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The Caucasus & Globalization

2009

ОБЛАСТЬ НАУК

Политологические науки


КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА

caucasus region / azerbaijan republic / caspian energy resources / hierarchical global structures / abkhazia / south ossetia / anarchy / hierarchy / perceptions of hierarchy / caucasus regional system

АННОТАЦИЯ

научной статьи по политологическим наукам, автор научной работы — Strakes Jason

While much discussion of the international relations of the **Caucasus region** has relied upon traditional Western theoretical perspectives of world politics, the foreign and national security policies pursued by the **Azerbaijan Republic** are not closely reflective of their assumptions. Much emphasis has been placed in recent years on anarchic competition for **Caspian energy resources** by external powers. Yet post-Soviet nations such as Azerbaijan likely view these interactions from the perspective of international **hierarchy**. The present essay examines the position of Azerbaijan within hierarchical global, regional and local systemic structures as defined by the economic, political, demographic and geographic characteristics of their constituent states. This incorporates both realist power-based and liberal institution-based logics into a single theoretical framework. It then presents a model for analyzing their influence upon the perceptions of Azerbaijani political elites in defining national interests as manifest in their foreign and security policies.

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ПОХОЖИЕ ТЕМЫ

научных работ по политологическим наукам, автор научной работы — Strakes Jason

Regional developments and Armenian national security

Epistemic Community'. Review of International Studies, Vol. 43, Issue. 3, p. 494. Hierarchy-centered approaches to IR promise to deliver what anarchy-centered approaches have not: a framework for theorizing and empirically analyzing world politics as a global system rather than just an international one. At the core of this proposition are three features of hierarchical systems as they are represented across the growing IR literature on the topic. First, the structures of differentiation at the core of hierarchical systems are deeply implicated with power. Hierarchical systems are thus intrinsically political. IEEE style: Strakes, J. E., "Hierarchical global structures and their influence on Azerbaijani views of

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ТЕКСТ НАУЧНОЙ РАБОТЫ

на тему «Hierarchical global structures and their influence on Azerbaijani views of international politics»

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HIERARCHICAL GLOBAL STRUCTURES AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON AZERBAIJANI VIEWS OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Abstract

While much discussion of the international relations of the Caucasus region has relied upon traditional Western theoretical perspectives of world politics, the foreign and national security policies pursued by the Azerbaijan Republic are not closely reflective of their assumptions. Much emphasis has been placed in recent years on anarchic competition for Caspian energy resources by external powers. Yet post-Soviet nations such as Azerbaijan likely view these interactions from the perspective of international hierarchy.

The present essay examines the position of Azerbaijan within hierarchical global, regional and local systemic structures as defined by the economic, political, demographic and geographic characteristics of their constituent states. This incorporates both realist power-based and liberal institution-based logics into a single theoretical framework. It then presents a model for analyzing their influence upon the perceptions of Azerbaijani political elites in defining national interests as manifest in their foreign and security policies.

Introduction

international politics", The Caucasus & Globalization, vol. 3, issue 2-3, 2009. Trending. Latest. Most cited. How Improved Attribution in Cyber Warfare Can Help De-Escalate Cyber Arms Race (2,816). National Cyber Security Strategy and the Emergence of Strong Digital Borders (2,395). Austria's National Cyber Security and Defense Policy: Challenges and the Way Forward (2,111). Thirdly, international involvement defines part of the context. Especially Russia's role is important. Russia has a big economic interest in the region because of Azerbaijani arms purchases and its big share in key economic sectors in Armenia as well as privileged market access. Furthermore, non-resolution gives Russia a bigger influence in the region.

The Republic of Azerbaijan is a country that is often said to occupy a precarious position in the international system.

■ Surrounded by three former imperial cores and contemporary powers—Turkey, Iran and the Russian Federation—it is commonly viewed as being subject to multiple pressures of competition for strategic influence.

■ Secondly, it experienced a seven-year civil and international conflict involving the neighboring Republic of Armenia, constituting an internal (1988-1991) and an interstate (1992-1994) phase resulting in approximately 30,000 deaths and 650,000 internally displaced¹—a level of violence matched in the former Soviet space only by the case of Tajikistan.

■ Thirdly, the war resulted in the continued occupation of one-fifth of the national territory by the forces of Armenia and an unrecognized separatist government that receive both overt

1 See: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. “Azerbaijan: IDPs Still Trapped in Poverty and Dependence,”

14 July, 2008, available at [[http://www.internal-displacement.org/idmc/website/countries.nsf/\(httpEnvelopes\)/17D873CC377B6A54802570B8005A73AE?OpenDocument](http://www.internal-displacement.org/idmc/website/countries.nsf/(httpEnvelopes)/17D873CC377B6A54802570B8005A73AE?OpenDocument)].

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(i.e., security assistance) and illicit (i.e., unauthorized arms transfers) military support from Moscow.²

The National Security Concept promulgated by President Ilham Aliiev in May 2007 contains various statements regarding how the present government defines the national identity and interests of Azerbaijan.³ Yet, apart from its central emphasis on Armenian occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh, the document is distinguished by the manner in which it prioritizes interrelated domestic and external rather than state-based conventional threats. First, despite public declarations of support for the U.S. Global War on Terror, it does not specifically name the United States as an ally, instead presenting participation in post-9/11 military operations as a necessary aspect of responsible contribution to United Nations and Euro-Atlantic counter-terrorism and peacekeeping activities.⁴ At the same time, unlike the Republic of Georgia, whose doctrine directly intends membership in NATO and the European Union (EU), Azerbaijan’s partnership with these institutions constitutes cooperation for mutual benefit rather than full integration.⁵ In line with this definition, regional militarization and armament policies, rather than bilateral tensions with historic imperial powers (and Armenian patrons) such as Iran and Russia⁶ are identified as collective sources of potential insecurity.⁷

