

*Peace or War?*  
*The Prospects for Conflicts in the Caucasus*

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*This article aims to show that the relative stability, compared with the turmoil of recent years, that seems to be the reigning in the Caucasus is in fact not a peace but perhaps a mere interruption in the conflicts of the area. As virtually all conflicts are frozen along cease-fire lines, and as no durable peace agreement has been reached in any of the cases, there is reason to fear a re-escalation of hostilities in the region. The conflicts that seem to be the most agitated currently are the conflicts over Nagorno Karabakh and over Abkhazia, both conflicts where the central government, having suffered humiliating defeats against numerically much weaker separatists, is growing increasingly intolerant against the unrecognized mini-states persisting on its territory. The risk, clearly, is that these states will attempt to solve their separatist problems by arms. Simultaneously, the recent peace accord in Chechnia, at a closer look, is anything but stable, while potential unrest remains among other North Caucasian minorities of the Russian Federation. Hence there are reasons to claim that the Caucasus will remain an area of instability in the near future. The potential of renewed conflict is only made worse by western neglect and indifference towards the region.*

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**A**t present, it seems—on the surface—as if the turmoil in the Caucasus has stabilized, and been replaced by a sense of relative stability. Since long already, the armed conflicts in Transcaucasia have been shelved, although no political solutions to the deeper contradictions between the rebellious minorities and their respective central powers have been found. Even in the unstable North Caucasus, the situation seems to have stabilized, as the last Russian troops left Chechnya on New Year's Eve 1996—by itself a symbolic event, given that it was to the day two years since the Russian army launched its large-scale offensive on Grozny. A peace agreement, if fragile, is in force in the breakaway republic, since former Russian Security Council secretary Alexandr Lebed and the Chechen chief of staff Aslan Maskhadov reached an agreement in the Dagestani settlement of Khasavyurt in the end of August 1996. For the first time since 1988, then, several months have passed without any violent clashes having taken place in the area.

The question that comes to mind, then, is if this seemingly calm situation is the beginning of a new and more peaceful chapter in the tumultuous history of the Caucasus, or if it is a mere pause in the hostilities, a kind of a 'calm before the storm'. This question is justified, as no lasting solutions have been found to the complicated circumstances and inter-ethnic relations that led to the outbreak of the violent conflicts in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Chechnya, and the Prigorodniy raion of North Ossetia. Even if no confrontations are taking place presently, weapons are as plentiful in the whole region as they were at the height of hostilities; attempts to disarm paramilitary formations and civilians have been largely futile, wherever they have been attempted. The number of refugees dispersed in the region is counted by the millions—many of which still live without permanent housing in tent camps, with increasing frustration as a result. A quick glance at the details of the problems that remain to be solved leaves little ground for optimism.

## GEORGIA AND AZERBAIJAN

The ethnic conflicts in Georgia and Azerbaijan emerged in the late 1980s, hence even before the dissolution of the Soviet Union. In Azerbaijan, full-scale war erupted in 1992, as the withdrawal of Soviet troops left Armenian and Azeri militants in the predominantly Armenian enclave of Nagorno Karabakh on each other's throats, the Karabakh Armenians having campaigned for a rattachment of the enclave to Armenia since late 1987.<sup>1</sup> In the following two years, the Karabakh Armenians, often supported by regular units of the Armenian (and occasionally former Soviet) army, managed to establish control over the whole of Nagorno Karabakh and its surrounding, homogeneously Azeri-populated areas. Totally, over 20% of Azerbaijan remains under occupation. Similarly, the Abkhaz and Ossetian minorities in Georgia started voicing their claims for larger self-determination in 1988-89; war erupted in 1992, which became particularly violent in Abkhazia.

