



Contemporary Caucasus Newsletter

The Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies

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A Message from the Executive Director

Despite earlier signs of measured stabilization, the past six months have been unsettling for the Caucasus and Caspian littoral states. Russia's financial meltdown has hurt the region's economies, albeit variously. In the South Caucasus, Georgia's economic recovery was the most negatively impacted, as a run on the lari induced Shevardnadze to change finance ministers and contributed to a sharp decrease in anticipated GDP growth this year. Nevertheless, Russia's economic turmoil has not interrupted the overall trend toward recovery, with better than expected growth rates registered in Armenia and Azerbaijan. Meanwhile, despite very low prices for oil on world markets, investment in the oil and gas sectors in the Caspian Basin continues, with Azerbaijan signing another major oil contract in December. Plans for the construction of the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline also remain on the drawing board despite repeated reports that the AIOC would make a final decision to put them to rest. Politically, there was a change of prime ministers in Georgia in July and an insurrection at a army base in western Georgia led by supporters of the late Georgian president, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, which was put down by Georgian troops loyal to President Shevardnadze. Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan held presidential elections in which the incumbent presidents, Heydar Aliyev and Nursultan Nazarbaev, won decisive victories under less than "free and fair" conditions. Meanwhile, in Armenia President Robert Kocharian is confronting mounting opposition from parliament, and the country was shocked by the recent murder of the procurator general. Finally, the most unstable region in the Caucasus and Caspian Basin remains the North Caucasus, where the political situation in Chechnya continues to deteriorate as the kidnapping crisis intensifies and economic conditions worsen, while Moscow continues to worry about the precarious political balance in Daghestan.

The articles in this issue of our newsletter discuss many of these destabilizing developments. Included are summaries of talks at Berkeley by **Elkhan Nuriyev**, Director of the Center for International Studies in Baku; **John Dunlop**, Senior Researcher at the Hoover Institution, Stanford; **Stephan Astourian**, our William Saroyan Visiting Professor of Armenian Studies this year; **Thomas Goltz**, an independent journalist and filmmaker who has spent much of the past seven years living in Baku, Azerbaijan; and **Richard G. Hovannisian**, Professor of Modern Armenian History at UCLA. Also included is an article comparing the recent presidential elections in Armenia and Azerbaijan by graduate student **David Hoffman** (political science), who just returned from nine months of research in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. Finally, we have included a summary of a talk that I gave in the fall in New York on Chechnya and the economics of secession.

This semester we are very pleased to welcome Leila Alieva to campus as our visiting Caucasus scholar under our Ford Foundation grant for the 1998-1999 academic year. Dr. Aliyeva is a leading specialist of international relations and foreign policy in the Caucasus. A resident of Baku, she was the Director of the Independent Center for Strategic and International Studies. Her doctorate is in psychology from Moscow State University. While at Berkeley, she will prepare a research paper for us, tentatively entitled "Reshaping Eurasia: Leadership Strategies in the Caucasus," to be published as part of our working paper series. She will also lead an informal seminar series and help

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organize our annual Caucasus conference.

We are also very fortunate to have Sergei Arutiunov with us this term. Professor Arutiunov, one of the best-known cultural anthropologists working in Russia, is of Armenian heritage, grew up in Tbilisi, and has conducted extensive research in the South and North Caucasus as well as in Central Asia. He will teach courses through the Anthropology Department, one of which focuses on the Caucasus (“Peoples and Cultures of the Caucasus”). Also enriching the curriculum this semester is a Slavic Department course co-taught by Alma Kunanbayeva and Harsha Ram (“Civilizations of Central Asia”), and a course taught through the History Department by Stephan Astourian (“Armenian History: Pre-modern Empires to the Present”). Finally, introductory Kazakh will be taught by Professor Kunanbayeva, while Professor Gayane Hagopian will teach introductory Armenian.

I am also very pleased to announce an exciting new seminar series organized by Professor Harsha Ram of the Slavic Department. The series, entitled “Eurasianism: Culture, Identity, and History in Central Asia and the Caucasus,” will bring historians and other specialists of the languages, literatures, and cultures of the region to campus to present their research. The first event in the series will take place on February 8, 1999 and will feature a two-hour panel discussion of a recently published volume, *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700-1917*, with presentations by the editors, Daniel R. Brower (History, UC Davis) and Edward J. Lazzerini (History, University of New Orleans). Berkeley's Yuri Slezkine (History), also a contributor to the volume, will serve as a commentator. Other speakers in the series will be Giorgi Derluguian (Political Science, Northwestern), who will make a presentation on February 22, “Bordieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus: The Power of Networking and Ideological Framing in Post-Communist Societies,” and Adeeb Khalid (History, Carleton College), who will make a presentation on April 1, “Muslim Solidarities in the Russian Empire: Rethinking Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism.”

Our annual Caucasus conference this year, entitled “State Building and the Reconstruction of Shattered Societies,” will take place on April 30. Topics addressed will include prospects for democratic consolidation, economic reform, social welfare, equity, and reconstructing social institutions; coping strategies and the cultural resources that facilitate survival during periods of economic turmoil; and the international community's role in helping with reconstruction. An agenda and list of speakers will be posted on our website and sent out to recipients of the newsletter as soon as it is available.

Finally, Berkeley will benefit from additional public lectures this spring dealing with our region. We anticipate presentations by Levon Chookazian (January 27), Alexander Kukhianidze (February 3), Vakhan Dadrian (February 16), Sergei Arbatsumian (March 3), Marina Kurkchian (March 11), and Ghia Nodia (mid-March). We also have some new additions to our Working Papers series, including a summary of last year's annual conference, “The Geopolitics of Oil, Gas, and Ecology in the Caucasus.” We expect to publish two more working papers this spring, “Prisoners of the Caucasus: Cultural Myths and Media Representations of the Chechen Conflict” by Harsha Ram, and “From Ter-Petrossian to Kocharian: Leadership Change in Armenia” by Stephen Astourian. Finally, in the summer will we publish the above-mentioned paper by Leila Alieva. To order copies, write, e-mail (bsp@socrates.berkeley.edu), or call (510-643-6737) Sasha Radovich.

Finally, I invite you to visit our upgraded Caucasus website at <http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~bsp/caucasus/caucprog.html>). The site includes a list of available working papers and the full text of past newsletters, a list of staff, affiliated faculty and graduate students, and visiting scholars, and links to useful websites with information about the region. Thanks go to Lexie Wood for her success in making the site as useful and informative as possible.

Edward W. Walker
Executive Director



From Ter-Petrosyan to Kocharyan: Causes and Prospects of the Transition in Armenia

Stephan Astourian

Stephan Astourian is the William Saroyan Visiting Professor of Armenian Studies, UC Berkeley, 1998-99. Dr. Astourian studied at the University of Paris I (Sorbonne) and received his Ph.D. in history from UCLA. Prior to his appointment at UC Berkeley, he taught Caucasian and Armenian history at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor and UCLA. These are the insights of a forthcoming article on the political transition in Armenia in a lecture given at UC Berkeley on 13 October 1998.

Most political analyses of the situation in Armenia contain variations of the following two views: former President Levon Ter-Petrosyan was a democrat, and current President Robert Kocharyan is a strong, authoritarian leader in charge. Both of these views require revision, for they fail to capture many of the causes that led to Ter-Petrosyan's resignation, while simplifying the possible outcomes of the transition in Armenia.

Ter-Petrosyan's resignation resulted from a deep crisis of legitimacy. The Nagorno-Karabakh issue, which helped to bring him down, was a necessary but not sufficient condition for his resignation. Ter-Petrosyan was overwhelmingly elected President in 1991 on the basis of a four-point program: the development of a market economy, democratization, new foreign policy, and resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem. Why then, did he decide to resign less than seven years later?

A hyper-presidential system, weak political parties, and neo-liberal policies characterized Ter-Petrosyan's regime. The president could nominate most members of the government and provincial governors, proclaim a state of emergency under vague conditions, and dissolve the Parliament. There was no separation between the judiciary and executive branches of government. The proliferation of political parties continues today, for the forty-nine parties under Ter-Petrosyan have expanded to sixty-nine. The

parties are weak, and with the exception of five or six, most exist around a specific leader with few ideological differences among them.

Underlying Causes of the Downfall

First, the economy played a large role in causing Ter-Petrosyan's resignation. GDP declined by 85.4 percent between 1990 and 1993, while inflation surged more than 10,000 percent between 1990 and 1995. In December 1997, Artashes Tumanyan, head of the tax department at the Ministry of Finance and Economy, stated that the "shadow" economy comprised 50 to 70 percent of all economic activities in Armenia. Simply put, a sharply stratified society emerged. It did not help matters much that large-scale corruption and profiteering increased and that Ter-Petrosyan's brothers and Vano Siradeghyan, sometime Minister of the Interior, mayor of Yerevan, and leader of the Armenian National Movement (ANM), were perceived as some of the main profiteers. Largely due to the dire economic situation, 667,000 Armenians have emigrated since 1989, or about 17 percent of the population.

Second, Armenians had experienced a profound ideological disappointment by the time of Ter-Petrosyan's resignation. The president and his followers attempted to radically reinterpret the past, excluding reliance on the so-

called “third force,” that is, Russia or the West, on whom Armenia had often relied to solve its problems. As part of this ideology, Ter-Petrosyan tried to establish normal relations with Turkey by putting the issue of the Armenian Genocide aside. The attempt turned out to be a humiliating policy, for he had little to show for his efforts. Robert Kocharyan felt the policy was counter-productive, as it put Armenia in a weak position relative to Azerbaijan and Turkey. In accordance with this movement toward “rethinking” history, Ter-Petrosyan attempted at first to distance Armenia from Russia. Instead, Armenia has grown more dependent on Russia, especially in military and economic matters. The intelligentsia grew to loathe Ter-Petrosyan’s regime, for the President and his allies denied that Armenia had values and ideals inherited from the past that could define its identity.

