must be adequately prepared to meet potential challenges. Many in the energy industry think that as long as profits are flowing, countries will act rationally and continue to trade energy, allow transit, and so on. Heydar Aliyev thought differently: he understood that geopolitics will always be a major factor in energy and thus cannot be ignored.

### Energy Legacy

Heydar Aliyev's legacy continues to shape Azerbaijan's foreign, infrastructure, and energy export policies. Azerbaijan engages in cooperation with states from different strategic groupings and refrains from joining a rigid alliance group. In parallel, Azerbaijan trades energy and works with investors in multiple countries, regardless of political orientation. Most important to Baku, Azerbaijan conducts an independent foreign

---

*Many in the energy industry think that as long as profits are flowing, countries will act rationally and continue to trade energy, allow transit, and so on. Heydar Aliyev thought differently: he understood that geopolitics will always be a major factor in energy and thus cannot be ignored.*

---

policy. Azerbaijan's Southern Gas Corridor project, which was led by Heydar Aliyev's great successor, Ilham Aliyev, reflects these strategic lessons.

As Azerbaijan and SOCAR keep developing new energy projects, the legacy of Heydar Aliyev continues to guide us. President Ilham Aliyev has continued to articulate the vision of Azerbaijan's independent policies, stating in October 2023 at the opening ceremony of the 74th International Astronautical Congress in Baku:

---

And now, when we are independent, our natural resources serve the benefit of our people. The rapid transformation during the years of independence is actually a demonstration of the proper use of our natural wealth. For some countries that are rich in oil resources, oil is a curse. For us, it was the way to develop, to strengthen our independence, to protect our identity, and to build a strong economy.

President Ilham Aliyev has also stressed that a major component of

---

*A new energy security model must be identified for increased use of renewables, without increasing the consumption of coal. Access to affordable and secure natural gas supplies will enable the increased consumption of renewables, without backup from coal.*

---

his strategy is that "the territory of Azerbaijan will not serve as the battleground" of conflicts between powers.

Like the BTC, the Southern Gas Corridor, which was developed under the guidance of President Ilham Aliyev, bears the imprint of mul-

multiple flags of investors and natural gas buyers. Also, like the BTC, the Southern Gas Corridor was built with extra capacity and is scalable since Baku foresaw a growth in demand for gas from Azerbaijan. In fact, by the time the project became fully operational in late December 2020, consumers were expressing interest in receiving additional volumes.

Unlike so many countries that try to ignore the relevance of energy for national security and the role of energy in national security, both Heydar Aliyev and Ilham Aliyev stressed the importance of energy security to national security. At the February 2015 meeting of the Southern Gas Corridor Advisory Council meeting, President Ilham Aliyev stated:



The Southern Gas Corridor is an energy security project. This is energy security for us. Because Azerbaijan will have the opportunity to export large volumes of natural gas to international markets. It is also energy security for consumer and transit countries. Because today, energy security cannot be considered separately from the national security of any country.

Another aspect of continuity between the energy strategy conceived and executed by Heydar Aliyev and Ilham Aliyev is the principle of diversification. As the latter has stated,

Energy resources [and] diversification are the main factors in the industrial and economic development of any country. Countries with abundant natural resources are certainly in a secure position because they are not dependent on external supplies.

### *From Oil and Natural Gas—to Energy*

Looking back at Azerbaijan's energy policies over the past three decades, it is clear that Azerbaijan has read the markets, technological trends, and energy security needs differently than most other players.

In the 1990s, the companies investing in the Azerbaijani energy sector wanted the shortest and cheapest main export pipeline possible. In contrast, Azerbaijan insisted on the diversification of its oil export routes and the establishment of the main ones through allied countries—Türkiye and Georgia. This has proven to be reliable.

In the 2010s, when EU companies and governments thought that there was no more need for new natural gas volumes, Azerbaijan correctly read the EU's market and energy security needs and built the Southern Gas Corridor. Today, a growing number of European countries seek additional gas volumes via the Southern Gas Corridor.

The next stage of Azerbaijan's unique policies is moving from oil and natural gas to energy. Azerbaijan seeks to promote policies that can utilize both fossil fuels and renewable sources of energy. Baku seeks to enable the lowering of carbon emissions and environmental impact while ensuring energy security.

So far, it seems to have gotten this balance right: many states that have increased the role of renewable energy in their fuel mix have also

increased their consumption of coal, in order to maintain the security of supply. Access to affordable and secure natural gas supplies will enable the increased consumption of renewables, without backup from coal. Switching from coal to natural gas remains the quickest and most affordable mechanism for lowering carbon emissions.

A new energy security model must be identified for the increased

---

*In 2024, Azerbaijan will host COP29 and will seek to identify new and best models of averting climate change and lowering pollution, while ensuring global energy security and advancing workable climate finance mechanisms.*

---

use of renewables, without increasing the consumption of coal. In addition, the energy industry needs to lower emissions generation and pollution from our energy production. In 2024, Azerbaijan will host COP29 and will seek to identify new and best models of averting climate change and lowering pollution, while ensuring global energy security and advancing workable climate finance mechanisms. **BD**

[bakudialogues.ada.edu.az](http://bakudialogues.ada.edu.az)



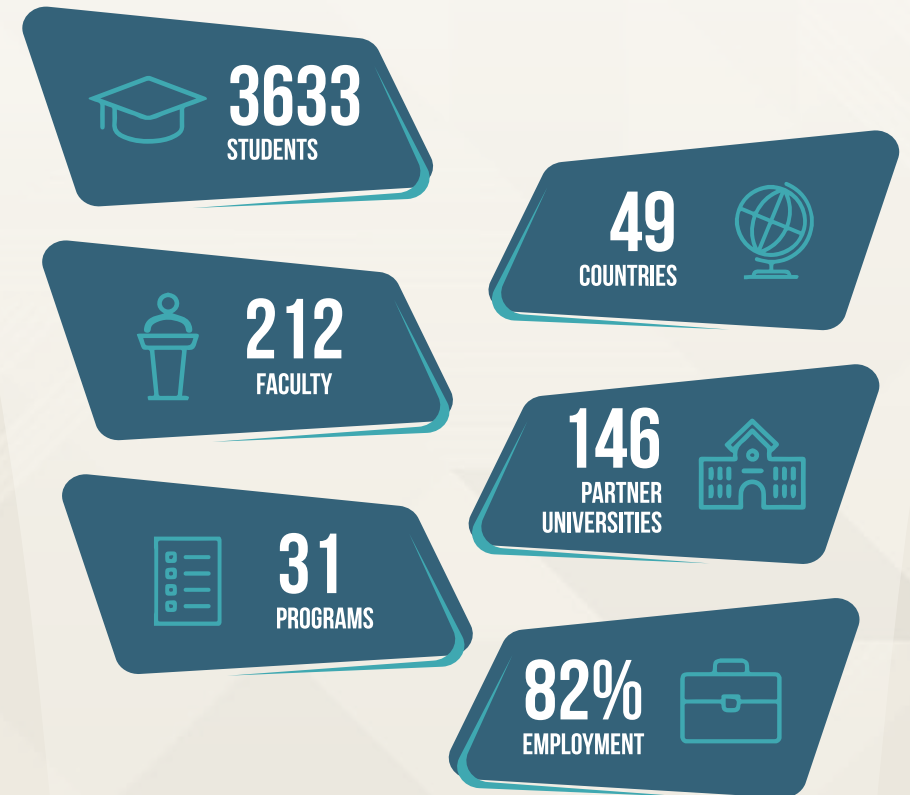
Innovative functionalities in the "**PASHA Insurance**" mobile application!



Download the next-generation insurance app now:



## ADA UNIVERSITY AT A GLANCE



Ahmadbey Aghaoghlu str. 61,  
Baku, Azerbaijan, AZ1008

+99450 256 99 06

admissions@ada.edu.az

www.ada.edu.az

# Statesmanship in the Silk Road Region

## Reflections on Heydar Aliyev's Achievement

*Rodrigo Labardini*

I began writing this essay near the end of a triple jubilee year for Heydar Aliyev: the centenary of his birth, the thirtieth anniversary of his return to Baku (celebrated as National Salvation Day), and the twentieth anniversary of his death. Heydar Aliyev was a significant leader who left a lasting impact in the Caucasus region—not just in Azerbaijan. Heydar Aliyev was indispensable in shaping Azerbaijan's vision for the future and establishing the country as a vital player in the Silk Road region. Several key traits (in the final part of this essay, I identify nine such traits) characterized his leadership style and

contributed to his success, particularly in navigating the complex dynamics of the region between East and West, oil and energy, and its future development.

Heydar Aliyev's presence in Azerbaijan's history represents a leader who was able to quell civil war and unrest and offer stability to the country, which became instrumental in launching the economic growth, and development of the country—and eventually of the region. These, in turn, enabled several things, including improved living standards, putting Azerbaijan on the global energy

*Rodrigo Labardini is Diplomat-in-Residence at the Institute for Development and Diplomacy and Professor of Practice at ADA University. He is a former Ambassador of Mexico to Nicaragua and later to Azerbaijan, Deputy Legal Adviser to Mexico's Secretariat of Foreign Affairs, Director General for Human Rights and Democracy in the same ministry, and Director General for International Labor Policy in the country's Labor Ministry. He may be contacted at rlabardini@ada.edu.az. ORCID: 0000-0002-2547-0549. The views expressed in this essay are his own.*

map, and significantly modernizing its military. Azerbaijan has demonstrated to the world that sustained economic efforts, accompanied by political patience and apt international analysis and evaluation of the world's political situation, made true—in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic—the “day for which all Azerbaijani people were waiting,” namely the return of Karabakh.

Like most foreigners, when I arrived in Baku several years ago, I would repeatedly see the figure of a single person, Heydar Aliyev, displayed at intersections, in parks, and on the walls of buildings—everywhere. His name also adorns multiple streets and state institutions. This got me thinking and remembering that in Mexico (my home country) there are eight municipalities and more than 60,000 streets that carry the name Benito Juarez (the president who established the basis of a secular state, and consolidated the country as a federal republic), more than 14,000 streets that honor Miguel Hidalgo (he initiated our War of Independence), and more than 12,000 streets commemorating Emiliano Zapata (he fought for peasants' right to their land).

In the United States, 12.2 percent of homes nationwide are located on a street named after George Washington, with streets named after Abraham Lincoln in second place. In France, Charles de Gaulle is equally memorialized alongside Victor Hugo and Louis Pasteur. Atatürk is the most common street in Türkiye. Winston Churchill is commemorated in Great Britain in two Royal Navy warships (one destroyer and one submarine), parks, gardens, schools, and buildings, and also in Belgium, Canada, France, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Brazil, Mexico, Israel, U.S.A., Australia, Czech Republic, Fiji and probably elsewhere, too. Every country has its way of commemorating its historical development. Founders, re-founders, liberators, generals, statesmen, renowned poets, writers, and artists; and naturally, philosophers—grateful nations give due public honor to the men and women who belong to their country's pantheon.

And so, for me, the question became, who was Heydar Aliyev, really? After recognizing this Azerbaijani statesman's imprint in comparative terms vis-à-vis Mexican history, I came to

*For me, the question became, who was Heydar Aliyev, really?*



analogously associate him with the historical hallmarks of six Mexican presidents.

*First*, Heydar Aliyev consolidated the Azerbaijani state into a self-sustaining independent country. *Second*, a fundamentally important fact for the state's future, he stabilized the country domestically by quelling impending civil war, thus allowing the economy and industry to develop. *Third*, as a continuation of his domestic policy, the stabilization of the country allowed Azerbaijan to assert its dependability internationally by defining its identity and, above all, its reliability as an independent partner—a subject of international order. *Fourth*, drawing from the country's history and his previous experience in statecraft, he mapped the route for the future based on a sophisticated geopolitical posture and economic foresight. *Fifth*, appreciating the country's geographical location, he oriented the nation's policies to strategically benefit from it without lamenting its tough neighborhood's unique and unfortunate complexities. *Sixth*, attesting to his dedication to institution-building, he set the foundation for an increasingly meritocratic system of government that

seeks to meet the needs of the many, harnessing the will of the people and its aspirations. All this took more than a century in Mexico. Heydar Aliyev achieved it all in ten years as President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

### *Understanding Statesmanship*

Leaders abound; statesmen are in need. We all recognize statesmen when we see them, partly because they are so rare. We also somehow grasp that, in our globalized world, it is the direction and guidance of certain countries that define all our futures. Nonetheless, although we inhabit the same planet, those who live in one hemisphere scarcely know those who live in the other.

Across the world, we find communities, nations, and regions that go through diverse and arduous circumstances set by their location. They play different roles on the

---

*Leaders abound; statesmen are in need. We all recognize statesmen when we see them, partly because they are so rare.*

---

world scene depending on their history, what they achieve, and how they see the world. While tradition meets modernization, countries

confront new challenges. In all cases, countries must persevere and endure daily toils to achieve long-term goals in an ever-increasingly complex new environment while remaining in the same geographical surroundings because, well, nations cannot change their location. And above all, countries must always seek to satisfy the needs of their population.

How do we accomplish this?

Historically, societies, nations, and empires have teemed with rulers, public servants, and politicians. Leaders—and occasionally nations—make an impact on history when they attain their political pinnacle. History shows us the rise and fall of empires, but also the enduring efforts made by nations to grow.

History is unrelenting and unforgiving. It truly only remembers individuals and nations that set a path for the future, people that find the road for their country's potential to arise and develop, personalities that uncover the ways and means to put forth their views in their region, and dignitaries that open the doors to the world. While politicians inhabit the annals of history, their presence fades away, ceding their seats to leaders, and still, these yield the way for statesmen. As some

countries subsist, others become complacent and tend to fade away, while others adapt, set new paths, and grow. History and international relations flock and evoke the latter.

A nation's life is a multifarious phenomenon wherein we can distinguish numerous facets, yet we cannot entirely separate them. The intricacies of social and international interaction are fully interwoven and cannot be disassembled—just like a hand, where we can clearly identify the palm, the fingers, and the wrist. When one moves one's hand, everything is affected; so it is in the life of a nation.

One often hears assertions that leadership emanates from political leaders. The same concept—leadership—also applies to countries. A statesman can make breakthroughs and change the life and destiny of a nation. But it is the continued and sustained effort from successive leaders that will make that country shine and steer its route—and of its surrounding region—because the center pulls. A country may grow and develop after difficult times or during buoyant moments. However, if its policies, plans, and projects do not align with the goal or diverge from the same sustained aim, the country will lose momentum and derail from its set target. In other words, for a country

to grow and develop, it is not just one leader at the rudder that makes things happen—persistence and staying the course throughout time will achieve the result. Historically, while one person can change avenues and the country may grow (Alexander the Great's empire springs to mind), in general, one person by himself has rarely (if ever) managed to make a country a regional leader or even ensure a country's survival: Alexander's empire faded away rapidly after his death.

This demonstrates that when statesmen (plural) guide and focus a country throughout its life and history, the result will be attained in due time. A successful statesman and his country need worthy successors—new statesmen—to artfully manage the new surroundings and stay the course.

In a country, both the people and their national leaders play vital yet distinct roles in shaping its future. Leaders allocate resources, plan programs, develop policies, and forge partnerships to promote

the long-term improvement and progress of citizens and nations. However, it is the resolute commitment of the people that will make statesmen's vision a reality—once it has been embraced and adopted by the people.

The effective leadership of a nation requires the foresight to fathom alternatives and possible futures, as well as pragmatism

that does not hinder prospects and opportunities as well as maintains hope while maintaining a firm hold on reality. Effective leadership in an individual leader requires a vision for the future, an understanding of the country's strengths and weaknesses, and the ability to prioritize and maximize available assets to achieve strategic goals. This involves making tough decisions about where to invest funds and resources, how to structure governmental policies, and how to engage stakeholders to attain shared objectives.

Above all, for a country to become a leader in its region and the world, it necessitates not only sound leadership from politicians. Continued

---

*The effective leadership of a nation requires the foresight to fathom alternatives and possible futures, as well as pragmatism that does not hinder prospects and opportunities as well as maintains hope while maintaining a firm hold on reality.*

---

and sustained *statesmanship* becomes essential. This implies the ability to create a stable and prosperous future for the country and its citizens, including long-term perspectives, and the willingness to invest soundly in infrastructure, education, and other key areas. However, of particular interest is the aptitude and talent to adapt to changing circumstances and challenges. The statesman passes on the baton to his successors, who follow the path set for the country and develop it even further. And yet, it does not define an exclusive path. The baton lights the way to change when it is warranted.

My colleague Damjan Krnjević Mišković recently shared an essay written by a now largely forgotten figure from Weimar-era Germany by the name of Kurt Riezler. Writing in exile in the United States right after World War II, Riezler wrote a passage contrasting the statesman and the politician that, to my knowledge, encapsulates like no other one thread of the distinction that the preceding paragraphs have tried to convey. It reads thusly:

While the politician merrily plays his game from one short-lived smartness to another, trusting that he will find a way out of every mess in which he gets entangled, *the real statesman is not allowed to be, like ordinary man, a*

*short-range planner and a long-range dreamer.* He is bent on shaping the future. He does not take it for granted. If he fails—there may be no future for his nation [...]. He knows his ends, he has a goal, a hierarchy of purposes, long-term and short-term; he subordinates one to the other; he has a vision of both the possible and the desirable and looks at the one under the aspect of the other; he thinks the possibilities through to their end; he follows up his actions, keeping ready a possible answer for whatever their foreseeable consequence—trying to keep his hand on the events and their interaction, flexible at short range, rigid at long range, passionately reasonable, a knower of human nature, suspicious even of his own love and hate and of the many passions that blind the children of man. His eyes are cold and hard yet the flame burns in his heart as he opposes his specific virtue to the play that necessity and chance play with each other. (emphasis added).

Good political leadership—a “real statesman,” as Riezler put it—requires a person who can effectively steer a country through the complexities of an ever more convoluted modern world—with good skills to draw lessons from the past. Regional leadership requires a country to set the trail for others to join, not by imposition

but by conviction. This involves a deep understanding of the historical context that led to the current state of affairs and the capability to use such knowledge to make informed decisions about the future. It demands distinguishing between success and failure to adequately grasp one's own performance and that of the nation. A competent and experienced leader learns from past failures to make better decisions in the future. A nation—whose agency is embodied in its leaders—learns from past errors and mistakes to prevent history from repeating itself to its detriment.

Nations and political leaders succeed by embodying visionary thinking—a crucial trait that manifests in daring to conceive bold new ideas and turn them into reality. Such notions require an understanding of the current and future needs and aspirations of the people and country and the ability to communicate their vision compellingly. Having a vision does not suffice. The people must embrace it. Ideas must be transformed into practical action.

Countries and good political leaders must operate effectively in the modern world. This means being comfortable with new technologies and modes of communication and capable of piloting

through the complex web of international relationships that define our global society. To attain a goal, you achieve it by yourself. To reach significance in the world, you do so with friends and allies. Social life, diplomacy, and international engagement become essential.

National leadership is not a one-person issue. The life of a nation necessitates the continuation of plans, vision, projects, and above all, an unwavering commitment to attain the goal. There may be some detours, but political leaders, when they are “real statesmen” and comprehend their country's needs and goals—and countries when they grasp the needs of the forthcoming and impending circumstances—will pursue the same aim, sharing similar aspirations.

### *The Hydrocarbon Effect*

In the Silk Road region, as in other parts of the world, geographical constants and the perspectives derived therein are clearly and naturally interwoven with domestic and international political processes. While physically at the intersection of Asia and Europe, the Silk Road region is better conceptualized as a link between East and West. This variance of views builds bridges, opens the door for

cooperation (amidst competition), and assembles new partners. This allows the Silk Road region's abundant resources to meet strategic geopolitical interests and serve not as a divider but as the conduit for the passage of energy, trade, culture, and connection. This is particularly in evidence in the South Caucasus part of the Silk Road region, where Azerbaijan is increasingly coming to be seen as a “key-stone state,” a case for which Nikolas Gvosdev and other scholars have made in previous editions of *Baku Dialogues* and will not be repeated here.

Building on the legacy of Heydar Aliyev, Azerbaijan has shown the world what a reliable partner can achieve and what it offers to the advancement of global stability. It has come as a consequence of its leaders putting forward this posture, and the people—of the country and the region—absorbing and owning the thought and the scheme. The upshot of grasping the strategic importance of Azerbaijan's location is that instead of dividing the South Caucasus, the Caspian Sea builds bridges between East and West and opens the gates to Central Asia.

---

*Building on the legacy of Heydar Aliyev, Azerbaijan has shown the world what a reliable partner can achieve and what it offers to the advancement of global stability.*

---

More importantly, Azerbaijan is the only country on the western shore of the Caspian Sea, with Russia to the North and Iran to the South.

Hence, in a world of Western-led sanctions imposed on Russia, if the Caspian Sea is the door between East and West, then Azerbaijan—by geographical necessity—becomes the hinge that al-

lows the door to open between the two regions. Further, Azerbaijan pursued partnerships with countries such as Türkiye and Georgia to strengthen ties with the West while cultivating relationships with Russia and Iran to promote regional stability. Azerbaijan's nature as a landlocked country drives the development of trilateral formats and the like, but the world increasingly feels its growing impression. The successful conclusion of its chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement and the assumption of the presidency of COP29 speaks further to this overall point.

The Caspian Sea is one of the world's largest oil- and gas-producing regions, such that in 1999, it was dubbed the “new Persian Gulf.” The region has been the focal point of global energy



geopolitics for decades. The Caspian Sea's five littoral states (Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Turkmenistan) have adapted. The discovery and development of resources attracted the attention of regional powers (Russia, Türkiye, Iran), major international actors (U.S., China, the European Union), and transnational energy companies. The geopolitical landscape, as countries compete for access to and control over these resources, has led to political tensions, conflicts, and alliances among the countries in the region and beyond, but astute maneuvering brings about fruitful political and regional associations.

Construction of oil and gas pipelines from the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean Sea and the European continent has been a major regional geopolitical issue, with countries and companies competing to control pipelines and transit routes, utilizing projects such as Baku-Novorossiysk, Baku-Supsa, and the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipelines. Examples of the genuine geopolitics involved are that discussions about the Southern Gas Corridor (SGC) took place while agreements and possibilities

continued about the Nabucco pipeline and its alterations, such as Nabucco West. A pragmatic and reality-oriented vision was put into play. Whereas Nabucco was simply too large by design (considering oil sources in Iraq, Iran, the Caspian Sea, and Turkmenistan) to deliver to markets in Austria and Eastern Europe, the SGC “only” planned to deliver

Caspian Sea gas via a 3,500-kilometer pipeline to Italy. The latter has been proven to be a reliable alternative to alleviate the EU's dependence on Russian gas. What is even more impressive is that once the SGC became operational, several “add-on” pipelines and countries in Southeast Europe came into play. The end result is coming to resemble a modified *but implemented* Nabucco.

### *Nine Traits*

The remainder of this essay consists of nine of the traits of statesmanship that, in my view, Heydar Aliyev demonstrated during the times in which he served Azerbaijan, culminating in his decade of service as its head of state (1993-2003). Heydar Aliyev

---

*Heydar Aliyev possessed nine traits of statesmanship that he demonstrated during the times in which he served Azerbaijan.*

---

possessed nine traits of statesmanship that he demonstrated during the times in which he served Azerbaijan. The first of these traits is *pragmatism*. A country sets its goals and puts into play the resources it has. Success necessitates realistically assessing all situations and maintaining pragmatism, as sometimes certain conditions may not be easily overcome. To paraphrase Churchill, we know that neither success nor failure is final nor fatal, and the country shows the courage to continue. Azerbaijan comprehends the importance of balancing the needs of various stakeholders, including international partners, domestic interest groups, and its society.