During 1993 and 1994, these conflicts lost much of their momentum, and cease-fire agreements, brokered mainly by Russia but also with the involvement of the Organization for Security and Cooperation (OSCE) in Europe were signed, which have extended until today. The fact that armed conflict gradually faded out was rather a result of the exhaustion of the parties, or Russian intervention (especially in the case of Georgia) than as a response to international efforts to bring an end to them.<sup>2</sup> The consequence was that the conflicts were not solved, but lived on in a passive form, without the use of violence. Hence, three mini-states were allowed to consolidate their control over the territories they had conquered militarily. Even if no independent state has granted recognition to either Nagorno Karabakh, Abkhazia or South Ossetia, the fact remains that power in these territories is exercised by the political organs of the respective secessionist groups. One could argue that the separatists were successful in achieving their primary aim, independence, but not in the secondary, international recognition. This lack of recognition has been a core argument in the metropols' claim to reassert control over these

enclaves, and has contributed to the general acceptance of the illegitimacy of the secessionist regimes.

Feeling the need to somehow legitimize their rule, and thus to a great extent for foreign consumption, all three of these entities held either presidential or parliamentary elections during the fall of 1996.<sup>3</sup> During November, presidential elections were held in South Ossetia and Nagorno Karabakh, as well as parliamentary elections in Abkhazia, in all three cases openly defying loud protests from Baku and Tbilisi, respectively. In all three cases, the incumbent, relatively moderate governments won the polls; however the fact that the more extremist movements among the separatists were not able to assert their views was a feeble consolation for Baku and Tbilisi.

The leaders of Azerbaijan and Georgia consistently argue that no legitimate elections can be held in these territories before the Georgian or Azeri refugees are allowed to return to their former places of residence, where they were victims of the often violent ethnic cleansing carried out by the separatists. Hence, it is argued that elections can only be held once the original ethnic make-up of the respective regions is restored. It should be mentioned that around 30% of Nagorno Karabakh's population was Azeri before 1988, whereas 35% of South Ossetia's, and 55% of Abkhazia's population consisted of Georgians in 1989.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the elections were held despite repeated appeals from representatives of both the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to the leaders of the three mini-states to postpone the elections until a solution is found to the refugee question.

The direct consequence of the elections has been to demonstrate the lack of the capacity of Baku and Tbilisi to exercise sovereignty in areas that theoretically belong to them. Coupled with the lack of interest of international actors for the problems of the Caucasus, this in turn leads to increasing revanchism in these two capitals. Voices in Azerbaijan and Georgia asking for their governments to reconquer the lost territories with the use of force, if necessary, are growing steadily. This is particularly true among the numerous refugee communities in

these republics. In Georgia, a parliament in exile has been formed for Georgian refugees from Abkhazia, and has grown into a considerable political force in the country. Its chairman, Tamaz Nadareishvili, has for a long time exerted pressure on the government to take up arms against the Abkhazian rebels.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, in Azerbaijan, distrust towards the regime is growing among the Azeris that were forced to flee their homes in Armenia, Nagorno Karabakh, or its surrounding territories. Recent reports from refugee camps in Azerbaijan speak of the danger of the refugees taking the matter in their own hands, and marching on Karabakh unless something is done for them to return to their homes. As a leader of the refugees in the Saatli camp expresses the matter, it is not difficult to find 150'000 strong men among a million refugees.<sup>6</sup>

If on top of this the chronic political instability that Georgia and Azerbaijan have experienced since independence is considered, it is likely that the regimes of these two countries will be tempted to use revanchism in order to increase their popular support. Not staying at this, as international negotiations seem to be leading nowhere, the discontent with the west is increasing as well, especially in Azerbaijan, which always has the possibility to look southward to Iran and the Arab world for alternative sources of support. It is a fact that president Heydar Aliyev has distanced himself from secular and western-oriented Turkey and has moved closer to the Islamic world, in particular Iran and Sa'udi Arabia.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, despite his communist background, Aliyev has made efforts to improve his Islamic credentials. With respect to the continuing occupation of Azeri lands, the Azeris have grown increasingly restless by reports that Armenia is steadily integrating Nagorno Karabakh into itself, hence trying to create a *fait accompli* of a union between Armenia and Karabakh,<sup>8</sup> in order to make it practically impossible for Azerbaijan to ever regain control over the region. At several occasions, Aliyev has stated that if nothing is done internationally to free the occupied Azeri territories, Azerbaijan will have to do it on its own.