Third, Ter-Petrosyan’s policies divided the important potential of the Armenian diaspora while co-opting a few individuals and organizations. Ter-Petrosyan denied dual citizenship to diaspora Armenians, yet wanted them to support the policies of the government and to provide financial aid. Disregarding the potential of the diaspora was a dangerous policy for a country receiving approximately \$350 million annually from Armenians abroad. These policies had consequences. During its 1997 telethon in North America, the Armenia Fund was able to collect only about \$1 million from the wealthy Armenian American community, which was matched by another \$1 million from billionaire Kirk Kerkorian.

Fourth, growing authoritarianism, including politically motivated trials, pressures, and restrictions, began to characterize the Ter-Petrosyan regime. The rigged parliamentary and presidential elections of July 1995 and September 1996 caused significant political protest in Armenia and led to the use of military forces to support the regime. To shore up his legitimacy and improve his image, Ter-Petrosyan chose Armen Sargsyan, the Armenian ambassador in London, as prime minister. Sargsyan had no power base in Armenia, and due to serious health problems, and perhaps a realization that he would be unable to impose reforms upon the ANM, he resigned. However, Ter-Petrosyan made his biggest mistake when he chose Robert Kocharyan to replace Sargsyan as Prime Minister. Kocharyan had views that differed considerably from his own, and possessed a substantial power base in Armenia and Karabakh. Because these problems were not alone sufficient to bring about Ter-Petrosyan’s downfall, several factors that precipitated the crisis need to be mentioned.

Precipitating Factors

Political dissension in the ANM became apparent in late spring 1997. Draft deferment for students became an issue that created a clear fault line between two close allies of the President, Parliament Speaker Babken Ararktsyan and Defense Minister Vazgen Sargsyan. Ararktsyan, who supported deferment, was defeated when adoption of the Defense Minister’s bill showed that the interests of the army would prevail. A second issue that went to the core of ANM’s policies reached its apex in July 1997 when parliamentary legal affairs chairman Yedvart Yegoryan lost the election for the chairmanship of the ANM to Yerevan mayor Vano Siradeghyan. This defeat was particularly significant because while Yegoryan’s faction asserted that it was in favor of establishing legal-rational institutions in Armenia to buttress capitalistic economic development and to restrain corruption, the faction led by Siradeghian favored maintenance of the status quo. Calls by some ANM members for the resignation of Prime Minister Robert Kocharyan and National Security and Interior Minister Serj Sargsyan added to the tension in the ruling circles.

There were reasons for those calls. The growing efforts of the government to fight tax evasion hurt the social base of the ANM and pressure to establish and enforce fair electoral laws endangered ANM’s grip on power. Yet, the adoption of a new electoral law is a precondition for Armenia’s admission to full membership in the Council of Europe. Ter-Petrosyan’s government did not pass a new electoral law despite the fact that the opposition, Yegoryan, and Kocharyan were in favor of one that would promote something looking like free and fair elections. In summary, by the fall of 1997, three quarters of Ter-Petrosyan’s programs had failed or resulted in massive corruption and nepotism.

After these failures, Ter-Petrosyan sought to address the only issue remaining, Karabakh. In a 26 September 1997 press conference, he gave an open endorsement to the step-by-step approach propounded by the OSCE. However, the leadership of Karabakh, the Armenian Defense Ministry, National Security and Interior Ministry, and the diaspora, media, opposition, and intelligentsia expressed their strong opposition to the President’s stance. Not until 10 November 1997 did the ANM back the President’s Karabakh policy. In addition to openly opposing the Karabakh resolution process, Prime Minister Kocharyan rejected Ter-Petrosyan’s view that the conflict was the main cause of Armenia’s economic distress. As a result of this crisis, forty deputies defected from the ruling

“Hanrapetutyun” (Republic) coalition on 2 February 1998; twenty-seven of who joined the Yerkrpah deputy group under Vazgen Sargsyan’s control. The president’s parliamentary coalition was now in the minority. The resignations of the mayor of Yerevan, Vano Siradeghyan, and Foreign Minister Alexander Arzumanyan marked the beginning of the end for Ter-Petrosyan. With no power base, the President had no choice but to resign on 3 February 1998.

Transition to Kocharyan

Although the OSCE stated that the March 1998 presidential elections were far from fair, there is consensus that they were fairer than the previous elections and that Kocharyan’s victory cannot be doubted. Karen Demirchyan, First Secretary of the Armenian Communist Party between 1974 and 1988, was the runner-up with about 40 percent of the votes. Kocharyan appointed a number of party leaders as presidential advisors, including the formerly imprisoned leader of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, thus co-opting them. They do not wield much power. Nor is Kocharyan’s power to be exaggerated, for he does not rep-

resent a political party and has no control of the dominant parliamentary faction, the Yerkrpah.

Vazgen Sargsyan, the Defense Minister and head of the Yerkrpah, is the strong man of the regime, and all the more so since the mayor of Yerevan and many *marzpets* (governors) owe their appointment to him. Serj Sargsyan, the minister of National Security and the Interior, is another key figure, for he controls the special services and information and is in charge of combating corruption. A native of Karabakh, like the president, Serj Sargsyan is said to be close to him. In the self-proclaimed, unrecognized Republic of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh), power lies not so much in the hands of President Arkadi Ghukasyan as in those of Defense Minister Samvel Babayan. The former is an associate of Kocharyan, while the latter is closer to Vazgen Sargsyan and appears to disagree on many matters with the President of Armenia. On the whole, while about 100 out of 189 deputies support Kocharyan, his political future depends largely upon the Yerkrpah group and its close to 80 deputies.

The main points of Kocharyan’s political platform can be summarized as follows: regarding Nagorno-Karabakh, he has dropped the claim to independence; rather,

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BPS Working Paper Series

**From Ter-Petrosian to Kocharian:
Leadership Change in Armenia
By Stephen Astourian,**

The William Saroyan Visiting Professor of
Armenian Studies 1998-99, UC Berkeley



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he is asking for a “package” in contradistinction to a step-by-step solution that would establish “horizontal” relations between Artsakh and Azerbaijan. The issue of the genocide has now become important in Armenia’s relations with the Republic of Turkey. Ties with Russia, already close, are getting even closer. Yet, Armenia enjoys good relations with NATO and the United States. It is also particularly keen on getting closer to Europe. In internal matters, Kocharyan has contended that he would intensify the anti-corruption campaign, almost inexistent previously. Effective taxation, fight against tax evasion, and continuation of the privatization process constitute some other proposed policies. Finally, Kocharyan has promised democratization and democratic consolidation, including reform of the electoral law and the constitution. Little has been achieved so far and Kocharyan has faced some setbacks.

Corruption is a major issue. Four deputies and a number of old and recent assassinations are currently under investigation. The parliament, however, voted against lifting the parliamentary immunity of one of those deputies, as requested by the Ministry of the Interior. Many of those who voted against that request belonged to the Yerkrpah. Reform of the electoral law is another contentious matter. While the Yerkrpah favor single mandate constituencies, most parties want the majority of the seats to be assigned on the basis of proportional representation. Kocharyan favors a 50/50 compromise, but such a solution is not quite acceptable to the Yerkrpah. The constitutional reforms promised by the president have not made much headway. Kocharyan wants a presidential regime, but most parties favor a parliamentary democracy. The president’s viewpoint is likely to prevail. There is also tension regarding how to best handle continued privatization. Parliament fell a few votes short of stopping the sale of the cherished Yerevan cognac factory to a French company, Pernod-Ricard, for \$30 million.

Finally, the crisis which erupted in May 1998 over the performance of Artsakh Prime Minister Leonard Petrossyan revealed that President Kocharyan is far from being in full control of Nagorno-Karabakh. Indeed, Kocharyan wanted Artsakh President Ghukasyan to assume also the position of prime minister, but the Artsakh Parliament, controlled by Babayan, supported the latter’s candidacy. Kocharyan

reluctantly agreed to a compromise of sorts: a man of Babayan’s, Jirayr Poghosyan, was appointed as Prime Minister.

Current Prospects

Although Kocharyan has improved relations with the diaspora and so far maintained economic stability, he faces multiple challenges. First, if the next electoral law is based mostly on single mandate constituencies, the 1999 legislative elections may again be open to large-scale manipulation. Second, although Kocharyan enjoys a substantial degree of credibility among the people of Artsakh, he has little leverage with Babayan and the Artsakh parliament. Third, significant tensions are emerging in the “Justice and Unity” coalition which supports him, essentially between the Yerkrpah and the other parties, in particular the Armenian Revolutionary Federation.

The political landscape of the opposition may also undergo some substantial changes. In the coming months the ANM is likely to weaken further, for no one has appeared to take the place of Ter-Petrossyan, whose popularity is not exactly enviable, and serious dissensions among its top leaders have come into the open. A few of the opposition parties might end up merging, if they are able to solve the thorny issue of leadership in the future party. The rising force will be Karen Demirchyan’s newly-formed People’s Party.

Looking at the Armenian post-Soviet experience, one would be inclined to suggest that hyperpresidentialism can be an empty shell if it is devoid of legitimacy. Kocharyan, whose political capital has significantly decreased over the past six months, should avoid following Ter-Petrossyan’s example. He would do well to ensure the integrity of the state, the establishment of democratic constitutional arrangements, and the development of legal-rational norms, for they are key factors in the transition from totalitarian socialism to democracy and a market economy. Armenia is a small, landlocked, resource-poor country. Its only assets are the entrepreneurial spirit of its people and their high level of education, the promising talent of its scientists, and its diverse, often prosperous, diaspora. Armenia will emerge from its current situation only by establishing a state perceived as the legitimate guarantor of the rights and duties of all and by consolidating legal-rational norms. In this regard, much remains to be accomplished.



Chechnya and the Economic Consequences of Secession

Edward W. Walker

Dr. Walker is the Executive Director of the Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies. The following is a summary of a talk he gave at the World Policy Institute in New York City on 14 November 1998. The talk was part of a seminar series sponsored by the Eurasia Group on the political economy of secession. Dr. Walker was asked to speak about the economic ramifications of Chechnya's possible secession from Russia.

