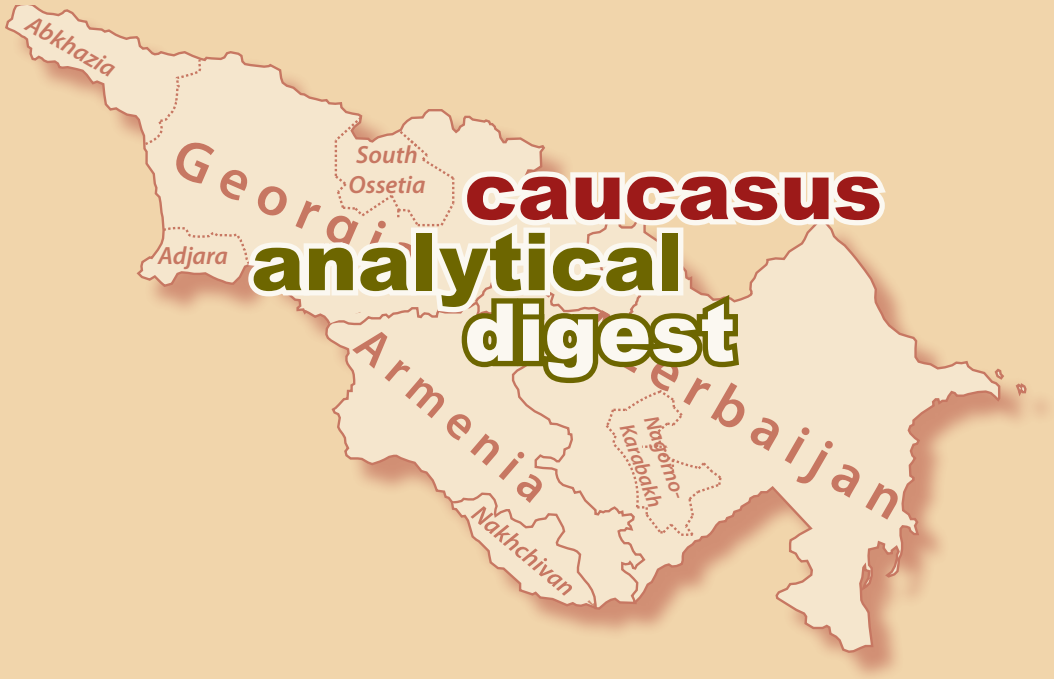
No. 30 | 28 October 2011



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EMERGING REGIONAL POWERS: TURKEY AND IRAN IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS

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The Role of Iran in the South Caucasus

By Tornike Sharashenidze, Tbilisi

Abstract

Iran's policy in the South Caucasus is shaped by its desire to counter threats from regional and outside powers (US, Russia, Turkey), while expanding its influence in the region. Iran unexpectedly backed Armenia in the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict as a way to balance against Turkey and Azeri irredentist claims inside Iran itself. Georgia's historic relationship with Iran ultimately pushed Georgia closer to Russia, but now Iran has little influence in Georgia. Azerbaijan is the key concern in the region for Iran because it is a potential rival as a Shia-dominated country and an energy power.

A Difficult Neighborhood

The South Caucasus re-emerged on Iran's agenda after the collapse of the Soviet Union and relations between Tehran and the South Caucasus states are destined to intensify as Iran looks to play a much bigger role in the area. Iran's attitude towards the region is based on two elements—its general foreign policy vision and its historical experience with the South Caucasus.

Iran's foreign policy agenda is clearly dominated by the quest for security and the task of neutralizing external threats. Iran sees threats coming both from the neighborhood and from distant powers that can threaten Iran through its neighborhood.

Historically Iran has lacked the luxury of a friendly environment. In the 18th and 19th centuries it had to compete and fight with Russia and Turkey. Religious discord also added to the discomfort as Shia Iran lived next to Sunni tribes that coalesced later into the independent Arab states. The perception of hostile encirclement deepened after the Islamic Revolution, which led the country into a self-imposed isolation, being at odds with its neighbors and the US, which had a considerable presence in the region. As an ambitious nation that claims to bear elements of an ancient and unique culture, Iran always sought to be a regional leader and resented the presence of outside powers in its neighborhood. As Russia has lost its pre-eminence in the Caspian basin, the US has become the major source of discomfort for Tehran.

The role of Iran in the South Caucasus is largely defined by this broader context and traditional balance-of-power calculations. As eager as Tehran can be to gain an exclusive sphere of influence or at least to assert itself as a regional power, it still acknowledges its true capacities and external difficulties. Therefore its regional policy is quite cautious and balanced. In particular, Iran definitely dedicates vast resources to the South Caucasus but, at the same time, keeps a low profile in this region, bearing in mind its rather uneasy historical experience with the region.

Iran's Goals

In brief, Iran must pursue the following goals in the South Caucasus:

- Diminish the influence of the outside powers (namely, the US); thus ensure more security for itself and also acquire space for exerting its own influence
- Achieve a balance of power vis-à-vis other regional players (Russia and Turkey) in the South Caucasus or at least accommodate their interests in the region
- Gain a foothold in the region through economic and (if possible) cultural expansion
- Neutralize the possible threats from the region itself

As a country that once enjoyed a huge influence over the South Caucasus, Iran welcomed the opportunity of re-establishing ties with this region thanks to the collapse of the Soviet Union. The 1990s did not offer any serious opportunities for Tehran to advance its cause. Russia still enjoyed almost exclusive dominance over the South Caucasus as it maintained military bases there. Nevertheless, Russia's influence over the region declined in other ways and vast gaps emerged in the local economy and trade, but these gaps were filled by Turkey which was much better prepared than Iran thanks to its openness to the outside world and its ability to produce cheap consumer goods. Iran simply could not compete with its big rivals and appeared to be doomed to playing second rate role in the region.