These statements illustrate the fact that the position of the Azerbaijani leadership is distinctively more severe and menacing than

that in Tbilisi. The primary reason for this is that there was a radical difference in the way the wars were fought in Azerbaijan and Georgia. Whereas the Abkhazian and Ossetian separatists only established control over the territories that lay within the borders of their respective autonomous entities, the Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh went one step further and conquered large territories of Azerbaijan proper, areas that lay outside the borders of the Nagorno Karabakh Autonomous Oblast and were homogeneously Azeri-populated. The primary logic of these actions was military: to establish a buffer zone between themselves and Azerbaijan.

In spite of the differences between the cases, they all have in common that the conflicts have been deadlocked in a way that is unacceptable for the respective central governments. Doubtlessly the situation cannot remain as it is today—with international indifference—for long, without something happening.

In the best case, one could imagine Tbilisi or Baku carrying out low-scale armed provocations in order to revive international interest for political solutions to the respective conflicts. Such actions would not really be aggressive in nature, but rather intended to show the determination of the regime not allow the present situation to perpetuate itself. The ultimate aim of such actions would be to force the international community to press for a political resolution of the conflicts, hence putting more pressure on the governments of the secessionist mini-states. Unfortunately, such a prediction might be overly optimistic. Both Georgia and Azerbaijan are planning to purchase weapons on a large scale, and this can not other than imply an intention on the part of the two governments to ‘solve’ their respective secessionist problems with arms. Furthermore, demographic characteristics are also in favour of the Georgians and the Azeris. Whereas there are around six million Azeris and four million Georgians in their respective republics,<sup>9</sup> the Abkhaz number only 100’000; and the Armenians in Karabakh are less than 200’000. Even Armenia itself is much smaller than Azerbaijan, with a population of around three million.<sup>10</sup> Hence in both cases, the numeric

superiority of the central government towards the separatists is in the order of thirty-five to one.

Comparing the freedom of action of Azerbaijan and Georgia, it again seems as if the situation in Azerbaijan is more critical than in Georgia. Eduard Shevardnadze's regime is deeply dependent upon Russian support for its survival; and as Moscow is constantly in a position to exert leverage on Georgia by renewing its support for Abkhazian or Ossetian separatism, it indeed seems as if the Georgian leadership would be forced to retain its calm, at least as long as the current balance of power does not change. Furthermore, Georgia is in a difficult geographic position, as it does not have particularly good relations with any of its neighbours. However, in case Moscow's attention would be diverted to some other, more pressing issues, it is likely that Tbilisi would be more assertive in its stance towards Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Azerbaijan, on the other hand, seems to have succeeded in keeping a certain distance to Russia, and hence has more freedom of action than Georgia. The country shares a long border with Iran to the South and a shorter one with Turkey through the enclave of Nakhichevan. Hence by making use of the Turco-Iranian rivalry for influence in the Caucasus, Azerbaijan tries to keep an independent policy towards Moscow. Furthermore, Azerbaijan has huge oil resources, and if the agreements that have been signed with western petroleum companies enter into force, Azerbaijan expects large sums of 'petrodollars' to start flowing in by 1997 or 1998.

In the immediate future, this curtails the freedom of action of Baku, as the country must produce an aura of stability in order not to scare away foreign investors. This in turn naturally rules out any adventurist actions in Karabakh. However, within a few years Baku expects to have tied up the western petroleum companies by their own investments, so that they have too much to lose to take the decision to leave even if Azerbaijan would become a more unstable and unpredictable country. According to such a scenario, the Azerbaijani leadership would use the oil revenues to build up a modern and well-

equipped army, after which the country would use its newly won might against the much poorer and less numerous Armenians in Karabakh; first as a bargaining chip in negotiations, and ultimately—if demonstrations of force show no progress—Azerbaijan would reconquer the lost territories by force.