Contrary to popular assumptions, it cannot be assumed that secession always leads to net economic costs, especially in the long-run. If accompanied by significant violence, secession will likely prove very costly indeed, both in human lives and in losses of economic infrastructure and productive activity. But while there are inevitably some short-term costs of separating from an existing state, the net economic effects may well be positive, not only for the seceding territory but also for the rump state, particularly in the long-run. This is true for two reasons. First, peaceful secession may avoid bloodshed in defense of territorial integrity. And second—and this will be the main focus of my talk today—the economic consequences of peaceful secession are almost entirely a function of the policies, institutions, and background conditions in the seceding and rump state before and after secession.

Economic theory, as well as empirical observation, suggests that open economies do better than closed economies in the long-run. In particular, there is little disagreement among professional economists about the long-term net welfare gains from free trade, although the distributional effects of free trade are various and the economic benefits of fully open capital and labor markets are more controversial. If secession results in significant increases in barriers to trade (or, arguably, to the free flow of capital and labor as well), or to significant increases in transaction costs generally, it will likely lead to net losses for both economies. But in principle, it is quite possible that secession could be effected with minimal increases in trade barriers and transactions costs, depending upon the kinds of institutions and policies that are adopted by the governments in

question.

Indeed, the institutions and policies that can put into effect after secession are infinitely varied. Consider, for example, the question of national currencies and monetary policy. Both parties might agree (1) to use the old national currency (as was the case initially with the ruble after the USSR's dissolution); (2) to peg the exchange rate of a new currency in the seceding state to the national currency of the rump state; (3) to adopt a supra-national currency like the Euro, or (4) to peg both currencies to a third one like the dollar. Even where two entirely independent currencies are established, it may be that the post-secession arrangement is economically advantageous because the two new currency regimes are closer to what economists call "optimal currency areas." As the long and contentious debate over the Euro suggests, it is not even clear that in Western Europe, where governments have had centuries of experience with capitalism and where institutional and macro-economic differences are comparatively moderate, the eleven EU "Euro-states" will be better off adopting the currency than, for example, the United Kingdom, which has opted out. Where you have significant disparities in economic conditions—for example, between northern and southern Italy, or between the Czech republic and Slovakia—or where you have regions that are out-of-sync in terms of their business cycles, as is the case with Ireland and Germany today—it may be that the countries involved would be better off with two different currencies and separate central banks that can adopt independent monetary policies to cope with external shocks or unsynchronized business cycles.

Likewise it is impossible to generalize about the effects of secession on levels of taxation and government expenditures. Secession may simply mean that the seceding party continues to have fiscal autonomy but no longer pays taxes to an ineffectual national government of which it is no longer a part. The result would then be a decrease in taxes but no deterioration in government services. Alternatively, where the national tax burden is minimal and secession forces the government of the seceding state to incur additional expenses (for example, on national defense), government expenditures and taxes might go up considerably.

In principle, even transaction costs on trade and investment between the seceding territory and the rump national state could decline after secession. There are often considerable barriers to trade between regions in large countries, particularly ones that are suffering from internal turmoil (as is the case in Russia today). One cannot assume, therefore, that those barriers would increase after secession, particularly when secession results in greater internal order or diminished corruption. If formal or informal barriers to trade do not increase significantly, and if, for example, the two governments involved find it easier to coordinate legislation and harmonize commercial codes and other laws after secession, it may even be that businesses engaged in trade or investing in both areas discover that the costs of doing business decline.

Above all, it may be that political and economic uncertainty is diminished by peaceful secession. Consider Quebec. Investors hate uncertainty, especially when they are not sure of the consequences of some dramatic event such as Quebec's secession. One could credibly argue, therefore, that the greater economic cost to Quebec is the endless threat of secession and the exaggerated fear of its consequences among investors—better just to have done with it, put the uncertainty behind you, and incur the upfront costs of secession in the interest of long-term stability and greater certainty.

Similarly, it may be that a national government that confronts a secession crisis is paralyzed by the challenge and is unable to muster the political will to bring down inflation or free-up labor markets, something that might be possible were secession to unblock the political impasse. This, for example, was almost certainly the case for the Baltic states after the dissolution of the USSR. (Although I should note that the Baltic states deny that they were seceding on the grounds that their incorporation into the USSR had been illegal from the start, an interpretation shared by most Western governments.) For Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, it is hard to deny that secession had enormous medium and long term benefits, even if the short-

term costs of reorienting their economies westward were considerable, above all because independence meant that they were no longer burdened by the ineffective economic policies coming out of Moscow.

It is even arguable that the secession of the Baltic states was beneficial to some or all of the other successor states. Had it not been for the successful sovereignty drives of the Baltic states, the USSR might well have remained intact, and the union republics might then have been subject to endless wrangling over the hybrid "socialist market" that Gorbachev and his allies were so committed to, with all its consequent economic costs. Certainly this is debatable, but so, too, is the widespread assumption, particularly in Russia today, that the dissolution of the USSR was an unmitigated economic disaster. If that were clearly the case, then the countries that were the most dependent upon inter-republic trade in the Soviet period should have fared worse after the breakup, which has certainly not been the case. The least dependent was the RSFSR (Russia), while Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were among the most dependent (inter-republic trade was almost twice as much of their output in 1988 as Russia's), and Russia's economic performance since 1991 has been much worse than economic performance in the Baltic states. Indeed, I suspect that the fragmentation of the USSR, despite its disruption of trade, relieved the economies of the region of the economic costs of trying to govern such a disparate collection of union republics with such different economic profiles. If so, the dissolution may well have been a necessary, albeit hardly a sufficient condition for economic recovery.

In practice, of course, there are almost always substantial short-term costs to secession, above all because secession is usually accompanied by significant violence or full-scale war. Even where secession or dissolution is effected peacefully, however, as was the case with Czechoslovakia and for the most part with the USSR (and which presumably will be the case if Quebec ever secedes from Canada), there are invariably very difficult economic problems that must be addressed, such as apportioning public and foreign debts, ownership of public assets, and so on. There are also costs that have to be incurred by the seceding state—for example, costs associated with establishing a new foreign ministry and foreign embassies and missions abroad, or (if necessary) developing a credible national defense capacity. There are also costs associated with belonging to assorted international organizations, including not only the United Nations and regional organizations such as NAFTA or ASEAN, but also institutions such as the International Telecommunications Union, the Universal Postal Union, the World Meteorological Organization; and the International Civil Aviation Organization, costs that can be

significant for small and less wealthy states in particular. And in most cases, new barriers to trade and increased transaction costs emerge in one form or another. For example, secessions often lead to new customs regimes and tariffs on trade between the new and the rump states, while new legal regimes may substantially increase the costs of doing business in the two states. Finally, there are also economic costs associated with uncertainty and fear of potential conflict, which may persist even after a seceding territory receives international recognition, particularly if there is a perceived risk of conflict with the rump state.

In short, the economic consequences of secession vary substantially between cases, and there is no way to tell *a priori* what the net gains or losses will be for either or both parties over any particular time frame, let alone in perpetuity. So what does this, or economic theory generally, tell us about the economic consequences of Chechnya's possible independence from Russia?

An initial point is that size (for the most part) doesn't matter, at least economically. A great many small states are extremely prosperous—consider Luxembourg, which by some counts is the richest country per capita in Europe, or Monaco, San Marino, Liechtenstein, and Singapore. In contrast, many large states—for example, Congo, Nigeria,

Brazil, India, and indeed Russia itself, to name but a few—have very poor records of economic performance. Numerous studies show almost no relationship between the size of a state, either in terms of territory or population, and economic performance.

Thus the oft-heard argument that certain areas, such as Chechnya, are too small to become independent is without merit. So too is the equally common assertion that certain regions cannot afford independence simply because they lack of natural resources (an argument that was frequently made about the Baltic states before the USSR's dissolution). Again, there is no clear relationship between natural resource endowments and economic performance. Consider resource rich countries such as Russia, Nigeria, or Congo, on the one hand, and resource poor countries such as Japan, Taiwan, or South Korea on the other. To be sure, a certain territory may not be *politically* viable as an independent state—hostile neighbors may make normal trade relations impossible. And it may be that a particular area is economically disadvantaged by virtue of its distance from world trade centers. But economically, size is largely irrelevant. And politically, the important point is that all small states are vulnerable to political pressure and intimidation from larger states, which merely suggests that it be-

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No Peace, No War in the Caucasus: Successionist Conflicts in Chechnya, Abkazia, and Nagorno-Karabakh

by Edward W. Walker

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hooves them to get along with their neighbors or find some powerful allies.

To a large extent, all of this is irrelevant to Chechnya, for the obvious reason that its drive for independence has not been peaceful. In fact, Chechnya's economy is in ruins, and its prospects for rapid recovery are very poor. The war has destroyed the republic's economic infrastructure; its capital, Djokhar (formerly Grozny), has been all but leveled; unemployment is estimated by the government to be over 90 percent; better educated Chechens have mostly fled; the Chechen authorities are unable to secure internal order; and revenues from the oil pipeline running through the region will be modest under the best of circumstances. Nor is Chechnya likely to receive much financial support from Russia or the international community, at least for the time being. Even before its financial meltdown in August, Moscow lacked the financial wherewithal to provide Chechnya with substantial economic aid. It is even less able to do so now. The Russian political elite is also deeply divided about Chechnya, including in regard to the crucial question of whether helping Chechnya is in Russia's interest. Despite frequent appeals from various Russian specialists, it is therefore very unlikely that a "concept" or coherent policy for the North Caucasus generally, or for Chechnya particularly, will be adopted and implemented by the Russian government.

Neither is the international community likely to help very much, not only because of concerns about Russian sovereignty but because Chechnya appears to be entirely unable to absorb outside aid effectively. The militarized Chechen elite, which was unified in its opposition to Moscow during the war, has fragmented, and the legitimacy of the Maskhadov government is being challenged today by opposition figures such as the influential field commanders Salman Raduev and Shamil Basayev, the former acting Chechen president, Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, and Maskhadov's former foreign minister, Movladi Udugov. Most alarmingly, kidnappings have become ever more frequent. In 1998, over 150 kidnappings for ransom reportedly took place in Chechnya and surrounding regions, and the Chechen government seems unable to bring the epidemic to a halt. International humanitarian organizations, NGOs, and foreign governments were particularly horrified and chastened by the assassination of six Red Cross

workers in the republic in 1997, the kidnappings and rape of foreign aid workers, and more recently the decapitations of three Britishers and a New Zealander who had been working for a British company that had been contracted by the Chechen government to install telephone lines in the republic. International organizations and NGOs have understandably refused to operate within the republic under these conditions. Until order is restored, this is unlikely to change. But even then, there would be considerable concern among foreign donors that humanitarian aid or financial support would disappear into the hands of criminals or corrupt Russian and Chechen officials. Moreover, as long as humanitarian agencies and international aid donors are unwilling to operate in the region, significant foreign direct investment is out of the question.