More significant challenges are posed by the “uncontrolled” territories and conflict zones comprising the self-proclaimed Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (NKR) (known by Karabakh Armenians as Artsakh) and by implication, the Caucasian de facto states of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The longstanding priority of the Aliiev policy to preserve territorial integrity and the inviolability of borders⁸ is well represented.⁹ Yet, rather than the subversion of internal sovereignty by governments and armed forces which are unrecognized in international law and supported by foreign diplomatic and military intervention (as literally exemplified by the Russian counter-offensives in Georgia during August 2008), primary threats are said to emanate from havens for transborder organized crime and illicit trade.¹⁰ The serious political instability of the period from 1991 to 1995, characterized by foreign-sponsored antigovernment actions and secessionist movements, also remains a major contingency.¹¹ Finally, the definition of threats is extended to explicitly non-military concerns: extremism, lack of human capital, overdependence on external aid, political pressures on energy infrastructure, destabilization of the economy and environmental damage endanger Azerbaijan’s national security as

2 See: Sh. Abbasov, “Arms Scandal Stirs Suspicions of Moscow,” *Eurasia Insight*, 27 January, 2009; F. Ismail-zade, “Russian Arms to Armenia Could Change Azerbaijan’s Foreign Policy Orientation,” *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Analyst*, 28 January, 2009.

3 See: National Security Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Approved by Instruction No. 2198 of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on 23 May, 2007, available at [<http://merln.ndu.edu/whitepapers/Azerbaijan2007.pdf>].

4 *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

5 See: E. Mammadyarov, “The Cooperation in the Framework of EAPC/PFP: Perspective of Azerbaijan,” *CROSSROADS: The Macedonian Foreign Policy Journal*, Issue 3, 2007, pp. 218-221; M. Malek, “NATO and the South Caucasus: Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia on Different Tracks,” *Connections Quarterly Journal*, Summer Supplement 2008, Vol. VII, No. 3, 2008, p. 33, available at [https://consortium.pims.org/filestore2/download/4050/Martin%20Malek_Summer%20Supplement%202008-3.pdf].

6 See: F. Ismailzade, “Azerbaijan Under Iranian and Russian Pressure on Relations to U.S.,” *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Analyst*, 3 November, 2004; E. Suleymanov, *Emergence of New Political Identity in the South Caucasus: Energy, Security, Strategic Location and Pragmatism*, Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy Thesis, The Fletcher School, 2004, pp. 30-40; “Azerbaijan—A Partner for Europe in Energy Security,” in: *Europe’s Energy Security: Gazprom’s Dominance and Caspian Supply Alternatives*, ed. by S.E. Cornell, N. Nilsson, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, 2008, pp. 47-52.

7 See: National Security Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan, pp. 6-7.

8 See: C.S. Brown, “Wanting to Have Their Cake and Their Neighbor’s Too: Azerbaijani Attitudes towards Karabakh and Iranian Azerbaijan,” *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 58, No. 4, Autumn 2004, pp. 576-596.

9 See: National Security Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan, pp. 3, 5, 7, 8, 12, 15.

10 See: *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

The interests of the U.S. and EU in the conflict are less big and more balanced. The lack of long term commitment by the international community is mentioned as a reason for non-resolution. The economic relations between Azerbaijan and Italy, mainly gas-related, might indeed put the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict higher on Italy’s international agenda. 3. Introduction: ‘No war, no peace’ since 1994. Prominent Russian scholar explains issues of International Relations Theory. Politicians have to build a rational strategy on the basis of these material patterns themselves and take into account the most relevant theories by which they are

equally as do opposing armies or terrorist groups.¹² In sum, these strategic assessments suggest a view of Azerbaijan's foreign affairs that differs from prevailing Western understandings of international politics.

Yet, the completion of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE) pipelines from 2005 to 2007 has virtually revolutionized policy discourse on international relations in the Caucasus region. This has prioritized the classical narrative of competing Russian, Iranian and Turkish interests, along with continual speculations regarding energy markets and great power (U.S./Russia/EU) access to oil and gas reserves and transshipment routes—the Caucasian counterpart of the Central Asian “New Great Game.” As a result, much public discussion of the foreign and national security policies of post-Soviet Azerbaijan continues to be implicitly or openly influenced by traditional realist/geostrategic assumptions (e.g., Brzezinski's Grand Chessboard).¹³ For instance: One leading American foreign policy theorist suggests that the demand for and pursuit of Caspian oil has turned “otherwise weak nations such as Azerbaijan into international ‘players’.”¹⁴ Thus, the emphasis is typically on the reactions of Azerbaijani policymakers to external forces, rather than how they perceive the nature of the international environment in which they are situated.

Given this condition, the scholarly investigation of Azerbaijan's foreign and security policies would potentially be advanced by the application of alternative theoretical approaches which interrogate the conventional wisdom in Western-based Caucasus studies. The present study seeks to introduce an alternate method of analyzing the international relations of Azerbaijan, by taking into account its condition as both a developing and post-socialist state. It will develop a framework for identifying the causal links between the perceptions of Azerbaijani political elites (e.g., the President, Foreign Minister, deputy foreign ministers, and Minister of Defense) regarding the country's position within the structure of the international system, and the expression of these views in its observable policy outputs.

Anarchy, Hierarchy or Neither? A Conceptual Framework

The research queries pursued in this article seek to both integrate and extend previous approaches in the study of world politics and foreign policy that have seldom been applied to the postSoviet Caucasian context. Since the late 20th century, much of the discourse in international relations (IR) theory in the United States and Western Europe has viewed the field as a dispute between two major intellectual traditions and their subsequent variants. The structural or neorealist perspective posits that as there exists no central mechanism to exert control over the behavior of states, a “self-help” system prevails in which the relative distribution of resources (i.e., economic and military capabilities) and their strategic use by governments—motivated by the “balance of power” and the “security dilemma”—is the primary driver of international interactions.¹⁵ Conversely, the

12 See: *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

13 See: M.P. Croissant, B. Aras, *Oil and Geopolitics in the Caspian Sea Region*, Greenwood Publishing Group, 1999, pp. 125-126.