Thanks to the west's presumed dependence on Azeri oil, Baku hopes that the United States, in particular, would show lenience toward Azerbaijan—just as it made if nothing had happened when 20% of the country's territory was occupied. The Azerbaijani leadership also hopes to escape harsh condemnations as it has by now collected a number of international documents confirming Nagorno Karabakh's belonging to Azerbaijan, through United Nations resolutions among others, and most recently through the December 1996 Lisbon summit of OSCE.<sup>11</sup>

At first sight, this scenario might seem far-fetched. But the fact remains that it comes back constantly in increasingly menacing statements from Baku on how small and poor Armenia actually is, as well as in conversations with Azeris. Generally speaking, the feeling of humiliation and revanchism appears to be strong and growing in Azerbaijan.

## CHECHNYA AND THE INGUSH-OSSETIAN CONFLICT

In the North Caucasus, the situation is similar. Although there is a semblance of newly won peace, many questions remain unanswered and small fires are left simmering.

First of all, the smaller and less publicized conflict between Ingushetia (the Ingush are Caucasian people ethnically close to the Chechens) and North Ossetia seems to be slowly boiling up again. The conflict erupted in 1992 over the *Prigorodniy* (suburban) district of Vladikavkaz in North Ossetia, which has historically been populated mainly by the Ingush, who lost the territory at the time of the deportations in 1943-44 and did not get it back when the deported peoples were rehabilitated in 1957. In November 1992, after violent



clashes which led to hundreds of casualties, the Ingush living in the region were forced to flee their homes. The Russian army was sent in to put an end to the fighting; however the troops took the side of the overwhelmingly Christian Ossetians in the conflict, leading to increased frustration with Moscow among the Ingush, who now deeply resent their decision in 1991 to leave their Chechen ‘cousins’ and remain within the Russian Federation—at the time, the Ingush saw the question of lost territories as more important than independence.

In February 1995, President Yeltsin lifted the state of emergency that had been in effect since 1992.<sup>12</sup> This led to the about 30’000 Ingush refugees from *Prigorodniy* reviving their efforts to return to their homes in North Ossetia, which is heavily opposed by the North Ossetian leadership. During 1996, tensions have increased, as it became clear that the North Ossetians were not even ready to negotiate a return of refugees, claiming that only people who did not participate in the clashes would be allowed to return.<sup>13</sup> This naturally leaves the problem of defining and listing people who did or did not take part in the clashes.

Simultaneously, the already strained relations between Nazran (the Ingush capital) and Moscow are worsening, especially after Russian troops killed several Ingush civilians in February 1996, as the latter tried to prevent the troops from proceeding on their way into Chechnya.<sup>14</sup> From the Kremlin, the Ingush know that they can expect no support. On the contrary, repeated statements from the so-called ‘power ministries’ in Moscow, and in particular vice prime minister Sergei Shakhrai, have condemned the Ingush as being a ‘disloyal and separatist’ people.<sup>15</sup> The Ossetians add fuel the fire by using their privileged relationship with Moscow to prevent a resolution of the refugee problem. Hence Moscow’s negligent attitude towards the grievances of the Ingush people, especially as it is coupled with quite overt support for North Ossetia, clearly is exacerbating the general impression of Moscow’s partiality in ethnic conflicts, hence further discrediting it as an ‘honest broker’ in the Caucasus.

In nearby Chechnya, a violent and bloody war which started in December 1994 seems to have come to an end during the summer of 1996. In a historical context, however, it might be just one more round in the war between Chechens and Russians, which started in the late eighteenth century. The question, therefore, is whether it will be possible to prevent further bloodshed in the future and turn the struggle between Chechens and Russians into a political rather than an armed one.