To conclude, I am sadly very pessimistic about Chechnya's economic prospects, although my pessimism has very little to do with general propositions about the economic consequences of secession or about the long-run economic "viability" of Chechnya as an independent state. The real problem is that the internal political situation in the republic is deteriorating, while relations between Moscow and Chechnya are unlikely to improve significantly, above all because they are unlikely to reach agreement on the republic's status. This will make it all the more difficult for the international community to provide significant aid, which is unlikely regardless as long as the Chechen government is unable to establish internal order. And even then, Russia's deteriorating economy, other strains on the global financial system, and the geographical isolation of Chechnya will make international support for Chechnya limited at best.

If there is a ray of hope for Chechnya's economy, it is that the Chechens are an industrious and resilient people who have devised effective coping strategies for dealing with harsh economic conditions through subsistence farming, trading, small-scale industry, and other "informal" commercial activities. Chechen authorities also appear to be generally realistic about the poor prospects for help from the outside and the need to rely on internal resources for recovery. Nevertheless, it is very unlikely that the Chechen economy will recover quickly, and, for this and other reasons, the republic will almost certainly remain a region of instability and unrest for years to come.



Witnessing History: Monitoring Azerbaijan's Presidential Elections

John Dunlop

John Dunlop, Senior Fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution, monitored the presidential elections in Azerbaijan as part of an 18-member independent, bipartisan observer mission sponsored by the International Republican Institute. A prominent specialist on Russian nationalism and politics, Dr. Dunlop is the author, editor, or co-editor of nine books and many articles. He shared his "notes from the field" with an audience at U.C. Berkeley on 10 November 1998.

While I have done some work on the North Caucasus recently, monitoring the 11 October Presidential elections gave me an opportunity to visit Azerbaijan for the first time. The non-profit organization that sponsored the mission, the International Republican Institute (IRI), is dedicated to promoting democracy worldwide and works very closely with the National Democratic Institute (NDI). Our 18-member team headed by Ron Palmer, former U.S. Ambassador to Hungary, was comprised of five delegates and 13 IRI staff members.

My observation group consisted of four persons, including an interpreter and driver. We drove from Baku to Lenkoran, a town close to the Iranian border, to observe the elections in territorial districts 22 and 23. Other missions went to Gyandzha, Baku, Nakhichevan, Guba, Sumgayit, and Evlakh. On the day following the election, the various groups drove back to Baku to participate in the IRI press conference held at the Baku Hyatt hotel.

The polls were open from 7am to 8pm, with 4.4 million registered voters, 4,245 voting stations or Precinct Election Commissions (PECs), and 82 Territorial Election Commissions (TECs). As you know, Azerbaijan, a Caspian Sea republic approximately the size of the state of Maine, has a population of 7.7 million and is 93.4 percent Shiite Muslim. Over 90 percent of the population is Azeri, in addition to a number of ethnic minorities, including Rus-

sians and Jews. Because Azerbaijan is the lynchpin for the U.S.-backed main pipeline route for exporting oil from the Caspian region, it has received increasing attention from the West.

Azerbaijan has experienced a severe economic decline since its independence in 1991. More than anything else, I was struck by the extraordinary level of poverty. While the World Bank estimates Azerbaijan's poverty at 60 percent, I am inclined to agree with IRI's estimate that 98 percent of all Azeri citizens live below the poverty line, defined as \$89/month. Unemployment is high, families are generally large, and close to one million are refugees or displaced persons. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, about 230,000 are refugees from Armenia, and 650,000 are internally displaced persons from the region around Karabakh. Many live in tents or dilapidated dwellings. At least 20 percent of the workforce has had to leave their homes to find work in Russia and Iran, but there is little scholarly research on this topic. The key question for President Aliyev is: Can he do something for the impoverished 98 percent of the population, or will a corrupt elite succeed in draining off all the oil money, as it seems determined to do?

Lenkoran, a major settlement about three and a half hours south of Baku, is considered a more traditional, conservative region of Azerbaijan. There is a large group of

Talysh, an ethnic group that is mostly Sunni rather than Shiite Muslim. As we drove into the Lenkoran area, the region became greener, with a large number of fruit trees. The area is strikingly beautiful. Its fast-moving, large rivers pour into the Caspian, fishermen haul in huge fish, and snow-capped mountains are in the distance. Though there is significant poverty today, the area has all the makings of a tourist center. About 25 percent of Lenkoran male voters are employed in Russia or Iran, which is higher than the national average. Although it is a completely male-dominated society, the governor is a woman, an Aliyev appointee. In Azerbaijan, all governors are appointed by the President.

Our team was able to observe elections in two TECs, each with 50,000 registered voters. At each precinct we visited in Lenkoran, we asked about how the PEC was formed. Invariably the answer was vague. We were told something like this: “The Council of Elders would call a meeting and they would tell the people to select a few good men to run the elections. The few good men would emerge by consensus.” Concerning the Central Election Commission (CEC), the NDI stated in July 1998, “The legal framework for the elections remains flawed in a fundamental respect—the CEC is under the control of the president and of the parliament, which is dominated by the president’s party. There is a need to allow parties with registered candidates to add a voting representative to the CEC.” Yet although Mamedov was eventually permitted to have a voting member on the CEC, this voting member was later barred from participating in the final vote tabulation. In fact, he was kicked out of the room.

Voters chose from six candidates. The incumbent, Heydar Aliyev, was elected to a five-year term in 1993, and has now been reelected to a four-year term. Prior to serving as president, he spent thirteen years as Party boss (1969-1982) and five years in the Politburo (1982-1987) before being shoved out by Gorbachev. Although at that time his career seemed to be over, Aliyev took control as acting president of Azerbaijan in 1993, following social unrest that forced then President Abulfaz Elchibey out of office. Aliyev has created a cult of personality in Azerbaijan and you see his portrait everywhere, beginning at the airport. He is the leader of the New Azerbaijan Party (NEP) which has 140,000 members and is in every sense the dominant political force. In 1995, in a dubious election, the NEP took 73 out of 104 seats in parliament. Nevertheless, I agree with an Aliyev spokesman that Aliyev can be credited with several accomplishments: preventing civil war, establishing a cease-fire with Armenia, creating an army, reducing dependence on Russia, and reviving the silk road trade. Yet Aliyev’s spokesman went on to mention several specious

achievements, including the following: halting the decline of the country and stopping inflation, adopting agricultural reforms, restoring democratic values, and abolishing censorship.

Etibar Mamedov, who appears to have come in second place, is the head of the National Independence Party of Azerbaijan (NIP). Mamedov helped to form the Popular Front in 1989, an outspoken political movement critical of the Soviet government. His controversial views eventually led to his arrest by the KGB, and he spent nine months in Moscow’s Lefortovo Prison before being released and elected to parliament in 1995. His party holds 3 of the 124 seats in parliament.

Mamedov’s followers believe he would have won the presidential election had it been free and fair. They argue that Aliyev did not get a two thirds majority in the first ballot, so he should have had to confront a single opponent in a runoff election. Once people realized that there was a real chance for change, people would have chosen Mamedov.

According to members of the NIP: “We oppose Aliyev and we oppose the opposition. We are in the middle—we are the conservative opposition.” The NIP favors a judicious privatization process, desires stability, warns against the risk of revolutionary explosion, and calls for an end to the current corrupt regime. Mamedov ran an excellent campaign, taking the middle-ground on many issues. He opposed the Popular Front, declared himself anti-Communist, and seemed eager to create a middle class in Azerbaijan.

The other candidates included Nizami Sulimanov, Firudin Hassanov, Khanhusein Kazimili, and Ashraf Mehtiyev. Sulimanov, who also ran against Aliyev in 1993, took an extreme position on the Armenian question, saying that if he were elected, he would give six months to one year for Armenia to return Karabakh, otherwise he would declare total war on Armenia. Many people stated that Sulimanov is Azerbaijan’s Zhironovsky.

Hassanov, First Secretary of Communist Party-2, was regarded as a traitor by Communist Party-1, which boycotted the elections. His platform called for a progressive socialist society, but he was continually criticized for not boycotting the elections. Kazimili was the most lackluster of the candidates, and according to most Azeris, Ashraf Mehtiyev simply had no money to run a campaign. Mehtiyev sought state control over the oil sector, favored an Azeri Autonomous Republic within Armenia, and supposedly wanted to liberate Karabakh even faster than Sulimanov.

Numerous groups boycotted the elections, including the Popular Front and Musavat, the “Equality” party.

The various groups boycotting the election formed one movement to push for democratic reforms, but they were forbidden from registering their organization. Most people now think that boycotting the election was a mistake.

Although newspapers are largely unread outside the capital, over 90 percent of Azeri households have a television. All six candidates got free air time, but the bias in favor of Aliyev was evident. At the two state-run TV stations, Aliyev typically received 18 hours of air time for every six minutes of time received by competing candidates. Clearly, Aliyev's campaign benefited from disproportionate media coverage.

Our team witnessed several glaring election violations ranging from stuffed ballots to intimidation. An influential member of the monitoring group arrived unannounced at a precinct in Baku when the commissioners were attempting to keep the IRI monitors 60 feet from the ballot box as the box was being shaken vigorously in an attempt to unstuff stuffed ballots. Another observer said that the lights went off right when the ballot box was being opened, and people were trying to unstuff the stuffed ballots when the observers pointed their flashlights at the ballot box.