Steering through a complex maze of political and economic challenges requires making testing decisions in the national interest. After independence, resorting to history and the oil riches it had, Azerbaijan pursued the international markets. However, with the available infrastructure at the time, it needed to go through Russia first to reach the oceans. Thus, on 18 February 1996, an agreement was reached to transport Azerbaijani oil via Russia to the Black Sea port by reverting the flow in the Novorossiysk-Baku pipeline (BNP). This in and of itself was a very pragmatic act. It was a politically sound decision

yet revenue-affecting. To export through BNP, Azerbaijan agreed to blend its higher quality crude with Russia's oil and market it as Urals blend, sold at 10 percent less. It shows that having 90 percent of something is better than 100 percent of nothing. The result was increased hard currency income and sound footing for the country's further development.

We must keep in mind other pragmatic ways of doing things. For years, Azerbaijan has been following what I refer to as a policy of self-financing and constructing large regional infrastructure projects—and/or finding the appropriate financing capabilities by joining with interested parties (countries, international financial institutions, and energy companies). Projects include the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline (BTE), the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline (BTC), the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars (BTK) railway, and the Southern Gas Corridor (SGC). This policy would result in a higher degree of certainty—for all parties involved, especially partners-to-be—of concluding the project, promoting national economic development, and increasingly focusing the world's attention on Azerbaijan for inter-regional infrastructure projects. And when infrastructure becomes operational, it utterly increases the

entry cost for any similar project—particularly one championed by a competitor or a foe.

The second trait of Heydar Aliyev's statesmanship is *vision*. In Heydar Aliyev's view, Azerbaijan had a clear vision for its future, which over time came to encompass the entire Silk Road region. This was even more patent in terms of the key role that the South Caucasus, and particularly Azerbaijan, could play—and is now playing—between East and West. Clarity of ideas is of the essence. Zbigniew Brzezinski, a former National Security Advisor of the United States, said that Heydar Aliyev was straightforward during his conversations. This allows a good flow of ideas and arguments, as Brzezinski was known to affirm. It may also have helped the former senior U.S. official think through the strategic implications of his famous 1997 characterization of Azerbaijan as being the “cork in the bottle containing the riches of the Caspian Sea basin and Central Asia.”

Assembling from the past, Azerbaijan recognized the importance of developing its oil and gas resources. Building on projects undertaken since the nineteenth century and continued during Soviet rule, Azerbaijan has worked

to erect the infrastructure necessary to support and develop this industry. A long-term vision for the country's economic development was in place. It demanded the establishment of a stable and secure environment for foreign investment because, grand as dreams may be, they require financing. Azerbaijan worked to establish itself as a bridge between East and West while promoting cooperation and stability—both its own and, as a result, that of the Silk Road region. And through such actions, it achieved national and regional effects. As President George W. Bush stated, “The attitude and actions had played a primary role in attracting foreign investments that had strengthened the economic position of Azerbaijan [...], had improved the lives of millions of Azerbaijanis, and had helped Azerbaijan enter the twenty-first century as an independent state.”

The third trait is *collaboration*. An important part of leadership involves dealing with partners, colleagues, and confreres who put their part into action. An idea must flow and become a reality. In the face of increasing demand for fresh perspectives, those peoples and countries capable of adopting decisive and resolute deeds and achievements attain a high level of responsibility, making peers

and staff essential. In early 1971, Heydar Aliyev publicly named officials at fault and the reasons for their removal. Stories abound on how recruitment needed to be done with professionalism, including in everyday life.

The views of neighboring partners also come into play—if performance and projects come alive, expectations run higher, and doubts become a will. Gas and oil were important for Georgia. Regarding Heydar Aliyev, Georgia's former president, Eduard Shevardnadze, said, “in the near future, Azerbaijan will become the most prosperous country in the Near East and the West.”

The fourth trait of Heydar Aliyev's statesmanship is *achieving results*. A vision with no results amounts to nothing—actions must take place. Products and outcomes must be evident, with deliverables becoming the order of the day. Accountability is essential for a country.

At the national and policy level, there is further evidence that sustained efforts oriented to benefit the people achieve results. The world easily recalls that Azerbaijan started to receive international revenue when it exported its oil to the world, albeit with somewhat limited

volumes through the Baku-Supsa pipeline and with discounted prices via the Baku-Novorossiysk pipeline. And it remembers that when Azerbaijan started directly selling its oil to the world markets through the BTC, it received substantial amounts of international revenue. But few evoke that in the first years of independence, according to the World Bank, Azerbaijan's GDP went through negative growth: -0.7 percent (1991), -22.6 percent (1992), -23.1 percent (1993), -19.7 percent (1994), -11.8 percent (1995), and finally 1.3 percent (1996). However, with its oil strategy in place, again, as per World Bank data, Azerbaijan recorded exceptional annual GDP increases: 27.9 percent (2005), 34.5 percent (2006), and 25.5 percent (2007). This was the result of concerted planning and continued implementation of infrastructure projects being designed and becoming operational—namely the BTC.

While the BTC was envisioned in the Contract of the Century, it had generally been seen as a myth or a “pipeline on paper.” However, thanks to the continuous efforts of Azerbaijan and its leadership, BTC was brought into being. Its impact at the regional—and global—level is evident. The BTC has achieved special global importance in the modern period, not only because it became an essential factor in

actualizing Azerbaijan's policy of providing an alternative energy export route to world markets but also because it, together with the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC), began to transport Kazakh oil from the Caspian Sea region, and shattered Russia's until then monopoly on the export of Caspian Sea oil.

The fifth trait of Heydar Aliyev's statesmanship is *strategic thinking*. Influential leaders and countries have intent and vision. They must anticipate and respond to changes in the political, economic, energy, and any other landscape that may directly or indirectly affect their possibilities. This requires skillfully balancing the interests of different stakeholders, including foreign governments, investors, and domestic political factors. While resolving today's problems, the focus must be on long-term goals and objectives. Azerbaijan prioritized the development of the country's oil and gas sector, recognizing its potential to bring economic growth and stability to the country. Then, once stability was assured, Azerbaijan moved to develop other economic sectors. A leader and a country must diagnose and appreciate benefits and risks, differentiate advantages and disadvantages deriving from daily—national and global—commotion and

events, and clearly identify the economic, political, energy, and cultural trends.

The sixth trait of Heydar Aliyev's statesmanship is *decisiveness*. With the vision in place, a country and its leaders must act unfalteringly and with a willingness to make difficult decisions when necessary. Courageous action to protect the country's interests, even in the face of opposition from powerful external actors. A leader must be capable of making "the right decision at the right time." Because actions greatly affect people, leaders must duly ponder and meditate on assessment and decision. Even more importantly, leaders must stand by their choices and follow them through yet be willing to review their progress and adapt.

The seventh trait of Heydar Aliyev's statesmanship is *diplomacy*. Countries and statesmen imagine potentiality and opportunities. They express these images with neighbors and prospective stakeholders. When other countries and leaders understand where the proposals are heading, they jump on board. Leaders have a duty to their population, and statesmen have a duty to the region and the world. This is the art of balancing what is right for the country, the region, and the world. Countries

will offer opportunities in a shared manner, recognizing unique sectors and a global perspective. This is even more evident for land-locked countries, which—by necessity—require heightened collaboration with neighboring countries. Thus, statesmen must travel widely and make their countries known. World gatherings give way to sharing expertise and differing visions with other countries. They are the means to forge a valuable and advantageous network with internationally prominent leaders. To better the place of a country in the world, a global perspective is a must.

Azerbaijan is a landlocked country *in natura*. Thus, to reach the world market, dealing with other countries is an intrinsic necessity, as noted above. As a leader in a region that is often marked by conflict and tension, Azerbaijan required a skilled diplomat capable of building strong and lasting relationships with leaders of the regional neighborhood and from areas far away, from both the East and the West—and not only from the diplomatic arena but from other international actors as well, such as transnational corporations prone to its available resources. Understanding the importance of maintaining good relations with neighboring countries and international partners, Azerbaijan worked to establish

itself as a reliable partner capable of effectively negotiating with international partners and regional leaders and maintaining and keeping its commitments in place.

The international sphere becomes evident when we see that in the first decade after independence, between 1993 and 2003, when international state visits were not often, thirty official and state visits to other countries took place—in addition to visits to Azerbaijan. Efforts were made to build strong relationships with neighboring countries to promote regional security and stability in an internationally balanced approach, bringing major powers and companies both near and afar into play. The countries visited included neighbors such as Russia and Iran, regional actors like Türkiye, and major powers like the U.S. and China.

Recognizing the globalization of international relations and the need to be a part of the world, Azerbaijan further sought to enhance its visibility by promoting and strengthening links with countries near and far. From 2003 to 2023, there have been 319 official and state visits (99 between 2003 and 2008, 72 between 2008 and 2013, 73 between 2013 and 2018, and 75 between 2018 to 2023), encompassing the above-mentioned countries,

numerous European countries, all Central Asian countries, and Asian and North African states, such as Japan, Egypt, and Morocco. Again, it must be stressed that this is in addition to the official and state visits that have taken place in Baku. Still to pursue is the geographical periphery, as seen from Azerbaijan's perspective: Latin America, Africa, and Oceania. *Verbi gratia*, in 2022 and 2023, there have been vice-ministerial visits to Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and Uruguay.

The eighth trait of Heydar Aliyev's statesmanship is *empathy*. A country's vision is not just about conceiving and actualizing an effort to lead its surrounding region. Such images and concepts must vie for the benefit of the population—the only goal there is for serving in office. Society's interests were evident when you see that shortly after becoming party leader of Azerbaijan in mid-1969, Heydar Aliyev took to incognito visits, taking advantage of the fact that, at that time, few people could recognize him. He would dress in plain clothes, leave his house, and take the first available taxi, taking a long route to better talk to the driver and ask him what life was like for the people and what they didn't like. Or he would go into shops and ask for the cost of food, meat, and other staples. Upon finding amassing

of food or any legal deviation or wrongdoing, he would take action. His picture soon found its way to all establishments as they became afraid—not necessarily of wrongdoing, but of being caught. Baku taxi drivers called him “Mikhailo,” from the 1958 Azerbaijani movie *On Distant Shores*, where legendary Soviet partisan Mehdi Huseynzade, a.k.a. Mikhailo, was fighting behind enemy lines. This also evidences another important part of Heydar Aliyev's persona. A statesman is able to inspire and motivate his people, and he had the ability to connect with the people of Azerbaijan. His popularity and leadership style played a key role in stabilizing the country after years of political turmoil and economic hardship. A statesman understands the challenges ordinary citizens face and works to improve their lives through social and economic policies.

The ninth trait of Heydar Aliyev's statesmanship is *leadership by example*. An essential part of leadership is the ability to inspire others. The most difficult aspect for a leader, whether an individual or a country, is to convince other peoples and countries to assist in achieving a goal. This can only be realized by providing a clear example and encouragement. When one's peers see how one

reacts when the going gets tough, the country leads by example. A country facing and overcoming difficulties will lead others, and other countries will feel inclined to at least pursue parallel goals—if not precisely the same one. This becomes evident from analyzing situations and maintaining confidence in one's just and legal position while encouraging neighbors. Remember that in 2017 Azerbaijan refused to provide an *agrément* to proposed Russian ambassadors. Deeds like this do not go unnoticed.

Overall, Azerbaijan's leadership—and that of its leaders between East and West, oil and energy, and future development was marked by a combination of strategic thinking, diplomatic skills, and a clear vision for the future,

one accepted by international partners and major powers and proven right by regional conflicts, such as the Russia invasion of Ukraine. The legacy of Azerbaijan's statesmen continues to shape the region today.

Leadership in the region serves as an example of what can be achieved through effective statesmanship in a complex and dynamic environment facing political and economic challenges. One result is unblemished: Azerbaijan is now a key player in the Silk Road region—a keystone state in a part of the world that is critical to the advancement of the connectivity ambitions of most if not all of the world's major powers. This is the result of a pragmatic approach to geopolitical and geoeconomic realities—a result attained by countries, statesmen, and people. **BD**

[bakudialogues.ada.edu.az](http://bakudialogues.ada.edu.az)



The Institute for Development and Diplomacy was established by ADA University in March 2022. ADA University Vice-Rector for External, Government, and Student Affairs Dr. Fariz Ismailzade serves concurrently as IDD's Director.

Modeled on the best practices of leading world-class research universities abroad, IDD serves as the University's hub of policy-oriented, interdisciplinary research and analysis outputs. It also serves as the focal point of high-level, policy-oriented conferences, briefings, and workshops.

IDD has also incorporated existing ADA University programs, projects, and initiatives, including Executive Education, the Global Perspectives Lecture Series (GPLS), the Center of Excellence in EU Studies, the publication of our quarterly flagship policy journal *Baku Dialogues*, and the ADA University Press imprint, amongst others.



[idd.az](http://idd.az)



[@IDD\\_ADA](https://twitter.com/IDD_ADA)



[IDDADAU](https://www.facebook.com/IDDADAU)



[@idd.ada2022](https://www.instagram.com/idd.ada2022)



[idd@ada.edu.az](mailto:idd@ada.edu.az)

Email us to subscribe  
to the IDD mailing list

## ADA UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION



ADA University Foundation in Azerbaijan is a non-profit organization that supports the university's educational activities. We established a permanent endowment fund, an innovative concept in the country's education sector that ADA University has pioneered. ADA University Foundation also operates in Washington, DC, known as ADA International, which has become in short order a significant extension of ADA University and its educational activities in the United States.

Giving to ADA University impacts positively not only on the quality of education we can offer but also provides support that can tangibly impact the lives of ADA students, faculty, and staff by developing their education and research activities whilst enhancing academic excellence.

ADA University Foundation has partnered with more than one hundred local and foreign companies in Azerbaijan and abroad.

[www.adafund.az](http://www.adafund.az)

# Karabakh and Azerbaijani Statecraft

*Michael M. Gunter*

This brief article seeks to make two important and related points. The first is that the international law principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity hold that Karabakh belongs to Azerbaijan, despite misleading arguments to the contrary about supposed Armenian rights of self-determination. The second provides a partial assessment of Heydar Aliyev's legacy and how it relates to some of the policies pursued by his successor, Ilham Aliyev. Each will be examined in turn.

## *Karabakh and International Law*

There exists a voluminous literature on the Karabakh issue, much of which argues diametrically opposed positions. For example, among many others, a volume edited by M. Hakan Yavuz

and Michael M. Gunter titled *The Karabakh Conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan: Causes & Consequences* (2023) recently detailed the Azerbaijani position, while a much earlier collection, edited by Gerard J. Libaridian and titled *The Karabakh File: Documents and Facts on the Question of Mountainous Karabakh, 1918-1988* (1988), among many others, presented the Armenian stance.

Because of the historical Western sympathy for the Armenians—fueled by the influential Armenian diaspora in the U.S. and France—it is particularly important to present the counterargument to the prevailing Western academic literature. However, this often proves problematic, given Western biases and sheer ignorance of the facts. Thus, the aforementioned book edited by Yavuz and Gunter is of particular significance.

*Michael M. Gunter is Professor of Political Science at Tennessee Technological University and Secretary-General of the EU-Türkiye Civic Commission (EUTCC). The views expressed in this essay are his own.*

Presented succinctly, this counterargument holds that the Armenian occupation of 20 percent of Azerbaijan following the First Karabakh War when the Soviet Union collapsed was illegal because it violated Article 2(4) of the UN Charter, which clearly and unambiguously states: “All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.”

After Armenia attacked Azerbaijan and conquered 20 percent of its territory, including what was then known as the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO), the UN Security Council passed several unanimous resolutions condemning the Armenian action and demanded “the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of all Armenian forces from all the occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan.” For example, UN Security Council Resolutions 822 (30 April 1993), 853 (29 July 1993), 874 (14 October 1993), and 884 (12 November 1993) each condemned the Armenian aggression and called for “the withdrawal of all occupying forces from [...] occupied areas of the Republic of Azerbaijan” (to quote from Resolution 822).

The OSCE's Minsk Group/Process, which was established to solve the problem, along the lines adumbrated by the UN Security Council, miserably failed to implement its mandate. Therefore, Azerbaijan had the inherent right of self-defense to resort to war in 2020 to regain its occupied territories, and finally impose its sovereign jurisdiction over the rest of Karabakh in September 2023 when it became clear that neither Armenia nor the indigenous Armenians in Karabakh were willing to accept Azerbaijani authority.

The resulting mass exodus of indigenous Armenians from the enclave of what was in the Soviet period called the NKAO is regrettable, but certainly understandable given all the bad blood between the two sides. Precedents regarding the exchange of populations exist for this situation (the population exchanges between Greece and Türkiye after their war for mastery in Anatolia following World War I being one). In the case of Karabakh, large Azerbaijani populations already had fled from Armenia after Armenia initiated war against Azerbaijan in a misguided attempt to conquer the NKAO when the Soviet Union began to disintegrate in 1988.



Evidence has been presented that the Armenian presence in the South Caucasus dates back to before the common era—that is more than 2,500 years; the Turkic peoples only began to arrive about 1,000 years ago. Nevertheless, scholars have also found that today’s Azerbaijani people—although speaking a Turkic language—are likely an amalgamated nation that includes ancient peoples such as the Caucasian Albanians. Ironically, therefore, both Armenians and Azerbaijanis are probably correct when they claim Caucasian Albanian origins. Possibly, realizing these partial common origins might help ameliorate their current deep differences.

In the early nineteenth century, the Russians began their conquest of the South Caucasus, largely replacing the Iranians and to a lesser extent the Ottomans. Despite these much more recent times, however, the Armenians and Azerbaijanis (called ‘Tatars’ by foreigners into the twentieth century) debate about which nation was the majority in Karabakh and when. In addition, as recently as 1905-1906, and again in the early 1920s, they fought deadly wars against each other in which the ownership of Karabakh was part of the dispute. Only the final Bolshevik (Communist) victory ended this overt violence.

Most important for this article is that the eventual Bolshevik triumph in the 1920s decided that NKAO’s large ethnic-Armenian majority would possess formal governmental autonomy within the overall territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, which was in turn granted the status of one of ultimately 15 Soviet Socialist Republics (SSRs) within the framework of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). This was probably an impossible and fatal attempt to square the circle temporarily made possible only as long as the USSR imposed ultimate authority over the two nations. Once the Soviet Union began to collapse, the imposed co-existence collapsed.

Although there had been an even larger ethnic-Azerbaijani minority living in Armenia (which had not been granted any sort of autonomy), the Armenian minority, living as the majority in what was then known as the NKAO, constituted the only minority in the Soviet Union that had its own separate governmental institutions within another (SSR), even though it also had its own SSR elsewhere. Still, this uniquely privileged position was not satisfactory for the Armenians because as the Soviet Union began to disintegrate in the late 1980s, the Karabakh Committee in Yerevan began

increasingly to agitate for Moscow to hand over the NKAO to Armenia even though it was formally part of Azerbaijan.

Under the Soviet legal regime of that day, this was illegal unless Azerbaijan agreed—and, of course, Baku did not. Instead, the two sides began their deadly struggle, which finally resulted in the Armenians seizing approximately 20 percent of Azerbaijan by the time Russia was able to broker a ceasefire in May 1994. Thus began a frozen, post-Soviet, ethnic conflict that the OSCE’s Minsk Group/Process co-chaired by Russia, the United States, and France miserably failed to solve even though, as noted above, the UN Security Council on four separate occasions had passed resolutions that called for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian troops and the recognition of Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity over Armenia’s claim to some type of self-determination.

International law clearly held that the former NKAO belonged to Azerbaijan, despite misleading arguments to the contrary about supposed Armenian rights of self-determination often parsed into claims of some type of internal self-determination and/or remedial secession. Internal self-determination referred to some sort of

reputed right to implement real democracy or autonomy for a group contained within an existing state where democracy for it was denied. Remedial secession was a proposed principle that if a specific people living in the territory of a larger state is egregiously misrepresented within that larger state and there is no remedy for the situation, then, as a last resort, this supposedly oppressed people have a right to remedial secession.

Although both of these novel concepts are discussed in the scholarly literature, the consensus of most is that neither exists as a legal right. Clearly, neither of these two recent theories took precedence over the hard, legal fact of Azerbaijan’s sovereignty and territorial integrity—as such arguments would threaten the sovereignty and territorial integrity of every single member state of the United Nations. This *existential* fact is arguably the most important point that this article makes. Despite the Armenian narrative that the Azerbaijanis were simply continuing a century-old genocide against them, international law and international organization speaking through the United Nations *unambiguously* sided with the Azerbaijani position. If this article does nothing else, it will make an important point by explicating this existential point. Yet the

Armenians were partially successful at “orientalizing” and “otherizing” the Azerbaijanis as the instigators of war and injustice. (The first pejorative concept regarding “orientalizing” was coined by Columbia University literature professor Edward W. Said to describe the West’s contemptuous depiction of the Orient, while “otherizing” is a term used to describe a situation in which one negatively characterizes the treatment of people from a different group as essentially inferior to one’s own group.)

For more than 25 years, the Azerbaijanis attempted to regain their honor and territory by legal, diplomatic means, but the Armenians refused to respond to the dictates of international law and international organization. Instead, they engendered ceaseless arguments on behalf of their supposed rights to the former NKAO through some type of self-determination and historical right. When international law and its determinative principle of territorial integrity refuted the Armenian position, they fell back on their military victory in the First Karabakh War (1988-1994) and refused to return the occupied Azerbaijani territories (not just the former NKAO but also surrounding Azerbaijani territories they had conquered during that war).

In 2019, the new Armenian prime minister Nikol Pashinyan progressively began to magnify his state’s position by calling for the unification of Azerbaijan’s occupied territories and Armenia. Disdaining sincere negotiations, Pashinyan now declared, “Artsakh [Karabakh] is Armenia, and that’s it.” A few months earlier, while dressed in a military uniform, David Tonoyan, the Armenian defense minister, had already told a gathering of influential Armenian diaspora notables in the United States that if Azerbaijan dared attempt to regain its lost territories by force, then his state’s policy would no longer be “land for peace,” but “new wars for new territories.” Other Armenians even began to speak about Armenian soldiers “drinking tea in Baku.” Adding further fuel to these incendiary boasts, the Armenian prime minister also rehashed the long-dead Treaty of Sèvres, by declaring that defunct treaty as still being a “historical fact.”

These were, one could say, the functional equivalent of what the U.S. Supreme Court held in 1942 to be “insulting or ‘fighting words, those that by their very utterance inflict injury or tend to incite an immediate breach of the peace.” To make this point better understood, a few sentences of explanation are

in order. The defeated Ottoman Empire had been forced to sign the Treaty of Sèvres on 10 August 1920. It would have reduced what became The Republic of Türkiye to only a rump section of Anatolia. However, the Turkish War of Independence overturned this stillborn treaty and in 1923 a new Treaty of Lausanne recognized the modern Republic of Türkiye. Thus today, the very term “Treaty of Sèvres” remains a notorious byword in Türkiye, symbolizing the West’s supposed desire to partition and destroy that country. Armenian prime minister Nikol Pashinyan’s gratuitous remark about the Treaty of Sèvres remaining a “historical fact” was a not-so-subtle threat against the territorial integrity of today’s Türkiye. It amounted to a declaration of diplomatic war against Ankara as well as Baku, bringing into question the most rudimentary judgment of the Armenian leader. Whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad.

Thus, when it became clear that even though international law and organization were on their side, the Azerbaijanis were not going to regain their occupied territories through peaceful negotiations, they finally turned to the only possible solution, war. Article 2(4) of the UN Charter

not only prohibited what Armenia had done in conquering the former NKAO and the seven surrounding Azerbaijani provinces, but also permitted, under Article 51, Azerbaijani counterforce in self-defense.