Surprisingly Close Ties to Armenia

Moreover, Iran's stance towards the region was seriously tested by the war over Nagorno Karabagh. The conflict confirmed Tehran's commitment to balance-of-power calculations as it rather openly supported Armenia instead of backing its fellow Shia Muslims in Azerbaijan. *Realpolitik* won out over ideological and religious sentiments despite Iran's strongly manifested dedication to Islamic principles. The support for Armenia grew out of Iran's traditional enmity towards Turkey, which was already emerging as Azerbaijan's new patron, and also fear of growing irredentist sentiments among the Azeri minority in Iran itself. Tehran's *Realpolitik* defi-

nitely did not make Azerbaijan happy while Armenia obtained a partner.

This unexpected partnership was to develop further as both countries suffered from isolation (Iran due to international sanctions, Armenia due to its landlocked position and the blockade imposed by Azerbaijan and Turkey). Levon Ter-Petrosyan, the former president of Armenia, admitted that, without Iran, his country "would suffocate in a few days."[1] Trade relations deepened between the countries: in 2007 the Iranian–Armenian gas pipeline was completed, leading Armenian officials to declare "the end of the blockade."[2]

At that moment the scope of the bilateral Armenia–Iran partnership looked to go beyond mundane topics of trade and economy because, from the early 2000s, Russian–Iranian relations gained new momentum. Trying to neutralize the American influence in the South Caucasus, Russia intensified its ties with Iran, and Armenia (Russia's closet ally in the region) automatically became number three in this anti-Western coalition while Azerbaijan–Georgia–Turkey emerged as a pro-Western regional grouping. More recently, as Turkey has assumed a more independent stance in the region and as US–Russian relations have thawed thanks to Obama's Reset policy, these two coalitions lost their initial connotations. Besides, the Iranian–Armenian gas pipeline never began to function at full capacity since Russia, enjoying monopolist control over the Armenian energy sector, allowed Armenia to import only limited amounts of gas. Iran simply cannot compete with Russia in Armenia but clearly has the upper hand vis-à-vis Turkey, which has sided with Azerbaijan and, more importantly, is burdened with uneasy historical memories—the massacre of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire that Yerevan views as genocide.

Ties to Georgia

But Iran's relations with the South Caucasus are also tainted by uneasy memories. Georgia suffered heavily from Iranian invasions that culminated in the burning of Georgia's capital Tbilisi in the late 18th century. That catastrophe led Georgia's king to decide that he had no alternative but to intensify ties with the Russians, who were fellow orthodox Christians. The latter gradually took over Georgia and later the whole Caucasus, ousting first Iran and later Turkey from the region.

The wars with Iran left an indelible imprint on Georgian historical memory. The most prominent Georgian thinkers and authors drew on examples of Georgia's heroic resistance against Iranian oppression and, as was typical, created grandiose legends, which inspired Georgian national pride and served as a tool for nation-building. The anti-Iranian sentiments in Georgia were further boosted in the Soviet era, during which Iran was depicted as Georgia's main rival and tormentor and Georgia as a victim that was finally saved by Russia, a fellow orthodox nation.

But, at the same time, hardly any other country came as close to Georgia culturally as Iran did. Despite the fact that by fighting the Muslim Iran Georgians defended not only their land but also their Christian identity, Iranian culture penetrated the Georgian consciousness. Some Georgian kings wrote poems in Persian, while many Georgians (along with Armenians) served at the Iranian court and Iranian noblemen married Georgian women. For Georgia these relations are only analogous to its relations with Russia—cultural affiliation mixed with political rivalry.

However, the modern Georgian–Iranian relationship is a far cry from those days. Pro-Western, modernized Georgia hardly has anything in common with Iran except for a handful of expressions and words absorbed from the Persian language. Understanding all these difficulties, Iranians maintain a low profile in Georgia while stressing their peaceful intentions and historical ties to a country toward which they feel a genuine closeness. However, it is increasingly clear that these ties are a thing of the past. Even the introduction of visa-free travel did not boost Georgia's interest towards Iran, although the inflow of Iranian tourists to Georgia rose sharply and is predicted to rise further.[3] Bilateral trade is insignificant whereas Turkey is Georgia's number one trade partner and even the Russian–Georgian trade volume is much higher than the level of exchange between Georgia and Iran. Iran does not even enter the top ten of Georgia's trade partners.[4]

Iran's Difficult Relationship with Azerbaijan

Georgia may be considered the most uncomfortable South Caucasian neighbor because of its strong pro-American stance. For that reason Georgia is no doubt one of the main targets of the Iranian special services. The same must be true about Azerbaijan, which several years ago caused even more trouble for Tehran through its ties with the US. In 2003 news spread that American troops were to be deployed on Azeri soil. Speculation on this topic continued for years[5] until it became clear that Washington had no such intentions (or had changed its mind). Tehran replied to these speculations