Furthermore, the TEC and so-called independent pollwatchers were all Aliyev men. The PEC determined which posters to put up and where, but only posters of Aliyev were put up in all 20 precincts. Problems occurred with the ballot itself, for many precincts signed and sealed ballots before the election. In this specific case, the violation was in fact the rule. Officials collected passport numbers, particularly of women, in order to mark ballots, sometimes offering \$5 for each passport number. Other officials totaled up the votes, but then did not bring the actual bal-

lots to the TEC. Twenty percent of all the ballots were spoiled, for in Aliyev-friendly precincts, officials simply ruined many ballots so that they could not be counted. It was really quite amazing that they were so open about massive violations, even in front of international observers.

Despite some improvements from the 1993 presidential and 1995 parliamentary elections, the 11 October presidential election in Azerbaijan left much to be desired. Everyone who observed the elections came to the same conclusion—that it did not meet international standards. In my opinion, Aliyev definitely did not get two-thirds of the votes, though we can only hypothesize about what the results might have been had the vote counting been fair. Witnessing fake elections in an authoritarian system did not leave us feeling inspired about the prospects for democracy in Azerbaijan. Instead, as IRI also concluded, Azerbaijan's recent elections were a missed opportunity.



Photo taken by Edward W. Walker

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Study Group on the Kazakh Language

Equally Unfair and Equally Not Free? The 1998 Presidential Elections in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan

by David I. Hoffman

David I. Hoffman is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Political Science at Berkeley and a Senior Associate at Cambridge Energy Research Associates. He has made numerous trips to the Caucasus and Central Asia, most recently from February to December 1998 to conduct research for his dissertation on energy and state building in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan.

As observers of the region are well aware, the presence of Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan on the world stage began with the “discovery”¹ of the hydrocarbon resources of these two Soviet successor states, particularly their oil reserves. International media attention—which was virtually non-existent in 1992—has reached an oil-fired crescendo in which it is difficult to distinguish between noise and news.

This past year, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan have attracted the attention of students and practitioners of another subject—the less concrete, if sometimes equally dirty business of electoral politics and democratization. Both countries have held presidential elections in recent months—Azerbaijan on 11 October 1998 and Kazakhstan on 10 January 1999. Post-revolutionary “follow-on” elections are generally regarded as important benchmarks of the consolidation of regime change and democratization, representing an important step in the legal institutionalization of democracy and the routinization of a competitive political environment. Given the extremely strong presidential systems of both Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, as well as the paucity of successful cases of peaceful succession and power transfers in the successor states (excluding the Baltics), the presidential elections that took place on the two sides of the Caspian Sea in the past three months provide an interesting barometer of the progress (or lack of progress) towards genuine democracy in the region.

Beyond their potential for hydrocarbon-driven riches, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan share a number of structural and circumstantial similarities that make comparison of the two propitious. Both countries have experienced a similar legacy of Soviet rule, manifested in a variety of ways, from the ideological upbringing of most adults (and especially political elites) to the physical infrastructure associ-

ated with a centralized command economy. At the same time, the electoral experiences of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan are distinguished from those of other successor states by the cultural contexts in which they have taken place. The titular nationalities of both states are Turkic Muslims, and both Azeri and Kazakh national political elites confront not only the legacy of their Soviet past but the legacy of Russian imperialism and colonialism.

The fact that incumbent presidents were returned to power in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan should be of no surprise. In both cases, state and civic institutions ranging from government bureaucracies to budget-funded organizations to the state-run media are unquestionably subordinated to the office of the president. Accordingly, both the manner in which the two electoral campaigns were executed, as well as their similar outcomes, raised serious doubts among foreign observers as to how representative their results were. In Azerbaijan, 75 year-old President Heydar Aliyev, despite crushing poverty, military defeat, ballooning inequality, and a rejuvenated and active political opposition, officially avoided a runoff and sailed to a first-round victory with approximately 76 percent of the vote—officially. President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan scored an even more decisive knockout, garnering 81 percent support from the reported 86 percent turnout on January 10.

The presidential elections in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan were conducted in remarkably similar ways, reflecting the lack of democratic institutions in both countries. Although official steps were taken to reduce or eliminate media censorship in both (in Azerbaijan, formal state censorship was abolished while in Kazakhstan, Nazarbayev’s daughter, Dariga, temporarily resigned her position as head of the state-run television channel *Habar*, ostensibly to en-

¹Oil, in fact, is nothing new to Azerbaijan, which at the close of the 19th century produced 51 percent of the world’s supply of crude, or Kazakhstan, whose oil industry recently celebrated its centennial.

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sure fair coverage), the state continued to manipulate both state-owned and private information outlets in the run-up to the elections. While explicit censorship was abolished, it was replaced by government-instigated libel and/or slander lawsuits that, when coupled with submissive courts presided over by political appointees, resulted in a situation where criticism of the ruling regime could spell financial suicide for any publisher or producer—such, for example, was the fate of the editors of *DAT* newspaper in Almaty and *Azadlig* in Baku). It is hardly surprising, then, that a major complaint among both Azerbaijani and Kazakhstani journalists has become so-called self-censorship. This process has been expedited by the reportedly coerced transfer of ownership of certain major media outlets to interests either sympathetic to or indirectly owned by the governing authorities. The purchase of the wildly popular and fiercely critical Kazakhstani newspaper, *Karavan*, and its sister television station, *KTK*, this past year is a prime example.

In addition to manipulating the media, the Kazakhstani and Azerbaijani authorities influenced the elections more directly through the application of state power. In Kazakhstan, the exercise of holding elections in January 1999—nearly two years ahead of schedule—required a package of 19 constitutional amendments. In both countries, during the months leading up to the elections enormous effort was expended redirecting state resources towards the reelection efforts of Nazarbayev and Aliyev. The television channels of Azerbaijan, despite protestations of neutrality, provided almost nonstop, fawning coverage of Aliyev. The Kazakhstani republican budget, which plunged into deficit partly as a result of Nazarbayev's election-year promises to guarantee pension reform and heating services to the entire country during the winter, showed that no state institution was exempt from attempting to influence the electorate. In fact, bureaucrats as well as employees of almost all large enterprises were pressured into supporting their incumbent president.

Given these similarities in tactics, Aliyev and Nazarbayev—both veterans of the “98 percent + Club” in previous elections—managed to garner similar vote totals, 76 and 81 percent, respectively. If these numbers seem modest compared to previous electoral harvests, the difference can be accounted for in part by the increase in international attention to the more recent elections, and also by the increased concern by each administration about international (and especially western) approval. Despite the best efforts of the Aliyev and Nazarbayev regimes, the international community was unimpressed by what it saw. The

OSCE, NDI, and IRI all expressed disappointment with the Azerbaijani elections, noting that, while there was a distinct improvement over the ridiculous 1995 parliamentary elections, they nevertheless fell far short of international norms for free and fair elections. Nazarbayev, despite a series of full-page advertisements in the *New York Times* and the employment of at least two foreign public image consulting agencies, could not even convince the OSCE to send a delegation to monitor the Kazakhstani elections. Although much of the large-scale vote-rigging found in Azerbaijan was absent² in Kazakhstan, international observers by and large concluded that the short lead-up to the election (a total of three months elapsed between the announcement and the election itself) undermined the claim that the contest had been genuinely competitive.

Despite these similarities, there were also important differences between the conduct of the presidential elections in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan and also between their ultimate impact on each country's political trajectory. Qualitatively, the Azerbaijani elections were more legitimate, having been mandated by the nation's constitution as the scheduled follow-on to the 1993 elections. As such, the political opposition was able to plan accordingly, leading to a coordinated boycott by the five major opposition parties and a series of public marches and demonstrations in Baku and other major Azerbaijani cities. The Kazakhstani elections, on the other hand, struck most local observers as having little to do with elections, almost nothing to do with democratization, and almost everything to do with insulating the incumbent politically from an anticipated economic crisis, which was predicted to hit in late 1999/early 2000, i.e., exactly when the next presidential elections were originally scheduled to take place. After debating for a total of a mere four hours, the Kazakhstani lower house of parliament adopted the necessary constitutional amendments on 7 October, thus “forcing” (in his words) early elections on Nazarbayev. Other “steps towards democratization” “forced” on Nazarbayev included the lengthening of the presidential term from five to seven years and the removal of the office's maximum age limit.

The elections are also resonating differently in each country. To be sure, the reasons elections were held at all in an environment of budget deficits and persistent economic non-performance are identical—successful reelection, blessed by the West, and a corresponding boost in foreign investor confidence. But for Azerbaijan, the presidential elections carried with them distinct foreign policy overtones. In a year that had already seen a “constitutional

²More than one election monitor in Azerbaijan reported seeing large bundles of still-bound pre-marked ballots tumble out of ballot boxes during the vote-counting phase.

coup” and tainted elections in Armenia, as well as a continuation of the impasse over Nagorno-Karabakh, the Azerbaijani government saw the presidential elections as a weapon for gaining ground on the one front still active in the Karabakh war—public relations and the war for international sympathy. “Beating” the Armenians by holding elections blessed by international monitors would show Azerbaijan in a favorable light with regards to its Armenian foe. Such a victory would have had more than merely moral consequences—faced with a powerful Armenian Diaspora lobby in the West, Azerbaijan has had few ways to leverage international support in its ongoing territorial conflict, be it diplomatic pressure or material aid (Section 907 of the U.S. Congress’s Freedom Support Act being the most obvious manifestation of its lack of influence).

For Kazakhstan, there was no such foreign policy reason for holding elections. While western governments went through the motions of expressing their unhappiness about the fairness of the campaign, neither the protests nor their substantive emptiness came as a surprise to Kazakhstan’s authorities (who, after all, had received similar slaps on the wrist before while rising to the top of the list of per-capita foreign investment among the successor states) or to Western governments. Whereas for Azerbaijan, the referent was Armenia, for Kazakhstan it was the even less democratic Uzbekistan, where a blanket ban on opposition parties is enforced with brutal efficiency, and Turkmenistan, where opponents (both real and perceived) of the regime are regularly dispatched to mental institutions for “treatment.”