Despite attempts to “orientalize” and “otherize” him, Azerbaijani president Ilham Aliyev proved to be a very effective leader in regaining his country’s occupied territories. In a wide-ranging question-and-answer session held during an international forum at ADA University on 29 April 2022 that was attended by the author of this article, Aliyev made the following realistic points concerning his country’s victory in the Second Karabakh War: *one*, do not accept the occupation of your territory and continue to maintain your territorial integrity; *two*, do not depend on international organization: unanimous UN Security Council resolutions supporting the Azerbaijani position did nothing to return occupied Azerbaijani territory—there was no effective help from the international community; and *three*, build and maintain a strong military to regain your lost territory. Unfortunately for the proponents of idealistic or liberal conceptions of world order, Aliyev’s realistic prescriptions proved to be correct.

## Statecraft

The other important point this brief article seeks to make revolves around an explication of sorts of the legacy of Heydar Aliyev, Ilham Aliyev's father and his predecessor as President of Azerbaijan. During his presidential tenure in office (1993-2003), the elder Aliyev had put to use his comprehensive grasp of old-style Soviet political culture, as he had served as a leading member of the Politburo of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and thus understood well the Russian mindset. He combined this insight with an understanding of new-style Azerbaijani nationalism, which would have been impossible during the Soviet era of proletarian internationalism. Thus, when he rose to the presidency of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev had two main goals: bringing about Azerbaijan's political stability (the country was on its way to becoming a failed state at that moment) and forming a new, capable army. Both, in his judgment, were necessary to successfully oppose and ultimately defeat Armenian irredentist claims on Karabakh.

Heydar Aliyev proceeded methodically. He began by achieving independence for his nation's oil industry by building an alternative

pipeline through Georgia and Türkiye. In 1994, he signed the "Contract of the Century" with a consortium composed largely of Western oil companies to strengthen this independence and diversify his economy (directly relevant but underappreciated is the fact that Ilham Aliyev was one of Azerbaijan's chief negotiators in this endeavor). This enlightened demarche was signed with an international consortium of 11 large oil companies representing 8 different countries. It later led to the signing of 26 agreements with the participation of 41 oil companies from 19 countries. All this put Azerbaijan on the world map as an important oil producer and exporter of energy. It constituted one of the most important agreements of the twentieth century.

However, at the same time, Heydar Aliyev also proved intelligent enough to bring Russia in on the deal so as not to alienate his northern neighbor, which was historically in the Armenian camp. He also could not rule out the possibility of Moscow wanting to reintegrate Azerbaijan back into Russia at an opportune moment. Even in the 1990s, Russia had, it seemed to him, continued to want to maintain total control over the export of Azerbaijani oil. Moreover, the Kremlin had

wanted to persuade Baku to keep allowing Russian military bases on Azerbaijani territory in—so he had judged—a bid ultimately to restore its full control over the South Caucasus lost when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. As a former Politburo member, Aliyev was perhaps more keenly aware of such ambitions than others might have been. Thus, shortly after being elected head of the Azerbaijan parliament in June 1993, Aliyev had astutely affirmed, "Russia, our northern neighbor, is absolutely a vast state. Undoubtedly, the relation based on independent principles between Azerbaijan and Russia must be better, broader, and more fruitful." This way of thinking eventually led to the signing of an Agreement on Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Security between Russia and Azerbaijan on 3 July 1997. Aliyev paid his first official trip to Russia as a President of the Republic of Azerbaijan in July 1997, at the invitation of Russian President Boris Yeltsin. Relations with Russia further developed through Aliyev-Putin negotiations during bilateral visits. Vladimir Putin visited Azerbaijan in 2001 and Aliyev paid a reciprocal visit to Russia in 2002. The two men understood each other well, as both had earlier served in the Soviet intelligence apparatus.

More importantly, of course, Heydar Aliyev proved able to use his country's oil to carefully navigate through these complicated geopolitical and geoeconomic shoals so as not to anger Russia to the point of hostile action. Thus, to forestall possible Russian intervention, he invited the Russian energy company Lukoil to join Azerbaijani's oil exploration and refining projects. SOCAR, the Azerbaijani state oil company, even transferred 10 percent of its share in the Azeri, Chirag, and Guneshli offshore oil fields to Lukoil. Aliyev saw this stock transfer of a small portion of his country's oil as a prudent method to preserve its much larger remainder.

Skillfully, Aliyev used his nation's ample oil reserves to enhance its initially precarious independence. He did so by distancing it from Russia without antagonizing the former ruling power, while at the same time using oil to strengthen relations with the West. As Vafa Guilizade, one of Aliyev's top foreign policy advisers and confidants observed, "oil is our strategy; it is our defense, and it is our independence. Iran [also] is having envious dreams of Azerbaijan, and if the Russians were strong, they would colonize Azerbaijan [again]. But they can't because Aliyev invited the whole world to watch."

Thus, the elder Aliyev at the same time was able adroitly to square the circle by also establishing amicable relations with the United States via the “Contract of the Century.” Subsequently, the Azerbaijani president visited the United States for the first time in the summer of 1997 and met with U.S. President Bill Clinton where they signed a joint statement on future relations between their respective nations regarding defense, military, energy, and economic issues. Following the 9/11 terror attacks against the United States, Azerbaijan joined an international coalition against terrorism led by the United States and also sent a military unit to Afghanistan. In addition, a pro-Azerbaijani amendment to the so-called U.S. Freedom Support Act was adopted on 24 October 2002 to permit the U.S. president to waive its infamous Section 907, which was being used by the strong domestic Armenian lobby in the United States to forbid the export of any financial or humanitarian aid to Azerbaijan.

The “Contract of the Century” proved incredibly lucrative for Azerbaijan’s economy. The revenue was used to construct a new, stronger army that could (and, as it turned out, would) eventually liberate all the Armenian-occupied territories of Azerbaijan. Oil (and,

later, gas) exports also enabled Azerbaijan to build the requisite state institutions to enhance Baku’s capacity for diversified economic development, military security, and a functional bureaucracy. Thus, even more than Charles de Gaulle of France and America’s Abraham Lincoln—who had each saved their respective political systems in a time of grave national crisis—Heydar Aliyev also proved to be the father as well as the savior of his nation.

Two decades after his death, Heydar Aliyev’s continuing legacy remains integral to what binds Azerbaijan together as an independent nation-state. Victory in the 2020 Second Karabakh War was built on the foundation he had constructed, fully cementing the situation. Shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union, but before Aliyev’s return to Baku at the helm of independent Azerbaijan, Audrey L. Altstadt—surely one of the world’s leading scholars on the country—had already speculated presciently in 1992 that Heydar Aliyev had traversed the route of “a man who vigorously [had] articulated Moscow’s line and freely replaced party cadres” to one who, “because Aliyev cannot be regarded as weak, uninformed, lax, or obtuse, it can be supposed that he permitted, perhaps encouraged, this upsurge

of national self-investigation, this exploration of historic identity, and this expression of national pride.”

### *A Final Observation*

To return to the first important point by way of conclusion: this article unambiguously and unabashedly defends the Azerbaijani position on the status of the former NKAO and their inherent right to use force in self-defense in the autumn of 2020 to regain their occupied territory and then reclaim the rest of Karabakh in September 2023. In so doing, this article stands firmly against Armenian counterclaims of Azerbaijani aggression even though Armenia still has so many supporters, especially in those states such as the United States, Russia, and France, among others, that have politically strong Armenian diasporas instrumentalizing their cause despite the clear verdict of international law and organization. In taking this firm pro-Azerbaijani position, this article notes the

---

*This article is implicitly but strongly predicated on the argument that Armenia needs to unambiguously accept its current borders, so that the resulting peace can enable it to enter into a mutually profitable relationship with neighboring Azerbaijan and Türkiye*

---

historical origins of the conflict, the First Karabakh War from 1988-1994, the debate between advocates of the political and international principles of territorial integrity and self-determination, the long-simmering failed negotiations from 1994-2020, the Second Karabakh War in the autumn of 2020 that returned most of Azerbaijan’s occupied territories, and finally the current aftermath when Azerbaijan incorporated the rest of Karabakh in September 2023.

However, despite the resounding Azerbaijani victory, ultimate peace remains elusive until the Armenians finally sign on to it. The perspective of this happening remains, as of this writing, unfortunately uncertain.

This article thus ends with a final observation. The Armenian people are victims of their own selfish, misguided leaders and a wealthy diaspora egging them on from the safety of their homes in the West. Both of these instigators persist in framing their misleading version of Armenians as perpetual victims



entitled to territory legally belonging to Azerbaijan and Türkiye. Given the geostrategic situation, and despite perhaps waning Russian and heightened yet largely rhetorical Western support, this is an impossible position that continues to curse the Armenian nation and may even incite it towards hopeless conflict that would prevent it from successfully developing politically and economically.

This article is implicitly but strongly predicated on the argument that Armenia needs to unambiguously accept its current borders

(this will almost certainly require a constitutional amendment, as Pashinyan himself reportedly indicated just as this edition of *Baku Dialogues* was going to press), so that the resulting peace can enable it to enter into a mutually profitable relationship with neighboring Azerbaijan and Türkiye. If this occurs, Ankara and Baku should sincerely offer their newfound partner a magnanimous peace. Given the historical memory, this will not be easy to implement, but it is the only way for Armenia to finally begin to prosper and develop in peace as a modern, successful state. **BD**

[bakudialogues.ada.edu.az](http://bakudialogues.ada.edu.az)

**silkway**  
west airlines

Worldwide Azerbaijan Cargo

# Your cargo is safe with us



Founded in 2012 in Baku, in the heart of the Silk Road region, Silk Way West Airlines operates hundreds of cargo flights every month across the globe via its fleet of 12 dedicated Boeing 747-8F and 747-400F aircraft based at Heydar Aliyev International Airport.

Silk Way West Airlines' annual cargo turnover exceeds 500,000 tons, and growing route network covers over 40 destinations across Europe, the CIS, the Middle East, Central and Eastern Asia, and the Americas.

[www.silkwaywest.com](http://www.silkwaywest.com)  
[commercialdep@silkwaywest.com](mailto:commercialdep@silkwaywest.com)

# Time to Dream?

## Toward a 'Shared Future' Perspective for the South Caucasus

*Alpaslan Özerdem*

The South Caucasus—a region at the intersection of Europe and Asia and a constituent part of what the editors of *Baku Dialogues* call the Silk Road region—is rich in history and cultural diversity, yet marked by complex geopolitical challenges. Comprising Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, this region is not only a mosaic of cultures and languages but also a nexus of strategic interests for global powers. The intricate landscape of the South Caucasus is defined by its history of territorial disputes, ethnic tensions, and the influence of neighboring powers, notably Russia, Türkiye, and Iran. These factors and the region's significant energy

resources have made it a focal point of international diplomacy and regional power struggles.

The present-day dynamics in the South Caucasus are shaped by the legacies of the Soviet era and more recent territorial disputes, notably the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (and surrounding areas) and the conflict between Georgia and Russia over Abkhazia and South Ossetia. As these states navigate their post-Soviet identities and relationships, the potential for a cooperative, shared future presents itself as both a monumental challenge and a transformative opportunity.

*Alpaslan Özerdem is a Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies and Dean of the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution at George Mason University. His research focuses on post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding, specifically regarding security rebuilding and reintegration of ex-combatants. He has published extensively, and, among others, he is the co-editor of Comparing Peace Processes (2019) and the Routledge Handbook on Peace, Security, and Development (2020). The views expressed in this essay are his own.*

This article explores the prospects for peace, cooperation, and regional integration in the South Caucasus, delving into the complex interplay of historical legacies, current tensions, and future possibilities for a region at a crossroads.

Geography is one of the critical features of nations and states for their peace, prosperity, and culture. However, geography is not the only determinant that dictates how countries live in peace and security. Climate, landscape, and natural resources are essential, but also political factors such as governance, corruption, trade laws, and political stability. Being landlocked

does not mean a country cannot build a strong economy and trade with the rest of the world. There are many examples of countries in challenging geographies that have still developed strong economies with high levels of human development. The Netherlands is a small country, where around 20 percent of its current land has been reclaimed from the sea or lakes, but it is one of the world's largest exporters of agricultural products. Costa Rica is surrounded by countries torn apart

by armed conflict, but it does not even have an army.

Similarly, although history is a critical defining factor in forming political, social, and economic relations, it does not need to dictate whether nations live in peace or conflict with each other in the same geographical regions. The legacy of the past can be transformed to generate new ideas and opportunities for living in peace in the future.

*Can Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia live in peace and prosper together? Can their populations envisage a future defined not by division but by connection?*

There are many examples of regions where countries experienced historical enmities but built new types of relations to live side by side and prosper together. They even managed to form alliances and economic cooperation organizations, such as the European Union.

Can the South Caucasus be one of these regions? Can Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia live in peace and prosper together? Can their populations envisage a future defined not by division but by connection? How could such a Shared Future idea for this region look like, and how could that be achieved?



With the current narratives of fear, anger, resentment, separation, division, and otherness in the South Caucasus in mind, the idea of a Shared Future in the region might seem to be a lofty goal. However, this is not impossible! Could the countries of Europe imagine being part of an economic and political union when they were slaughtering each other during WWII? According to former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, European integration through the European Union “is in reality a question of war and peace in the twenty-first century.”

Let’s also remember that living side by side peacefully and cooperating economically does not need to aim for full integration, as even this can be affected and influenced by difficulties, contradictions, and crises. Building a Shared Future is a dynamic process rather than necessarily an end goal in which not only state and international actors can interweave a broad spectrum of common interests and needs but also civil society and market networks and structures.

Ultimately, as pointed out by Lev Voronkov in his 1999 article in *Medzinárodné otázky* titled “Regional Cooperation: Conflict Prevention and Security through Interdependence,” a quest for a

Shared Future starts with the intention of identifying, cherishing, and strengthening mutual interdependence. The gradual nature of this process, with a deliberate intent of engaging a from-below approach, works on deepening cooperation between states in political and economic areas and building social and cultural bridges between communities. Subsequently, multilateral interdependencies established by economic cooperation are likely to make the settlement of disputes through violence harmful to all sides concerned.

Based on Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver’s “regional security complex theory” (RSCT), Rodrigo Taveras’ *Contemporary Politics* article in 2008 proposes “regional peace and security clusters” (RPSCs) as a framework for analyzing regional peace and security challenges and trajectories. The framework of RPSC is defined as “a set of peace and security relations that occur in a broad territory (region), driven by agents, operating at various levels of regional integration, who use various instruments to change the patterns of security, conflict, and positive peace.” There are six clusters in this typology:

- agents of peace and security;
- instruments of peace and security;

- security pattern;
- conflict pattern;
- positive peace pattern; and
- level of regional integration.

To unpack how a Shared Future prospect can be developed for the South Caucasus, the RPSC will be used in this article to take a 30,000-foot picture of the region through a peace and security lens. The focus of this mapping will be the security, conflict, positive peace patterns, and the existing regional integration structures in the first part, followed by discussions on the agents and instruments of peace and security in the second. By doing this, the goal is to explore how to disrupt the dominant narrative of mistrust and conflict in the region and move toward how economic cooperation and pathways of positive peace collectively can set a new way of thinking for living together in the area.

### *Security Pattern*

Suppose security is primarily about managing threats, while peace is the management of violence and transforming it in such a way that there will be no return to it. In that case, the relationship between peace and security can be understood through the observable materialization of those threats in

terms of physical and structural violence. Furthermore, the security pattern in regional relations is based on how the actors securitize each other and, as a response to these challenges, how agents and instruments of peace and security go about with processes of desecuritization. In other words, regional security relationships can be understood as security interdependence within which securitization and desecuritization define the spectrum and characteristics of amity and enmity.

Buzan’s RSCT framework identifies three types of security patterns: Conflict Formation, Security Regimes, and Pluralistic Security Community. In its current security context, the South Caucasus resonates best with the Conflict Formation pattern, as there are still trends with ongoing intra-state and inter-state conflicts. The interdependence between Armenia and Azerbaijan arises primarily from rivalry, fear, and mutual perception of threat. However, it is also important to note that Georgia has built positive interdependence with both countries on bilateral terms.

A Shared Future perspective can explore how to turn the Conflict Formation pattern into at least a Security Regimes pattern so that although these states

continue to see each other as potential threats, they would undertake measures to reduce the security dilemma among themselves. Within this transformation, the broader regional context, including neighboring countries like Iran, Russia, and Türkiye and neighboring regions such as the North Caucasus, should also be incorporated into the imagination of a Shared Future. Ultimately, the long-term goal here is to move to a Pluralistic Security Community pattern, as, for example, the European experience with the European Union, within which states abstain from threatening each other.

### *Conflict Pattern*

The RPSC framework identifies three types of conflict patterns: violence-prone, absence of violence, and conciliation. Considering that there are several disputed territories in Georgia, such as Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which are in a state of frozen conflict, the occupation of large Azerbaijani territories by Armenia has only ended recently; the last war between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Karabakh was fought as recently as back in 2020, the South Caucasus could still be described with the characteristics of the violence-prone pattern. The

region is affected by the lingering consequences of intra- and inter-state conflicts, which have spill-over effects due to the relations of Iran, Russia, and Türkiye with the area and some regional countries.

In the aftermath of the Second Karabakh War in 2020, the South Caucasus region has the most plausible opportunity for attaining inter-state regional negative peace. Since the early 1990s, when the three regional countries regained their independence, the relationship between Armenia and Azerbaijan has been hugely challenging. However, there is now a new era that can imagine the future of peace differently, accepting that what is there between these two countries is a fragile peace. It is also the case that there is always a risk of returning to violence over territory between these two states. However, it is essential to acknowledge an environment of negative peace for the first time over the last 30 years. This was not based on a peace accord and resulted in the departure of many Armenians from Karabakh. Still, it also ended the Armenian occupation of a large swathe of Azerbaijan's territory. It will also lead to the opportunity for those Azerbaijanis who were displaced from Karabakh and other formerly Armenian-occupied territories to their homes. If used as a starting

point for a deeper engagement between these two states, the current negative peace could even lead to a process that those Armenians who were displaced from Karabakh could go back to their homes one day.

In other words, the South Caucasus region might seem too far from the goal of a Conciliation type of conflict pattern in the current regional geopolitics. Still, the Absence of Violence pattern experienced right now could be its foundation. Within a possible future Conciliation conflict pattern, the region will need advanced internal dispute resolution mechanisms and appropriately trained human resources for peacemaking and peacebuilding, which will be explored in the second part. The Conciliation pattern can be achieved through the transformation from the current Absence of Violence pattern to a Positive Peace pattern in which the regional actors will need to work together to attain human security, human development, and peaceful coexistence.

In fact, according to the Global Peace Index (GPI) 2022 results, the state of peace in the three countries concerned was in the 'Medium' category, as Armenia ranked 66<sup>th</sup> out of 163 countries, while Georgia

was 94<sup>th</sup> and Azerbaijan was 95<sup>th</sup>. To put these rankings in a broader context, it is essential to note that France ranked 67<sup>th</sup>, the U.S. ranked 131<sup>st</sup>, Türkiye and Iran ranked 147<sup>th</sup>, and Russia ranked 158<sup>th</sup>. It is also good to note that compared to 2021, Armenia's ranking improved by three places, while Azerbaijan jumped by 15 and Georgia by 1. Overall, with the GPI trajectories in mind, there is an excellent basis to be hopeful for the region to move from an absence of violence to a conciliation pattern. Hence, developing a new narrative of a Shared Future is not too unrealistic to consider. The regional conflict and peace trends show adequate ripeness to design strategies to build a stronger momentum for a transformation toward positive peace and conciliation.

### *Positive Peace Pattern*

Approaches based on negative peace are likely to fail to reflect and address the fundamental issues that lie behind the violence. Hence, in the positive peace pattern, 'positive' represents the rule of law, justice, and order. It means the absence of violence in all its forms—physical-psychological, explicit-implicit (while explicit violence refers to forms of violence that are observable, latent violence

denotes violence that may not be apparent, such as those caused by economic exploitation), and direct-indirect (direct violence means armed hostile action that can be traced to a perpetrator such as war, extortion, torture, while indirect violence includes structural and cultural violence).

Structural violence concerns the manipulation of the structures that exist in society by people/groups to suppress others. Suppression of human rights, gender/age discrimination, institutional violence, and exclusion of some ethno-religious groups are examples of domestic structural violence. Also, the regional and global security, financial, and economic structures can impose wide-scale structural violence on populations and nations. Cultural violence has strong links with the day-to-day activities and perceptions of a social group. Various aspects of culture, such as religion and language, can be used to justify violence against specific sectors of society, thus preventing people from meeting their basic needs and reaching their full potential. Although cultural violence may be considered more of an intra-state conflict matter, it is a critical factor for regional conflict and peace patterns, too, as minorities are often linked with neighboring countries.

For regional positive peace goals, another helpful framework for understanding the conditions of peace is 'level,' which views peace as a ladder of stages: frozen peace, cold peace, normal peace, and warm peace. Frozen peace level refers to a situation in which coercion is the primary means of dealing with conflict. While on the surface, things appear to carry on as usual, the causes of conflict (both underlying and immediate) have not been resolved, and the probability for violence to erupt remains high, such as the situation in the Abkhazia and South Ossetia territories of Georgia. At the level of cold peace, parties in disagreement recognize each other's rights to existence, access to resources, and so on. Although there is a level of interaction and cooperation between disputants, the underlying and immediate issues surrounding the conflict remain unresolved. While the probability of returning to violence is reduced at this level, it has not disappeared entirely and might easily be triggered. The separation of the Greek and Turkish sides in Cyprus is an excellent example of such a level of peace. Cold peace is often regarded as a step towards resolving a conflict and offers an opportunity for achieving a sustainable and higher level of peace.

Frozen and cold peace levels represent the attainment of negative peace, and for positive peace in a regional context, the levels to aim for are Normal and Warm peace. At the Normal Peace level, the significant issues that had caused severe tensions or violent conflicts between disputants have been largely resolved or mitigated, and their relations are normalized. The possibility of cooperation is higher than in conditions of cold peace, and in regional and international relations cases, a transnational collaboration between civil societies emerges.

Meanwhile, Warm Peace describes a situation in which the issues of rivalries and incompatibilities between states or within society have been addressed. This level of peace is characterized by cooperation between various actors, effective organization of civil society, and active conflict resolution processes. In a regional peace context, although these differences between the different states may persist, these differences are no longer seen as threats to each other's security. For a region to attain positive peace, the trajectories with conflict and peace patterns must move from frozen and cold peace to normal and warm peace levels. Such a transformation through a Shared Future perspective can be used to measure how regional peace

trajectories can change over time. This is hardly novel. For example, the post-World War II European experience between Germany and its arch-enemies France and the UK, or the unification of East and West Germany after the Cold War and the integration of Eastern and Central European countries and the Baltic states into the European Union all went through such a transformation moving from frozen to warm peace. Similarly, Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia went through a similar transformation after the violent relations in the 1970s and today, benefiting from an environment of warm peace. Lastly, South Africa was at war with Namibia, Zambia, and Angola from the mid-1960s to 1990, but today these countries are in warm peace.

In such a measurement, the following clusters of indicators, namely, the deprived, moderate, and wealthy regions, presented by Tavares' RPSCs framework, could be a helpful starting point. A deprived region is stricken by low Human Development Index (HDI) indicators, while in a moderate region, populations, on average, live in satisfactory conditions regarding their basic human needs and development. A wealthy region represents a high HDI ranking with all characteristics of human development.

According to the UNDP's 2021-22 Human Development Report:

- Armenia's HDI value for 2021 was 0.759—which put the country in the High Human Development category—positioning it at 85 out of 191 countries. Between 1990 and 2021, Armenia's HDI value improved from 0.656 to 0.759, a change of 15.7 percent.
- Azerbaijan's HDI value for 2021 was 0.745—which put the country in the High Human Development category—positioning it at 91 out of 191 countries. Between 1995 and 2021, Azerbaijan's HDI value improved from 0.590 to 0.745, a change of 26.3 percent.
- Georgia's HDI value for 2021 is 0.802—which puts the country in the Very High Human Development category—positioning it at 63 out of 191 countries. Between 2000 and 2021, Georgia's HDI value improved from 0.702 to 0.802, a change of 14.2 percent.

