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The current issue of the "Contemporary Eurasia" VI (1) is devoted to the ongoing  
developments and processes in the Eurasia. The volume includes analyses of the key  
political developments, economic and security issues in the Middle East, South  
Caucasus and Central Asia. The volume also contains references on roundtable  
discussions at the Institute of Oriental Studies NAS RA.

The publication may be of interest for social scientists, experts and students.

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**FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK**

RUBEN SAFRASTYAN

**NEW GEOPOLITICS FOR A SMALL COUNTRY:  
ARMENIA IN WIKIPEDIA**

Armenia is a country with small territory and population. Its territory takes the 137<sup>th</sup> point in the world, and the population occupies the 131<sup>st</sup>. Armenia is not rich in natural resources. It has no developed economy. In terms of GDP, it takes the 130<sup>th</sup> point in the world (according to IMF). All these indicators are unbiased. We can add a number of others, not very different from these ones. According to all these indicators, Armenia belongs to the group of small countries, ranking second, the bottom half of the world list.

Besides, Armenia is a landlocked country. It has four neighboring states. Two of them closed their borders with Armenia. One of them has involved the country into a long-lasting conflict, which from time to time develops from low intensity to high intensity armed conflict.

All the above-mentioned factors determine the "vulnerability" of Armenian position in terms of geopolitics. Such disadvantageous circumstances necessitate to struggle for survival, or if we apply to a geopolitical tool, the fight to keep control over a certain space or, in other words, territory. For a quarter of the century since the restoration of Armenia's independence, the country's ruling elite has developed a certain geopolitical paradigm. In this report, I use the concept of paradigm as it's defined by French philosopher Michel Foucault, who described a paradigm as a specific discursive formation, a historically rational way of understanding reality.

The basis of such a paradigm is the idea of the strategic alliance with Russia. This paradigm has been operating up till now. Its further development has become the membership of the military and economic alliances in which Russia plays the leading role. I mean the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Eurasian Economic Union (EaEU). As this topic is not the purpose of our report, I will not go into its details. I'd only like to note that this paradigm contributes to the solution of the country's main geopolitical

problem - it ensures the security. However, it is largely deterministic and puts the Armenian policy on the international platform into fairly strict limits.

At the same time, ladies and gentlemen, the world offers new opportunities for the states like Armenia. These opportunities are related to the fact that along with the traditional space in our time, there is the different, virtual scope - so-called cyberspace. The traditionally basic factors of classical geopolitics, such as area, population, geographical location, the economic situation and so on, lose their seniority. Thereby Geopolitics loses its significance in its classical form. The new form of Geopolitics becomes essential. Like the traditional one, it has been directed to master the space and maintain the control. However, in this case we are dealing with cyberspace. Thus, the new geopolitics is the geopolitics of cyberspace. It hasn't replaced, but accompanied the classical Geopolitics. One can also say it exists in parallel with it, creating its own system.

The new Geopolitics needs new paradigms. In the case of Armenia we offer to base one of them on the idea of the Armenian civilization. We proceed from the fact that the Armenian people have created spiritual values and expressed their identity for millennia. All these values combine the phenomenon we call the Armenian Civilization. Of course, this idea is one of the possible paradigms. We should also use others based on different ideas. We are interested in the area of cyberspace, where information warfare is launched. However, this issue does not belong to the subject of our report.

The use of "civilization paradigm" in Geopolitics in cyberspace provides benefits for Armenia. As it is one of the oldest currently existing civilizations in the world and has had continuous operation for several thousand years. This fact is an objective indicator, exactly the same as the 130<sup>th</sup>-131<sup>st</sup> position on the territory, population or GDP. The use of this indicator makes it possible to overcome the complex of "the country from the bottom of the list" in the geopolitical paradigm, or at least in the cyberspace.

The implementation of our civilization paradigm of "cyberspace geopolitics" should maintain the control over the distribution area of



the Armenian civilization in cyberspace. In other words, we are dealing with the geopolitics of survival, the cyberspace survival.

However, unlike the traditional geopolitics, the initial basic factors in this case are much more favorable. The following facts prove the above-mentioned idea. So, let me remind you that approximately one third of all the Armenians of the world - about three million people, live in Armenia. But about six million Armenians constitute the Diaspora and are dispersed all around the world. A large majority of them live in the countries with a high percent of internet distribution. At the same time the percentage of the Armenian internet rates is approaching the European numbers and makes up approximately 70 percent. For comparison, the neighboring Georgia constitutes about 47 percent (according to 2016 data).

We should emphasize that the struggle for control over the Armenian civilization sphere takes place in multilingual media, both in Armenian and foreign languages, primarily English and Russian. The civilization paradigm in these areas has its own peculiarities. We are going to analyze them during the study of the implementation of our paradigm in a specific area of cyberspace. We have chosen Wikipedia to show the problems caused during the implementation of geopolitical civilization paradigm. Let me remind you that it is a free universal public multilingual online encyclopedia, which can be completed and edited. Besides, there are certain rules in Wikipedia. Their execution is strictly monitored by the group of so-called "administrators", "bureaucrats", etc.