14 V.M. Hudson, *Foreign Policy Analysis: Classic and Contemporary Theory*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006, p. 145.

15 See: K.A. Waltz, *A Theory of International Politics*, Addison-Wesley, 1979; G.H. Snyder, “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics,” *World Politics*, Vol. 36, No. 4, 1984; J. Grieco, “Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation: A Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutionalism,” *International Organization*, No. 42 (3), 1988, pp. 485-507; J.J. Mearsheimer, “Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War,” *International Security*, Vol. 15, No. 4, Summer 1990, pp. 5-56.

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liberal institutionalist view asserts that the promotion of commerce between democratic governments as represented by trade, financial transactions and foreign investment, as well as the conclusion of legal agreements by both horizontal and vertical international regulatory and decision-making bodies, rather than strictly alliances and power balancing fosters cooperation and integration among nations.¹⁶

Yet, a more contemporary theoretical development that purportedly combines these positions within a single model is the power preponderance or power transitions perspective. In opposition to the anarchic condition assumed in neorealism, the theory of power preponderance suggests that the organizing principle of world politics is a multi-level hierarchy composed of great, lesser and minor powers.¹⁷ The relative positions of states within the hierarchy are defined and operationalized by the domestic components of national development. The economic productivity (i.e., gross domestic product), political capacity and population characteristics of the most powerful or “preponderant” states enable them to project their political preferences throughout the international realm, thus minimizing their incentives to engage in conflict. This therefore assumes that the state system is led by a single great power and its coalition of satisfied states unified by acceptance of the status quo and highly integrated by fixed military alliances, trade, communications, currency exchange and technology transfers.¹⁸ The U.S., NATO and European Union at the global level, and the Russian Federation, Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) (and their subsidiary organizations such as the Eurasian Economic Community) presently exemplify this condition in their respective spheres of influence.

Subsequent extensions of the core theory present logic and evidence for a “multiple hierarchy model” in which these vertical structural arrangements operate simultaneously at all levels of the international system, which allows for comparisons across world regions (e.g., Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, or the Caucasus).¹⁹ At the same time, the lower levels of each respective hierarchy are “conditionally anarchic,” in that they are occupied by a

certain number of dissatisfied states that abstain from or reject the conventions promoted by the leading power and its coalition. These actors are still concerned with the dangers posed by “relative gains”, and therefore continue to behave as if the system is anarchic, often pursuing alternative diplomatic or military strategies (e.g., nonalignment, pursuit of nuclear capability, support for insurgencies or terrorism) to oppose the status quo even though they do not possess the resources to directly challenge the preponderant power.²⁰ This “conditional anarchy” dimension is a relatively under-examined facet of the theory, which can be used to interpret foreign policy conflicts that remain below the level of major interstate war.

This premise is also logically compatible with propositions in the literature regarding the international relations of small developing or formerly socialist states. The “subaltern realism” perspective posits that contrary to the assumptions of the Western realist tradition, the leaderships of developing nations typically perceive the international system as a hierarchy presided over by great powers, while at the same time the domestic political environment is regarded as a struggle to maintain

16 See: R. Keohane, J.S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, Little, Brown and Company (Inc.), Boston, 1977.

17 See: A.F.K. Organski, *World Politics*, 2nd edition, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1968; A.F.K. Organski, J. Ku-gler, *The War Ledger*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1980; R.L. Tammen, et al., *Power Transitions: Strategies for the 21st Century*, Chatham House Seven Bridges Press, New York, 2000.

18 This is distinct from the “tragedy of the commons” in hegemonic stability theory, as the preponderant state in power transitions does not generate public goods that are consumed by all states in the system, but distributes only private goods among its immediate allies.

19 See: D. Lemke, *Regions of War and Peace*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2002.

20 See: S. Hussein, J. Kugler, “Conditional Anarchy: The Importance of the Status Quo in World Politics,” Paper presented at annual meeting of the Peace Science Society, October 1990; J. Kugler, S. Werner, “Conditional Anarchy: The Constraining Power of the Status Quo,” Paper presented at annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, April 1993.

control of the state against anarchic popular forces.²¹ A similar condition has been identified as being prevalent in post-communist states, as the Soviet dissolution initially left governments in many former Republics with a weak tradition of national sovereignty and a lack of capable administrative structures, including competent and technically sufficient foreign ministries and diplomatic services.²² Azerbaijan has faced severe local insecurity since independence, experiencing a revolution, an internationalized civil war, ethnic secessions and a series of successful and attempted military coups²³, certain of which are regarded by historians as having been sponsored by external (Russian, Iranian or Turkish) forces.²⁴

Thus, political leaders in these settings are often preoccupied with suppressing internal instability and preserving their position of authority, while also pursuing those external policies that enhance their ability to manage tensions and remain in office. Therefore, the foreign policy and security strategies of these states are designed in order to maintain autonomy and gain leverage against dominant powers within the international hierarchy, as well as through “omnibalancing”, or seeking the external support (i.e., foreign or military aid, alliances or security assistance) of stronger states to defend themselves against domestic pressures and threats.²⁵

Perceptions of Hierarchy in Azerbaijani National Histories

Given the common focus on imperial ambitions toward small states, it is thus curious that prevailing views of the Caucasus region would assume anarchy (power seeking) rather than hierarchy (status seeking) as an explanatory framework. This is because as small states are lacking in opportunities for aggrandizement, they typically rely on asymmetric alliances with larger powers in order to compensate.²⁶ Nevertheless, since independence Azerbaijan has rarely if ever participated in formal alliance systems. It has been suggested that the preoccupation of observers with the role of hegemonic influences in the Caucasus region is a byproduct of the varying reactions of regional and global powers to demands for external support by local leaderships in the post-Soviet period (e.g., Russia to Ter-Petrossian and Kocharian in Armenia, the United States to Shevardnadze and Saakashvili in Georgia, and Turkey to Elghibey in Azerbaijan).²⁷ Yet, it is arguable that Azerbaijan’s origins as a modern nation-state are rooted in reaction to imposed hierarchy. The establishment of the twin Russian imperial gubernias of Baku and Elizavetpol during the mid-19th century both established a defined Azerbaijani territory, and aided the founding of a bureaucratic elite unit-

21 See: M. Ayoob, “Subaltern Realism: International Relations Theory Meets the Third World,” in: *International Relations Theory and the Third World*, ed. by St.G. Neuman, St. Martin’s Press, New York, 1998, pp. 31-49; idem, “Inequality and Theorizing in International Relations: The Case for Subaltern Realism,” *International Studies Review*, No. 4 (3), Fall 2002, pp. 27-48.