1 http://www.1news.az/analytics/20110128124637849.html
2 http://www.newsarmenia.ru/arm1/20070319/41661533.html
3 http://www.prime-news.net/?p=17464&lang=en
4 http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=23796
5 http://www.armeniandiaspora.com/showthread.php?1192-USA-not-to-deploy-troops-in-Azerbaijan-US-general-tells-Armenians

using a variety of means, including demonstrative flights within Azeri air space.[6]

With the accession of Ilham Aliyev as the president of Azerbaijan in late 2003, Baku's foreign policy gradually became more balanced (the policy of Ilham's father Heydar Aliev was unambiguously pro-Western) and worked to accommodate the interests of all powers, including regional ones. However relations with Iran remain tense. Recently Baku reacted fiercely[7] to comments by the Head of the Iranian General Staff who accused Ilham Aliyev of "ignoring the laws of Islam" and threatened "dark future scenarios." Aliyev himself, according to Wikileaks sources, is alarmed[8] by Tehran's ascendance: Iran still undermines Baku's efforts to resolve the Nagorno Karabagh conflict and warns Azerbaijan on its pro-American stance.

In addition to the traditional balance of power approach that has dominated Tehran's attitude towards the Nagorno Karabagh issue, Iran's Azerbaijani policy is defined by several other factors. First, Iran expects from Azerbaijan, as a fellow Shia nation, much more loyalty to "the common Islamic cause." Realizing that Azerbaijan is a largely secular country, Iran is trying to boost Islamic sentiments through its diplomatic, religious and humanitarian missions. Consequently, the Iranian influence is already noticeable in the southern parts of Azerbaijan, but so far it has had little effect on the main bulk of the population, not to mention the ruling elite. No doubt by boosting Islamic sentiments, Tehran is trying to weaken the Western influence over Azerbaijan. But, on the whole, Azeri society remains docile and loyal to the government no matter how hard Iran tries to affect it. If official Baku continues to support a pro-Western stance then there is hardly anything that Iran or Russia can do about it. Apart from its stable regime, the Azerbaijani ruling elite currently enjoys unprecedented economic growth thanks to high oil prices making it largely immune to outside pressure.

A second factor behind Iran's Azerbaijan policy is rivalry for energy supply routes. Azerbaijan's role as an energy supplier has increased for the last decade whereas Iran hardly has developed its huge potential due its isolation. As this quarantine continues, Iran is losing precious time and is being left out of major energy projects. Therefore Tehran should be interested in undermining the new energy ventures and gain some time so that when its isolation ends it will be able to join future projects.

Conclusion

Summing up Tehran's relations with the South Caucasus states, it is clear that Azerbaijan tops Iran's regional agenda. Tehran's policy towards Baku is marked by ambitious designs because Azerbaijan is viewed as a rival that can endanger Iran's positions through its energy resources and by boosting irredentism among the Azerbaijani minority in Iran. Accordingly, Iran sees Azerbaijan as a threat. Armenia is the most comfortable neighbor in the region because of its commitment to Russia which almost nullifies the US influence. However Iran's positions in this country hardly match those of Russia and so Iran is happy just to accommodate Russia's interests there. As for Georgia, it poses no direct threat either by itself or through the US since a US military campaign launched from Georgian soil is hardly possible after the Georgian–Russian war. With these threats neutralized (at least at the moment), Iran's policy towards Georgia is rather lenient. As for gaining a foothold in the region, all of the three countries remain on Iran's radar screen, but Azerbaijan clearly is the number one target.

This is a logical choice because of the potential for Islamic propaganda. As already mentioned, no significant success has been achieved so far but this stance tells us a lot about Iran as a power with regional ambitions and a well-defined agenda for the future.

About the Author

Prof. Tornike Sharashenidze is the Head of the International Affairs MA Program at the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs.

6 http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1095830940

7 http://vz.ru/news/2011/8/11/514143.html

8 http://news.am/rus/news/39747.html

Turkey's Caucasus Policies in the Framework of Ankara's *New* Foreign Policy

By Nigar Goksel, Istanbul

Abstract

In recent years, Turkey has sought to diversify its foreign policy away from the West to focus more on neighboring regions by becoming a regional economic power, energy hub and using its Islamic credentials. The Middle East, where global attention has also been relatively more centered, has been more important than the Caucasus in the last decade of Turkey's foreign policy. Turkey's improved ties with Russia have disappointed allies in both the West and Georgia. Similarly, Turkey's leaders shelved their overtures to Armenia when they foreseeably ran into opposition from the Azerbaijanis and domestic public opinion. Rather than turn away from the Caucasus, Turkey should pursue more consistent and long term policies that make it possible to achieve its goals of open borders, resolved conflicts, soft power and economic interdependence.

Turkey's Policy Goals

Turkey's foreign policy discourse of recent years articulates the pursuit of multi-dimensional and proactive policies in order to maximize Turkey's strategic strength on the world stage. To this end, one central aim has been to 'correct' Turkey's traditional 'overemphasis on ties with Western Europe and the United States.' Turkey's leaders reason that Turkey has fallen short of optimizing its potential because it has limited its scope to the West, neglecting neighboring regions such as Eurasia, the Middle East, and Africa.