From a broader regional perspective, in the same year, Türkiye's HDI value was 0.838, positioning it at 48 out of 191 countries; Russia's was 0.822, positioning it at 52<sup>nd</sup> place; and finally, Iran's was 0.774, setting it at 76<sup>th</sup> place. With the

HDI indicator in mind, the South Caucasus region is 'wealthy,' where Georgia, for example, attains a very high human development ranking, while others are in the high human development category.

However, with the positive peace objectives in mind, it is also essential to look at other rankings, such as the Inequality-Adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI) and the Gender Development Index (GDI). The IHDI value equals the HDI value when there is no inequality across people but falls below the HDI value as inequality rises. In this sense, the IHDI measures the level of human development when inequality is accounted for. The following are the IHDI values of the three South Caucasus concerned:

- Armenia: 0.688, scoring 13 places higher than its HDI ranking.
- Azerbaijan: 0.685, scoring 14 places higher than its HDI ranking.
- Georgia: 0.706, scoring two places lower than its HDI ranking.

Regarding the IHDI rankings, all three countries present no significant inequality issues, which is highly promising for developing an environment of positive peace in the region. This is further

supported by the high rankings of these three countries on the Gender Development Index.

These results are encouraging for building a peaceful regional environment in the future, particularly in comparison to other conflict-affected regions worldwide. For example, in many parts of Africa and the Middle East, the human development basis tends to be much more challenging. Thus, in the South Caucasus, we have a context that would enable the building of positive domestic and regional peace.

### *Level of Regional Integration*

Regional integration is about reconstructing political/institutional, economic, and socio-cultural linkages. It is about building a momentum of intensity so that state, civil society, and private sector actors explore and build bridges of cooperation and collaboration for their common needs and interests vis-à-vis their sovereignty in different sectors. It is about finding win-win scenarios for regional peace and prosperity and providing new opportunities for meaningful connections for populations under separate sovereignties. It is

a process of finding new ways of dealing with the legacy of the past and developing new pathways for living the future together.

Tavares approaches levels of regional integration through a taxonomy of three levels: low, medium, and high. In the low level of integration, the priority is on states' self-sufficiency to the detriment of regional integration. Within the medium level of integration, states are prepared to give up some of their sovereignty on regionalization, especially in non-sensitive technical areas. Finally, at the high level of integration, national sovereignty is no longer a detriment in policymaking at the regional level. A regional body coordinates and manages policymaking in a wide range of areas, including political and economic. The way that six Western European countries cooperated in atomic energy and coal production in the 1950s led to a monetary union first, and the present 27-member state political union is an excellent example of how these three levels of regional integration can change over time.

There are many examples of regional organizations with security functions worldwide, from the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern



African Development Community (SADC), and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to the Organization of American States (OAS), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Arab League, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

The level and areas of integration, as well as the institutional structures created for such purposes, differ among the foregoing organizations. Some of them are a lot more active than others. Their policymaking capabilities can vary greatly, and some regional organizations do not even last long due to difficulties with state sovereignty and states' willingness to lose control over the implementation of policies at the national level. According to a 2006 article titled "Regional Security Cooperation in the Early Twenty-First Century" by Alyson Bailes and Andrew Cottey, "at the most basic level, regional security institutions serve as frameworks for communication and dialogue among their members. Regular meetings of heads of state or government, ministers and lower-level officials, and the military arguably help build trust between states, avoid miscommunication, resolve

disagreements, and develop a sense of common interests and identity."

**I**n this regard, a closer look at BSEC is warranted. Founded in 1992, it is the only regional organization to which all three South Caucasus states are members. Although the Black Sea is bounded by Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Türkiye, and Ukraine, BSEC members also include Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Greece, Moldova, North Macedonia, and Serbia. BSEC's working areas are comprehensive, ranging from agriculture, energy, education, and culture to combating crimes, trade, environmental protection, and tourism.

However, cooperation in the Black Sea region has historically suffered due to different geopolitical rivalries between the EU and NATO on the one hand and Russia on the other, with Türkiye straddling the middle. The current war between Russia and Ukraine, the Russian interference in the territorial integrity of Georgia, Türkiye's historically challenging relations with Greece, and the still unresolved territorial dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan continue to provide a problematic context for building cohesive cooperation strategies between BSEC members. Therefore, the Black Sea as a

regional context has not enabled stronger regionalization, as has been the case with Western Europe or the Baltic states, primarily due to the lack of a shared cultural identity and political or strategic notions.

Therefore, from a short-to-medium-term perspective, BSEC will likely be of limited value for building a Shared Future narrative for the South Caucasus. Nevertheless, as only the regional structure that numbers all three South Caucasus countries as members, developing a Shared Future narrative could benefit from its current working areas and regional policymaking capabilities, though they are currently limited.

**F**or the South Caucasus' regional integration—as has been the case for similar regional cooperation frameworks—economic integration will likely be more accessible to implement and also more significantly impactful, leading to more political integration possibilities. With that in mind, the terms of the 10 November 2020 tripartite statement that ended the Second Karabakh War explicitly refer to the unblocking of all economic and transport connections in the region. Building on this, Azerbaijan's proposal to optimize both intra- and trans-regional connectivity through the optimization

of the Middle Corridor, as well as Armenia's "Crossroads of Peace" idea, shows that there is now a much greater readiness to consider regional integration.

The proposed implementation of such and similar projects will not only be critical for the economic development of the South Caucasus, but rather for the entirety of the Silk Road region and even perhaps beyond: connecting the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean will have much more significant positive implications. A broad scope of infrastructural connection also covers Azerbaijan's desire to connect the mainland with its Nakhchivan exclave through the Zangezur corridor. It is important here to note the terminological significance of the Armenian initiative, which explicitly links economic cooperation through infrastructure building with prospects of peace in the region. The actualization of such projects, irrespective of their specific details and the moniker that ends up being used to characterize them, could represent a significant step in transforming the chances of a Shared Future in the region. The execution of such projects could set a positive precedent for cooperation in other areas.

As all these also aim to bring direct benefits for other regional

powers and connect neighboring states and regions, it will likely get the buy-in from a much greater scope of regional and international actors. However, as such connections will change the balances of regional geopolitics, affecting the interest of some other actors, it will also likely face a high level of national and international resistance.

Be that as it may, having now reviewed the patterns of security, conflict, and positive peace and regional integration prospects in the region, the next section will focus on the components of regional peace and security in terms of instruments and agents.

### *Peace Instruments and Economic Cooperation*

Taveras identifies nine instruments for peace: armed violence, balance of power, hegemony, military alliances, regional peace and security management by regional organizations, trade arrangements, normative engagement and institutionalism, regional identity, and federalism/local representation. Each of these instruments differs, and using those such as armed violence, balance of power, and hegemony for peace sounds paradoxical as peace instruments. Still,

such tools represent the current context of the South Caucasus well and how the current environment of negative peace is built and sustained by state actors. However, the first part of this article presented, the region cannot maintain its peace by only relying on conservative policymaking for peace. For a Shared Future narrative, one of the primary goals is to develop ways of changing the conflict pattern-based peace instruments into peace pattern ones.

This essay has already focused on the role of regional organizations in the regional integration section, and federalism can be discounted in the scope of a Shared Future narrative for the time being because of its current trajectories for political transformation. Therefore, the primary focus of this section will be on trade arrangements, normative engagement, and regional identity.

We begin with *trade arrangements*. Within the liberal peace framework, the central premise is based on a relationship between democracy and war and the need for a market economy to sustain democracy. Therefore, trade arrangements can become a peace instrument as countries with the possibility of losing trade and, subsequently,

economic gains will likely want to avoid conflict and build cooperation.

This is the most promising peace instrument for the South Caucasus in the current context. For example, closer economic ties and trade routes such as the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline are critical in maintaining good relations between Georgia and Azerbaijan. Therefore, it is encouraging that Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Türkiye proposed specific measures to optimize the Middle Corridor trade route to link Central Asia through the South Caucasus with Anatolia and Europe in late 2022. To that effect, a logistics company was established to facilitate transportation between Central Asia and the South Caucasus. The EU also seems to be looking at this trade route favorably for its broader geopolitical and economic interests in the region as part of its Global Gateway Initiative, a multibillion-dollar program for developing rail and port infrastructure in response to China's Belt and Road Initiative.

Due to the territorial conflicts between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the former has been excluded from most trade route development initiatives in the past. Still, in line with possible improvements in

bilateral relations between them and between Armenia and Türkiye with the end of the conflict over Karabakh, Armenia could somewhat be integrated into such projects. Armenia's desire has been articulated through its "Crossroads of Peace" idea, which could play a critical role in lessening its economic isolation in the region. The current framework of economic ties between Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia shows this clearly.

On the one hand, in 2023, for example, Georgia's good bilateral relations with the other two countries resulted in a significant trade turnover. Azerbaijan was the third biggest destination for Georgian exports, with a 22 percent year-on-year growth reaching \$595 million, and Armenia was the fourth, with a 120 percent increase reaching \$495 million. Similarly, these two countries played a vital supplier role in importing goods—Azerbaijan being the sixth and Armenia the seventh. Georgia has a trade turnover of over \$1 billion with both countries. On the other hand, as Armenia and Azerbaijan have no diplomatic relations, they have no direct trade links between them.

A report prepared by Berlin Economics in 2018 on the economic effect of a resolution of the conflict over Karabakh identified



several “benefits of peace” for both Armenia and Azerbaijan in the realms of public finances, the energy and water sectors, and financial markets and investments. With the normalization of relations between Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Türkiye with open borders, trade, and the potential for cooperation, Armenia and Azerbaijan would need to spend significantly less on military expenditures, which would help them increase their spending in areas like education and health. According to this report, Armenia would be the primary beneficiary of an integrated electricity market. Similarly, Armenia is likely to benefit significantly from the ability to purchase gas from Azerbaijan, and in return, Azerbaijan would gain a new customer and transit route. While the energy area is where Armenia would be the primary beneficiary from normalizing relations, Azerbaijan could have clear gains in dealing with its water scarcity problem through more efficient usage of natural water resources from the Kura-Aras basin (the territorial outcome of the Second Karabakh War has already helped Azerbaijan mitigate its water scarcity issues). Subsequently, both countries could attract increased foreign investment for new regional infrastructure projects. While Armenia could access cheaper energy resources, Azerbaijan could

increase its agricultural production through more significant freshwater resources, reducing its dependency on oil and gas revenues.

Overall, in connection with building a Shared Future narrative for the region, the context of trade, energy, transportation, and water can provide a more enabling environment for cooperation. These areas would demand reciprocal relations between Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, as they would need to consider the region, its logistical opportunities, and natural resources from a holistic perspective. They can keep the current status quo for political reasons or think about their future in a way that benefits from each area could be magnified significantly through cooperation. In other words, a Shared Future ideal is not necessarily a matter of existentialist politics: it is the ability to deal with a complex web of political, technical, and economic challenges for more prosperity for all populations in the region.

**N**ext is *normative engagement*. Any attempt to develop a Shared Future narrative must identify norms that could motivate states in the same region to work together. Based on experience with other regional cooperation narratives such as ASEAN, ECOWAS,

or SADC, some have to do with regional security standards to reduce risks and threats and build trust. Institutionalism, as discussed, is a crucial component of this process, and the region will need to develop such structures or try to benefit from the capacities of existing institutions, such as BSEC. This is a high-level political and strategic process. Still, it should also create opportunities for cooperation at a more operational level, and, chosen carefully, such cooperation efforts could play a critical role in building trust amongst states and societies. For example, considering that the South Caucasus is prone to natural disasters caused by earthquakes, landslides, and floods, one area of institutional cooperation could be coordinating civil defense against disasters. This could be initiated by altruistic steps between the civil defense organizations of the three countries to identify means of joint disaster response and rescue. They can build collaborative capacities to help borderland communities or allow information flow in transboundary disasters. There could also be opportunities for joint training programs delivered by international actors.

Normative engagement cannot and should not be handled only by state actors. It would be critical for the long-term sustainability of

such norms and institutions that civil society and private sector actors could find ample opportunity to contribute to building them. Their inputs help build bridges between policymaking for critical socio-economic issues and how they are experienced on the ground as an environment of everyday peace and development. Based on a sense of dialogue and partnership, the private sector and civil society can provide critical resources, knowledge, and implementation capacities that state actors would otherwise be unable to tap into. A Shared Future narrative would need to handle this issue sensitively and identify how to internalize the importance of reciprocity between the state and civil society.

Another pathway for generating regional normative engagement can be incentivized and built through a future European Union membership trajectory. Georgia applied for EU membership in March 2022, and in December 2023, the European Council granted Georgia EU candidate status as part of its decision to fast-track Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia in the membership process after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Nevertheless, a full EU enlargement in the South Caucasus is not envisaged in the foreseeable future, especially with the continuation of the war in Ukraine and

Russia's security sensitivities to the presence of NATO and the EU in the region. However, depending on how the war in Ukraine will end, some of these geopolitical balances can rapidly change, and there can be new opportunities for engagement with those organizations by the regional countries. Even if full membership is not presently in the cards, the EU and NATO can develop different partnership frameworks for the regional countries to help them build constructive normative engagement frameworks, notwithstanding the fact that neither Armenia nor Azerbaijan has shown any interest in joining these two flagship Western institutions. The membership of all three South Caucasus states in the EU's Eastern Partnership initiative, transitioning from a one-size-fits-all to a more tailor-made set of initiatives, represents another shared normative framework possibility.

Finally, *regional identity*. For Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, one of the most critical responsibilities for joint action is building a positive regional identity for the South Caucasus. Whether it is in the world of public opinion, investors, the media, or academia, the South Caucasus is seen as being a trouble-stricken part of the world known for its energy resources and historical enmities. Its reputation

is also tied to being seen as an area where Russia dominates and manipulates regional actors. Overall, the negative image that the region holds is a major detrimental factor against its development and prosperity. Therefore, these three countries have a choice to make here: either keeping the current status quo or working together to transform such an image into something constructive and enabling and taking advantage of many economic and geopolitical opportunities.

Amongst the three regional countries, Azerbaijan has been the most active one in this space, mainly to improve its world public image by taking on the chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement (2019-2023), which has involved hosting several high-level summits and meetings, and, most recently—thanks to a breakthrough deal involving direct negotiations with Armenia—being elected to host COP29 in 2024. Azerbaijan has also invested in the organization of significant sports and cultural events such as the 2012 Eurovision Song Contest, the 2015 European Games, the 2017 Islamic Solidarity Games, the 2019 European Youth Summer Olympic Festival, and, since 2016, an annual Formula One racing event. All three countries are active in the sports and arts scenes and have rich traditions in these areas,

which could be used to transform the region's image. For example, there could be opportunities to organize some of these events jointly, as holding European football tournaments by several regional countries has become a common practice. Such joint undertakings would improve the region's image and be critical milestones for transforming negative peace into a more positive one. Therefore, a Shared Future perspective could mark such objectives as areas of possible collaboration. Even aiming for such goals and setting the systems to work towards them would significantly impact building more reciprocal relations.

Another low-hanging fruit opportunity for building a regional identity can be through a regional tourism plan. Surrounded by the Black Sea from the West and the Caspian Sea from the East, all three countries have rich cultural heritage, unique gastronomy and folklore, natural attractions, and a culture of hospitality that transcends national borders. Based on comprehensive marketing and planning strategies, the three countries can identify a symbiotic and reciprocal tourism plan for their region. This would open opportunities for diplomatic relations, building the necessary transportation links, and promoting what

the area could offer tourists as part of connected holiday packages. All three countries can benefit from such a tourism plan individually, as there is already significant interest from the broader geographies from the Middle East to Central Asia. After the energy sector, tourism is the most profitable sector for Azerbaijan. Georgia makes one-fifth of its GDP from tourism. Armenia gets the least tourists among the three countries, but tourism is still a critical part of its GDP. The ongoing war in Ukraine continues to be a detrimental factor. Still, from a mid-to-long-term perspective, a regional development perspective of the tourism sector must be one of the primary elements of a Shared Future vision.

### *Agents of Peace and Security*

Our discussions have already identified a clear taxonomy for possible agents of peace and security in terms of national, regional, and international. The state is the most significant factor at these three levels, especially in providing an enabling environment through diplomatic means and establishing security and cooperation frameworks. The state actors' readiness to engage in constructive dialogue

and build means for a regional positive peace transformation cannot be ignored. Elite politics must take responsibility for changing the trajectory of living and prospering together.

The respective leaderships of the three countries face a litmus test in grabbing the opportunity of a new era of peace and security or keeping the region in its orthodoxy of conflict and security patterns. This is essentially a choice that leaders will make between negative and positive peace for their populations, countries, and the South Caucasus as a region. However, in the globalized context, where such geopolitical interests will have much broader implications for the regional and international hegemonic powers, the intentions of a Shared Future by the national leadership will need to benefit from a broader enabling environment. What is currently happening in Ukraine and the Middle East raises challenging questions on whether the South Caucasus could benefit from such a constructive international ecosystem. Still, if there is any possibility for the three countries to build their regional destiny, then they need to engage in direct dialogue with each other.

As presented in the Peace Instruments section, there are several areas where civil society and

the private sector could play a more active role as agents of peace and security. Building trust between states takes much longer, but common economic goals with transboundary benefits could germinate means of cooperation between actors at the operational level. In other words, vertical trust at the strategic level should not be the only area of focus, though its impact is broad and deep. Horizontal trust-building efforts between civil society and private sector actors can be easier to achieve. Let's consider the efforts of moving from an environment of negative peace to positive peace as a transformation and group possible agents into three levels in a triangle where state/international at the top, civil society/the private sector in the middle, and community-based organizations and civic actors at the bottom to represent their power levels and numbers. In the early stages of the transformation, most activity will occur at the top end of the triangle. Still, in time, with trajectories of moving toward positive peace, we could witness a much deeper engagement by actors in the space between the middle and bottom of the triangle.

Within all these three levels, one of the critical priorities must be building peace infrastructures in all three countries. That means the three countries must invest in

human resources and institutional structures that can play an active role in conflict prevention, peace, and reconciliation. This is essential because although most conflicts occur in the developing world (this includes the South Caucasus), most institutional and trained human capabilities and resources are located in the developed world. This disjointed dichotomy must be reversed. The South Caucasus needs to develop its own, home-grown institutions of peace and conflict resolution. The region's higher education institutions and governments need to invest in this area urgently. If the local actors have no means, resources, and capacities to do this, then the vacuum created is filled by external actors. The people of South Caucasus should build their peace and security. This is an area where external actors can help regional and national actors, if, that is, they are genuine about building sustainable peace and prosperity in the South Caucasus. Building such peace infrastructures would impact the three countries and their shared geography and the surrounding areas such as the North Caucasus, the Middle East, and Central Asia.

## Charting a Path

It is time to dream of a Shared Future in the South Caucasus. Dreaming is not utopic. Dreaming is part of leadership. It is time to change and transform the narratives of conflict into peace. The South Caucasus now has a unique opportunity that was not the case only a couple of years ago. The relations between the three regional

---

*It is time to dream of a Shared Future in the South Caucasus. Dreaming is not utopic. Dreaming is part of leadership. It is time to change and transform the narratives of conflict into peace.*

---

countries might still be shaky, informed by a high level of mistrust. The region might still be considered by some living in a "garden" to be part of the "jungle" or by those with outdated aspirations of regional hegemony as being their ex-

clusive backyard. The energy needs of powerful countries might have led them to approach the region as a proxy for their geopolitics, and in fact, they might even continue to do so. However, rather than seeing them as given and unsurmountable challenges, it is time to take the lead to change them.

This essay is thus a call for action. It is time to bring together representations from academia and civil society to work towards a white paper



identifying how such a Shared Future could be built collectively. It is time to imagine how the region could look in 2050 by moving from negative regional peace to positive peace. How can that comprehensive journey with complex and interrelated priorities be planned? What would be its critical parameters, needs, and low-hanging opportunities in such a process? What investments need to be made, by whom, and where? What role would there be for international actors? What

roles can the private sector and civil society play?

A White Paper for a Shared Future 2050 is the roadmap for a call to action leading a comprehensive process with multiple levels of political, economic, and socio-cultural approaches. A Shared Future is a dream, but it is a dream that can be made come true with the right type of leadership and political willingness at all national and international levels. **BD**

[bakudialogues.ada.edu.az](http://bakudialogues.ada.edu.az)



# Baku 18<sup>th</sup> annual Summer Green Energy School

8-19 July 2024



Scan for more



[bses@ada.edu.az](mailto:bses@ada.edu.az)  
deadline: 1 April 2024



# ADA University Programs



## Undergraduate Programs

- Computer Science
- Information Technology
- Computer Engineering
- Mathematics
- Electrical and Electronics Engineering
- Business Administration
- Economics
- Finance
- International Studies
- Public Affairs
- Communication and Digital Media
- Law
- Agricultural Science
- Animal Science
- Architecture
- Interior design

## Graduate Programs

- Computer Science and Data Analytics (Dual Degree with GW University)
- Electrical Engineering and Power Engineering (Dual Degree with GW University)
- Computer Engineering and High Performance Computing (Dual Degree with GW University)
- Master of Business Administration
- MBA program in Finance (Dual Degree with MGIMO University)
- Diplomacy and International Affairs
- Public Administration (English/Azerbaijani)
- Education Management (English/Azerbaijani)
- Teaching and Learning (English/Azerbaijani)
- Human Resource Management
- Global Management and Politics (Italy-Azerbaijan University)
- Agricultural and Food System Management (Italy-Azerbaijan University)

Undergraduate students wishing to pursue a second career track may do so by taking a set of courses predefined by programs across the university.



Ahmadbey Aghaoghlu str. 61, Baku, Azerbaijan | (+994 12) 437 32 35  
admissions@ada.edu.az | ada.edu.az

# LET'S BUILD A DIGITAL FUTURE TOGETHER



## Leading Technology company in Azerbaijan

- Professional staff: **350+**
- Activity fields: **5+**
- International and local partners: **100+**



## Company values

- Human Values
- Reliability
- Innovation
- Agility
- Transparency and Confidentiality



## Information Security services

- AzInTelecom LLC provides audit and consulting services of Cyber Security and Information Security, Security Operations Center (SOC as a Service) as a Service for clients.



## SiMA

- According to the laws of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the electronic signature has the same legal force as a handwritten signature. An electronic signature is a document that confirms our identity in a virtual space.



## AZCLOUD

- AzInTelecom Data Centers are the largest availability zone in the South Caucasus region, including Azerbaijan. Awarded TIER III, ISO 20000, ISO 22301, and ISO 27001 certificates, AzInTelecom Data Centers operate in two areas: Corporate Solutions and Government Solutions.



## Youth and innovations support initiatives

- Smart Karabakh Hackathon
- Annual internship programs



[www.azintelecom.az](http://www.azintelecom.az)



# Revitalizing the 3+3 Platform

## A Formula for a New Regional Security Order?

*Vasif Huseynov*

On 23 October 2023, the second meeting of the 3+3 Consultative Regional Platform took place in Tehran, Iran. This platform is built upon the idea of bringing together Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia 'plus' Iran, Russia, and Türkiye for regional cooperation had been introduced by the presidents of Azerbaijan and Türkiye after the Second Karabakh War. Georgia, owing to its ongoing territorial conflict with Russia, refused to participate in the platform, though its leaders signaled that they might reconsider this position in the future. The initiative, even in the 2+3 format (i.e., without Georgia), has faced several challenges, including Russia's war in Ukraine and Iran's mercurial policies in the region. The first meeting within

this initiative (without Georgia's participation) was held in Moscow on 10 December 2021 at the level of deputy foreign ministers. At that inaugural meeting, each side expressed optimism regarding the future of this framework.