22 See: M. Skak, *From Empire to Anarchy: Postcommunist Foreign Policy and International Relations*, Hurst&Company, London, 1996, pp. 7-9, 21-30.

23 See: J.D. Fearon, D.A. Laitin, “Azerbaijan: Random Narratives 1.2,” Stanford University, 2006, available at [<http://www.stanford.edu/group/ethnic/Random%20Narratives/AzerbaijanRN1.2.pdf>].

24 See: F. Shafee, “Inspired from Abroad: the External Sources of Separatism in Azerbaijan,” *Caucasian Review of International Affairs*, No. 2 (4), Autumn 2008, pp. 200-210, available at [<http://cria-online.org/Journal/5/INSPIRED%20FROM%20ABROAD.pdf>].

25 See: St.R. David, *Choosing Sides: Alignment and Realignment in the Third World*, Johns Hopkins University

Press, Baltimore, MD, 1991.

26 See: G. Gleason, A. Kerimbekova, S. Kozhirova, "Realism and the Small State: Evidence from Kyrgyzstan," *International Politics*, Vol. 45, No. 1, January 2008, pp. 44-45.

27 See: A. Jafalian, *Influences in the South Caucasus: Opposition & Convergence in Axes of Cooperation*, Conflict Studies Research Centre, Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, February 2004, p. 7.

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ed by a common language and religion.²⁸ This provided a basis for a unified Azeri bourgeoisie to seek to build a polity that could compete with other nations, advocate for the autonomy of the Transcaucasus, and pursue independence in relation to the Russian colonial government as well as the neighboring ethnic Armenian community.²⁹

During the Soviet period, the domestic politics of Azerbaijan evolved into a system composed of two primary elements: the hierarchical Baku city-state governed by an assimilated Russian-speaking Azeri nomenklatura that accepted the status quo generated by Moscow, and an anarchic hinterland of practically independent rayons and village centers loosely based on the former Azerbaijan khanates, where popular identification as Azerbaijanis was weak and subordinate to Iranian Shi'a Muslim cultural influences, and connections to the capital were limited largely to local administrators and shipments of primary goods.³⁰ It was this peasant population that was prevented from entering the elite residential and economic sectors of Baku into the late 1980s, and formed the dissatisfied popular forces that prevailed with the weakening and collapse of the Soviet system, and in the uprising that removed the post-communist Mutalibov regime from power in 1992.³¹

With the consolidation of the New Azerbaijan Party (Yeni Azarbaycan Partiyasi) government in 1993, President Heydar Aliiev combined practical experience with Soviet hierarchy with the production of a nationalist ideology in order to provide the leadership necessary to resist centrifugal processes.³² This was further intended as a defense against neo-colonial policies on the part of the great powers, in their attempt to impose generic concepts of democracy and economic reform on the newly independent Muslim states.³³ At the same time, Azerbaijan's historic position at the confluence of European and Middle Eastern cultural streams has reinforced its maintenance of autonomy versus both Pan-Turkism and Iranian theocratic Shi'ism.³⁴ Thus, rather than traditional rivalries among the regional powers, perhaps the most significant gauge of Azerbaijani independence and national security is the political and economic orientation of the Russian Federation, which remains the most powerful and influential nation in the Caucasus system.³⁵

Further evidence can be found within the precedents of Azerbaijani national histories of linkages between perceptions of hierarchical global structures and foreign policy behavior related to national security. During the years from 1450 to 1600 AD, the Azeri proto-states established by the Agqo-yunlu and the Safavid dynasty pursued diplomatic relations with the kingdoms of Western Europe in response to the military and economic threat posed by the growing preponderance of Ottoman Turkey.³⁶ Similarly, between 1918 and 1920, the leadership of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (Azarbaycan Xalq Cumhuriyyati) sought unsuccessfully to secure recognition and military support from the United States to defend against the territorial and ideological encroachment of Soviet Russia.³⁷ Finally, reversing the policies of previous post-Soviet leaders, in 1993 Heydar Aliiev extended a resolution for the entry of Azerbaijan into the Commonwealth of Independent States in order to

28 See: C. Cagla, "Foundations of Nation-State in Azerbaijan." *Turkish Review of Eurasian Studies*. Obiv, 2003, p. 119; E. Ismailov, V. Papava, *The Central Caucasus: Essays on Geopolitical Economy*, CA & CC Press, Stockholm, 2006, pp. 22-24.

29 See: C. Cagla, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-123.

30 See: G. Derluguian, "Azeri Orientalists as Mirror of the Post Soviet Revolution," *21st Century*, No. 2, 2007, pp. 46-47.

31 See: *Ibid.*, pp. 50-53.

32 See: A.A. Al-Falah, *Heydar Aliiev and National Spiritual Values*, Gismet, Baku, 2007, p. 26.

33 See: *Ibid.*, pp. 46, 67-69.

34 See: G. Robbins, "Not a Persian Nor a Turk," *Freedom Review*, No. 27, 1 March, 1996, available at [<http://www.azerbaijan.com/azeri/azerbaijan3.htm>]

35 See: *Ibidem*.

36 See: Y. Mahmudov, *Azerbaijan Diplomacy in the Second Half of the XV—Beginning of the XVII Centuries (The Relations of the Aghgoyunlu and Safavi States with the West European Countries)*, Baku, 2006, available at [<http://www.elibrary.az/docs/azerdiplom.pdf>].