Turkey's traditional alignment with the West naturally pitted it against countries like Iran and Russia, and led such countries to collaborate *against* Turkey and curb Turkey's strategic depth. Related to this orientation is a pronounced recognition that confrontation with neighbors drains Turkey and prevents it from realizing its potential—thus the articulation of the "zero problems with neighbors" motto. Reducing neighbors' incentives to counter Turkish interests has emerged as a guiding principle in Turkish foreign policy. This thinking also informed Turkey's initiative to normalize relations with Armenia in 2009.

Perceived Western failures in the region—such as the inability of the US to play a decisive role and the EU's failure to put forth a unified position on key strategic questions—have fed an emerging conviction in Turkey that 'diversification' from the Western orientation is needed. Turkey has steered away from acting as an extension of the Transatlantic bloc, particularly where confronting Russian interests would be the case. This was apparent in Ankara's opposition to the US proposal to extend NATO's Mediterranean naval Operation Active Endeavor into the Black Sea in 2005.

Besides limiting its association with the West and solving problems with neighbors, Ankara has sought to maximize its regional power by becoming a regional economic powerhouse and energy hub, while also using Islam as a soft power instrument.

A central pillar of Turkish foreign policy has been advancing Turkish economic growth and business community interests. The Turkish government has capitalized on stronger political relations with its neighbors to extract economic advantages for Turkish businesses. Visa-free travel regimes, free trade agreements and the like have also increased Turkey's soft power. In the Caucasus, Ankara has paid most attention to the two leading economic players, Russia and Azerbaijan.

Relations with Georgia have also been geared around maximizing mutual economic potential. Armenia is an anomaly in this case—with economic relations limited by the closed border and lack of diplomatic relations. (Given that the pursuit of normal economic relations with Armenia comes with the price tag of deteriorating relations with Azerbaijan, and the fact that Armenia's economic potential pales in comparison to Azerbaijan's, the prospective gain of opening the border with Armenia today is not enough incentive for Turkey to follow through with the already controversial course of normalizing relations). Since the economic and political power of most of its Eastern neighbors is entrenched in authoritarian regimes, to reap economic advantages, Ankara has noticeably strayed away from criticizing democracy deficits in these countries.

Besides domestic economic interest groups, public opinion sympathies have also affected Ankara's foreign policy choices both in general and in the Caucasus. Turkish public sympathy for Azerbaijan and the conflicting enthusiasm of Turkish liberal constituencies to reconcile with Armenia shaped Ankara's ultimately incoherent effort to normalize relations with Armenia. Domestic pressure groups, including members of the diaspora from the North Caucasus and Abkhazia, also effect Ankara's rhetoric and policies towards Georgia and Russia.

The Turkish government has taken up the plight of the Azerbaijanis in the Karabakh conflict using a discourse of protecting *victims* which "the West" neglects.

Even though Karabakh gets less attention than distinctly 'Muslim causes' such as the Palestinian issue, support for the Azerbaijanis helps the government score points (read *votes and economic advantages*) from Azerbaijani and Turkish constituencies. However, in cases where such idealism might contradict other interests of Turkey, or not bring worthy dividends in domestic public opinion, such value-based discourse is set aside.

An overarching reality that characterizes Turkey's Caucasus policies over the past decade is that the Caucasus has been *secondary* to the Middle East/North Africa and Europe (the latter also waning since 2005) in Ankara's foreign policy attention and activism.

Numerous reasons explain Ankara's relative neglect of the Caucasus. Internationally, there is a much greater global focus on the upheaval in the Arab world. Domestically, the political team that rose to decision-making positions in Ankara in 2002 did not have a special interest in or links with the Caucasus.

Turkey's initiatives in the Caucasus since 2008 have brought to the fore challenges in the real-life implementation of Turkey's new foreign policy. In recent cases, Turkey has seemed to improvise its actions in the Caucasus, leading observers to question whether it has a well-formulated longer term strategic vision behind its tactical steps or is merely operating on the basis of short-term goals.

Fitful Realization

Turkish diplomats underline that Turkey seeks win-win solutions for all parties in the neighborhood. Neighbors caught up in conflicts or strategic competition with each other have found this approach to contradict their national interests, and render Turkey less of a strategic asset.

One angle in which this disjunction has surfaced has been in the development of Turkey–Russia relations. After the collapse of the USSR, Turkey's value for its 'traditional European allies' was precisely that Turkey, with its pivotal position, could counterbalance Russia and Iran. Turkey's new foreign policy has therefore led to questions about what kind of strategic role Turkey will play. Besides opposition to strategic designs that would irritate Moscow in the Black Sea, Ankara's willingness to embrace Russian energy transit projects—which are widely perceived to be in competition with planned pipelines for bringing non-Russian hydrocarbon resources to Europe—has attracted concerned attention from Europe and the Caucasus.

The Russia–Georgia war highlighted the precarious position of Turkey in light of Russia's growing assertiveness. Ankara maintained a low profile, taking less of a stand against Russia than was expected by Georgia's sympathizers in the West. Turkey's enthusiastic announcement (notably, in Moscow) of a Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform (CSCP) reflected Ankara's relative detachment from the realities of the region. Though the framework and ideas espoused by the initiative may be appealing in the long term, the practical limitations to making it work today soon became apparent.