The presidential elections in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan also diverge in the effect each is likely to have on internal politics. In Azerbaijan, the tumultuous election campaign and the genuine interest it stimulated among the population demonstrated that open criticism of the regime is, within limits, tolerated—an important lesson in a country ruled by a former KGB general. More importantly, the

elections provided a critical opening for a political opposition that, while quieted and suppressed since 1993, has not yet been eradicated or entirely cowed. By boycotting the elections, the would-be candidates of “the Five”—that is, the five main opposition parties—were given an opportunity to criticize the regime with relative impunity and without the stain of an electoral defeat. By choosing to compete in the elections, the runner-up to Aliyev, Etibar Mammedov, has managed to give his political stature a considerable boost, adding to the plurality of voices on the Azerbaijani political scene. Given the political opposition’s declared intention of continuing its policy of confrontation, Azerbaijani political life was in fact enlivened by the 1998 election campaign. Indeed, an increasingly pronounced cycle of action-reaction between opposition forces and the authorities is already underway.

Kazakhstan’s presidential elections, on the other hand, have had exactly the opposite effect on political life in Kazakhstan. Rather than providing a window of opportunity for the opposition, they shut the door on any possible political revitalization by demonstrating the resolve of the authorities to prevent challenges to the incumbent president regardless of international opinion or the constitution. What opposition remains is weak—geographically and ideologically diffuse and divided. Its exposure to the public during the campaign was minimal (15 minutes of television airtime, and minimal coverage in the print media), and much of the latent protest vote was rendered irrelevant by the introduction of the wildcat “opposition” candidate, Gani Kasymov, whose candidacy was thought by many to be the creation of the authorities.³ Ultimately, the elections in Kazakhstan are likely to have little, if any, effect on domestic politics, other than to prolong Nazarbayev’s term until at least 2006, and quite possibly to 2013.

³General Kasymov, the head of the Kazakhstani Customs Department, is on record as promising to deliver “personally, by myself and with my friends, one million votes for President Nazarbayev.” His antics during his campaign to “challenge” Nazarbayev for the presidency included brawling with market vendors and crushing glass in his bare hands on national television. Phone calls to his office before the election were answered by aides with the reassurance that the general would be back from his “vacation” on 11 January.

Unresolved Issues in Twentieth Century Armenian History

Richard Hovannisian

Richard G. Hovannisian, the Armenian Educational Foundation Professor in Modern Armenian History at UCLA, is considered the founder of the field of modern Armenian history. He recently edited a two-volume work entitled History of the Armenian People. On 18 November 1998, Dr. Hovannisian shared his ideas on topics deserving of further research in Armenian history.

As I approach the end of my academic career, I have given myself the leeway and the privilege of thinking about some broad issues in Armenian history and I wanted to share them with you today. I could have given a lecture on a specific topic, but I chose not to do that. Rather, I would like to just chat with you about some of the things that I wish I knew but do not know. Hopefully, in the next generation of scholarship there will be advances towards knowing.

Despite the title of this presentation, I would like to go back about 20 centuries to begin. Who are the Armenians? This issue of who the Armenians are affects current history. It is a part of contemporary politics, and there are several theories about who the Armenians are. The Armenians were for a long time considered a biblical people and many modern Armenians see their struggle for survival in epic origins. Even now in Armenian parochial schools in the Middle East, and perhaps even in the United States, the story of the biblical origins of the Armenian people is often taught not as epic or legend but as fact. On the other hand, Herodotus, father of Greek history, tells us that the Armenians were people who moved, along with another related people, from Thrace eastward into the great plateau of Armenia.

Why is this a problem? Because there is a raging debate that goes on in and outside of Armenia. Are the Armenians migrants or immigrants into the area, or are they the native population? Increasingly, Armenian national, or at least nationalist, historians want to demonstrate that the Armenians were the very first inhabitants in the area and they are very upset with people like me who publish books which say that the Armenians are a mixture. There is likely to have been groups of Indo-European people from Thrace and the Caucasus Mountains who came into contact with the Hittite kingdom and then mixed with local peoples. Gradually, there was a long process of people formation.

To illustrate the importance of this question, I have a couple of examples. I gave a talk in San Francisco earlier this year. The talk focused on a recent book that I had edited which included a chapter on Armenian origins and mentioned the Urartian people, a pre-Armenian people.

To put it bluntly, an Armenian historian in the audience went ballistic. He admonished me and everyone else for having allowed a terrible version of history to be published in English, which would permit the Armenians to be viewed as newcomers. The reasons for this outburst are obviously political. Nationalists want to demonstrate that other groups are the newcomers. Clearly, much more linguistic and archaeological work needs to be done on this topic. I hope that in the next generation this issue can be removed from its political context. After all, the Azerbaijanis have the same issues: Are they Turks or Caucasian Albanians? When it comes to Karabakh, Azerbaijanis usually decide that they are descendents of the Caucasian Albanians, who were contemporaries of the Armenians.

Professor Nina Garsoyan, who wrote five chapters in the two-volume *History of the Armenian People* that I published last year, is a revisionist historian in two ways. She insists that the Armenians are really Iranian, although Christian historians have hidden this fact. She argues that the Armenians dissociated themselves from the Persians when they became Christians, for the Iranians remained Zoroastrian. Second, she states that the Armenians are country people and Armenian society was semi-feudal in structure. I find this surprising since ancient Armenia was dotted with cities and major trade routes. Yet she maintains that cities were alien to the Armenians, even claiming that the ancient cities were populated by non-Armenians. Again, we need additional information to sort out these questions.

Moving towards modern history, there is the question of whether there were any other options available to the Armenians to resist Ottoman rule and the breakdown of law and order in the 19th century? The whole issue of the revolutionary movement is critical. The movement was relatively localized in the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire, not highly effective, and did not engage a large percentage of the Armenian population. But the ultimate fate of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire was genocide. Some people want to make excuses for the genocide, claiming that the Armenians were a threat to the Ottomans because they had arms. It seems to me, however, that the Armenians were not a genuine threat because their num-

bers were far too small and the surveillance system of the sultan was so pervasive. The sultan clearly knew what was going on. Still, this is another topic that we need to know more about.

I also have a problem with Armenian dualism. Sometimes Armenians are proud to sing freedom-fighter songs but at the same time we also want to be recognized internationally as victims. Perhaps it is possible to be both a revolutionary and a victim. Yet, before any Armenian even thought about taking a rifle up to a hill, they had tried for decades to bring about change and to achieve reform through legal means.

Another issue is the Young Turks in the Ottoman Empire, which gave so much hope to the Armenians. Widespread massacres of the Armenian population took place between 1894 and 1896, when 100,000 Armenians perished out of a total population of two million. The Armenians were therefore ecstatic when the Young Turks took over in 1908. But what do we really know about the relationship between the Armenians and the Young Turks? There was an uneasy alliance between the leading Armenian political party, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), and the Young Turk movement. The Young Turk revolution took place in 1908, but for several years prior to the revolution there were discussions, negotiations, and quarrels between the Armenian leaders abroad and the Young Turks, who were also abroad at the time because of persecution at the hands of the Ottomans. Some materials have been published on this issue, but we only have information from the Turkish side, based on Turkish and French language materials. One of the problems, of course, is that many of the people who worked with the Young Turks were killed in 1915, so they did not have the luxury of writing memoirs. This is such an important period in Armenian history, for it was the beginning of the end. It is like studying the Holocaust without knowing what happened in Germany in the 1930s. Although a new massacre took place in Silyssia in 1909, the Armenians still worked with the Young Turks afterwards, and the ARF continued to support the government until 1912-1913. Why wasn't the 1909 massacre a wake-up call to the Armenians? What were the internal debates that went on? There are many archives and numerous newspapers that are largely unused today. Primary sources need to be explored. I would like to see real scholarship and interpretation of this period.

There are many questions about the period of the genocide itself. We are frequently told that, just as Hitler decided early on to destroy the Jews, the Young Turks decided on a Final Solution for the Armenians at a secret meeting in 1912. This story has been circulated and it could be true, but we do not have the scholarship to support it.

Even if there was such a decision in 1912, what was it that triggered the final decision to start the genocide at that moment? It was clearly not a random action. The Turkish killing machine was very well-organized, though far clumsier, and more cruel and brutal than the German killing machine. Still, the question remains: What were the internal discussions that led up to the decision to implement the Final Solution? Turkish sources say that there was no intent to kill, only to remove the Armenians from a "war zone." This is contradictory to fact, but in any case, who made these decisions? What was the mechanism for implementing the decision? We know that the telegraph was at work, and we have some information, but that information has not been brought together to give us a full picture. The problem here, of course, is the lack of cooperation from the Turkish government. In the case of the Armenian Genocide, the Ottoman records are closed (although the Turks claim they are open). Even if the Ottoman archives were opened, most decisions of this sort are not committed to paper. Deniers claim that the cabinet records do not say anything. But for those who have studied Soviet history, we know that there are official Soviet documents, but very few records from the inner chambers when real decisions were made.

There are also many questions that need to be answered about international relations at the time of the first republic. In 1918, after the Russian revolution, the Kerensky government had been tolerant toward the Armenians, in contrast to Tsarist officials. In May-June 1918, the Turkish government recognized an Armenian state around Yerevan. Why did they recognize an Armenian state, especially if they had the force to occupy the whole area? A possible answer is that they wanted to show that they would allow a "showcase state" to form, but a dissenting view says that this was only a temporary reprieve. Likewise, while there may be clues about Turkish policy toward Armenia in the Ottoman archives, right now we still do not fully understand Turkish objectives in the Caucasus during that period.

There is also a lacuna in our knowledge of Soviet-Turkish relations from 1912 to 1918. We know that the Soviets saw Turkey as a key to Islamic sympathy toward Soviet power. If they could win over Turkey, they believed they could stir up the entire Islamic world against Great Britain and France. But equally important was the role of Soviet Russia in the minds of Turkish leaders, particularly those who were trying to reject the sultan's government in Constantinople. Mustafa Kemal wanted Soviet help without becoming a Soviet state. Kemal was a brilliant strategist and by the summer of 1920 the Soviets were sending Turkey gold and weapons. What are the details of the ne-

gotiations that went on between Russia and Turkey? There is a memoir documenting the treaty between Turkey and Russia, but we do not have the actual negotiations or stenographic notes documenting any discussions that took place. This is important, for it was only after Turkey received assurances that the Soviet government would not intervene to help the Armenian republic that Kemal decided to invade Armenia. Circumstantial evidence tells us the Turks invaded Armenia within three weeks of the receipt of gold and weapons from the Soviets. The Soviets, it seems, miscalculated terribly. And Kemal, by baiting the Soviets and threatening the West with adopting a Soviet-style government, was able to get what he wanted from both.