However, this optimism did not materialize for a long time. While Moscow and Tehran remained supportive of the 3+3 initiative, it mostly lost its relevance and importance for the other actors, including Azerbaijan. Despite repeated announcements by Russian and Iranian officials regarding preparations for the second meeting in this format, it took nearly two years for the meeting to actually occur. According to Russia's leadership, the West was undermining this initiative.

*Vasif Huseynov is Head of Department at the Center of Analysis of International Relations (AIR Center) and an adjunct lecturer at ADA University and Khazar University. He is also a regular contributor to the Jamestown Foundation's Eurasia Daily Monitor. The views expressed in this essay are his own.*

Speaking at a 20 March 2023 press conference alongside his Armenian colleague, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov argued that "the West is actively working to destroy this structure [i.e., 3+3]." He added that Russia does not see any possibility or need to cooperate with the West in the South Caucasus and complained that the West infringes on the lawful interests of three close neighbors of the South Caucasus countries, namely Iran, Russia, and Türkiye.

In fact, the major blow to the 3+3 initiative seems to have been struck by Iran rather than the West. Tehran's increasingly more aggressive policies with respect to Azerbaijan following the Second Karabakh War, coupled with its overt attempts to undermine Baku's efforts to open the Zangezur Corridor via Armenian territory, had brought bilateral political and diplomatic relations to a record low. Iran had, thus, nullified all efforts for the advancement of the 3+3 format by

countering the Zangezur Corridor project, which represented a core part of this format: development of that passageway was meant to

connect almost all parties within that framework. During an international conference co-organized by ADA University and the AIRCenter on 22 November 2022, Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev openly stated that the 3+3 initiative had failed to materialize due to, as he put it, "unfortunately, some Iranian officials' recent steps and actions are absolutely counterproductive."

### *Catalyst for Regional Integration*

The regional geopolitical situation in the South Caucasus changed to a great extent following Azerbaijan's victory over the separatist regime in its Karabakh region and the restoration of the country's territorial integrity in

*3+3 is built upon the idea of bringing together Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia 'plus' Iran, Russia, and Türkiye to advance regional cooperation.*

September 2023. This historic development put an end to the Armenia-Azerbaijan territorial conflict, as it pertained to Karabakh. In a way critical for the establishment of peace and stability in relations

between the two countries, the government of Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan refused to intervene in Azerbaijan's anti-terror

operations against illegal Armenian armed units located in the Russian peacekeeping zone operating in parts of Karabakh. In his address to the nation on 20 September 2023, President Aliyev commended what amounted to Armenia's non-reaction to the military operation in Karabakh and found it constructive for the future of the peace process.

This situation made a positive contribution to regional integration efforts on two fronts: at the 3+3 level and within the trilateral framework involving Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. President Aliyev, a strong and consistent proponent of substantive regional integration, emphatically highlighted this stance in the same address: "we propose that the future of South Caucasus countries should be based on peace, tranquility, and development. [...] The day is not far when Azerbaijan and Armenia will settle the issues between them, sign a peace treaty, and the countries of the South Caucasus start working on future cooperation in a trilateral format."

This approach is supported by Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili who, in his press conference with President Aliyev following the latter's visit to Tbilisi on 8 October 2023, stated that "our future should be peaceful and

stable, and all three countries of the South Caucasus should address regional issues themselves." President Aliyev expressed his endorsement of this approach, affirming that his country views Georgia also as a more suitable venue for the continuation of the Armenia-Azerbaijan peace talks. "Several countries and also some international organizations are trying to support the normalization process between Armenia and Azerbaijan today. We welcome that. If it is not lop-sided and biased, of course, we welcome any mediation and assistance. However, in my opinion, taking into account both the historical relations and the geographical factor, the most correct option in this field would certainly be Georgia," he said.

In its aftermath, the first-ever meeting amongst the prime ministers of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan took place on 26 October 2023 on the sidelines of the Silk Road Forum in Tbilisi. This was a historic event that raised hopes in the region. The three prime ministers gave positive messages about the future of the region and outlined their proposals towards this goal.

In parallel, a rapprochement began to unfold between Azerbaijan and Iran. During a

ministerial meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement hosted by Baku in July 2023, Iran's foreign minister met separately with President Aliyev. The two discussed the increased dynamism of trade and economic ties as well as prospects for developing the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and improving communication links between mainland Azerbaijan and its Nakhchivan exclave through Iranian territory, on which the two countries had agreed in March 2022.

Nasser Kanaani, spokesperson for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, stressed on 11 July 2023 the potential for improved relations between Iran and Azerbaijan. Notably, he pledged Tehran's commitment to ensuring "maximum security" for the Azerbaijani embassy in Tehran, which had been closed by Azerbaijan following the terrorist attack against the embassy in January 2023. On 17 July 2023, a joint conference of Azerbaijani and Iranian economic cooperation commissions took place in Astara, addressing issues related to the development of regional and international transport connections, including the completion of the Astara cargo terminal by the end of 2024. In early October 2023, Tehran reported that the individual who carried out the terrorist attack

on Azerbaijan's embassy in Tehran had been convicted and sentenced to capital punishment.

A couple of days later, on 6 October 2023, Azerbaijan's Deputy Prime Minister Shahin Mustafayev and Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development, Mehrdad Bazrpash, took part in a groundbreaking ceremony for a bridge connecting the two countries over the River Aras. This is part of the Azerbaijan-Iran agreement on the establishment of a corridor via Iranian territory that represents an important alternative to the Zangezur Corridor (the route through Iran effectually loops below Armenian territory and is only a few kilometers longer). Hence, Azerbaijan has undertaken to finance the construction of what is coming to be known as the Aras Corridor, which will include both road and rail throughways.

The convening of the second meeting of the 3+3 platform in the wake of these developments was not unexpected. This time, the sides came together at the level of foreign ministers on 23 October 2023. They stressed the "importance of platforms like the Consultative Regional Platform 3+3 in providing opportunities for constructive dialogue and establishing mutually beneficial cooperation between

the countries of the region.” The ministers agreed that the next 3+3 meeting will be held in Türkiye on a date to be specified later. They also confirmed that the platform remains open to Georgia’s participation, though Tbilisi has not indicated any willingness to join.

### *A New Security Order?*

The revitalization of the 3+3 platform after a two-year break coincides with the decline of Russia’s hegemony over the South Caucasus and may characterize a transition to a new regional security order. The war in Ukraine has dealt another blow to what its proponents call a “rules-based liberal international order,” which opened a new chapter in world affairs—with significant implications for the South Caucasus and the rest of the Silk Road region. Facing an unexpected military stalemate in Ukraine and economic troubles at home due to the imposition of a West-led sanctions and export restrictions regime, Russia began to face challenges to its regional aspirations, especially concerning Armenia and Azerbaijan. Meanwhile, Georgia appears to be attempting to find a balance with Russia while seemingly distancing itself from its pro-Western aspirations.

Georgia is the only country in the South Caucasus that has a territorial conflict with Russia and feels threatened by its northern neighbor. Tbilisi has therefore been attentive to the potential spillover of the conflict over Ukraine into its territory. These security threats have prompted Georgia to reevaluate its foreign policy concerning the EU and the U.S. while reducing its emphasis on aspirations to join NATO. In parallel, the Garibashvili government has attempted to diversify the country’s foreign policy by establishing stronger ties with China and refraining from an all-out confrontation with Russia.

Developments involving Armenia and Azerbaijan exhibited significant differences when compared to those concerning Georgia, marking a trend that can be described as the erosion of the Russia-dominated security order in the region. One pivotal development in this context revolved around the involvement of external actors in advancing the ongoing Armenia-Azerbaijan peace talks. Before the onset of the present stage in the conflict over Ukraine, Russia had been the primary mediator in these talks, but in 2022 and 2023, the EU and the United States assumed a more active role (the former identifies itself as a “facilitator,” the latter as a “supporter”).

The Kremlin referred to these actions by Western powers as “geopolitical games,” with the apparent goal of diminishing Russia’s influence in the South Caucasus.

Clearly, Moscow had failed to keep the process under its primary control. The most visible and important manifestation of this failure was the fact that Armenia and Azerbaijan had politically recognized each other’s territorial integrity in the EU-facilitated meeting of the two countries leaders on the sidelines of the inaugural gathering of the European Political Community in Prague on 6 October 2022. This

was followed almost a full year later by Azerbaijan’s aforementioned anti-terror operation, which resulted in the collapse of the ethnic-Armenian secessionist regime and the restoration of Azerbaijan’s full sovereignty over all of Karabakh. Both the recognition by Yerevan that all of Karabakh is a sovereign part of Azerbaijan and the dissolution of the separatist regime were developments that had not been foreseen by the Kremlin, whose representatives were proposing to leave the issue

of the “status of [the] Karabakh region” to future generations.

The decline of Russian dominance in the South Caucasus is also being observed in an increasingly deteriorating relationship between Yerevan and Moscow. There have been a wide range of decisions by the Armenian government over the last two years that have annoyed the Russian leadership.

---

*Both the recognition by Yerevan that all of Karabakh is a sovereign part of Azerbaijan and the dissolution of the separatist regime were developments that had not been foreseen by the Kremlin.*

---

These decisions have related both to Armenia’s relations with Russia and the country’s attempts to deepen relations with the West—particularly France and the United States (not coincidentally, these countries host sizeable

and well-organized Armenian diasporas). Yerevan invited the EU to establish a “monitoring mission” to observe the situation on the country’s border with Azerbaijan. In parallel, the Pashinyan government became less and less receptive to the offer of the Russian side to deploy a similar mission under the auspices of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

Nevertheless, Armenia’s exit from the CSTO and the Eurasian

Economic Union (EAEU)—Armenia is a member of both—much less its departure from Russia's orbit altogether, seems quite unlikely. According to Armenian experts, Armenia's multi-sectoral dependence on Russia (particularly in the economic and security domains) makes it “unrealistic to expect that Armenia fundamentally alters its foreign policy orientation towards the West without these dependencies being addressed and mitigated,” as one commentator put it. Hence, it is not surprising that, despite all the above-mentioned tensions, the Pashinyan asserts that his country is not changing its foreign policy vector and does not plan to exit the CSTO and the EAEU. His tactical moves may be better understood as being part of an effort to strike a more equitable balance between the West and Russia; and, as such, to end his country's strategic dependence on Russia. It is far from clear how far he can go or, indeed, whether he can succeed in any strategic sense.

Thus, the confrontation between the West and Russia, coupled with the latter's inability to achieve its battlefield objectives in Ukraine, has prompted the two South Caucasus republics with heretofore one-sided geopolitical orientations (i.e., pro-Russian Armenia and pro-Western Georgia) to attempt

to simulate elements of Azerbaijan's balanced foreign policy strategy. Put simply, this strategy entails the pursuit of a neutral (but not passive) stance between the West and Russia, steering clear of provoking either side through excessive alignment with any major power center. With Armenia, however, even the decision to attempt such a policy course has already incurred Russia's antagonism. Given Armenia's extensive reliance on Russia across various domains, Moscow's frustration with Pashinyan's balancing act appears justified.

As observed in earlier sections of this essay, Moscow's decline as a dominant actor in the region is leading to the growing role of other neighboring actors in the affairs of the region. For the major powers neighboring the South Caucasus (Iran, Russia, and, to some extent, Türkiye), the heightened geopolitical and geoeconomic engagement and positioning (both Moscow and Tehran have used the term “encroachment”) of faraway powers in this region is inadmissible and represents a grave national security threat. This was made clear by Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian on 23 October 2023, before a meeting of the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan that was organized on the sidelines of the ministerial

meeting of the 3+3 platform in Tehran. “The presence of outsiders in the region will not only not solve any problems but will also complicate the situation further,” he stated without elaborating but with an implicit reference to the United States and the European Union.

This emphasis on regional actors being the sole or at least the primary legitimate players in dealing with regional problems in the South Caucasus has been supported by Russia, Azerbaijan, and Türkiye. For instance, on 16 September 2023, the Turkish president proposed the establishment of a quadrilateral format composed of the leaders of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, and Türkiye, hinting that local disputes need to be resolved by the countries of the region, not faraway nations.

This approach was also observed in Azerbaijani official statements following the collapse of the ethnic-Armenian separatist regime in Karabakh. Baku started to emphasize the importance of ‘regional solutions to regional problems,’ in reaction, in particular, to France's decision to contribute to the heightened militarization of Armenia: “France's biased actions and militarization policy [...] seriously undermine regional peace and stability in the South Caucasus and

put at risk [the] European Union's overall policy towards the region,” said Hikmet Hajiyev, foreign policy advisor to President Aliyev. The French push played a critical role in Baku's refusal to attend an EU-mediated meeting of the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan together with the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, the Chancellor of Germany, Olaf Scholz, and the President of the EU Council, Charles Michel, in Granada, Spain, on 5 October 2023 on the margins of the third European Political Community summit. The Azerbaijani Press Agency reported that “Baku does not see the need to discuss the problems of the region with countries far from the region. Baku believes that these issues can be discussed and resolved in a regional framework.”

The revival of the 3+3 Consultative Regional Platform and the rise of the ‘regional solutions by regional actors’ approach in the South Caucasus is taking place in parallel with a perceived decay of the Russia-dominated regional security order. Thus, 3+3 may come to constitute a new regional security order—one that is not dominated by any other extra-regional actor and characterized by local states' stronger agency. In such an order, the interests and concerns of the three surrounding



major powers—namely Russia, Iran, and Türkiye—would be prioritized over those of other major powers that are not from the region. The success of this approach would be critical to prevent a military escalation in the South Caucasus, which is expected by some observers due to the erosion of the Russia-dominated order and the “encroachment” of supra-regional players.

It stands to reason that if a new regional order takes hold and Georgia continues to uphold a balanced approach in its foreign policy, then some breakthrough toward Tbilisi’s participation in the 3+3 format and even an eventual breakthrough in the deadlock over the Georgia-Russia territorial conflict may follow.

This situation would diminish the geopolitical dimension of that conflict, by making it less of a theater in the broader West-Russia rivalry and hence make Russia more interested in engaging sincerely in substantial talks aimed at resolving the conflict. Overall, the geopolitics of the

---

*If a new regional order takes hold and Georgia continues to uphold a balanced approach in its foreign policy, then some breakthrough toward Tbilisi’s participation in the 3+3 format and even an eventual breakthrough in the deadlock over the Georgia-Russia territorial conflict may follow.*

---

South Caucasus is passing through a period of transformation within which lies the promise of greater political and economic dividends for the region’s countries themselves—if, that is, they manage to tackle this process successfully and with no hostilities.

### *Subject, Not Object*

The revitalization of 3+3 might well represent a significant development amid the shifting dynamics in the South Caucasus, which is taking place within a global geopolitical and geoeconomic transformation. This platform, initially introduced by the presidents of Azerbaijan and Türkiye after the Second Karabakh

War, faced various challenges to get off the ground, including a two-year hiatus. Iran’s disruptive policies, particularly its opposition to the Zangezur Corridor, also played a crucial role in undermining the initiative. However, recent geopolitical transformations, marked by

Azerbaijan’s final victory over the separatist regime in Karabakh in September 2023, have reshaped the regional landscape.

The dissolution of the ethnic-Armenian separatist regime in Karabakh can be seen in retrospect to have served as a catalyst for rekindling regional integration efforts. Leaders from Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia have engaged in historic talks, signaling a potential for peace and stability. Armenia and Azerbaijan successfully held direct (unmediated) top adviser-level talks, resulting in a further exchange of prisoners and opening the way for Azerbaijan to host COP29. Simultaneously, a thaw in Azerbaijan-Iran relations, evident in the launch of various new economic cooperation and infrastructure projects, also contributed to a more conducive environment for regional collaboration.

The second meeting of the 3+3 platform, held at the foreign ministers’ level, indicates a renewed commitment to constructive dialogue and cooperation. The

platform’s potential role in shaping a new security order in the South Caucasus becomes particularly pertinent against the backdrop of the perception of Russia’s declining influence in the region. The conflict over Ukraine altered the region’s geopolitical dynamics, prompting a reevaluation of alliances and strategies by the three South Caucasus countries.

At this time of writing, it seems that the roles of Western (external) actors in actively facilitating (i.e.,

---

*Azerbaijan, in particular, has taken several steps to ensure that it does not slip back into a position of being an object of major power rivalry, working diligently to secure itself as a subject of regional and, indeed, international order.*

---

the EU) and supporting (i.e., the U.S.) the Armenia-Azerbaijan peace process are declining. There is a growing emphasis on local actors resolving their issues directly, or at least with the participation of those “closer to home.”

This ‘regional solutions by regional actors’ approach is gaining prominence, with leaders from Russia, Azerbaijan, and Türkiye advocating for the prioritization of regional interests. Azerbaijan, in particular, has taken several steps to ensure that it does not slip back into a position of being an object of major power rivalry, working diligently



to secure itself as a subject of regional and, indeed, international order. The potential success of this approach—which is shared by all the countries of the region and its immediate neighbors, as embodied in the 3+3 format—could pave the way for the establishment of a new security order, less dominated by external influences and more reflective of the concerns of the South Caucasus states themselves, rightly understood.

This leads to the following bottom-line assessment: the South Caucasus is at a transformative crossroads, presenting opportunities for political dividends and prosperity if regional countries navigate this process successfully and collaboratively whilst avoiding further hostilities. The future holds promise for a more stable and integrated South Caucasus, provided these positive trends continue to unfold. **BD**

[bakudialogues.ada.edu.az](http://bakudialogues.ada.edu.az)



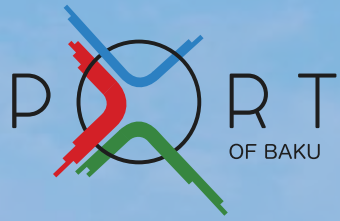
# MASTER OF SCIENCE IN AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD SYSTEM MANAGEMENT

within Italy-Azerbaijan university project



[www.ada.edu.az/apply](http://www.ada.edu.az/apply)

For more information: [iau@ada.edu.az](mailto:iau@ada.edu.az)

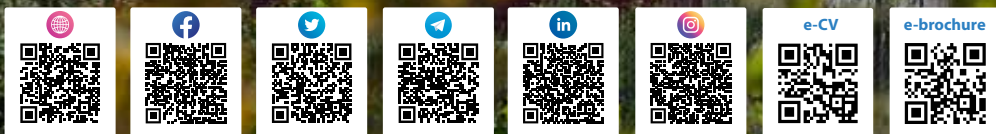


Your hub in Eurasia!

The first Eco Port in the region

FOLLOW US

GET



Meet **Afet Ahmadova**, founder of ZIRA Natural & Gourmet, EY Entrepreneur Of The Year 2022 Azerbaijan!

Apply now and become next winner. [eoy@az.ey.com](mailto:eoy@az.ey.com)



[www.eoy.az](http://www.eoy.az)

[EOYAzerbaijan](https://www.facebook.com/EOYAzerbaijan)

[eoy\\_azerbaijan](https://www.instagram.com/eoy_azerbaijan)



# Armenia's Critical Economic Reliance on Russia

## Can the West Eliminate It?

*Orkhan Baghirov*

Lately one of the most discussed political issues related to the South Caucasus region is Armenia's attempt to incline towards the West by trying to move away from Russia's sphere of influence. This has been manifested both geopolitically and economically. However, Armenia's potential strategic shift away from its centuries-old political alignment with Russia raises questions about the future of the overall relationship between the two countries. A key concern revolves around the challenges Armenia may face due to its significant *economic* dependence on Russia.

For such a shift to occur successfully, Armenia would have to not only strengthen its political and security ties with the West, but also develop the ability to replace Russia

with Western partners in key economic sectors. Thus, the primary objective of the essay is to assess the degree to which Armenia could economically substitute Russia with the West, determining the feasibility of this transition. To achieve this, we should identify the critical level of Armenia's reliance on Russia across diverse economic sectors and assess the extent to which the West can mitigate this dependency in anything resembling a realistic timeframe, without, that is, critically endangering Armenia's economic wellbeing.

### *Foreign Trade*

Armenia's foreign trade dynamics reveal a significant increase in trade with Russia during January-August 2023. The trade

turnover surged by 56.3 percent to \$4.2 billion, with exports to Russia more than doubling to \$2.3 billion and imports rising by 16.1 percent to around \$2 billion. In this period, Russia's share in Armenia's foreign trade turnover reached 34.7 percent, accounting for 51.7 percent of exports and 25.9 percent of imports.

Comparing the above figures with those from 2022, it is evident that Russia's influence has grown, with an increased share in both exports and imports. In 2022, Russia held a 34 percent share in Armenia's overall trade turnover: 36.7 percent in exports and 32.3 percent in imports. This trend indicates a substantial increase in Armenia's exports to Russia, while the level of imports has almost remained the same.

Conversely, Armenia's trade with the European Union in the first 8 months of 2023 saw a 36.7 percent increase in turnover, amounting to \$1.9 billion. However, exports to the EU decreased by 5.3 percent to \$516 million, while imports rose significantly by 64.3 percent to \$1.4 billion. Consequently, the

EU's share in Armenia's foreign trade turnover during this period was 15.8 percent, comprising 18.5 percent of imports and 11.2 percent of exports.

We can also compare the above data with 2021 so as to gain a fuller understanding of how the position of Russia and the EU has changed in Armenia's foreign trade since the start of the Russia-Ukraine war and the EU's

*The primary objective of the essay is to assess the degree to which Armenia could economically substitute Russia with the West, determining the feasibility of this transition.*

choice to respond to this conflict by imposing an economic sanctions regime on Russia. In the first 8 months of 2023, compared to 2021, Armenia's foreign trade turnover increased by \$3.64 billion, exports by \$1.46 billion, and imports by \$2.18 billion. In this same period, Armenia's trade turnover with Russia increased by \$1.35 billion, and exports to Russia increased by \$1.45 billion. Imports from Russia decreased to \$100 million. In the case of the EU, Armenia's trade turnover with the EU increased by \$244 million, and imports from the EU increased by \$400 million. Simultaneously, exports to the EU decreased by \$156 million.

*Orkhan Baghirov is a Senior Research Fellow at the Baku-based Center for Studies of the South Caucasus (CSSC) and a former Leading Adviser at the Center of Analysis of International Relations (AIRCenter). The views expressed in this essay are his own.*

As a consequence of these shifts, between 2021 and 2023, Russia's share in Armenia's exports climbed from 28.2 percent to 51 percent, while its portion in imports declined from 37.3 percent to 25 percent. This represents a notable transformation, indicating that Russia has now become Armenia's primary trade partner with a more substantial share in both exports and imports.

In contrast, the EU's role in Armenian trade has seen a decline. The EU's share in exports has decreased from 21.8 percent to 11.2 percent, while its share in imports has remained unchanged. This signifies a reversal in the trade dynamics observed in 2021, where Russia held a larger share in imports, and the EU had a greater share in exports. The significant boost in Russia's export share by 1.8 times, coupled with a 12.3 percent reduction in its import share, highlights the strengthening of trade relations between Armenia and Russia, to the detriment of the European Union.

The main factor that contributed to these changes was the start of the Russia-Ukraine war, which enabled Armenia to actively participate in the re-export of Western-sanctioned products to Russia. Therefore, there has been

a great increase in the volume of exports to Russia, and Russia's trade relations with Armenia have strengthened. Despite Armenia's official representatives consistently denying their country's involvement in the re-export of sanctioned products, Armenia's finance minister, Vahe Hovhannisyan, told lawmakers on 25 September 2023 at a session of his country's Financial-Credit and Budgetary Affairs Committee that "in the first half of 2023, compared to the same period of last year, re-exports contributed significantly, by nearly 187 percentage points, to the nearly 215 percent dollar growth in the exports of goods to Russia, whereas the exports of Armenian-made goods contributed by 28 percentage points."

That being said, the overall trade statistics suggest that Western countries, particularly EU member states, could potentially serve as a viable alternative to Russia as Armenia's primary trade partner. However, an analysis of Armenia's foreign trade structure at the product level reveals a substantial reliance on Russia for the import of strategic products, beginning with the energy sector. Finding alternative sources for these key products would prove to be a strategically challenging task.