37 See: J. Hassanov, *Azerbaijan in the System of International Relations in 1918-1920*, Baku, 1993 (in Azeri).

retain access to the security benefits of the status quo maintained by the Russian Federation, while simultaneously supporting the withdrawal of the Russian troops from the national soil carried out

earlier.³⁸

However, while these historical accounts may provide a descriptive view of world and domestic politics from various seats of power in Baku, in order to accumulate evidence of these relationships, one must also identify the national

characteristics that constitute system structure.

Hierarchical Structure of the Global and Caucasus Regional System

The analytical approach applied in this study places Azerbaijani foreign relations within the context of the nation's position in the local, regional and global international hierarchies, presided over by Azerbaijan, Iran, Turkey, Russia, and the United States. It is therefore necessary to present the empirical basis for these systemic structures. The structural analysis incorporates the framework previously extended by Ismailov and Papava which conceptualizes the Caucasus as consisting of Northern, Central and Southern subregions.³⁹ It is posited here that this definition essentially conforms to a hierarchical view of world order, as it suggests both a vertical arrangement of states according to their national capabilities, and that the region is divided between two hegemonic coalitions: one oriented toward integration with the U.S. and Western Europe (Turkey, Georgia and Azerbaijan), and the other toward the classical paradigm of Eurasian geopolitics (Russia, Armenia, and Iran).⁴⁰ The economic, political, demographic and geographic characteristics of each of these states are summarized in Table 1. All reported figures are current to 2008 where available. Care was taken in assigning the country rankings based on a single indicator or data source (i.e., differences between nominal GDP per capita and GDP at purchasing power parity per capita). Therefore, where necessary these were compared with alternate figures in order to ensure their reliability.

Table 1

Hierarchical Structures in the International and Caucasus Regional System⁴¹

Global Level

State Economic Political Demographics Geographic

Development Capacity (Population Size

(GDP per Size/Total (terrestrial

capita PPP) Fertility Rate) area in sq km)

38 See: L. Alieva, *Integrative Processes in the South Caucasus and their Security Implications*, ed. by J. Dufourcq, C. Coops, NATO Defense College, Occasional Paper Series 13, Academic Research Branch, Rome, March 2006, pp. 23-24.

39 See: E. Ismailov, "New Regionalism in the Caucasus: A Conceptual Approach," *The Caucasus & Globalization*, Vol. 1 (1), 2006, pp. 7-24; E. Ismailov, V. Papava, "A New Concept for the Caucasus," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 8, Issue 3, September 2008, pp. 283-298.

40 See: J. Eyvazov, "Geopolitical Lessons of the Post-Soviet Caucasus: Forward to Globalization or Back to Classical Eurasian Geopolitics?" *The Caucasus & Globalization*. Vol. 1 (1), 2006, pp. 25-37.

41 Data for each indicator is taken from International Monetary Fund, World Bank and CIA World Factbook 2008.

Table 1 (continued)

United States of America \$48,000 Strong 304,059,724/2.1 births per woman 9,161,923

European Union \$33,800 Strong 491,018,683/1.51 births per woman 4,324,782

Regional Level

I Northern Caucasus I

State Economic Development (GDP per capita PPP) Political Capacity Demographics (Population Size/Total Fertility Rate) Geographic Size (terrestrial area in sq km)

Russian Federation \$15,800 Strong/Moderate 141,377,752/1.4 births per woman 17,075,200

I Southern Caucasus I

Turkey \$12,000 Strong 71,892,808/>2 births per woman 783,562

Islamic Republic of Iran \$12,800 Strong/Moderate 65,875,224/1.7 births per woman 165,000,000

Local Level

I Central Caucasus II



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State Economic Development (GDP per capita PPP) Political Capacity Demographics (Population Size/Total Fertility Rate) Geographic Size (terrestrial area in sq km)

Azerbaijan \$9,500 Strong 8,410,801/2.05 births per woman 86,600

Georgia \$5,000 Moderate/Weak 4,615,807/1.43 births per woman 69,700

Armenia \$6,600 Strong/Moderate 2,967,004/1.36 births per woman 29,800

Beginning at the global level, although forecasts suggest that the United States will be surpassed by China as the

leader of the international system by mid-century, and despite the recent domestic economic crisis, it presently maintains its status as the “world’s sole remaining superpower.” Also, regardless of rifts fostered by policies such as the invasion of Iraq in March 2003, it

maintains the EU and the NATO security community within its coalition of satisfied states. While exhibiting a smaller total population than Europe, America continues to possess a higher rate of replacement through new births. At the same time, the EU, whose member states contribute one quarter of the world’s Gross National Product (GNP), is increasingly taking on the character of a singular international entity.

In the Northern Caucasus area of the regional level, the Russian Federation remains the world’s most massive state even after the dissolution of the “internal” and “external” Soviet empire in 1989-1991, covering more than one eighth of the Earth’s land area and containing the ninth largest population, despite severe trends of declining fertility during the past two decades.⁴² Since 2000, national economic indicators have exhibited a steady trend to growth,⁴³ although it presently faces a significant downturn in production and shrinkage of disposable income due to the delayed effects of the global financial crisis.⁴⁴ The succession to the presidency of Vladimir Putin in March 2000 began a period of concentration of decision-making power in the executive, with direct appointment of federal regional governors and the inauguration of the post-Soviet nationalist party United Russia (Yedinaya Rossiya) in 2001 that has dominated presidential elections (although it remains to be seen whether the Putin-Medvedev “tandem” regime will ultimately prove stable).⁴⁵