And what about the Soviets and Armenia? There are hundreds of Armenian books about how the Soviets “liberated” Armenians from the Turks and from capitalism, accounts that highlight the heroic struggle of the Red Army as it saved Armenians wanting help. But when was it that the Soviets decided to “Sovietize” Armenia? The key here is in the Soviet military archives. We need to know what was going on behind the scenes, for we simply cannot trust the highly ideological published documents. What were the considerations that made the Soviet leadership change its mind between 1920 and 1921, thereby precipitating the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh between Azerbaijan and

Armenia? First the Soviets awarded Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijan, and then to Armenia, and then later established it as an autonomous republic within Azerbaijan. Why, and who was calling the shots?

Finally, why in the 1940’s did the Soviet government, having lost so many people, undertake a massive campaign to bring Armenians from the diaspora to Soviet Armenia? It was not exactly a repatriation, as it is often called. Most had never lived there. These people sold their belongings at a pittance and went from a capitalistic system to Soviet Armenia just because the name of the Soviet country was Armenia. And they suffered miserably. One theory is that the Soviets wanted to take over the eastern provinces from Turkey, and they needed to have enough Armenians to populate the territory they wanted to take. If this is true, I want to see the documentation.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize that although a great deal has been studied, for every question we answer there are ten that remain unanswered. It will take generations of scholars to answer them. We need collaborative efforts of Russian, Turkish, and Armenian scholars who can explore these unresolved issues in Armenian history without political agendas.

The Azerbaijan Presidential Elections and Azeri Foreign Policy

Elkhan Nuriyev

Elkhan Nuriyev is Director of the Center for International Studies (CIS) and Associate Professor of Political Science and International Affairs at the Caucasus University in Baku, Azerbaijan. Prior to joining CIS, Dr. Nuriyev was a Fulbright Scholar at George Washington University and served as an expert in the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry. Dr. Nuriyev recently completed a paper entitled "The Ongoing Geopolitical Game in the Caucasus: War or Peace" for the Caucasus Bank for Development (CBD), and is currently writing a book about the Caucasus region and the new geopolitics of the region on the eve of the 21st century. On 9 October 1998, Dr. Nuriyev gave a lecture on the 11 October Presidential elections and Azerbaijani foreign policy.

Presidential Elections

As an independent political scientist and concerned Azeri citizen, I would like to provide an overview of some recent developments in Azerbaijan and in the region. The previous presidential elections in Azerbaijan followed a bloodless 1993 coup in which Heydar Aliyev, a former KGB chief and Communist party boss, seized power and then conducted elections, claiming 98 percent of the vote. The 11 October elections feature incumbent President Aliyev, nominated by the New Azerbaijan Party, as well as five other candidates: Etibar Mamedov, nominated by the National Independence Party; Firudin Hassanov, appointed by one of the three registered Communist Parties; Khanhusein Kazimili, Chairman of the Social Prosperity Party; Ashraf Mehtiyev, Chairman of the Association of Victims of Illegal Political Repression; and Nizami Sulimanov, Chairman of the Independent Azerbaijan Party. While six candidates are on the ballot, most observers agree that Aliyev has one main competitor, Etibar Mamedov.

Recently, Aliyev initiated a dialogue with the democratic opposition. Although the dialogue began just before the presidential campaign and after five years of Aliyev's leadership, his government nevertheless took several steps towards reforming Azerbaijan's election law and making censorship illegal. The Aliyev government revised election legislation in accordance with OSCE requirements in late spring 1998, formally abolished censorship in August 1998, and approved a new Citizenship Law in September 1998. These steps indicate that the Aliyev government can respond positively to the concerns of the international community and is willing to meet international standards in the election process. However, the opposition believes these minor changes are insufficient. They believe additional steps are necessary for freedom of the press, and they argue that several proposals for holding free and fair elections have not been accepted. The opposition believes that free and fair elections are possible in Azerbaijan, but only if the government agrees to make additional substantive changes needed to establish a truly open, democratic society.

While claiming that it agrees with most of the opposition's goals, the Aliyev government argues that a restriction of democracy and freedom in the short-term is necessary for Azerbaijan's long-term stability and growth. Due to the conflict between Aliyev's government and the opposition, most influential opposition groups decided to boycott the elections since basic conditions for holding democratic elections had not been met. Major opposition leaders such as Isa Gambar (Musavat Party), Abdulfaz Elchibey (Popular Front), Lala Hajiyeva (Liberal Party), Rasul Guliyev (former Speaker of Parliament), and representatives of other influential political parties believe most of the competing candidates were "manufactured" by Aliyev. Although Aliyev attempted on 4 August 1998 to appease the opposition, offering them four seats in the Central Election Commission (CEC) and a fifth seat from the parliament quota, the opposition rejected the offer as inadequate.

President Aliyev still controls the general situation in Azerbaijan. I therefore expect him to win the election in the first round, despite the view of some political scientists that Aliyev and Mamedov could continue their struggle for power in a second round. The Azeri people trust Aliyev and look to his experience and knowledge of regional and international affairs. When my center conducted a poll of 500 people in Baku, we found that despite some grievances, most people were prepared to vote for Aliyev.

While the outcome of the election is certain, several other intriguing questions remain to be answered. Will the opposition recognize Aliyev's victory or cast doubt upon it? What will Aliyev do with a stronger opposition movement after the election? Will he enter into a dialogue with the opposition, or seek to strengthen his control over it? I think Aliyev will make some effort to compromise with the opposition and will try to continue the dialogue that he began earlier. Dialogue initiated by Aliyev will foster communication and better understanding among various dissenting groups. Though there might be differences in their

approaches, Aliyev and the opposition belong to the same country—a country of 7.5 million facing dire circumstances, with 9 out of 10 people in poverty and vast parts of the country under foreign occupation.

Foreign Policy

In general, a balance of power with an equilibrium of multiple interests will guarantee regional security while the reinstatement of a single power will threaten the independence of emerging countries and create barriers between the eastern and western parts of Eurasia. Although Azerbaijan is a relatively small country, its strategic location, abundant natural resources, and political circumstances ensure that it will be at the center of international politics for years to come. Azerbaijan has endeavored to maintain its independence by maneuvering among regional powers such as Russia, Turkey, and Iran, while securing harmonious relations with both East and West. Oil has increased Azerbaijan's importance in the eyes of the world, including Western oil corporations, and has intensified the competition for Azerbaijan as part of a sphere of influence.

Clearly Russia sees Azerbaijan as within its legitimate sphere of influence. Russia is fearful of Turkish-Azeri ties, including the possible spread of Islamic fundamentalism. Economically, Russia desperately wants oil pipelines to go through Russian territory. Events in Russia will have a significant impact on Azerbaijan as well as in the region—but which way will Russia go? Russia's fate currently depends upon how internal politics play out and shape its future. Russia and Azerbaijan have poor relations currently because Azerbaijan is truly an independent state and is keenly aware of its strategic importance, especially relative to other parts of the region such as Central Asia. Ignoring Russia's interests will have fatal consequences for Azerbaijan, for Russia could easily manipulate ethnic factions within Azerbaijan and use its leverage over Armenia to start another war between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Russia might also join with Iran to impede natural resource development in Azerbaijan. In fact, Russia's strategy is to place military bases in the Caucasus, ensuring Moscow's exclusive control over future pipelines in the region.

Turkey is another important regional player, since much of the Caspian oil will have to go through the Bosphorus Straits. Turkey wants the pipeline to go through the Caspian to its port of Ceyhan. Although there are strong linguistic and cultural ties to the Caucasus and Central Asia, and Turkey sees Azerbaijan and the Central Asian countries as natural allies in a loose confederation of secular Muslim republics, the overall influence of Turkey is relatively weak. Turkey is grappling with its own internal eco-

nomical and political problems. Nevertheless, its geopolitical position gives Turkey a significant advantage over other players in the region.

Iran, another historic player in the "Great Game," has economic and ideological interests throughout the Caucasus and Central Asia. A strong, politically independent, secular, pro-Western, and pro-American Azerbaijan is not in Iran's interest. Iran's territorial integrity could even be threatened if the 20 million Azeris living in Iran find a developed Azerbaijan increasingly attractive. By developing its energy resources and emerging as a strong petroleum country, Azerbaijan will become a competitor to Iran. Azeri ties with the U.S., Turkey, and Israel will decrease Iran's influence in the region. However, by isolating Iran, Azerbaijan is cultivating a strategic alliance between Iran and Russia—an alliance that could threaten Azerbaijan's status as an independent republic. Azerbaijan should therefore pursue limited cooperation with Iran.

The United States also has an interest in Azerbaijan's oil and natural gas resources, especially since the United States imports over 40 percent of its oil. The United States has become more active in Azerbaijan during the past few years. It has focused on strengthening regional economic mechanisms, developing East-West energy and transportation processes, and providing support to conflict resolution efforts. In general, the West wants to ensure that the Caucasus and Central Asia remain independent, secular, Muslim countries.

It is the tension between the United States and Russia, and the United States and Iran, that is forcing a political realignment in the region. Azerbaijan has aligned itself with the West, and its ability to survive as an independent state, and to build democratic institutions, will largely depend upon the presence of the West and Armenian support.

Sometimes commercial interests can consolidate political ones, bringing both sets of interests towards agreement. Compromise must replace competition in regard to pipeline interests. Otherwise, the Caucasus will suffer from even more poverty and bloodshed, with no clear winner. Azerbaijan has enormous economic potential, and perhaps economic incentives can create avenues of cooperation. The development of Azerbaijan's energy resources and the transportation of crude oil to world markets can be the backbone of regional cooperation. Vision, respect for sovereign rights, and a willingness to cooperate will secure a future full of promise. The great powers must attempt to cooperate instead of maintaining competition in the region. And the Caucasus, too, should choose conciliation over confrontation.