The Turkish–Armenian diplomatic overtures of 2009 have also caused controversy in the implementation of Turkey's foreign policy vision in the Caucasus. With the dissolution of the Soviet Unioin, the Karabakh war between Armenia and Azerbaijan further complicated the historically strained Turkish–Armenian relations, leading Ankara to maintain a closed border and not establish diplomatic relations. The prospect of an open Turkey–Armenia border is supposedly a crucial incentive for Armenia to resolve the Karabakh deadlock. Therefore, the effort to normalize bilateral relations (establish diplomatic relations, open the border, and set up commissions towards developing relations), created rifts in the Turkey–Azerbaijan relationship.

The initiative had significant flaws from the start. Strategically, economically, and in consideration of public opinion, it is not in the interests of the Turkish government to open its border with Armenia given the current status of the Karabakh deadlock. Ankara's ambiguity and contradictory messages about its intentions hurt its credibility both in Yerevan and Baku. Furthermore, rather than gauging and guiding Turkish public opinion from the start, the government allowed public opinion to to evolve against the initiative without taking any countermeasures to firm up support. Approximately six months after the normalization process with Armenia had been declared, and amid rising tensions with Baku and reactions from the Turkish public, Turkish decision makers announced that they only intended to follow through with this process if an agreement over Nagorno-Karabakh was reached between Baku and Yerevan. The high-profile initiative was effectively shelved.

This case depicted not only the challenges of implementing the theory of 'zero problems' with neighbors, but also the need for engaging both diplomatic counterparts and the public more openly, factoring in their perspectives from the start and working towards mobilizing their support more effectively. Rather than embarking on initiatives which are unlikely to be carried to fruition, Ankara should lay the foundations for its initiatives more diligently before pre-maturely setting them into motion, and take into consideration the mutual exclusivity of some of its immediate policy goals given the nature of the situation in the Caucasus.

Focusing on the Longer Term

Turkey's high-profile attempts to resolve deadlocks in the Caucasus in the timeframe of 2008–2010 did not work out very well. Meanwhile, Turkey has turned its attention predominately to the Middle East and North Africa. For the near future it is unlikely that Turkey will engage in another high profile attempt to shake up the dynamics in the Caucasus.

However Turkey should in the meantime work on a longer term approach to guiding the Caucasus in a direction which will allow Turkey to inch towards its policy goals of open borders, resolved conflicts, soft power and economic interdependence. In short, Ankara should conceive of *baby steps that will build confidence and influence policy debates* in the Caucasus countries.

The lack of interest in, and cynicism among Turkish mainstream media and regional analysts of Georgia's Rose Revolution and the reforms that followed starkly depicted Turkey's detachment from democratization debates in the region even though advancing good governance principles and open societies in the Caucasus serves Turkey's interests. Ultimately, it was Georgia's Rose revolution reforms that rendered Turkey able to pursue the policies it thrives on—such as the visa-free regime and free trade agreement with Georgia. Skepticism of Western democracy-promotion initiatives and caution against interfering in internal affairs need not rule out consistent discourse from Ankara along the lines of appreciating and encouraging democratic advancement in the Caucasus.

Consistency in Turkey's own democratization and clearer communication of Turkey's domestic and foreign affairs will also serve to increase its traction in the Caucasus—increasing Turkey's legitimacy, Western credentials and soft power. For example far-reaching, long term initiatives like enshrining new language in schoolbooks about Armenian history in Anatolia or being more cautious about inciting nationalist reactionism with political statements would have more positive effects than high profile, ad hoc reconciliation displays which simply spark Armenian cynicism.

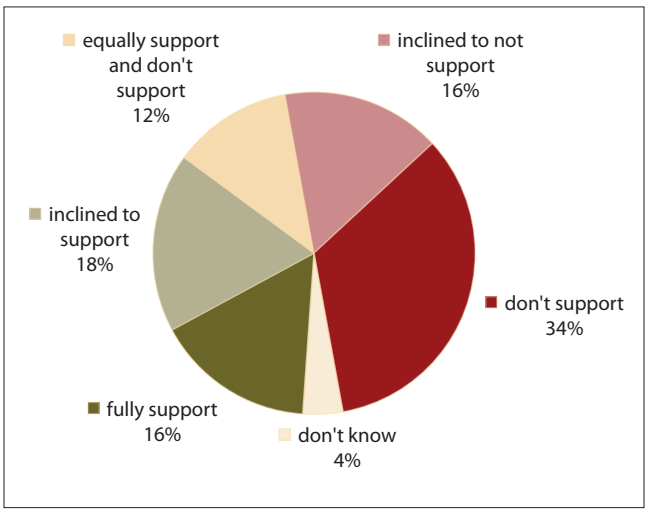
Finally, though good relations with Russia serves Turkey's immediate national interests in various ways, a critical debate within the Turkish intellectual and policy community about the optimal depth and breadth of the alignment between the two countries would be befitting.

About the Author
Nigar Goksel is the Editor-in-Chief of Turkish Policy Quarterly.