In the eastern wing of the Southern Caucasus, the Islamic Republic of Iran’s substantial size and population (over 50 percent of the entire inhabitants of the Persian Gulf region) make it a central pivot between the Middle East and Central Asia. The economy has experienced rapid growth in GDP, a rate of nearly 50 percent between 1999 and 2006.⁴⁶ Iran remains the third largest oil producer in the world and a major prospective competitor in natural gas, with steady increases in production against predictions of decline (nearly doubling between 1986 and 2005) due to high export revenues and increased efficiency in exploration and processing.⁴⁷ The fusion of theocratic and electoral political system has allowed the Islamic regime to maintain legitimacy and remain in power for three decades despite considerable internal dissent.⁴⁸ In addition, those provinces that comprise the southwestern frontier of the Caucasus region (Southern Azerbaijan) are both heavily populated (over 13,000,000 people) and contain both major agriculture and industrial processing and manufacturing centers, which constitute over 13 percent of the national GDP.⁴⁹ Finally, partly as a result of family planning and population control programs, fertility rates have declined sharply in the past two decades, to levels comparable with Western Europe and well below the average for the neighboring Arab countries, as it begins the demographic transition from a classical “underdeveloped” to an industrialized nation.⁵⁰

To the west, the Republic of Turkey is a longstanding member of the global power coalition in both the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and NATO (as well as EU aspirant since 1987), and exceeds Iran in population. The government led by the Justice and

42 See: T. Heleniak, “Russia’s Demographic Decline Continues,” Population Reference Bureau, Washington, D.C., June 2002, available at [<http://www.prb.org/Articles/2002/RussiasDemographicDeclineContinues.aspx>].

43 See: Russian Economic Report # 2, January 2001; Russian Economic Report #15, The World Bank, November 2007, available at [<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/ECAEXT/RUSSIANFEDERATIONEXTN/0,,contentMDK:20888536~menuPK:2445695~pagePK:1497618~piPK:217854~theSitePK:305600,00.html>].

44 See: A. Aslund, A. Kushins, The Russia Balance Sheet, Peterson Institute for International Economics/Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington D.C., April 2009, pp. 30-31, 34-38.

45 See: *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54.

46 See: K. Crane, R. Lal, J. Martini, Iran’s Political, Demographic, and Economic Vulnerabilities, The Rand Corporation, Washington D.C., 2008, pp. 83-84.

47 See: *Ibid.*, pp. 67-78.

48 See: *Ibid.*, pp. 32-34.

49 See: E. Ismailov, V. Papava, The Central Caucasus: Essays on Geopolitical Economy, pp. 71-74.

50 See: K. Crane, R. Lal, J. Martini, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

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Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi), which entered office in 2002 and was reelected in 2007, has combined a Muslim and secular orientation that has successfully garnered support among both wealthy urban elites and the rural poor.⁵¹ Since the introduction of reforms designed to control inflation in 2001, the Turkish national economy has experienced consecutive increases of growth in GDP (a rate of nine percent in 2004), despite high levels of unemployment and a significant current account deficit.⁵² At the same time, its total fertility rate has declined by over seven percent in recent years, reflecting broader trends in industrialized Europe as its overall population ages and decreases in size.⁵³ In contrast, although Turkey is typically identified as a pivotal regional counterweight in traditional geopolitical analyses, the northeastern provinces (ils) that are actually contiguous with Ajaria Autonomous Republic (Ach’arisAvt’onomiuriResp’ublik’a) of Georgia, Armenia, and Nakh-chivan Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan (Ardahan, Kars and Iddyr), constitute the most sparsely populated, underdeveloped and economically marginal areas of both that country and the Caucasus system as a whole.⁵⁴

Finally, in the Central Caucasus Azerbaijan is the largest among local states in both the extent of its territory and its population size, density and total fertility rate, all of which are the highest in the subregion.⁵⁵ While observers identified a lower level of development and industrialization than in Armenia and Georgia in the years after independence⁵⁶, Azerbaijan currently possesses the highest level of scientific and technical resources.⁵⁷ In contrast with the serious political instability that has prevailed in Georgia since the 2003 Rose Revolution (including the disastrous Russian invasion) and recurrent electoral unrest in Armenia, the incumbent Azerbaijani government has consolidated central authority since the mid-1990s and has established relative prosperity and popular support.⁵⁸ In addition, due to foreign investment and its position in international energy markets, it has experienced rapid economic expansion within the past decade, reporting the world's highest consecutive rate of growth in GDP from 2005 to 2008.⁵⁹ Predictive analyses of trends in conflict and development in the Caucasus region assert that due to its natural resource wealth and expanding domestic sectors, Azerbaijan's power capabilities are expected to increase relative to its immediate neighboring states during the next few decades. This will ostensibly place it in a dominant local position by mid-century, while the resources of Armenia and Georgia are expected to remain at comparable projected levels.⁶⁰

51 See: A.P. Qelik, L. Naqvi, Turkey: Current and Future Political, Economic, and Security Trends, Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute, December 2007, p. 102.

52 See: *Ibid.*, p. 4.

53 See: Central Intelligence Agency World Factbook 2008, available at [<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tu.html>].

54 See: E. Ismailov, V. Papava, *The Central Caucasus: Essays on Geopolitical Economy*, pp. 74-75.

55 See: T. Swietochowski, "Azerbaijan", in: *Encyclopedia of the Developing World*, ed. by Th.M. Leonard, Routledge, New York, 2006, p. 126.

56 See: W. O'Malley, "Central Asia and South Caucasus as an Area of Operations: Challenges and Constraints," in: *Faultlines of Conflict in Central Asia and the South Caucasus: Implications for the U.S. Army*, ed. by O. Oliker, Th.S. Szayna, Rand Arroyo Center, 2003, pp. 277-278; H. Sadri, "Elements of Azerbaijan Foreign Policy," *Journal of Third World Studies*, Vol. 20, Issue 1, 2003, p. 181.

57 See: E. Ismailov, V. Papava, *The Central Caucasus: Essays on Geopolitical Economy*, pp. 61-62; E. Ismailov, V. Papava, "A New Concept for the Caucasus," p. 293.

58 See: H.K. Nazli, "Azerbaijan," in: *Nations in Transit 2008 Democratization from Central Europe to Eurasia*, Freedom House, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. pp. 98-100.