After having lost their leader, Dzhokhar Dudayev, in a Russian helicopter attack in April 1996, the Chechen guerrillas, through both military successes and negotiations, managed to achieve a number of their war aims. The Russian troops have been withdrawn from Chechen territory, while a peace agreement has been signed, which postpones the settlement of the question of Chechnya's future status for five years.<sup>16</sup> *De facto*, it can be argued that Chechnya has already achieved a position very close to independence, without as for now *nominally* having completed its secession from the Russian Federation. Even if the war is over, the stability of the peace is questionable. The first problem is that Aleksandr Lebed, who on the Russian side was responsible for both the negotiations with the Chechen leadership and for the signing of the treaty itself, has lost his post as security advisor to President Yeltsin and secretary of the Security Council.<sup>17</sup>

As the peace deal seems to be something that Russian politicians are very reluctant to associate with, let alone take responsibility for, the direct danger is that the leaders in the Kremlin sooner or later will disclaim responsibility for it. The thoughts and plans of General Lebed, which are truly controversial in the Kremlin, do not at all enjoy the same popularity in Russia as they do in the West, a fact which was proven by his dismissal shortly after the completion of the agreement. Both the powerful communists and the extreme-right groupings in the Duma are against the peace deal, as they fear that it could lead to the whole of the Russian Federation succumbing to ethnic nationalism,

thus facing the same destiny as the Soviet Union did. Hence the very legitimacy of the agreement is in danger, as even many liberal politicians in Russia share these feelings.

Even if the agreement does hold, that does not mean that the dangers for Chechnya are over. In itself, it is not a full-fledged peace treaty, rather being a commitment to hold further negotiations in detailed matters. Hence the need for future talks remains, something which might turn out to be difficult to realize, as the Chechens and Russians are in disagreement on the most fundamental issue: Chechnya's future status. The Russians see the agreement as a necessary compromise in their aim of reintegrating Chechnya into Russia; the Chechens, on the other hand, see it as a compromise on the way to reaching their final goal—*independence*. Problems in the interpretation of the deal have already emerged, and do not seem to diminish. And as few political figures on either side are ready to compromise, concern for the developments in Chechnya seems justified. The positions of the parties are too distant from each other to induce any hope for a final solution at this stage. Nevertheless, the presidential elections that were scheduled for 27 January 1997 were carried out without complications, and were surprisingly fair and calm according to OSCE observers.<sup>18</sup>

The presidential elections of 27 January led to the victory of the moderate Aslan Maskhadov, which in the immediate future most likely means a further normalization of relations with Moscow. However, the strong show of popularity of guerrilla leader Shamil Basayev, (who got 28% of the votes) whom Moscow has branded a terrorist, points to the strong anti-Russian sentiment in Chechnya.

An interesting fact is that both Basayev and former president Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev have refused to take part in the new Chechen government. If other important figures stay out of the cabinet, this might lead to the isolation of the Maskhadov government and, in turn, the dominance of Maskhadov's clan members in the administration.

Hence there is a real danger that the divisions among the Chechen leaders will lead to conflicts among the various Chechen

factions, which are mainly organized on the basis of clans. If this is the case, Moscow is likely to try to use the internal Chechen divisions to pave the way for installing a puppet regime in Grozny.

A possible tool for such ambitions in Ruslan Khasbulatov, the former speaker of the Russian parliament, as he is a respected figure both in Russia and in parts of Chechnya. On the other hand, Moscow's current puppet, Doku Zavgayev, is too burdened by his Soviet past and his war-time collaboration with Russia to be a credible leader. Khasbulatov has nevertheless proven his ability and willingness to intervene in Chechen affairs, both by playing a role in Dudayev's ousting of Zavgayev from power in 1991, and by his meddling with the opposition to Dudayev in 1994.<sup>19</sup> However, Moscow has to take into account that power in Chechnya will not necessarily be concentrated with the elected political leaders, whatever their stance towards independence. The war has led to much power being concentrated with the guerrilla field commanders, who are generally very autonomous from the leadership; some of them don't even accept the authority of General Maskhadov, and will not necessarily accept the outcome of the January elections. Another particularly worrisome circumstance is that many circles in Moscow do not recognize the validity of these elections. Thus, the holding of elections in Chechnya is a positive development, which however should not be allowed to hide the real and serious contradictions that remain unresolved, both between Chechens and Russians and among the Chechens themselves.