## *The Energy Sector*

Armenia's greatest dependence on Russia is evident in the energy sector, where Russia serves as the primary supplier of various energy products, including natural and liquefied gas, gasoline, and diesel. While Armenia generates electricity through local thermal power plants, hydroelectric power plants, and a nuclear power plant, the raw materials crucial for these facilities to function are mostly imported from Russia. Thermal power plants operate using gas overwhelmingly imported from Russia, and even the Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) relies on nuclear fuel (uranium) sourced exclusively from Russia. Consequently, Russia not only stands as the main provider of gas and fuel; it also indirectly plays a significant role in the electricity production of Armenia, contributing to 70 percent of the country's electricity generation in 2022 (according to the International Energy Agency).

In 2022, Armenia experienced a 6.4 percent increase in natural gas imports, totaling 2.966 million cubic meters, according to the Customs Service of Armenia. Russia dominated in the import of

natural gas, constituting 87.7 percent, with Iran contributing 12.1 percent. In this period, the volume of gas imported from Russia rose by 6.1 percent, while the volume from Iran increased by 7.9 percent. The import of liquefied gas also saw a notable uptick, rising by 22.7 percent to reach 90.26 thousand tons. The vast majority of liquefied gas imports (90.3 percent) came from Russia, with the remaining 9.2 percent originating from Iran. Notably, the import of liquid gas from Russia surged by 4.1 times during 2022, while the import from Iran witnessed a significant decline of 80.7 percent. Compared to 2021, Russia's share in liquefied gas imports increased from 26.8 percent to 90.3 percent.

Along with gas, Russia is Armenia's primary provider of oil products, especially gasoline and diesel. In 2022, Russia accounted for 76.1 percent (519 thousand tons) of the oil products imported by Armenia. Iran and Greece contributed 10.2 percent and 8.2 percent, respectively, to Armenia's oil product imports during that period. In the first half of 2023, there was a 10.3 percent increase in the volume of oil product imports, with Russia solidifying its position as the leading supplier, providing 74.3 percent of Armenia's total oil product imports.



One of the main components of Armenia's energy security is the Metsamor NPP, which plays a critical role in ensuring Armenia's energy security, supplying 35 percent of the country's electricity for many years. Despite its importance, major concerns have arisen due to the plant's aging infrastructure, reaching 40 years, leading to debates about potential regional risks. In 2016, significant renovation efforts extended the plant's operational period until 2027, with Russia providing a \$270 million loan and a \$30 million grant to Armenia. The renovation was carried out by the Russian company Atomenergoremont. Despite these improvements, the aging infrastructure remains a major challenge for Armenia's energy security, with the EU repeatedly calling on Armenia to close it down permanently—in 2021, an EU Commission report put it this way: “the nuclear power plant located in Metsamor cannot be upgraded to meet internationally accepted nuclear safety standards fully, and therefore requires an early closure and safe decommissioning.”

Nonetheless, it continues to operate. The management of the Metsamor station is fully entrusted to Russia's Rosatom. Furthermore, the uranium essential for the station's operation is entirely imported from Russia, with another Russian

company handling the processing of the plant's radioactive waste. Therefore, the Metsamor station—a primary contributor to Armenia's electricity production—is under the comprehensive control of Russia.

### *Trade in Other Strategic Products*

Beyond energy products, Armenia is heavily dependent on Russia for the import of various strategic goods, particularly in the food sector. In 2022, nearly all of Armenia's wheat imports (99.9 percent) and wheat flour imports (99.2 percent) were sourced from Russia. Russia also played a crucial role in supplying 98.8 percent of Armenia's corn imports during the same period. Furthermore, substantial portions of other food products are heavily reliant on Russia, including 82.2 percent of pasta imports, 72 percent of margarine oil imports, and 66.6 percent of bread and flour products imports.

These statistics demonstrate Russia's substantial presence not only in Armenia's general trade relations and the energy sector, but also in ensuring the country's food security. The mentioned food products, predominantly imported from Russia, are vital components of the

population's main consumption basket, which directly contributes to the food security of Armenia.

### *Remittances*

Russia also plays a key role in the inflow of remittances into Armenia, primarily driven by the substantial Armenian expat community residing in Russia. The onset of the Russia-Ukraine war in February 2022 has further heightened Russia's significance in this aspect, with approximately 110,000 Russian citizens relocating to Armenia permanently due to the conflict.

The share of Russia in providing remittances to Armenia increased notably, rising from 55 percent in 2021 to 70 percent in 2022. In 2022, \$3.6 billion was transferred to Armenia solely from Russia, marking a fourfold increase from the previous year. In this period, the overall volume of remittances more than doubled.

Remittances hold substantial importance in Armenia's economy, as evidenced by their high contribution to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In 2022, the share of all remittances in Armenia's GDP reached 19 percent; just the remittances originating

in Russia amounted to about 13 percent of Armenia's GDP. This financial leverage forms a significant political and economic tool for Russia, providing the potential to strategically shape the course of Armenia's future developments.

### *Foreign Investments*

Along with the mentioned directions, Russia also acts as one of the main investors in Armenia's economy, as outlined by data from the Statistical Committee of Armenia. In 2022, the total volume of foreign investments in Armenia reached \$506.44 million, with 92 percent of it categorized as foreign direct investments. Indeed, Russia is the country's leading investor by far, contributing significantly to the economic development of Armenia. In 2022, Russia's share of the country's total foreign investments was an impressive 80 percent, and its involvement in foreign direct investments stood at 60 percent.

It is noteworthy that the volume of investments attracted from Russia in 2022 experienced a substantial surge compared to the previous year. This growth was remarkable, increasing fivefold for total foreign investments and more than tripling for direct foreign investments. This

underscores the substantial and growing influence of Russian investments in Armenia, a trend that has intensified since the onset of the Russia-Ukraine war.

### *Influence of Russian Companies*

In addition to the existing dependence in the mentioned directions, in various key sectors of the Armenian economy, Russian companies hold significant stakes, reinforcing their influence in Armenia. Notably, Gazprom Armenia, which is responsible for gas supply in Armenia, is entirely owned by Russia's Gazprom, making it the country's second-largest taxpayer and a major employer.

Another noteworthy player is Armenia Electric Networks (EES), a leading electricity distributor in Armenia. EES is owned by the Russian Tashhir Group, which is headed by Samvel Karapetyan, a Russian-Armenian billionaire. EES, which employs the largest internal workforce in Armenia whilst serving a

substantial customer base, further solidifies Russian presence in the energy sector.

The South Caucasus Railway, which is the primary railway company in Armenia, is fully owned by the Russian Railways state company. The Armenian government's concession of the South Caucasus Railway to Russian Railways in 2008, spanning a 30-year period with a possible 10-year extension, underscores Russia's control in this strategic sector as well.

### *Can the West Substitute Russia?*

This essay's brief analysis demonstrates Armenia's substantial and strategic economic reliance on Russia, which is evident across trade, energy, food security, transport, and various other vital sectors. This dependence has intensified since the onset of the Russia-Ukraine war. Despite Yerevan's recent political posturing against Russia, Armenia's economic ties to Russia have

---

*This essay's brief analysis demonstrates Armenia's substantial and strategic economic reliance on Russia, which is evident across trade, energy, food security, transport, and various other vital sectors.*

---

deepened, driven by the prospect of increased income amid the conflict. To put it bluntly, Armenia is an economic beneficiary of the conflict over Ukraine; indeed, the longer the conflict lasts and the Western sanctions against Russia are maintained, the better it will be for Armenia.

Excluding war-related re-exported products, Armenia's primary exports to Russia consist of agriculture, food products (61 percent of the total of these are exported to Russia), and high-value processed industrial goods. The export of those products serves as a crucial source of income for those Armenians living in the country's impoverished provinces and countryside. If Armenia aims to shift exports of these products to Western markets, especially to the EU, challenges will arise. Not only because the demand for these products in the West is limited due to substantial domestic production, but also because both their quality and production standards often fall short of the EU's requirements. Therefore, transitioning away from a strategic

reliance on the Russian market to Western markets would constitute a truly challenging task for local producers and manufacturers. This shift could result in decreased production levels, heightened unemployment rates, and increased social discontent, which would particularly affect the country's most economically vulnerable class—i.e., those residing outside of Yerevan and the country's few other urban centers.

Armenia heavily relies on Russia for crucial imports such as gas, oil products, wheat, corn, and vegetable oils. Changing the source of these imports to Western countries would also be challenging, sometimes impossible, and certainly more expensive. For instance, Armenia's primary gas supplier is Russia, and the infrastructure limitations make it physically impossible to replace Russian gas with Iranian gas. Constructing a new pipeline would be expensive, time-consuming, and politically complex. Russia controls the existing pipeline that traverses through Georgia. Thus, only

---

*To put it bluntly, Armenia is an economic beneficiary of the conflict over Ukraine; indeed, the longer the conflict lasts and the Western sanctions against Russia are maintained, the better it will be for Armenia.*

---

Azerbaijan can act as an alternative to Armenia regarding energy imports.

As noted above, the Metsamor NPP, which is one of the key energy sources of Armenia, is fully under the control of Russian interests. While the EU advocates for its closure by 2026 due to safety concerns and a failure to meet energy security standards, completely removing it from Russia's control is effectually impossible. How would this be done, exactly? The alternative—closure and decommissioning, as demanded by the EU—would present a significant risk of triggering a structural energy crisis in Armenia that could not easily or rapidly be remedied. Therefore, finding viable alternatives remains a complex and challenging task for Armenia. It is also worth mentioning that, recently, the Armenian government approved a draft agreement with Rusatom Service worth \$65 million, signaling its commitment to extending the operational life of Metsamor NPP to at least 2036. The project, which is slated to be implemented between 2023 and 2026, comes amid deliberations about replacing Metsamor with a new U.S.-designed NPP and the EU's insistence on shutting down the station by 2026.

Another essential factor to consider is the significant number

of Armenian migrant workers employed in Russia, whose remittances constitute a vital component of Armenia's economy. The expulsion of these migrants from Russia (on whatever pretext could be found) would pose a severe challenge for Armenia, as finding equivalent employment opportunities in the West is highly, highly unlikely due to a mismatch in skills and labor market demands. The potential mass return of this workforce to Armenia would result in substantial unemployment and financial difficulties for those concerned and their families, leading almost certainly to great social dissatisfaction that would be exceedingly difficult for any Armenian government to manage, much less overcome.

Economically, the West would face considerable challenges in replacing Russia's role in Armenia, with some aspects being practically impossible. This assumes, of course, the existence of sufficient political will—not exactly a foregone conclusion. Achieving energy security independent of Russia in the coming decades appears daunting for Armenia. Furthermore, the continuation of Western sanctions against Russia suggests that, for Armenia, it remains more practical to sustain income through re-exports, as a

complete halt to such exports could lead to a significant economic setback.

To begin to shift to a strategic economic relationship with the West would also require it to make institutional changes in its relationship with Russia-led regional organizations. Currently, Armenia is a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), the Commonwealth of Independent States, and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). This last is particularly relevant, although membership in the other two is of great political and security significance (particularly the CSTO). For example, EAEU membership brings huge economic dividends for Armenia (participation in re-exports to Russia and Iran, low-duty export opportunities), and domestic production capabilities have been adapted to the EAEU

market standards. Thus, leaving the EAEU could pose significant challenges for Armenia. In fact, Armenia flirted with this idea once before but stopped short of taking the plunge; Ukraine managed to do so, but at an enormous cost. Frankly, no scenario in which such an outcome increases in likelihood should be championed by those who wish Armenia well.

Not to put too fine a point on it, but Armenia's military alliance with Russia (both bilaterally and through the CSTO) is intertwined with its economic cooperation with Russia. If Armenia wishes to leave the CSTO, then it would be politically impossible for it to remain a member of the EAEU. Therefore, if Armenia wants to leave Russia's sphere of influence, it would be obliged to do so politically, militarily, and economically. And all at once. Talk about shock therapy on steroids... **BD**

[bakudialogues.ada.edu.az](http://bakudialogues.ada.edu.az)



# İstəSən

design your tariff!

 Social media  

3 GB


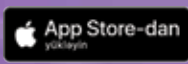

 Internet  


7 GB

 All-net calls  

100 MIN

In Azercell Kabinetim

  App Store-dan  
yükləyin 

 Google Play  
DƏ ƏLDƏ EDİN

 Azercell



The State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan



E-Gov Development Center



myGov

Your digital portfolio



my.gov.az



digital.gov.az



# What Is Public Diplomacy?

## Fostering Cooperation, Countering Disinformation

*Alan K. Henrikson*

Among the various kinds of diplomacy, one of the newest to be designated with a distinct name is “public diplomacy.” This is a supportive function, for like an actor in the theatre, the *public diplomat* plays a part. It may be a significant part, but rarely if ever is it the ‘lead.’ Public diplomacy assists leaders and senior officials of governments and of international organizations by presenting and explaining their policies and, more broadly, managing the communications aspects of their strategies. Public diplomacy work—the role of which is mainly informational—nowadays has included cultural interaction and educational exchange as well. For some

countries, those functions have been handled somewhat separately, even at arm’s length, from political representation and policy promotion (e.g., the British Council, Alliance Française, Goethe Institut, Instituto Cervantes, and Confucius Institute).

Public diplomacy is *not*, I wish to emphasize, merely instrumental—a means to any end. It is a *purposeful* activity, with qualities that are inherent, the aims of which are not arbitrarily chosen. Public diplomacy is a purposeful activity, with qualities that are inherent, the aims of which are not arbitrarily chosen. There are objective standards in the world, including those of natural

*Alan K. Henrikson is Lee E. Dirks Professor of Diplomatic History Emeritus and Founding Director of Diplomatic Studies at The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University. He has served as Fulbright Visiting Professor at the Diplomatische Akademie in Vienna and as Fulbright Schuman Professor at the College of Europe in Bruges. This essay is adapted from his chapter in Reimagining the International Legal Order (2023), edited by Vesselin Popovski and Ankit Malhotra. The views expressed in this essay are his own.*

science and scholarly knowledge, to which it may owe its convincingness. Because public diplomacy operates in the judgmental realm of popular opinion, which in the globalized world of today is more and more universal in scope, it must, in order to be effective, appeal to the reason, tastes, values, and aspirations of peoples of different traditions in distant societies—over whom no formal or direct political authority is held or control exercised. Its objectives must be achieved noncoercively and for the

*Public diplomacy is a purposeful activity, with qualities that are inherent, the aims of which are not arbitrarily chosen.*

most part openly, through public media and transparent private communication. It works primarily through persuasion and attraction, rather than by command, employment of force, or subterfuge. That is not to deny that manipulation can occur, as with military “information operations.” Insofar as public diplomacy succeeds in assisting a government or an organization to achieve its purposes, it is, despite its noncoerciveness, powerful. Influence over minds, from the level of the individual to that of society, is an ultimate arbiter. “Public opinion,” as Napoleon Bonaparte famously advised, “is the thermometer a monarch should constantly consult.” Today’s leaders,

irrespective of the type of regime or political form in which they operate, can rise or fall according to it.

My particular question in this essay is: what, if any, is the international legal framework within which public diplomacy is, and should be, conducted? Is there a higher normative context—a set of principles—that both inspires and constrains practitioners of public diplomacy, that both elevates and guides them? In short, does public diplomacy have a

conscience, a shared sense of right, a “normative ecosystem,” a collective ethos that influences those engaged in it?

My interrogation of the subject in what follows will proceed in five interrelated steps. The first will be to present the term *public diplomacy*, recounting briefly its origins and explicating its historically evolved meaning, and how it became governmentally established.

A second step will be to describe the range of public diplomacy activity and review major changes that have occurred within it, and also how the incidence and role of public diplomacy can vary with country size.

The third and central step is to examine the legal-normative bases and also some of the organizational foundations on which public diplomacy is, and arguably should be, conducted—both nationally and internationally.

The fourth step will be to identify the challenges within structures of the existing international political system and also in today's global communications space that complicate, and may even counteract, the progressive development of public diplomacy.

My fifth and final step is to consider current responses to these challenges, to gauge their possible effectiveness, and to suggest corrections and contributions that could be made in the conduct of public diplomacy that would strengthen the international legal order, foster comity among nations, and promote human enlightenment.

### *Origins and Meaning*

The term *public diplomacy*, as it is commonly used today by the American and other governments, originated with

---

*Does public diplomacy have a conscience, a shared sense of right, a "normative ecosystem," a collective ethos that influences those engaged in it?*

---

the establishment in 1965 of the Edward R. Murrow Center for the Study and Advancement of Public Diplomacy at The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, whose dean at the time was Edmund A. Gullion. A professional diplomat, Gullion had served during the Kennedy Administration as U.S. ambassador to what is now known as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which at the time had just become independent of Belgium. He is known to have said that he might have used the word *propaganda* (instead of *public diplomacy*) for the Center he was establishing, but for the strong negative connotations of the former—then and now associated primarily with the work of German minister Joseph Goebbels but whose origins go further back to work of the Catholic Church in the Counter Reformation period (of which Gullion no doubt was aware). I suspect, therefore, that the doctrinal implication of the word could also have been a deterrent to his using it. The identification of 'public diplomacy' with propaganda has been very stubborn. It is a repurposing of a term that sometimes had been

used for describing "what Russian diplomats did," as an expert on the history of the subject Matthew Armstrong observes. For Geoffrey Berridge, a traditionalist scholar of diplomacy, public diplomacy is "the modern name for white propaganda"—distinguishable from the black variety for being essentially truthful and for "admitting its source."

As for the origin of the term *public diplomacy*, Nicholas Cull's careful analysis from 2006 "bears out," as he says, "that Gullion was the first to use the phrase in its modern meaning." He found, when doing a word-search, that the phrase itself first appeared in the *London Times* in 1856. In that context its meaning was, essentially, just civility—whether in international or in domestic speech. "The statesmen of America must recollect," the *Times* suggested, referring to U.S. President Franklin Pierce, "that, if they have to make, as they conceive, a certain impression upon us, they have also to set an example for their own people, and there are few examples so catching as those of public diplomacy."

With the arrival a half century later of Woodrow Wilson as the U.S. president, the term "public diplomacy" took on a broadly

systemic meaning, indicating almost a new philosophy of international relations. There were to be no exclusive alliances or secret agreements, he argued. Governments' intentions and policies would be straightforwardly and honestly declared—and in public. Wilson's concept was most memorably expressed in the first of his Fourteen Points outlined before a Joint Session of the U.S. Congress on 8 January 1918: "Open covenants of peace openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind, but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view." As the principal U.S. negotiator at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, however, Wilson's actual methods were of necessity a mixture of private, even secret, and public diplomacy.

The idealism of the Wilsonian conception of diplomacy continued in the 1920s with U.S. sources stressing the moral duty of the news media to report international affairs accurately and dispassionately, with the aim of reducing tensions. In the inaugural edition of *Foreign Affairs*, which was published in 1922, former U.S. Secretary of State Elihu Root wrote an essay titled "A Requisite for the Success of

Popular Diplomacy” in which he argued that “war is essentially a popular business.” So, too, should be diplomacy, “if democracies are to conduct their own destinies.” It thus is important, Root added,

that the democracy which is undertaking to direct the business of diplomacy shall learn the business. The controlling democracy must acquire a knowledge of the fundamentals and essential facts and principles upon which the relations of nations depend. Without such a knowledge there can be no intelligent discussion and consideration of foreign policy and diplomatic conduct. Misrepresentation will have a clear field and ignorance and error will make wild work with foreign relations.

Thus, not only governments but also the journalist profession and the citizenry—the “public”—should know, or learn to know, what is diplomacy.

In the 1930s—partly owing to a remarkable generation of U.S. foreign correspondents—the American public did learn more of what was happening in the world, if not necessarily of the modalities of diplomacy itself. In this period, as well as during World War II, the term “public diplomacy” was seldom used, however. International communication then

largely was a battle of ideas, militantly expressed, by both sides. Wilsonian thinking was confined mostly to long-term planning for the better organization of a postwar world.

Despite a brief revival of the spirit of “open covenants of peace, openly arrived at” after World War II, when the United Nations Organization was being established, the rapid deterioration of relations between the Western powers and the Soviet Union changed the context of international public communication for the worse. The American columnist Walter Lippmann, who had been involved in opinion-influencing efforts in both World Wars, observed in November 1953 that some diplomats now “might argue that practice of public diplomacy and of propaganda and of psychological warfare had become such a plague” that key Soviet-American talks should be held in private. However, international public altercation, being easier, prevailed. Public diplomacy, as conducted in the debates at the UN, was losing its utility. UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, in an attempt to restore it, said in a 1958 address, that the “value of public diplomacy in the United Nations will depend to a decisive extent on how far the responsible spokesmen find

it possible to rise above a narrow tactical approach to the politics of international life, and to speak as men for aspirations and hopes which are those of mankind.”

As the foregoing shows, Gullion did not in a strict sense coin the term, but he did, however, institutionalize it—and not just at The Fletcher School itself. The term “public diplomacy” was picked up the American government, particularly within the United States Information Agency (USIA), an entity created in 1953 by the Eisenhower Administration. Further recognition of public diplomacy by official Washington came with the 1975 Report of the Panel on International Information, Education, and Cultural Relations chaired by CBS President Frank Stanton, whose preface stated that “public diplomacy is a central part of American foreign policy simply because the freedom to know is such an important part of America.” Through a process of emulation and bureaucratic replication, the term “public diplomacy” was adopted by other, mostly Western governments and also by NATO, which established a Public Diplomacy Division during this period, which directed its work mainly at the populations of its own membership. In the context of the U.S. State Department, the

older term “public affairs” (used to define its work of informing Americans and foreigners of U.S. policies and international relationships and actions) was kept. This category of diplomats stationed abroad are still known as Public Affairs Officers and they still work in Public Affairs Sections.

For technological and other reasons, the distinction between internal and external public communication has become blurred. For many countries, not only the smaller ones, the *domestic* aspect of public diplomacy—letting their people know of their diplomacy and its effects—can be almost as important as its international aspect. Diplomacy begins—and ends—at home, as the Polish scholar Katarzyna Pisarska emphasized in a 2016 book. Effective public diplomacy, known at home as well as abroad, can be a means of enhancing a nation’s self-identity, cohesive strength, and political unity.

The linguistic and organizational adoption of the idea of public diplomacy has seemed to fill a need. After a dozen years of its life, the United States Information Agency (USIA) needed a terminological update. Gullion’s innovative use of “public diplomacy,” Cull writes, “covered

every aspect of USIA activity and a number of the cultural and exchange functions jealously guarded by the Department of State.” The phrase “gave a respectable identity to the USIA career officer, for it was one step removed from the ‘vulgar’ realm of ‘public relations’ and by its use of the term ‘diplomacy’ explicitly enshrined the USIA alongside the State Department as a legitimate organ of American foreign relations.” The integration of the USIA into the State Department arguably has strengthened the diplomatic character of the public diplomacy practitioner. Public diplomacy now is formally one of the five career tracks of the United States Foreign Service. It has gained similar professional recognition within other ministries of foreign affairs, with public diplomacy officers on their less-specialized, and usually smaller, rosters. In recent years, however, with increased recognition of the need for ‘multifunctional competence’ in foreign ministries, public diplomacy is assumed to be a core competency of a multifunctional diplomatic service.

### Recent Changes and Variations

What, exactly, does a practitioner of public diplomacy do? There is no standard definition of the concept or of the function. It understandably has been called, as by the cultural diplomacy specialist Richard Arndt, a “portmanteau” phrase. Edmund Gullion’s own definition, as given in a Fletcher School brochure, is actually more of a description. It is rather good, as far as it goes: “Public diplomacy deals with the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies. It encompasses dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy; the cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries; the interaction of private groups in one country with another; the reporting of foreign affairs and its impact on policy; communication between those whose job is communication, as diplomats and foreign correspondents; and the process of intercultural communications.”