OPINION POLL

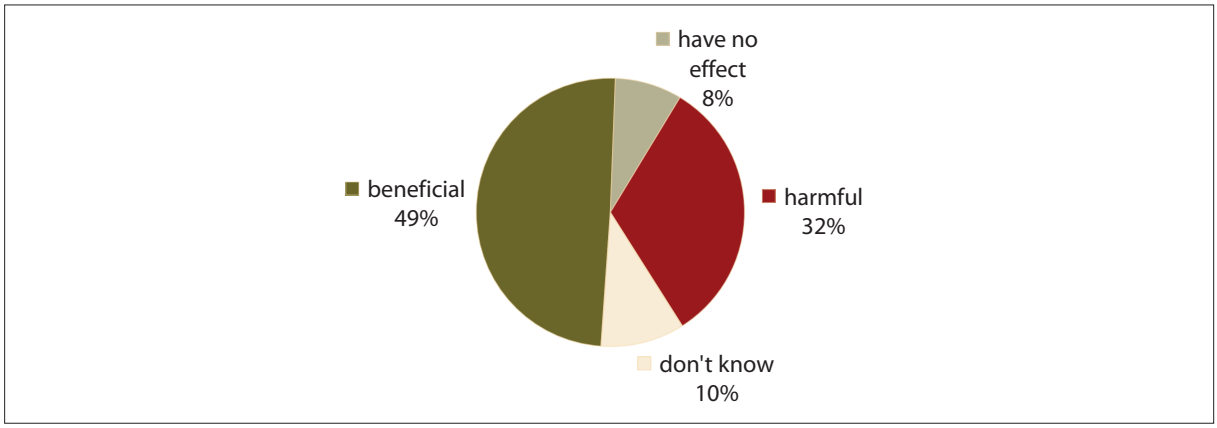
Attitudes in Armenia and Georgia Towards Turkey

Figure 1: Support of Armenian Government Opening the Border With Turkey With No Preconditions (%)



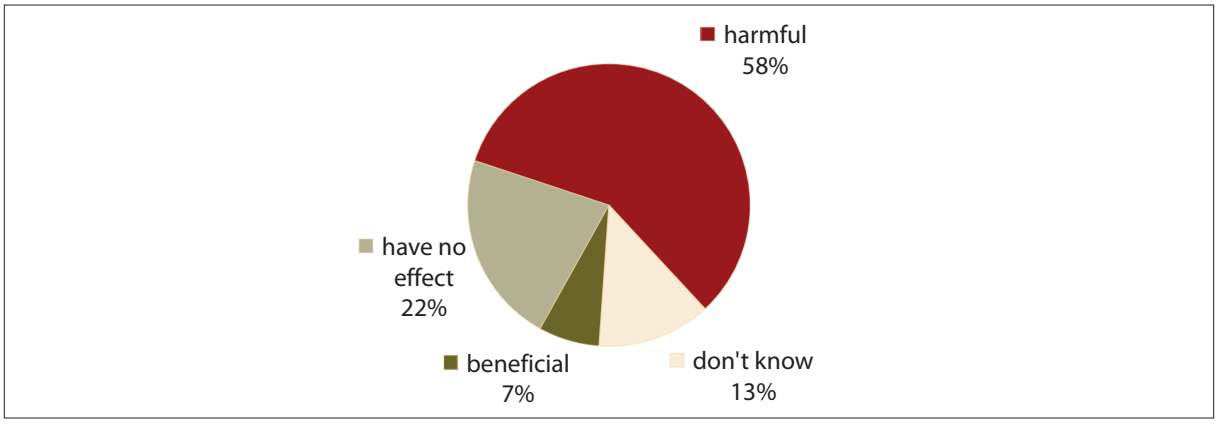
Source: Caucasus Research Resource Centers. "Caucasus Barometer 2009 and 2010". Retrieved from http://www.crrccenters.org/caucasusbarometer/

Figure 2: For the Armenian Economy, the Opening of the Borders With Turkey Will Be … (%)



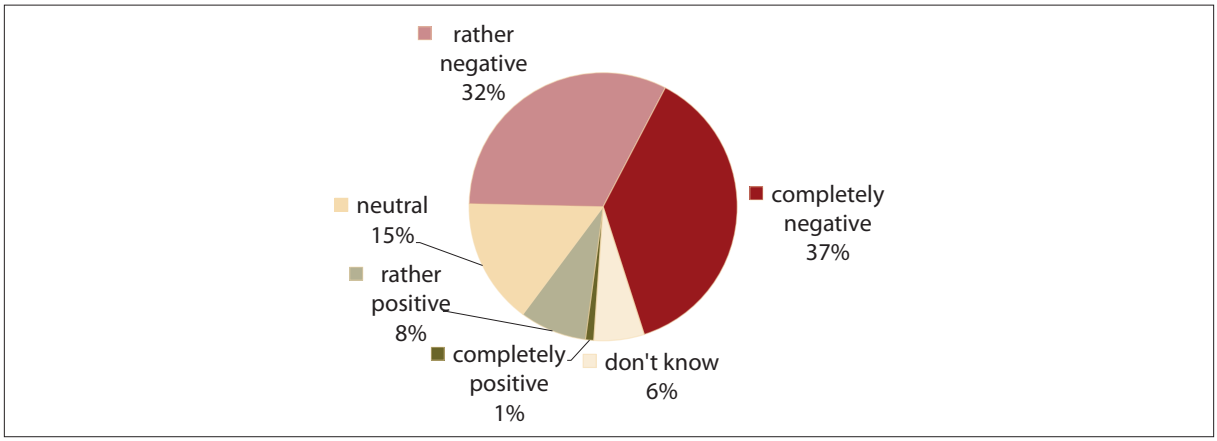
Source: Caucasus Research Resource Centers. "Caucasus Barometer 2009 and 2010". Retrieved from http://www.crrccenters.org/caucasusbarometer/