## THE NORTH CAUCASUS

Besides these well-known and open conflicts, there are other antagonisms in the Caucasus which have the potential to grow into open conflicts. Among them, the perhaps most impending one is the Lezgin quest for autonomy. The Lezgins are a half-million strong Dagestani people, whose population traditionally lives in a territory which at present is divided between Southern Dagestan and Azerbaijan. Although Azeri sources try to downsize the number of Lezgins in their republic, it seems as if there is a high number of

Lezgins that have assimilated to various degrees into the Azerbaijani society, and are registered as Azeris in official documents. Hence the number of Lezgins in Azerbaijan is certainly higher than the roughly 180'000 that appear officially, according to Lezgin sources over 600'000.<sup>20</sup> The Lezgins were disturbed by the secession of Azerbaijan from the Soviet Union, as it meant that their people was divided into two sovereign states—Dagestan, belonging to Russia, and Azerbaijan. When the Russian and Azerbaijani governments planned to erect a state frontier between Dagestan and Azerbaijan in the Summer of 1992, the Lezgins saw this as effectively separating the Lezgin people, especially as visa restrictions were to be introduced. As a response, the Lezgin *Sadval* movement organized mass demonstration in both Dagestan and Azerbaijan. Although at the time a crisis was prevented as the project of a state border was scrapped, the problems remain, especially in Azerbaijan, where the Lezgins feel discriminated against and continue their quest for autonomy, ideally aiming at a union with Lezgins in Dagestan, either within Dagestan, or in a separate Lezgin republic, whose state affiliation would be unclear. Although the political climate in Azerbaijan does not allow for the *Sadval* to operate openly, at least one bomb attack on the Baku metro has been blamed on the organization, pointing at the severity of the contradictions between Lezgins and Azeris. The Azerbaijani government, for its part, sees Moscow's hand behind *Sadval*, arguing that Moscow is trying to create a conflict between the two communities to further destabilize Azerbaijan.

Even in Dagestan itself, a fragile inter-ethnic peace is enduring. The fall of the Soviet Union led to popular fronts of many of the 33 ethnic communities emerging.<sup>21</sup> These fronts have conflicting political aims, searching for an increased influence of their ethnic group in the government of the republic, which is still dominated by Soviet-time technocrats.<sup>22</sup> The socio-economic problems of the republic only exacerbates the tensions between the ethnic groups, hence endangering the stability of the republic.<sup>23</sup> In the Dagestani case, peace and stability is dependent upon the attitudes of the four largest

ethnic communities—the Avars, the Dargins, the Kumyks, and the Lezgins—towards Dagestani unity. At present, the Kumyks seem to be the most active and nationally conscious of the four, whereas the Avars and Dargins are strong defenders of unity; the Lezgins are more preoccupied with the plight of their brethren in Azerbaijan. However, the difficult economic problems of the republic can not but make the task of maintaining cordial relations between the numerous ethnic communities even more complicated as competition for scarce resources and land increases; thus as long as the economy of the republic is sloping downward, one can expect multi-ethnic stability to deteriorate further.

## CONCLUSIONS

In this intricate web of post-Soviet conflicts in the Caucasus, there are certain parallels that deserve mention. If one excludes the Ingush-Ossetian conflict, which involved two Caucasian peoples—be it with significant Russian involvement—all the armed conflicts in the region resulted in military defeats of the central powers, which proved incapable of militarily achieving control over the territories under ‘rebel’ control. The separatists are not interested in further military action, as they have already achieved more than what could have been expected given their demographic inferiority. The result is a deadlock which might seem rather stable and calm. However, no political solutions to the deeper controversies that led to the wars is in sight. This in turn leads to the danger of crises recurring, potentially leading to further hostilities. Although it can be inferred that this description does not fit in the case of Chechnya, it does seem that this conflict as well is developing towards a similar deadlock, a kind of passive perseverance of the conflict. Even on the Russian side, presidential advisor Emil Pain recently argued that Chechnya is on the way to such a situation, similar to the condition of Nagorno Karabakh, Abkhazia and Transdnestria.<sup>24</sup>