---

*In recent years, with increased recognition of the need for ‘multifunctional competence’ in foreign ministries, public diplomacy is assumed to be a core competency of a multifunctional diplomatic service.*

---

Public diplomacy, as Gullion personally knew and lived it, was not so much the organized international communications effort of an entire government as it was the individual performance of the nation’s authorized representative. He once described the diplomat as a “man of the occasion.” This encompassed not only the public ceremonial roles that a diplomat often performs but also the handling of extraordinary demands, including those of the media, in critical situations. A subsequent Fletcher School dean, Stephen W. Bosworth, served as American ambassador in the Philippines during its People Power Revolution of February 1986 and later in South Korea. During his deanship he also was U.S. President Barack Obama’s special representative for North Korea policy and Washington’s negotiator in the Six Party Talks on denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. Dealing with reporters about these matters was a regular part of his job. “I really do not know what ‘public diplomacy’ is,” he once said to me in conversation, adding, “the ambassador can do a lot.”

---

*What, exactly, does a practitioner of public diplomacy do? There is no standard definition of the concept or of the function.*

---

For many professional diplomats—not only the older ones or those at the ambassadorial level—public diplomacy is an aspect of *diplomacy itself*, not something separate from it. I myself am sympathetic to that view. Public diplomacy, nonetheless, has come to be understood as a distinct practice, with differentiated activities and roles within it. It has emerged as an academic field as well. A former senior Canadian career diplomat, Mark McDowell, who after serving as counselor for public diplomacy at Canada’s embassy in Beijing was appointed Canadian ambassador to Myanmar, has offered a graphic depiction of public diplomacy. At a Fletcher School conference in April 2008, he described a government’s public diplomacy activities as a pyramid that has three levels. At its peak, McDowell placed *advocacy*. This merits special comment, as “advocacy” is not one of the “functions” listed in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961).

While openly advocating for a government’s interests and positions of course is something that diplomats long have long done, the explicit adoption of “advocacy” as



a formally assigned task appears to be a Canadian innovation. In April 2004, Prime Minister Paul Martin announced the establishment of a public advocacy and legislative secretariat in Canada's embassy in Washington, DC. Its first head, as 'minister of advocacy', was Colin Robertson. He explained his job as involving a measure of agitation: "Advocacy is as much about getting attention as getting your message across. Get attention and your message follows." Such assertiveness may not be needed. As McDowell acknowledges, "advocacy can often be achieved by conventional diplomacy alone." Ministers, and ambassadors too, can usually be heard. However, public diplomacy can play "a supporting or leading role in advocacy by mobilizing popular support" in the target country (country B) and/or by "enlisting civil society from country A to make a more persuasive case." The Canadian government's coordinated effort, which in the end proved unsuccessful, to win American government agreement to the Ottawa Convention banning anti-personnel landmines is illustrative.

In McDowell's public diplomacy pyramid beneath "*advocacy*," which tends to be focused and short term, there is a second layer that he describes as "*relationship building*,"

which is broader and more diffuse. It includes the cultivation of ties with decisionmakers and opinion leaders as well as strategic networking with the various sectors of society. It is medium-term in its time horizon. The bottom layer of the pyramid is "*branding, programming, events*." These are the most "public" aspects of public diplomacy, encompassing cultural programs and academic exchanges along with special events like film festivals. The goal of this wider work of public diplomacy is familiarization, and even the occasional production of delight—cumulatively, a long-term effect, and a civilizing one.

As the foregoing basic description indicates, public diplomacy has become more operational. This is the result of its progressive institutionalization as a practice embedded in the expanding bureaucracies of governments, and also of rapid advances in the technology of communication including the digital revolution. "Digital diplomacy" now is being practiced by most of the world's governments.

With the disrupting spread of globalization and the fragmentation of the world political order that has been occurring, there are more and more centers of

consciousness, even of agency. The ease of communications has empowered these many centers—not only governments of sovereign states—to have a public diplomacy presence. For many, the smaller states especially, it is a matter of establishing and maintaining identity.

In a further graphical representation of the role of public diplomacy today, McDowell depicted three green-colored circles; a small one (S), a middle-sized one (M), and a large one (L), representing countries. Within each of the ovals he placed a red dot—somewhat like a pimiento pepper in a stuffed olive—representing the size of the country's public diplomacy apparatus. Naturally, the dot—the public diplomacy bureaucracy—'grows' with movement from smaller to larger country-circles, but *not* proportionately to the overall size of the country. The essential point is that for the world's many small states and also for middle powers, the importance the role of country's official public diplomacy apparatus may be *much* greater than for larger or more powerful countries with their bigger economies, open societies, heterogenous populations, and myriad diaspora and other links abroad.

What Hollywood or Bollywood, or Microsoft or Infosys, can do to project themselves internationally may at times eclipse what the American or Indian government's public diplomacy practitioners can do. But this raises another important question: Can private corporations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) participate in public diplomacy? Or is public diplomacy (and not just by lexical definition) *governmental*—inevitably and properly so?

The matter has long been, and remains, a matter of debate. Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, Jr.—early proponents of greater attention to the rise of 'transnational relations'—observed in a 1970 book that for most political scientists and for many diplomats "a state-centric view of world affairs prevails." Who 'owns' public diplomacy (as the question might be posed): the State or the People—in whose name diplomacy presumably is conducted, and who might wish to do it themselves?

The answer, in my view, depends on whether those various entities (companies, NGOs, affinity groups, and even individual persons) have a serious and well-considered interest in matters of international public policy—in actual rule-making and international

governance—and are actively engaged in advancing it, and are doing so publicly.

A more radical view is that of, for example, the sociologist Manuel Castells, author of *The Theory of the Network Society* (2006). In an essay titled “The New Public Sphere: Global Civil Society, Communication Networks, and Global Governance,” Castells, who envisions “de facto global governance without a global government,” logically contends that public diplomacy is, quite simply, “the diplomacy of the public.” That public diplomacy is, or should be, “People’s Diplomacy” is rhetorically attractive. It is not merely utopian. For Americans especially, from the time of Benjamin Franklin through the Revolution, foreign policy has been appropriately understood as being that of the People, not of the State. What this concept—the republican ideal—should require, however, is that the People (general public) themselves, as Elihu Root urged back in 1922, learn what diplomacy—informed and civilized discourse, premised on mutual respect, about larger issues of public policy, both between societies and within them—actually is. To learn the business, and engage responsibly in it.

### *Normative-Legal Bases and Organizational Foundations*

This brings me to the central question of whether there is an existing international normative framework for public diplomacy, or whether it takes place in a moral void. A starting point is the Charter of the United Nations (1945), a document that expresses in its Preamble the determination of “THE PEOPLES” of the United Nations “to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours,” and “to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest.”

The organizational structure of the UN itself, when established, was a mechanism for peace. The historically older institution of diplomacy was given newly codified form by the UN Conference on Diplomatic Intercourse and Immunities, which was held in Vienna in 1961. Although negotiated during a period of high East-West tension, the resulting Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (VCDR) has stood the test of time remarkably well.

The text of the VCDR expressed a belief that the Convention would “contribute to the development of friendly relations among nations, irrespective of their differing constitutional and social systems.” More concretely, Article 3(1) on The Functions of a Diplomatic Mission includes on its list, as the final item: “Promoting friendly relations between the sending State and the receiving State, and developing their economic, cultural and scientific relations.” While a “function” is not a mandate, the verb “promote” and adjective “friendly” are dynamic and positive in meaning, and connote an intention, if not an obligation.

That being said, there is nothing in the VCDR about communicating with the public—i.e., public diplomacy. At the time, amidst the Cold War, such openness would hardly have been generally welcomed. Still, Article 27 of the VCDR requires the receiving State to “permit and protect free communication on the part of the mission for all official purposes,” with the further provision that “in communicating with the Government and the other missions and consulates of the sending State, wherever situated, the mission may employ all appropriate means, including diplomatic couriers and messages in code or cipher. However, the mission may

install and use a wireless transmitter only with the consent of the receiving State.”

This last provision touches upon the International Telecommunication Convention (1932), which accords host governments supervisory authority over the use of wireless facilities located within their territories. As a leading scholar of diplomatic law, Eileen Denza, points out in her 2016 book, that VCDR provision reflected anxiety within some delegations that “diplomatic wireless” might lead to radio broadcasting which, if done from within the space of the host country, could much more easily reach its domestic population than the state of technology at the time permitted. During the Cold War, Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) were located on the Western side of the Iron Curtain, in Munich. A further provision of the VCDR that carries a potential for restricting a sending state’s exercise of public diplomacy is Article 11, which allows the receiving state to “require that the size of a diplomatic mission be kept within limits considered by it to be reasonable and normal”—a plausible legal basis for the expulsion, without needed explanation, of members of an embassy or consulate. When this occurs, it can lead to the well-known pattern of “tit

for tat” retaliation by the sending state. Although a negative rather than a positive expression of reciprocity, it is an effective means—a “diplomatic” means—of enforcing the VCDR, and has helped to give it endurance.

More broadly and less technically, when considering the “normative ecosystem” within which public diplomacy is practiced, one should note the language of the founding document of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). In the Preamble to its 1945 Constitution, the participating states parties, on behalf of their peoples, declare “that a peace based exclusively upon political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace that could secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world, and that the peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.” Accordingly, “believing in full and equal opportunities for education for all, in the unrestricted pursuit of objective truth, and in the free exchange of ideas and knowledge,” the states parties “are agreed and determined to develop and to increase the means of communication between their peoples,” and, in consequence, “create the United

Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.” UNESCO was assigned the lead role for the UN system in what one of its later documents calls “the dialogue among civilizations and cultures,” a multi-faceted programmatic effort aimed at “attaining justice, equality and tolerance in people-to-people relationships.” Without using the name, this is an ambitious multilateral commitment and undertaking in public diplomacy.

Especially noteworthy as well in the present context is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Article 19 of which articulates the norms of intellectual freedom and unrestricted access to information. It reads: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media or regardless of frontiers.”

Two years earlier, the principle of “freedom of information” had been recognized by the UN General Assembly, when in December 1946 it adopted Resolution 59, titled “Calling for an International Conference on Freedom of Information.” This document called “freedom of information” a “fundamental human right,” which in turn

“implies the right to gather, transmit and publish news anywhere and everywhere. The same document defined this right to be an “essential factor in any serious effort to promote the peace and progress of the world,” which “requires as a basic discipline the moral obligation to seek the facts and to spread knowledge without malicious intent.” Factuality and benignity thus were made imperative.

The freedom of information principle is embedded in many international legal instruments, including regional ones. One example is the Council of Europe’s European Convention on Human Rights (1950), whose implementation is overseen by the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. Another is the Helsinki Final Act (1975), which is the basis of the existence of the OSCE. Within its so-called Third Basket, under the heading Information, there is recognition of the importance of “the dissemination of information” from participating states and of “the better acquaintance with such information” within them, with a specific emphasis on “the essential and influential role of the press, radio, television, cinema and news agencies of the journalists working in those fields.” Cooperation between such entities working in the field of information on the basis

of “short or long term agreements or arrangements” is expressly encouraged.

Considering the close, even symbiotic, relationship that diplomats can have with foreign correspondents, as Edmund Gullion experienced professionally and noted in his description of “public diplomacy,” one may conclude that the 1975 Helsinki documents—a goal of which was more openness of diplomatic interaction in East-West relations—are part of a normative, even legal, framework for public diplomacy, still today.

### *Contemporary Challenges*

The most fundamental challenge to the unconstrained practice of public diplomacy is the structure of the international political system itself—its interstate character, the segmentation of the globe by borders. As political scientist David Held observes in *Democracy and the Global Order* (1995), “territorial boundaries demarcate the basis on which individuals are included in and excluded from participation in decisions affecting their lives (however limited that participation might be) [...]. The implications of this are considerable.” One implication of this divided jurisdictional reality is that

it is usually through diplomacy—including public diplomacy, that decisionmaking in other countries can be influenced, whether in support of “democracy” or for any other positive, or negative, purpose. As McDowell reminds us, “public diplomacy is by nature transparent, but it cannot be contrasted with traditional diplomacy as an activity which by definition serves only good ends.”

The present international legal order, which mirrors the political map (whose pattern it has helped to shape), is a further constraint on international communication, notably anything that could be deemed “interference” in the internal affairs of sovereign states. Article 2, paragraph 7, of the UN Charter lays down this limiting condition clearly, with the exception of possible collective-security action:

Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state or shall require Members to submit such matters to settlement under the present Charter; but this principle shall not prejudice the application of enforcement measures under Chapter VII.

Only if and when a majority of the 15 members the Security

Council, including its five (veto-holding) permanent members, decide upon enforcement measures, can “intervention” in a country’s internal affairs be considered legally valid—however ‘legitimate’ it, nonetheless, might be viewed by much of the world.

Article 2(7) of the UN Charter also provides member states with a normative justification for resistance to outside influences and pressures, including those that might be exerted by means and methods of public diplomacy. Article 2(7) is reinforced by the UN Charter’s Article 51, which recognizes “the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence”—an inalienable right of self-help that cannot be impaired, except as a result of a Security Council decision to authorize “measures necessary to maintain international peace and security.”

More immediate challenges to the exercise of public diplomacy are many. Some of them are not new. First of all, there is *jamming*. The Soviet government during the Cold War jammed broadcasts, not sent directly from the United States but from Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty from transmitters located in West Germany, as noted above. The Voice of America, also sometimes

jammed, was popular in the Soviet Union, partly because of its jazz program hosted by Willis Conover, a long-time VOA contractor with a slow delivery and accessible English.

The Voice of America, a basic purpose of which was to *counter* propaganda, may have seemed to listeners in the Eastern bloc somewhat propagandistic itself, but less so than RFE and RL, which arguably were aimed at liberation (its role in agitating Hungarians to rise up in 1956, with the implicit promise of concrete Western assistance and even intervention, has been well-documented). Jamming by Moscow continued for many years, despite agreed-upon language in the Helsinki Accords supporting the “expansion of the dissemination of information broadcast by radio.” The Soviet government regarded jamming as a legally justified response to Western broadcasts that it considered contrary to the Accords’ purpose of meeting “the interest of mutual understanding among peoples and the aims set forth by the Conference,” as one formulation described it. Moscow also held that the Accords required only the facilitation of the flow of information, not the implementation of it. During the current Russia-Ukraine war, both sides are jamming each other’s communications.

A novel legal question arose during the 1994 civil violence in Rwanda, partly incited by Radio Télévision Libre du Milles Collines (RTL), as to whether jamming could be internationally authorized, on humanitarian grounds, as a collective counter to “genocide.” The question has not been resolved.

Then there is *physical violence* against diplomatic facilities themselves, such as occurred with the student demonstrators’ takeover of the U.S. embassy during the Iranian revolution in 1979 and, more recently, with the Taliban victory in Afghanistan, which led to the abandonment by the U.S. government of most of its assets there. The *blocking of websites* is a more calculated obstructive measure, favored by some governments (e.g., North Korea and China, with its ‘Great Firewall’ of censorship). It is a practice as well of the Russian government, which also limits access to information by the use of restrictive *regulation and licensing*.

A more aggressive form of disruption is *hacking*—i.e., the unauthorized breaking-into of computer network security systems so as to gain control of them for illicit purposes, including the sowing of political confusion. Outright *disinformation* and its spread, by electronic and other



means, is an especially pernicious challenge to the norms of public diplomacy. At present, during the military conflict between Russia and Ukraine, a country supported by the United States and most other Western countries, this has amounted to *hybrid warfare*. The conscious spread of outright lies, conspiracy theories, and charges of “fake news” has entered in the realm of diplomacy. It is on this basis that some Western governments have justified blocking certain Russian websites.

As Nicholas Cull has wisely suggested, what we need is “disarmament” in the field of public diplomacy, similar to that developed earlier in the field of arms control, along with positive confidence-building measures. He contends that “just as an excess of conventional arms requires a disarmament process, so the weaponization of media should be met with an information disarmament process.” This will require responsible leadership, not only on the part of governments but also from within international society—the global public. The truthfulness of information must be protected. It also must be promoted. The more alert populations are to disinformation, the more likely such widespread awareness will engender corrective, and preventive, action by activists

along with authorities. Diplomacy itself, both official and unofficial, is a model and a means.

### *Effective Responses*

The final step in this exploration of the role of public diplomacy in the modern world—particularly the legal and normative context in which public diplomacy, in its many manifestations, is being conducted—I must consider, first, defensive responses, aimed at the protection of information and networks through which it is increasingly being communicated. This must be undertaken initially at the domestic level, by national governments.

The United States during the Biden Administration, for example, has given high priority to cybersecurity, which is the designated responsibility of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA). At the regional level, the EU also has acted firmly, with the establishment of the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA) and, through the passage of the European Union Cybersecurity Act, a strengthened Code of Practice on Disinformation. NATO has made Cyber Defense one of the Western military alliance’s core tasks of “collective defense.”

At the global level, too, efforts have been made to contribute to cybersecurity resilience. The International Telecommunication Union is now offering Cybersecurity Certificates through a training program. The UN Office of Counter-Terrorism conducts a Cybersecurity and New Technologies program. During its two-year existence, the ad hoc Global Commission on the Stability of Cyberspace, chaired initially by the Estonian diplomat Marina Kaljurand, worked to “promote stability in cyberspace to build peace and prosperity.” It defined a set of Principles with supplementary Norms, the first of which is non-interference with “the public core” of the internet, the general availability and integrity of which, it asserted, is essential to the stability of cyberspace.

There obviously is positive purpose as well in these protective efforts. This is not only to facilitate international communication but also to build trust and foster cooperation. The development and maintenance of *relationships* is the proper object of diplomacy, including public diplomacy. Too often it is just the defense and promotion of *interests*, national and even international, that is considered to be what diplomacy is for and mainly what diplomats do. Diplomacy—not just in the

conduct of negotiations—is inherently relational. It involves, more broadly, management of “relations of separateness,” as the diplomatic theorist Paul Sharp argued in a 2009 book.

This fundamental fact can be obscured by the current emphasis, almost a fashion, on “narrative.” The trend is especially evident in discussions of public diplomacy. A seminal study in 1999 by John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt of the RAND Corporation titled “The Emergence of Noopolitik: Toward an American Information Strategy” posited that it is no longer military or economic power that prevails in international competition. Rather, it is a matter of “whose story wins.” Such “stories,” while they can indeed be somewhat inclusive of others, are basically told from a single point of view—a nation’s, a government’s, or even an individual political leader’s perspective.

An example of the foregoing is the narrative that the current Russian leader, Vladimir Putin, is telling about the origin of Russia as lying within present-day Ukraine, which he does not consider to be “a real country.” Ukraine, of course, has its own narrative, which has been greatly strengthened by the invasion of its territory by the Russian army on 26 February 2022. Although clearly it

was the Russia side that made the first, aggressive move, the Russian government has represented its action as “defense” against the expansion of NATO, which it claims amounts to a “defense” of Russia itself.

This continues a line of argument developed by the Russian government during the Crimean crisis of 2014. A one-sided narrative such as this, if backed by power, can be bought into and bolstered by others who, for their own reasons, may choose to accept (if not believe) it as truth. Thus, at a three-way summit in Tehran in July 2022 at which the Iranian supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, met with Putin and Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and reportedly said to Putin: “War is a violent and difficult endeavor, and the Islamic Republic is not at all happy that people are caught up in war. But in the case of Ukraine, if you had not taken the helm, the other side would have done so and initiated a war.” Khamenei also spoke of NATO as a “dangerous entity,” adding that “if the road is clear for NATO, they know no boundaries or limits.” The Russian narrative of the war’s causation thus was, by this addition, not only confirmed, but was augmented. Thus,

---

*Narrative and power are closely related. The former can be a cover for the latter—its presence or its absence.*

---

built upon by Iran, the Russian “story” of preemptive defense was internationally stronger.

The Iranian government does have a basis for complaint. Along with the severe economic sanctions being applied to Iran by the United States and its NATO allies, there evidently has been a disruptive social media campaign being directed against it. The White House, concerned about decisions by Facebook and Twitter to remove, as ostensibly “coordinated inauthentic behavior,” some accounts attributable to the Trans-Regional Web Initiative of the Defense Department, instructed the Pentagon to conduct a review. The White House concern, as reported by the *New York Times* in September 2022, was that “clandestine programs could undermine American credibility even if the material being pushed was accurate.” The top Pentagon spokesman, Brig. Gen. Patrick Ryder, said that it was the Department of Defense’s policy to conduct information operations in support of “national security priorities.” He further stated that “these activities must be undertaken in compliance with U.S. law and [Department of Defense] policy.

We are committed to enforcing those safeguards.”

The very fact of the White House concern and the Pentagon audit being reported (first by the *Washington Post*) increased the likelihood of stories told abroad by the Pentagon henceforth being both authentic and accurate, if not also governed by international norms.

### *Overcoming Dangers*

Narrative and power are closely related. The former can be a cover for the latter—its presence or its absence. In the lexicon of diplomacy, in my judgment, the word “power,” even in the benign term “soft power,” is badly out of place. In international as well as interpersonal relationships, if they are genuine, the word rarely is mentioned, whatever inequalities there actually may be within them. True relationships involve dialogic interaction, continuous two-way conversation. Thereby facts are tested, and truth is determined as well.

As Edward R. Murrow said when he headed the USIA, “truth is the best propaganda.” Public diplomacy, if there is a too-heavy emphasis on “messaging,” can devolve into monologue, even solipsism. This is a danger, too, in the current focus on ‘narrative,’ which may be interesting,

but not actually engaging. The emphasis of public diplomacy, as with diplomacy generally, should be on engendering cooperation.

That is possible. There is an existing framework for it: the international legal order. Principles relating to the flow of ideas and information that are found in the UN Charter, the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, the UNESCO Constitution, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights, the Helsinki Final Act, and also some of the functionally-focused transgovernmental regulatory regimes can be seen to provide partial answers to the question of the existence of a normative framework for public diplomacy. So, too, can national legislation and actual and proposed measures to control the scope and content of state media and government influence operations.

The more that publicly sponsored international communication, as well as policy-oriented ‘transnational’ communication—whether by private corporations, NGOs, academic institutions, or interested individuals—is guided, even inspired, by international law and the higher principles and norms surrounding it, the more likely it is that cooperation will result, and the planet (as well as the people on it) will benefit. **BD**

# PASHA Holding at Glance



**Leading investment company and ecosystem builder**

Credible strategic investor promoting capital-efficient investments in non-oil industries of Azerbaijan and the region

Enriching customer experience via building the first ecosystem of products and solutions in the country

Consistently ranked as one of the top employers of choice

The first multi-profile private holding to implement Agile methodology across the group



**Talent oriented organization**



**Innovative approach**

Implementation of innovative and technology-driven business solutions

Supporting the local start-up ecosystem through various programs to further enhance our Ecosystem

Investing in global technology themes to be at the forefront of latest trends

Environmentally conscious

Support to education, health, sport, and social projects

Support to small family businesses



**Socially responsible**



## Continuing to support our communities



### Build Your Future project

Over 300 students from disadvantaged families including 5 people with disabilities have received support in preparation for university admission and social integration

90% of the students have been admitted to higher educational institutions



### Sweet Gold project

530 small household businesses established in our pipeline communities

110,000 nectar trees planted for bee-breeding

73 tons of honey extracted by beneficiaries in 2018-2020, with total sales of over \$500,000

Find out more on [www.bp.com/azerbaijan](http://www.bp.com/azerbaijan)





# War, Peace, and Law

*Miguel Ayuso*

We are going to deal with peace in relation to law in the broad context of the Western philosophic tradition, presented in these pages through a traditional Catholic prism rooted in what one can characterize as Thomistic realism. Naturally, when defining peace, war appears by comparison or opposition. And, naturally, it is therefore also necessary to deal with war in some detail in order to contribute to a better definition of peace.