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A View From the Front: Media Coverage of the Post-Soviet Caucasus

Thomas Goltz

*Thomas Goltz, journalist and independent film maker, has written articles for publications such as the **Washington Post**, **Los Angeles Times**, **The Nation**, **Business Week**, and **Foreign Policy**. He has also made several documentary films for the BBC and PBS. Mr. Goltz speaks Turkish, Russian, Azeri, and other languages of the region and received his M.A. in Middle Eastern Studies from New York University in 1983. His new book is entitled **Azerbaijan Diary**. On 30 November, he showed three documentary films at Berkeley and shared his thoughts on media coverage of the post-Soviet Caucasus.*

When I received a grant from the Institute for World Affairs in the summer of 1991 to spend two years in Azerbaijan, there was very little known about the republic. Of course, interest in Azerbaijan has increased during the past several years, due to the presence of oil. A new economy is starting up the region.

Although I spent most of the 1980s on various assignments in Turkey, I became interested in understanding the dynamics of ethnicity in the post-Soviet states. The Azeris were trying to find a new identity, Pan-Turkism vs. Shiite Islam. They turned to Heydar Aliyev, whom I have respect for as a survivor but criticism for as an authoritarian. But the main story of the post-Soviet world is one of ethnic strife. The ongoing conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh has resulted in 35,000 dead and one million refugees. Despite international intervention, the conflict between Georgia and Abkhazia is in many ways the most unstable conflict. In Chechnya, there are 100,000 dead and half a million displaced. All of these conflicts have had to do with the self-determination of peoples vs. the territorial integrity of existing states.

As a contract journalist, I have been acutely aware of the Western media's shortcomings in terms of its coverage of the post-Soviet world. The media do not cover everything, and in my opinion, they usually do not cover enough. Journalists affiliated with major newspapers suffer from "Moscowitis", for they continue to look at the former Soviet Union from Moscow or other world capital cities (an Istanbul viewfinder is not much better than a Moscow viewfinder). For example, I was in Azerbaijan to "monitor the monitors" for the 11 October presidential elections. When I called the *New York Times* to find out who was covering them, I was told that their Istanbul bureau chief would be in Baku soon. He never showed up. When I called the *New York Times* in Moscow about the Azerbaijan elections, they asked me, "What elections?" Therefore, it was not surprising that the *New York Times* featured only a

two-paragraph story one week after the elections took place.

Another problem the media suffers from is "Idiotitis." Decision-makers in New York or D.C. assume that Mrs. Jones in Iowa cannot comprehend nuanced arguments regarding foreign affairs. Yet in my experience, Americans are very interested in international events. Due to my frustrations with the Western media in terms of its coverage of post-Soviet news, I have begun to spend more time working for the BBC, which tends to have a larger view of things.

The first documentary film we will view today is focused on Abkhazia, which was initially created as an autonomous republic. In 1992, the minority Abkhaz declared their independence from Georgia, and the Georgians sent in a ragtag army, leaving 10,000 dead after 14 months of warfare. Abkhazia is recognized by no one, and is under an international embargo. I returned five years after the conflict to gauge the prospects for reconciliation. The beginning of the film depicts the trading of citrus fruits, for when I was in Abkhazia the export of tangerines was being allowed as an exception to the embargo. The capital, Sukhumi, was like a ghost town, and former Abkhaz soldiers were being trained to detect and destroy mines.

Georgians and Abkhazians used to live side by side, but after the conflict, most people said that "time is needed" for real peace. I spoke to a Georgian woman whose family has been living for two years in the Hotel Iveria in Gali, a lawless enclave of Abkhazia. Rooms in the Hotel Iveria were filled with refugees. According to the cease-fire agreement, Georgians are entitled to return to Abkhazia, but the city of Gali has been a security nightmare, with UN and Russian peacekeepers subject to attacks. While there are rumors of a new round of war, the convoluted ethnic politics remain an abstraction to most people.

In May, while covering a conference marking the 80th year of the founding of Georgia, I learned that the Abkhaz had "flushed out" Georgian refugees by burning

their houses. Although the Abkhaz claim that the Russians did it, Gali was swarming with Abkhaz soldiers. Yet, in an event signifying the limits of international intervention, UN monitors were being pulled out of Georgia—the American officers in the monitoring group were considered more important than the mission itself.

The second film is focused on the aftermath of the war in Chechnya. I had been inside a killing zone at Samashki, when the Russians from late January-April 1995 invaded it, but I got out on the Russian side. I returned to Samashki two years later to find out what had become of the people I had known there. The signature of Russian destruction was everywhere to be found. I witnessed the growing influence of Islam, as a woman was arrested for illegal traffic in alcohol. I took part in a ritual dance of remembrance for the dead in which young and old Chechens participated together. But I was distressed upon learning that Hussein, a friend and Chechen commander from two

years earlier, survived, yet had been branded a traitor by the village elders. When I finally found Hussein with his son living in Kazakhstan, he told me that many Chechens had since been accused of collaboration. Nevertheless, he hoped to be able to return to his village one day.

The third and final film is the result of a project funded by three international media organizations that seek to understand the aftermath of the Ingushetia/North Ossetia conflict. The project used local reporters from both sides of the conflict to produce a joint television program. The conflict between Muslim Ingushetians and Christian North Ossetians took place in 1992. Hundreds were killed on both sides and thousands were driven from their homes. Although the question of who started shooting first is a much debated issue, our program sought to “lift the checkpoints of the mind” by fostering communication and understanding on both sides of the conflict.

Calendar of Events

Wednesday, February 1. Brown Bag Talk. Alexander Kukhianidze, Associate Professor of Political Science, Tbilisi State University, Tbilisi, Georgia: "Grassroots Politics in the CIS: Citizens, Local Power, and Local Elections in Georgia." 270 Stephens Hall, 12:00 noon.

Wednesday, February 3. Brown Bag Lecture. Josef C. Brada, Professor of Economics and Director, College of Business International Programs, College of Business, Arizona State University: "The Persistence of Moderate Inflation in the Czech Republic and the Koruna Crisis of May 1997." 442 Stephens Hall, 12:00 noon.

Thursday, February 4. Public Lecture. Gail Kligman, Professor of Sociology, UCLA: "Reproduction as Politics: Reflections from Central East Europe." Geballe Room, 220 Stephens Hall, 4:00 pm.

Monday, February 8. Panel Discussion. Edward Lazzerini, University of New Orleans; Daniel Brower, University of California, Davis; Yuri Slezkine, University of California, Berkeley: "Whatever Happened to Russia's Orient?" 223 Moses Hall, 4:00 pm.

Tuesday, February 9. Brown Bag Talk. Carlotta Gall, Reporter for the Financial Times and The Economist based in Baku, Azerbaijan and Reporter for the New York Times, based in Belgrade: "Chechnya: Calamity for the Caucasus." 270 Stephens Hall, 12:00 noon

Tuesday, February 16. Brown Bag Talk. Vahagn N. Dadrian, Director of the Genocide Study Project and Member of the Academy of Sciences of Armenia: "The Legal Aspects in the Prosecution of Two Major Twentieth-Century Genocides: The Armenian and Jewish Cases." Location TBA, 12:00 noon. Please call CSEES at 510-642-3230 for more information.

Wednesday, March 3. Brown Bag Talk. Sergey Ambartsumian, Former President of Yerevan State University and Member of the Presidium of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia: "Science, Education, and Politics in Armenia." 442 Stephens Hall, 12:00 noon. Sponsored by BPS, CSEES, and the Armenian Studies Working Group of the Townsend Center for the Humanities.

Thursday, March 11. Brown Bag Talk. Marina Kurkchyan, Fulbright Scholar from Armenia, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor: "Public Health and Social Policy in Armenia" 270 Stephens Hall, 12:00 noon.

Monday, March 15. Brown Bag Talk. Ghia Nodia: Title TBA. 270 Stephens Hall, 12:00 noon. Please call BPS at 510-643-6737 for more information..

Friday, April 30. Annual Caucasus Conference. Speakers to be announced: "State Building and the Reconstruction of Shattered Societies." Lipman Room, 9:00 am-6:00 pm

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Campus Visitors relating to the Caucasus

Leila Alieva, national coordinator for the U.N. National Human Development Report in Baku, Azerbaijan, will be the Visiting Caucasus Scholar at BPS, funded by the Ford Foundation. She is a prominent specialist in Azeri foreign policy.

Sergei Arutiunov, chairman of the department of Caucasian studies at the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, will visit Berkeley during the spring semester. He will be teaching two courses with the anthropology department, "Peoples and Cultures of the Caucasus" and "Archaeology of Northeast Siberia."

Vladimir Degoev, professor and chair of the Department of Russian History and Caucasian Studies at North Ossetian State University in Vladikavkaz, Russia, will be at the history department for the fall semester as a visiting Fulbright scholar. His research project is entitled "The Caucasus in the International and Geopolitical System of the Sixteenth through Twentieth Centuries: The Origins of the Regional Threats to Global Security."

Issa Guliev of the Ingush National Theater in Nazran, Russia will spend the fall semester as an exchange visitor at the departments of Slavic languages and literatures and linguistics. He is working with Johanna Nichols, professor of Slavic languages and literatures, on an Ingush-English dictionary project, funded by the National Science Foundation.

Gayane Hagopian is teaching an Armenian language and culture course both semesters as a visiting professor in the department of Near Eastern Studies. She is a former Fulbright scholar in the department of linguistics.

Alma Kunanbaeva, former head of the department of ethnography of Central Asian Peoples of the Museum of Ethnography in St. Petersburg, is teaching a Kazakh language course both semesters as a visiting professor in the department of Near Eastern studies. In the spring, she will team-teach, with Harsha Ram, an assistant professor in the Slavic department, a second course on Central Asia through IAS teaching programs.

Firuz Ozdoeva, head of the department of Ingush philology at Ingush State University in Nazran, Russia, is visiting campus during the year to work with Professor Johanna Nichols on an Ingush-English dictionary project, funded by the National Science Foundation.

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