Figure 3: For the National Security in Armenia, the Opening of the Borders With Turkey Will Be … (%)



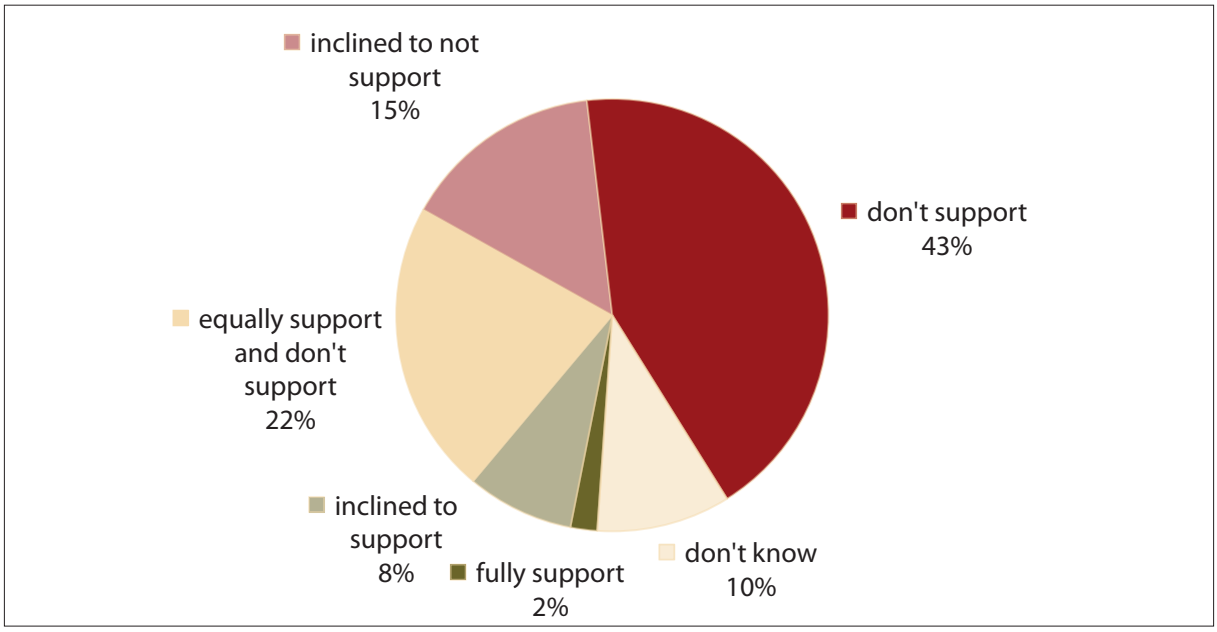
Source: Caucasus Research Resource Centers. "Caucasus Barometer 2009 and 2010". Retrieved from http://www.crrccenters.org/caucasusbarometer/

Figure 4: The General Attitude of the Population of Turkey Towards Armenia Is … (%)



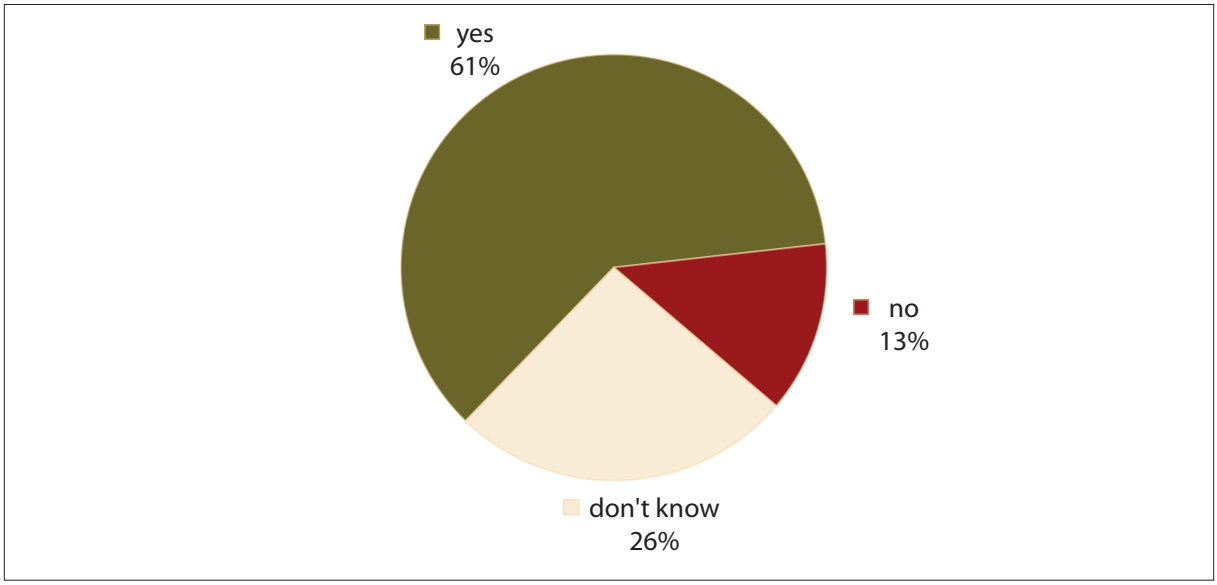
Source: Caucasus Research Resource Centers. "Caucasus Barometer 2009 and 2010". Retrieved from http://www.crrccenters.org/caucasusbarometer/