First of all, some doubt arises about this relationship. For if peace is—in St. Augustine’s definition—the tranquillity of order, it is not only the absence of war, but something positive: order, hierarchy, harmony, etc. But if, on the other hand, it is the neutralization of conflict, as Italian academician Danilo Castellano says, that war must somehow make its presence

felt again, even if its disappearance is postulated.

We shall deal briefly with both in what follows, concluding with a reminder of “just war” and a conclusion on “just peace.”

## *Modernity and War*

Modernity, which wanted to flee from the civil war of the state of nature, has ended up producing and deepening it to the point of opening up a permanent civil war. Modern political thought, in its postmodern evolution, has ended up, in effect, in the “war of all against all,” that is to say, in the “state of nature,” which is precisely that from which it sought to escape through the establishment of the “social contract”—a kind of fatal circle from which it is only possible to escape by recovering the sense of

*Miguel Ayuso is Professor of Political Science and Constitutional Law at Comillas Pontifical University, President of the Council for Hispanic Studies Felipe II, and President of the Political Science Research Group of the International Federation of Catholic Universities. In 2009, he was elected President of the International Union of Catholic Jurists, a position he held until 2019. He is the author of more than 30 academic books and 500 articles. The views expressed in this essay are his own.*

human community in which political concord and the common good occupy a central position.

There is, indeed, a diamantine link between modernity and war, despite the disguise of “fraternity,” updated as “solidarity”—and both in the historical (or existential) and the doctrinal order. In the former, since it is not in vain that its political embodiment, the (modern) state, appeared in the sixteenth century as a reaction to overcome the anarchy provoked in some European peoples by the wars of religion. And in the latter, since Thomas Hobbes founded it on the flight from what he called the fear of violent death.

A curious “heterogenesis of ends” sprung up, whose cause lies in sovereignty and contract—or, rather, in a sovereignty based on the instrument of contract: sovereignty, linked to Jean Bodin’s explanation, only finds its true meaning through the construction outlined by Hobbes. Thus, of the two doctrinal roots at the beginning of the great revolution, the first (the French one) only spread through the second (the English one), since sovereignty, before its contractualist instrumentation, appeared too closely

linked to Roman law and the political tradition that flowed from it. The reason, as is not difficult to imagine, lies in the emptying of the communal substance produced by the contract, through which a supposedly “pure” power is reaffirmed that, left to its *hybris*, can only become impure in the long run.

Hobbes is the true father of modern politics in the West, even if for a time his children were ashamed of him, for the supporters of parliament reproached him for his absolutism, while the defenders of royal power did not accept his ungodly rationalist assumptions. Indeed, on a sensist, materialist, and contractual basis, he had arrived at the thesis apparently most opposed to political liberalism, namely, the justification at all costs of state absolutism as a necessary means for men, free by nature, to avoid their mutual extermination.

In John Locke’s wake—although he erased the traces—he also upheld the contractual origin of political power and the need for *consensus* in order to “live better.”

This expression and concept have a naturalistic, i.e., a “de-sacralized” meaning: the power thus created is not something

*Peace must overcome war as silence overcomes words, for to be silent is not the same as being mute.*



like a great and all-powerful living being (as in Hobbes's *Leviathan*), arising from the terror of all in the state of nature, but rather a conditioned and revocable power, always accessible to the will of those governed by it and in no way to be feared by them.

Hence—although less coherent and solid than Hobbes—Locke will be more successful in the future of political science as a representative of the rationalist and liberal current that seeks to understand society as a human artefact resulting from the reason and will of men and by no means natural—at least in the traditional sense of the term that conceives nature as the work and expression of the divine will. According to this theory, writes philosopher Rafael Gamba, by submitting and obeying political power, man only obeys himself, his objectified reason and will. Neither Hobbes's *Great Man* nor *Leviathan*, which annuls the individual will that engendered it, nor the universal fatherhood of kings (Sir Robert Filmer's thesis), which destroys any idea of *consensus* and demands unconditional obedience, are, for Locke, real or acceptable conclusions: a well-balanced social contractualism can lead, on the other hand, to a liberal conception of

sovereignty, useful to the public good and to the appropriate limitation of power.

Then came Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who attracted the greatest support at the time of the triumph of the French Revolution. But in the long run, as we see today, the temperate provided by Locke is returning. In any case, the scheme will remain substantially unchanged: between it and that of classical political philosophy, there is an impassable chasm.

Classical political philosophy always thought of human society as a true *community* rather than a mere *coexistence* (or *society*, strictly speaking)—to borrow the distinction coined at the end of the nineteenth century by the German thinker Ferdinand Tönnies—between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gessellschaft* as ways of explaining sociological bonding. Indeed, human society is first and foremost a community, for it recognizes religious and natural (and not merely conventional or covenanted) origins; it possesses not only voluntary-rational, but also emotional and attitudinal internal bonds; it is thus primarily a “society of duties,” with a nexus of a very different nature from that of the “society of rights”

that is born of contract and conscious purpose. Communities are, then, realities in a certain sense prior to the individual, who does not constitute them voluntarily, but encounters, accepts, and recognizes them.

The contractualists, on the other hand, in contrast to the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition of man as a “political animal,” started from the isolated individual: they separated man from his relations with God, with his fellows, and with the universe around him; they abstracted him, as if he were an asocial being, from all natural community and transferred him to his origins—to an imaginary state of nature; but, not content with that, they dissected him, and, just as they had stripped him of all natural sociability, they disregarded his reason, to choose from among his passions a single one that they considered the most powerful: the “fear of death” (Hobbes), the “right to property” (Locke), or “natural liberty” (Rousseau).

But can human coexistence worthy of the name be based on purely legal, voluntary, consensual, and contractual ties? For a long

---

*Can human coexistence worthy of the name be based on purely legal, voluntary, consensual, and contractual ties?*

---

time, during the phase of construction and affirmation of the modern state (a journey from monarchical “absolutism” to the “social state”), this

theoretical explanation, however influential it may have been in practice, did not manage to eliminate the communitarian elements until, that is, the emergence of pluralism in the dissolution phase of statehood as it had been traditionally understood. In the presence of pluralism and its “values,” the “American” response is that of neutralizing the conflict that lies at the heart of what were, until very recently, the institutions.

### *The Paradox of Permanent Civil War in the Realm of Pacifism*

In any case, and despite this surprising connection, what is certain is that our times are characterized by the nominal rejection of war and the ideological triumph of pacifism. On this point, it is necessary to refer to the thinking of Álvaro d'Ors, one of the twentieth century's foremost scholars of Roman law.

He begins by pointing out the relationship between peace and

war. Peace, as we all know, is a great good, but it presupposes the possibility of war, for it consists precisely in overcoming war. Just as the holy counsel to love one's enemy cannot be practiced if there is no enemy, so, too, if we exclude the reality of war, we cannot count on the joy of peace. Peace must overcome war as silence overcomes words, for to be silent is not the same as being mute. And therein lies the difference between the peacemaker who refrains from or ceases to make war possible and the pacifist who denies any possibility of it: the pacifist is not the one who knows how to keep silent but the one who reduces silence to dumbness.

If pacifism, on the one hand, promotes the ideological complex that leads to war (as we have already said), it is incapable, on the other hand, of excluding the reality of war, because—although it may be undesirable—it is absolutely ineliminable as a last resort in case of necessity, as a legitimate collective defense of a people. In fact—continues d'Ors—all the universal and solemn proclamations of pacifism (such as those that abounded after 1945), have not prevented wars from

continuing unceasingly, and wars were maintained in practice more or less directly by the very preachers of pacifism (who are often at the same time the manufacturers and sellers of arms).

May the reader forgive me for recalling an anecdote that illustrates this last point, which I think is worth mentioning. After the Spanish Constitution was adopted in 1978, the military criminal and procedural laws, which had previously been included—together with the disciplinary laws—in a comprehensive code, such as the 1945 Code of Military Justice, had to be modified. The reason was none other than the provisions of Article 117.5 of the aforementioned Constitution: “The law shall regulate the exercise of military jurisdiction in the strictly military sphere and in cases of state of siege, in accordance with the principles of the Constitution.” When it came to revising the criminal laws, another problem was added, also derived from another constitutional provision: “The death penalty is abolished, except as may be provided for in the military criminal laws for times of war” (Article 15).

---

*The reality of war is absolutely ineliminable as a last resort in case of necessity, as a legitimate collective defense of a people.*

---

Initially, in the drafting of the 1984 Military Criminal Code, which replaced the criminal part of the 1945 Code, the death penalty was retained, although never as the only penalty, but as an alternative for some particularly serious offenses and, always, of course, in wartime. As long as the procedural rules on the execution of sentences of the old Code were in force until 1988, when they were replaced by the Military Procedure Act, there would have been no problem with the possible imposition of the death penalty. From the entry into force of the latter, however, things changed because it did not foresee any procedure for its execution and because the principle of criminal legality (enshrined in Article 25 of the Constitution) integrates the guarantee of execution together with criminal, penal, and judicial guarantees. In other words, sentences must be executed in accordance with the legally established procedure.

But how can this be done in the absence of such a procedure? The fact is that its omission from the Military Procedural Law was not due to a defect in legislative technique; it was, rather, done deliberately. Within the committee set up in the Ministry of Defense to prepare the draft bill—which

was partly made up of officers from the Military Legal Corps, some of whom were competent—the problem was pointed out by some of them, who received the mocking reply from the then Deputy Secretary of Defense that “the time of war had passed.”

Thus, since 1988, it would not have been possible to impose a penalty that had a constitutional and legal basis. Logic led to the removal of the penalty from the Code when it was reformed in 1995. However, a greater step had been taken before that, when Spain ratified the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 1991, which aimed to abolish the death penalty, having been adopted by the UN General Assembly on 15 December 1989. This would prevent, despite constitutional authorization, the reintroduction of the death penalty in military criminal legislation.

We have dwelt on the above because it is evidence, on the one hand, of an ideology that denies the reality of war, while on the other hand, it is evidence too of the consequences of pacifism, which leads to the abolition of the death penalty, and which fundamentally weakens the basis for the imposition of any penalty.

Let us continue, then, with pacifism. In another text, Professor d’Ors himself asks: “What is pacifism? Pacifism is the negation of the right to war, but what is peace? Peace is the abstention from war. And refraining from something is not the same as denying its existence. It is not the same to abstain prudently from too much wine as to try to exterminate the vineyards. It is not the same thing to keep silent when silence should be kept as to impose absolute silence; it is not the same thing not to look as to be blinded.”

There is thus a correlation between pacifism and the negation, not of war, but of the right to war. Pacifism does not eliminate war; it debases it. There is a correlation between pacifism and the negation, not of war, but of the right to war. Pacifism does not eliminate war; it debases it. It has thus devalued the traditional law of war, starting with the distinction (classic among theologians, jurists, and theologian-jurists of yesteryear) between just war and unjust war. Where “just” did not refer to a vague adaptation to moral sentiments (which can

---

*There is a correlation between pacifism and the negation, not of war, but of the right to war. Pacifism does not eliminate war; it debases it.*

---

and often are very subjective) but to the objective principles of the law of war. That is why one could speak of a “just enemy,” who is the one who can wage war according to the rules of public international law (which is the law of war and peace), supplemented by other rules of moral theology.

The consequence of the (theoretical) elimination of war and the law of war has been that wars (not governed by law and morality) are now much more cruel and inhumane than before, and, moreover, that dirty wars, waged by unjust enemies, such as partisanship or terrorism—a typical product (says d’Ors) of the ruin of the law of war—have proliferated.

Hence it is often said that terrorism is the normal price of democracy. But that is not all. For pacifism, after causing (or at least enabling) terrorism, disturbs the correct understanding of it, relegating it to the realm of criminality, handing its repression over to the police and judges, when the terrorist is a (non-just) enemy rather than a criminal and should therefore be treated militarily like any other enemy.

### *Just War?*

In the face of pacifism, which does not conceive of just war, this was one of the great themes that Hispanic theologians dealt with extensively, following in the footsteps of St. Thomas Aquinas, the Common Doctor of all the Schools. It is a subject that continues to arouse the interest of scholars to this day.

The synthesis of St. Thomas Aquinas is, as always, extraordinary, and revolves around three conditions.

The first is the “authority of the prince under whose command war is made.” For, “it is not for the private individual to declare war, since he can assert his right in a higher court; nor is the private individual competent to summon the community, which is necessary to wage war.” Now, “since the care of the republic has been entrusted to the princes, it is up to them to defend the public good of the city, kingdom, or province under their authority.” Well then, “just as they lawfully defend it with the material sword against internal disturbers, punishing evildoers, so it is incumbent on them to defend the public good with the sword of war against external enemies.” This is

followed by “just cause,” that is, “that those who are attacked deserve it for some cause.” Finally, it is required that the “intention of the disputants is right”—that is, Aquinas specifies, “an intention to promote good or to prevent evil.” It may happen, however, that, although the authority of the one who declares war is legitimate and the cause is just, “it is nevertheless unlawful because of the evil intention.”

This doctrine is the one that Spanish Scholasticists (Francisco de Vitoria and Francisco Suárez in the first place) elaborated in response to the new circumstances produced in the context of the discovery, conquest, and evangelisation of the Americas. And it is the one that has become the most recent doctrine of the Catholic Church.

In order to show its continuity up to the present day, despite the gravitation of the pacifism we have dealt with above, let us look at a text from the Second Vatican Council:

War has not, of course, been uprooted from humanity. As long as the risk of war exists and there is no competent international power equipped with effective means, once all the peaceful resources of diplomacy have been exhausted, governments cannot be denied the right

of legitimate self-defense. It is the duty of the Heads of State and of all those who hold the office of government to protect the security of the peoples entrusted to their care by acting with the utmost responsibility in so grave a matter.

Closer still to us is the Catechism of the Catholic Church, where the traditional doctrine on the conditions of just war (and of civil war, in particular) is collected in different numbers. Although the reason for this dislocation is not apparent, and although the reference to self-defense only appears clearly in the former, both modalities (international and civil war) are covered by this concept.

In the first (n. 2309) we read:

The strict conditions for *legitimate defense by military force* must be rigorously considered. The gravity of such a decision subjects it to rigorous conditions of moral legitimacy. It is necessary at the same time (1) that the damage caused by the aggressor to the nation or community of nations is lasting, serious, and certain; (2) that all other means of ending the aggression have proved impracticable or ineffective; (3) that serious conditions for success are met; (4) that the use of arms does not involve evils and disorders more

serious than the evil it is intended to eliminate. The power of modern means of destruction requires extreme caution in assessing this condition. These are the traditional elements listed in the so-called “just war” doctrine. The appreciation of these conditions of moral legitimacy belongs to the prudent judgment of those in charge of the common good.

While the second (n. 2243) reads:

*Resistance* to the oppression of those who govern cannot legitimately resort to arms except when the following conditions are met: (1) in case of certain, serious, and prolonged violations of fundamental rights; (2) after all other remedies have been exhausted; (3) without provoking worse disorders; (4) if there is well-founded hope of success; (5) if it is impossible to reasonably foresee better solutions.

If the above applies to the *ius ad bellum*, the Catechism does not fail to incorporate some considerations regarding the *ius in bello*. Thus, the following limitations appear, which must be extended to civil wars: respect for prisoners, including the wounded (n. 2313); respect for human groups as such, i.e., the condemnation of genocide (n. 2313); and the indiscriminate destruction of populations (n. 2314).

Thus, it seems that in principle, just war is defensive war, as a modality of legitimate defense—an institution of divine-natural law—that can be exercised by individuals when they are unjustly attacked, but also collectively by peoples. Álvaro d’Ors writes that the relationship between this natural principle and war is so inseparable that, as war has been discredited by pacifist propaganda, the legitimate self-defense of individuals has also been forgotten, and it is a regrettable fact that the courts of justice today condemn those who defend themselves legitimately with much greater severity than they do the aggressor. To such an extent has the notion of legitimate self-defense been lost today—another clear symptom of the legal crisis of our times—that it has come to be confused with the state of necessity, and therefore the horrendous crime of abortion has been justified as legitimate self-defense, when the case of necessity that can serve as a pretext for this crime never justifies killing anyone, but only property damage; forgetting also that the innocent human being to be born can in no way be considered the aggressor.

The Catholic Church’s doctrine, however, does not limit itself to recognizing defensive war as legitimate, but imposes such defense as a moral duty on the ruler,

who has the obligation to defend his people against aggression and incurs responsibility if he fails to do so. One might then ask, taking a further step, whether a war of aggression can be lawful and, beforehand, how to clearly differentiate defense from aggression. This naturally leads us to the field of preventive self-defense. For in some cases, preventive self-defense can be just. In this case, as Professor Castellano has cautiously written, the offensive measures taken by one state against another must be suitable for the annihilation of a people and must be current from the point of view of the threat. And the preventive defense must relate to the very existence of the people or to some of its vital interests, i.e., indispensable to its life.

Another problem—connected to the previous ones—that we cannot address in these lines but which should at least be noted, is that of intervention in the conflict of a third party. Modern international law was based on the dogma of the sovereignty and equality of states and, consequently, affirmed the doctrine of “non-intervention” in the internal affairs of another country. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, clearly rejected this, as shown by the 62<sup>nd</sup> proposition of Pope Pius IX’s 1864 *Pertiosa societatis, seditiosa, iuris publici et*



*gentium destructiva*. The reason, it seems to us, lies in the fact that it is the expression of liberalism in the international order.

However, the metamorphoses of modernity have nowadays led to a radical change in this question, to the point of affirming a “duty to interfere.” Can we therefore speak of a rapprochement in this area between the proponents of liberalism in international order with the position of the Catholic Church?

If we may be allowed a nod to diplomatic language, we could answer with a “yes” and a “no” simultaneously. Because, despite appearances, it is not a question of upholding the moral law as the indispensable and immutable foundation of the new international order or the return to a true Christianity in the state and between states. No, on the contrary, there is a radical-ization of liberalism from abstentionism to interventionism. But the motives, rationale, or authority—among other things—behind the interference are none other than those of a liberalism that has shed some of its restraints and hence has become more unrestrained.

### Just Peace

When dealing with peace, it is difficult not to look at it from the counterpoint of war. However, if we are to deal with the latter, it may be convenient to conclude by also looking at it in terms of the former. Indeed, if we consider peace as a “problem,” it must first of all be made clear that peace presupposes war and that, without an order of war, it is difficult to aspire to true peace.

So, finally, just peace has been envisaged. We ruled out above that peace was merely a neutralization of conflict. Still less, we can now add, that that peace is that which masks injustice or disorder. Peace is neither merely a neutralization of conflict nor that which masks injustice or disorder. It should be noted—to begin with—that we have not opposed the latter two terms, in the way that Goethe said he preferred injustice to order. The foregoing is a mistaken thesis because injustice is already disorder. But the fact is that destruction or death has been called peace on more than a few occasions. This is what Tacitus, summing up classical wisdom,

---

*Peace is neither merely a neutralization of conflict nor that which masks injustice or disorder.*

---

sentenced in an unappealable way: “They create deserts and call it peace.” And what the Bible, on the other hand, also expresses in a lapidary manner: “And they call such great evils peace.”

Christians believe that there is true peace only in the Kingdom of Christ, as was the motto of the pontificate of Pius XI, completing the intention of Pauline origin of his predecessor (close, though not immediate), St. Pius X, to “establish all things in Christ.” There can be no peace outside the Kingdom of Christ, which in turn elevates and perfects the natural order.

Peace is the subject of Pope Pius XII’s Christmas address to the Curia in 1940. In it we find listed the indispensable presuppositions for a new order after the war:

One: victory over hatred, which divides peoples, with the renunciation, therefore, of systems and practices from which hatred receives ever new nourishment. To this end, the Pope denounced the fact that in some countries there was, in fact, an unbridled propaganda that did not shrink from manifest distortions of the truth, showing, day by day and even hour by hour, to public opinion the opposing nations in a distorted and outrageous light.

But—he goes on—whoever truly desires the welfare of the people, whoever wishes to contribute to the preservation from incalculable harm of the spiritual and moral foundations of the future collaboration of peoples, must consider it a sacred duty and a high mission not to let the natural ideals of truthfulness, justice, courtesy, and cooperation for good, and, above all, the sublime supernatural ideal of brotherly love brought by Christ into the world, be lost in the minds of men.

Two: victory over distrust, which oppresses international law, making all true intelligence unrealizable. With a return, therefore, to the principle of *justitiae soror incorrupta fides* (Horace), to that fidelity in the observance of covenants without which no peaceful coexistence of peoples is possible, and above all, no coexistence of powerful peoples and weak peoples: “*Fundamentum autem est iustitiae fides, id est dictorum conventorumque constantia et veritas*” (Cicero).

Three: victory over the principle that utility is the basis and rule of law, that force creates law—a disastrous principle that renders all international relations inconsistent, with great harm coming especially to those states that, either because of their traditional loyalty to peaceful

methods or because of their lesser war potential, are unwilling or unable to fight with others. With the return, therefore, to a serious and profound morality in the rules of the consortium between nations, which obviously does not exclude either the search for an honest utility or an opportune and legitimate use of force to protect peaceful rights when they are violently challenged, or to repair injuries to them.

Four: victory over the seeds of conflict, which consist in excessive differences in the field of world economy. Therefore, progressive action, balanced by corresponding guarantees, to arrive at an organization that will give the means to all states to ensure to their own fellow citizens—of whatever class they may be—a suitable standard of living.

Five: victory over the spirit of cold selfishness, which, proud of its strength, easily ends up violating no less the honor and sovereignty of states than the just, healthy, and disciplined freedom of citizens. Instead, a sincere juridical and economic solidarity, a fraternal collaboration, according to the precepts of divine law, must be introduced between peoples, once

they are assured of their autonomy and independence. As long as the harsh necessities of war speak in the language of arms, it is difficult to expect any definitive action in the direction of restoring moral and legally imprescriptible rights.

What we have just transcribed offers some clues for the reconstruction of peace after the wound of war. It is true that, even at that time, Pope Pius XII was giving in to modern language with terms such as “state” (instead of “political community”) or “sovereignty” (instead of “kingship”). It is relevant to underline that the original language of that speech was Italian, and not Latin. Perhaps this is the reason that those words have been aggravated subsequently, to the point of going so far—in a document as important as the Catechism—as to speak of the “state” instead of referring to something like “legitimate public authority,” or of “human rights” (which Pius XII had translated in this case backwards by *humana iura*), amidst many other unfortunate turns of phrase. **BD**

**GƏNCLİYİNİ  
TAM YAŞA**

KEŞBEK DOSTU

seçilmiş  
əməliyyatlarda  
xüsusi keşbeklər

ABB | tam.





# SUSTAINABILITY at PMD



## APPROACH TO SUSTAINABILITY

PMD is committed to contributing and making progress toward the well-being of society. By incorporating the **UN's Sustainable Development Goals** into its sustainability strategy, PMD continuously enhances its **innovative solutions** and **positive influence**.

## CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

- Conducting all business operations in the standards of strict institutional procedures
- Having strong corporate culture and identity
- Creating a fair and safe environment for all employees

## SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Supporting education, health, sport, and other social projects
- Cooperating with several universities to train and recruit young talents
- Sponsoring sports competitions to promote a healthy lifestyle

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

- Environmentally conscious in all of its operations
- Having strong corporate culture and identity
- Supporting and organizing environmental projects



"Our Group, a leading global brand exhibiting regional growth, draws strength from Türkiye to develop great projects and investments with over 50 companies in a wide variety of businesses, including construction, energy, industrial, tourism, education, and culture."

[bakudialogues.ada.edu.az](http://bakudialogues.ada.edu.az)

[bakudialogues.ada.edu.az](http://bakudialogues.ada.edu.az)





# BAKU DIALOGUES

POLICY PERSPECTIVES ON THE SILK ROAD REGION