59 See: "Azerbaijan", in: *Asian Development Outlook 2009: Rebalancing Asia's Growth*, Asian Development Bank, March 2009, p. 131, available at [<http://www.adb.org/Documents/Books/ADO/2009/AZE.pdf>].

60 See: B. Efir, B. Ye'ilada, P. Noordijk, *Power Transition Analysis of the Caucasus Region, 2010-2050*, Paper prepared for presentation at the 2005 Annual Conference of the International Studies Association, Honolulu, Hawaii, 1-5 March, 2005, pp 13; 16; B. Ye'ilada, P. Noordijk, B. Efir, *Regional Transitions and Stability in the Greater Middle East*, Working paper prepared for presentation at the Annual Conference of the International Studies Association in San Francisco, California, 26-29 March, 2008, pp. 8, 10.

■ However, Azerbaijan at the same time possesses several unusual geographic characteristics that affect its status as a leader of the local state system. First, its internal sovereignty is challenged by the presence of the NKR, a virtual enclave state that occupies nearly 20 percent (11,458 sq km) of its total land area.⁶¹ It has been suggested that despite the status of the NK dispute as an enduring interstate rivalry, because the site of the conflict is within its national territory, it is Azerbaijan alone that bears the greatest negative impact.⁶²

■ Second, Azerbaijan is one of the world's 12 non-contiguous states, maintaining sovereignty over the exclave Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic (Naxçivan Muxtar Respublikası) that spans 5,500 sq km, falling entirely within the territorial boundaries of Armenia and Iran,⁶³ and is subject to economic blockade by Erevan.

■ Third, due to historic geopolitical disruptions,⁶⁴ Azerbaijan possesses a dichotomized or separated national identity commonly referred to as the state of being "two Azerbaijan." ⁶⁵ This is manifest in two dimensions: First, Azerbaijan proper shares a 400 km contiguous border (600 km including Nakhchivan) with northwest Iran, the former center of the Turkic-Persian (Safavid) beyerbeliks administered from Tabriz, which also spanned what is now Northern Azerbaijan and Eastern Anatolia.⁶⁶ Second, the distribution of the local ethnic Azeri community (known historically by the Ottoman Turkish term millet⁶¹) is divided between the Republic of (Northern) Azerbaijan and its greater number south of the Araz River (estimated at over 20 million or 25 percent of the national total), concentrated especially in Ardabil, West and East Azerbaijan and Zanjan provinces (ostans).⁶⁸

The difficult position occupied by Azerbaijan in its local international setting therefore presents challenges to its status as local preponderant power. Although the country has attained a position of dominance relative to Armenia and particularly Georgia due to rapid increases in export-based revenues and foreign investment in the manufacturing and construction sectors, due to the unresolved status of the NK conflict, an interrupted national identity, and encirclement by maturing great and middle powers, Azerbaijan's leadership has pursued domestic and foreign policies that reflect an intent to mitigate the impact of prevailing structural conditions.

Theoretical Model of Structural Perceptions: Applications to Azerbaijan

The main proposition extended in this study is that the professional diplomatic and foreign policy decision-making

elites of small developing and post-socialist countries such as Azerbaijan often

61 See: This area includes southern Goranboy, western and eastern Kalbajar, Khojali, western Tartar, part of Agdam, Fizuli, Lachin, Qubadli, Zangilan, western and eastern Jebrayil, northern and southern Khovajend and Shusha rayons, the 7,634 sq km security belt patrolled by NKR Defense Army and Armenian regular troops, and the self-regulating 175 km “line of contact” (LoC) in which low-intensity fire incidents have continued since 1994.

62 See: W. O’Malley, *op. cit.*, pp. 180, 277.

63 Public International Law & Policy Group, 2006, p. 1.

64 See: E. Souleimanov, O. Ditych, “Iran and Azerbaijan: A Contested Neighborhood,” *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 14, No. 2, Summer 2007, pp. 101-102.

65 A. Asgharzadeh, “In Search of a Global Soul: Azerbaijan and the Challenge of Multiple Identities,” *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 11, No. 4, 7-18 December, 2007, p. 7, available at [<http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2007/issue4/pdf/2.pdf>].

66 These territories were later separated (an act known by northern Azeri and Iranian Azari nationalists as *ayriliq*) by the treaties of Gulistan (1813) and Turkmanchai (1828), which resolved the Russo-Persian wars of conquest and divided the multiple Azerbaijani khanates between the Qajar and Romanov empires.

67 See: T. Atabaki, *Azerbaijan: Ethnicity and the Struggle for Power in Iran*, London, 2000, pp. xv, 17-19; B. Shaffer, *Borders and Brethren: Iran and the Challenge of Azerbaijani Identity*, MIT Press, 2002, pp. 30, 54-55.

68 See: A. Asgharzadeh, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

perceive the international system as a hierarchical order presided over by global powers rather than as an opportunistic anarchy, which places significant limits on their ability to pursue autonomous national interests.⁶⁹ This perception in turn impacts and shapes the development or adoption of national security agendas or paradigms from which specific foreign and defense policies are generated. However, this equation is additionally affected by the presence of interrelated domestic and external challenges to the ability of political elites to govern their societies.

The variables contained in the flowchart displayed in Figure 1 are defined as follows: The first independent variable (IV1) is the perception of the international environment held by political elites, represented by their evaluation of the status quo generated and promoted by preponderant powers through mechanisms of political, economic and military influence. This is reflected by the quality and condition of their bilateral diplomatic relations with the preponderant state and the degree of direct alignment with (hierarchical), cooperation with (institutional) or rejection of (anarchical) its associated policies or arrangements (IV2). However, these perceptions are at the same time affected by the level of threats that emanate simultaneously from both domestic (IV3a) and international (IV3b) political environments. These can take the form of opposition movements, insurgent or terrorist groups or social unrest within countries, or diplomatic tensions, involvement in interstate disputes, or military challenges to the nation’s territorial integrity at the external level. Finally, the dependent variable (DV) in the model is defined as the summation of the states national interests as expressed in its foreign and national security policies.