Figure 5: Armenia: Support of Turkey Becoming a Member of the EU (%)



Source: Caucasus Research Resource Centers. "Caucasus Barometer 2009 and 2010". Retrieved from http://www.crrccenters.org/caucasusbarometer/

Figure 6: Georgia: Should Turkey Be in the EU? (%)



Source: Caucasus Research Resource Centers. "Survey of Knowledge and Attitudes toward the EU in Georgia (2011)". Retrieved from http://www.crrccenters.org/caucasusbarometer/

CHRONICLE

From 12 September to 24 October 2011

12 September 2011	The low-cost carrier flydubai announces that it will launch Dubai-Tbilisi flights on 4 November 2011
15 September 2011	A strike by workers from the metallurgical plant of Georgia's second largest town of Kutaisi ends after police detain 30 strikers
17 September 2011	Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinejad reiterates Iran's interest to strengthen ties with Armenia and calls for the rapid implementation of energy projects between the two countries during an official visit by Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian in Tehran
18 September 2011	The disputed region of Nagorno Karabakh holds local elections
21 September 2011	More than 300 residents of a Baku district protest against "noise and immoral activity at night" in local cafes
23 September 2011	More than 140 workers at Armenia's nuclear power station at Metsamore threaten to quit their jobs if their wages are not increased
27 September 2011	Leonid Lakerbaia is appointed prime minister in the breakaway region of Abkhazia
29 September 2011	The Eastern Partnership summit is held in Warsaw
29 September 2011	Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner Thomas Hammarberg criticizes serious setbacks to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly in Azerbaijan
3 October 2011	Three Azerbaijani opposition figures are jailed over their participation in an antigovernment protest in April 2011
4 October 2011	The seventh round of the Geneva talks co-chaired by the EU, the OSCE and the UN with participants from Georgia, Russia, the United States, Abkhazia and South Ossetia took place
5 October 2011	Abkhaz leader Alexander Ankvab makes an official visit to Moscow
5 October 2011	The Azerbaijani Defense Ministry says that two Azeri soldiers are killed in a clash with Armenian troops near the disputed region of Nagorno Karabakh
5 October 2011	Georgian billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili announces that he will establish a political party to run in Georgia's 2012 parliamentary elections
6 October 2011	French President Nicolas Sarkozy begins a visit of the three South Caucasus countries
7 October 2011	French President Nicolas Sarkozy urges Turkey to recognize the World War I killings of Armenians within the Ottoman Empire as genocide during a joint press conference with Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian in Yerevan
7 October 2011	The head of the Islamic Party of Azerbaijan (IPA) Movsum Samadov is jailed for twelve years after being convicted by the Baku Court for trying to overthrow the government
8 October 2011	The Russian Foreign Ministry welcomes the "sovereign decision" of the Pacific island of Tuvalu to recognize the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in September 2011
8 October 2011	Armenian opposition leader Levon Ter-Petrossian ends more than one week of demonstrations by the Armenian National Congress (HAK) in the capital Yerevan despite not having achieved concessions by the government
11 October 2011	The Georgian Civil Registry Agency declares that billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili, who had just announced that he will set up a political party to participate in the next parliamentary elections in Georgia, has no Georgian citizenship
14 October 2011	A senior official in Azerbaijan's presidential administration deplores Armenia's reported purchase of weaponry from Moldova and other arms acquisitions as "destabilizing factors"
17 October 2011	Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian appoints Vigen Sarkisian as new chief of staff (they are not related)
17 October 2011	A US missile cruiser visits Georgia's Black Sea port of Batumi
18 October 2011	Azerbaijan marks the twentieth anniversary of its independence from the Soviet Union
18 October 2011	Georgian police seize large amounts of money from the Cartu Bank owned by billionaire-turned-politician Bidzina Ivanishvili
19 October 2011	Armenian tax officers raid the offices of Armenia's Russian-owned national power distribution company after it is accused of tax evasion by the State Revenue Committee
24 October 2011	Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian holds talks with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev which are expected to focus on efforts to resolve the conflict over the disputed region of Nagorno Karabakh

For the full chronicle since 2009 see www.laender-analysen.de/cad

ABOUT THE CAUCASUS ANALYTICAL DIGEST

Editors: Iris Kempe, Matthias Neumann, Robert Orttung, Jeronim Perović, Lili Di Puppo

The Caucasus Analytical Digest (CAD) is a monthly internet publication jointly produced by the Heinrich Böll Foundation in Tbilisi (www.boell.ge), the Research Centre for East European Studies at the University of Bremen (www.forschungsstelle.uni-bremen.de), the Resource Security Institute in Washington, DC (resourcesecurityinstitute.org/) and the Center for Security Studies (CSS) at ETH Zurich (www.css.ethz.ch) with support from the German Association for East European Studies (DGO). The Caucasus Analytical Digest analyzes the political, economic, and social situation in the three South Caucasus states of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia within the context of international and security dimensions of this region's development. CAD is supported by a grant from the Heinrich Boell Foundation.

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Layout: Cengiz Kibaroglu, Matthias Neumann, and Michael Clemens
ISSN 1867 9323 © 2011 by Heinrich Böll Stiftung, Forschungsstelle Osteuropa, Bremen and Center for Security Studies, Zürich
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