What can be observed in the Caucasus, then, is that the danger of renewed hostilities remain on all fronts. An illusion of peace is existing, but it is not the case of a negotiated peace where the parties learn to accept a new situation; peace exists only because the central government in each conflict is incapable of altering the situation to its advantage. However, there should be no doubt that neither Azerbaijan, nor Georgia or Russia have any intention to accept the current situation, where minorities have acquired territories in such a humiliating way. Hence, it would be no exaggeration to claim that the Caucasus will remain a region in turmoil for still some time to come.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> For an early account of the outbreak of the conflict, see Tamara Dragadze, 'The Armenian-Azerbaijani Conflict: Structure and Sentiment', in *Third World Quarterly*, no. 2, 1989. For a general overview, see Arie Vaserman and Rami Ginat, 'National, Religious or Territorial Conflict? The Case of Nagorno-Karabakh', in *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 4 / 1994. For an account of the legal aspects of the conflict and the international attitudes to it, see Svante E. Cornell, "Undeclared War—the Nagorno Karabakh Conflict Reconsidered", in *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 20 no. 4, Summer 1997.
- <sup>2</sup> For Russian intervention in the internal affairs of Transcaucasian states, see Thomas Goltz, 'Letter from Eurasia: The Hidden Russian Hand', in *Foreign Policy*, no. 92, Fall 1993.
- <sup>3</sup> For an overview of these elections, see Elizabeth Fuller, 'When Should Unrecognized States Hold Elections?', *Open Media Research Institute* (hereafter OMRI) *analytical brief* (Prague), 27 November 1996.
- <sup>4</sup> For Nagorno Karabakh's population characteristics, see Alexandre Bennigsen, and S. Enders Wimbush, *Muslims of the Soviet Empire: A Guide*, London: Hurst & Co., 1985. For Abkhazia and South Ossetia, see Philip Petersen, 'Security Policy in Post-Soviet Transcaucasia', in *European Security*, Spring 1994.
- <sup>5</sup> See Fuller, *op. cit.*

- <sup>6</sup> See Chris Kutschera, 'The Forgotten Refugees', in *The Middle East (London)*, April 1996.
- <sup>7</sup> See Joseph A. Kechichian, and Theodore W. Karasik, 'The Crisis in Azerbaijan: How Clans Influence the Politics of an Emerging Republic', in *Middle East Policy*, Summer 1996.
- <sup>8</sup> See *International Herald Tribune*, 20 September 1996.
- <sup>9</sup> Six million Azeris live in Azerbaijan, whereas over 15 million live in Iran.
- <sup>10</sup> Furthermore, a high proportion of the Armenian population has reportedly left the country for the United States, Russia or Western Europe due to the economic hardships of the war years.
- <sup>11</sup> For an overview of the summit, see *Turkish Daily News*, 3 December 1996, pp. A1 and A6. Although Armenia blocked any resolution on Nagorno Karabakh's belonging to Azerbaijan, the final document of the



<sup>22</sup> See Brian Murray, 'Peace in the Caucasus: Multi-Ethnic Stability in Dagestan', in *Central Asian Survey*, nr. 4, 1994.

<sup>23</sup> For an overview of the problems of Dagestan, see Ismail Özsoy, 'The Socio-Economic Problems of Dagestan (1995)', in *Eurasian Studies*, Winter 1995/96. See also Kamil Aliyev, "The History of Kumyks and their Current Problems", in *Eurasian Studies*, Summer 1995.

<sup>24</sup> See OMRI Daily Digest , 19 September 1996.