Figure 1

Model of Elite Structural Perceptions and National Interests in Developing and Post-Soviet States

69 See: M. Ayooob, “Subaltern Realism: International Relations Theory Meets the Third World.” *idem*, “Inequality and Theorizing in International Relations: The Case for Subaltern Realism”; G. Gleason, A. Kerimbekova, S. Kozhirova, *op. cit.*

This model rests upon the assumption that as a result of historical experience and geopolitical situation, Azerbaijan’s political leaders view international relations as operating within a series of state systems and subsystems presided over by local (Azerbaijan, Iran and Turkey), regional (Russian Federation) and global (United States) powers. Therefore, the perceived position of Azerbaijan within each hierarchy vis a vis the preponderant state(s) will differently affect the political definition of alignments, postures and strategic goals. These orientations in turn condition the development of doctrine regarding the definition of national identity, the preservation of territorial integrity, and the existence of threats to vital national interests. The ultimate outcome of this linkage process is the manifestation of role perceptions in actual policy approaches. At the same time, it is expected that differences in perceptions held by individuals within foreign policy making organizations will contribute to variation in policy approaches across time or issues.

Therefore, the strategic orientation of these states are designed in order to derive resources from various global power centers, which provides decision-makers with the ability to select from a range of options for building domestic capabilities. The concept of a “multi-vector” foreign policy, in which states pursue a form of multi-polar balancing in order to preserve their independence while retaining the benefits of alignment with more powerful states, has become common parlance in journalistic and academic discussions of post-Soviet international relations. It might be suggested that multi-vectorism constitutes a form of post-Cold War nonalignment that avoids formal alliance commitments, while deriving benefits from economic and military affiliations or partnerships with both the great powers and their strategic competitors. Within the past decade, it has been utilized in order to describe, as well as prescribe the diplomatic agendas and behavior of various countries, most prominently Kazakhstan (to which its origins are attributed), Ukraine, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Belarus, and by extension, Putin-era Russia. However, it has at the same time rarely been articulated as a theoretical construct, having been applied for varying and inconsistent purposes.⁷⁰ Recent efforts to provide an analytically useful definition have identified the pursuit of multiple vectors as a pragmatic and non-ideological strategic activity engaged in by rational, self-interested actors.⁷¹

The Azerbaijani variant of multi-vectorism, the “balanced foreign policy” (balanslaşdırılmış xarici siyasət) doctrine initially introduced by Heydar Aliiev, is identified as a cornerstone of the nation’s external orientation.⁷² More significantly, it provides an observable example of how a strong, centralized leadership pursues an alternate (i.e., non-military) strategy of expressing dissatisfaction with the constraints imposed by hierarchical arrangements. Finally, its logic implies a fundamentally different view from that currently endorsed by Western policy advocates. Rather than “creating major guarantees for Azerbaijan’s independence and sovereignty”⁷³, the use of energy transit assets such as the BTC/BTE pipelines for full integration into the U.S.-led economic and security architecture via Turkey’s NATO membership would involve surrendering national autonomy and self-reliance. U.S. policymakers have endorsed the integration of Azerbaijan with Turkey since the Mutalibov era, when opposition politicians and liberal reformers had strong incentives to seek an alternative to perceived Armenian influence over Western governments.⁷⁴ Through its promotion of multiple balancing, the

70 See: G. Kirbassov, A Game Theoretic Approach to Kazakhstan’s Multi-vector Foreign Policy, Paper prepared for the 66th Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference, 3-6 April, 2008, Chicago, USA.

71 See: R. Hanks, “Multi-Vector Politics” and Kazakhstan’s Emerging Role as a Geo-strategic Player in Central Asia, Presented at the 49th meeting of the International Studies Association, San Francisco, USA, March 26, 2008.

72 See: National Security Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan, pp. 3, 12.

73 S.E. Cornell, F. Ismailzade, “The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline: Implications for Azerbaijan,” in: The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline: Oil Window to the West, ed. by S.F. Starr, S.E. Cornell, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program, 2005, p. 20.

74 See: M. Saroyan, “Azerbaijan Looks ‘West’: New Trends in Foreign Relations with Iran and Turkey,” in: Minorities, Mullahs and Modernity: Reshaping Community in the Former Soviet Union, ed. by Edward W. Walker, University of California International and Area Studies Digital Collection, Research Series #95, 1997, p. 239.

present Azerbaijani leadership has in theory rejected the foreign and security policy formula of local “calls for empire” adopted by other Caucasus states—or, the linkage of national consolidation and survival to the aid and intervention of external powers.⁷⁵

C o n c l u s i o n

This article has sought to present an alternative conceptual and theoretical model for analyzing Azerbaijan’s foreign and defense policies according to the situation of the republic within the structure of the international system. This is tentatively intended as an alternative to the prevalence of the Western theoretical discourse of realist geopolitics and strategy in contemporary studies of the Caucasus region. Because qualitative changes in foreign and security policies are likely to occur over time, an extension of this approach would be to develop a means of

- 1) directly measuring the strength of Azerbaijani foreign policy vectors toward the regional and global powers based on the historical record of diplomatic instruments, and
- 2) empirically testing the relationship of these indicators with the evolution of the national security concept from the date of independence to the present day.

⁷⁵ See: A. Jafalian, op. cit., p. 1.

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THE PARLIAMENT IN AZERBAIJAN’S POWER DIVISION SYSTEM

Abstract

This article discusses issues typical of the current stage in state-building in Azerbaijan, that is, the place and functions of the Milli Mejlis (national parliament) in the context of balancing the different

branches of power. Based on an analysis of extensive theoretical data and national law-making practice, the author gives several recommendations for further developing parliamentary activity in Azerbaijan.

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comprehended. Idealism derives from the premise that not only facts, but also values and gnoseological concepts (i.e. a subjective factor), predetermine the nature of the processes unfolding in international relations, and accordingly, changes to the consciousness of the actors or an expansion of their range may affect the material side of the unfolding events and processes.