Wikipedia is one of the cyberspace areas, where the geopolitical struggle is arranged among various states and groups for the possession and space control, in this case in the form of content. In such a struggle, the Armenians mainly use the content in three languages: Armenian, English and Russian. The application of the civilization paradigm is reflected in the creation of articles on various aspects of Armenian civilization. The increase of quantity of the articles on such topics in the above-mentioned languages helps to afford the opportunity of the operation of Armenian civilization in cyberspace. Armenian civilization is a part of the mankind civilization "body" (Toynbee). Thus, the article in Armenian, studying various

aspects of the entire human civilization, contributes not only to the content in Armenian, but also to the upturn of awareness of the Armenian society. Surely, the content is created in accordance with the Armenian perception of the world. Thus, such content is added to the all-Armenian content.

I would like to mention another factor. As we have already noted, about two-third of all Armenians are still live in the Diaspora. Wikipedia, in the three above-mentioned languages, is a means of creating a particular Armenian area in cyberspace. The Wikipedia articles of special value should play an important role there. We can mention different attempts to publish articles both in Eastern Armenian version of the Armenian language, which is spoken in Armenia and in a certain part of the Diaspora, and the Western Armenian, which is used in some parts of the Diaspora. Thus, we can say that the Civilization Geopolitics of Armenia has more chances to succeed in the cyberspace than the traditional geopolitics in real life.

In the final part of the report I'd like to focus on some specific cases that support our main points.

The Armenian Wikipedia is supported by the state. The issues related to its development are discussed at the government meetings. Another example: the country's president has recently visited the office of the "Wikimedia" organization, which coordinates the activities of the Armenian sector in Wikipedia. Since 2014 the Armenian state has carried out a nationwide program called "one Armenian - one article in Wikipedia". It is supported by a variety of governmental agencies and their leaders. A number of ministers have announced that they are involved in this program and become the authors of the articles. Young people, mainly schoolchildren and students have increasingly been involved in the process of writing articles. Several times a year the most active of them are invited to special camps in the resort areas of the country. Along with having a rest they have been writing articles for Wikipedia for several hours a day in accordance with coordinated topics. By the way, the representatives of the diaspora are more and getting invited to such camps more often. This program makes it possible to increase the number of Armenian content in Wikipedia. So, after one of the

preceding camps, it was announced that the Armenian-language Wikipedia was able to change a level in the global rankings of various Wikipedias on the number of articles - from 42<sup>nd</sup> point to 41<sup>st</sup>, as a result of their work. Compare these figures with the 130-131<sup>st</sup> point according the basic parameters of traditional geopolitics - they represent themselves.

Our conclusion: The example of Armenia shows that small countries, if they properly apply the elements of civilization Geopolitics in cyberspace, obtain the opportunity to increase their geopolitical value, at least in cyberspace. In our opinion it is important in the modern world.

*Paper presented at the Second Gulf Strategic Conference Geopolitical Transformation in the Global Sphere, Kingdom of Bahrain, 22-23 May 2016 organized by DERASAT Strategic Studies*

ALEXANDER KRYLOV

## THE KARABAKH PROBLEM IN THE MID-2010's

Abstract

In this article a situation on the territory of Karabakh conflict and the positions of the conflicting parties are analyzed. These are based on a "package approach" (Armenia) and "step by step approach" (Azerbaijan). These approaches of the sides are at a complete contradiction and are the main reason for the ineffectiveness of the negotiations under the OSCE Minsk Group, thus increasing the likelihood of a transition to a military-force scenario to solve the problem. Russia's policy is seeking to prevent a new war in Karabakh by maintaining a comparable military-political balance of power. In this situation, the main task of the OSCE Minsk Group and Russian diplomacy is a creation of effective mechanisms to prevent the resumption of hostilities. International ceasefire monitoring will create conditions for the activation of the negotiation process with the aim of achieving a comprehensive settlement of the Karabakh conflict. In the alternative the Karabakh problem will continue to be a source of international tension.

Keywords:

*The Karabakh problem, Azerbaijan, Armenia, NKR, Russian policy, the OSCE Minsk Group, the CSTO, military-political balance*

Introduction

The unresolved Karabakh problem continues to be a major obstacle to developing and modernizing the South Caucasus. Following the epic fail in the 1992-1994 war, Azerbaijani authorities realized that the Karabakh problem could not be solved by military means. Accordingly, during the first post-war years, the main focus was on diplomacy: Baku leadership was indeed set to use US and EU's interest in energy supplies from Azerbaijan to regain Nagorno-Karabakh. Baku treated energy cooperation treaties with EU within the only context: "oil in exchange for Karabakh". They even tried to use Moscow's interest in bringing Azerbaijan to the Collective



Security Treaty Organization later on. The formula transformed into "CSTO in exchange for Karabakh" and then "EEU in exchange for Karabakh".

The diplomatic gambits proved ineffective as (like in Georgia) they were based on an extreme overestimate of the country's importance for the United States, EU and Russia. Not surprisingly, the twilight hopes that someone from external players would force Armenia to return Nagorno-Karabakh under the authority of Azerbaijan, did not materialize. The result was disappointment in US, EU and Russian policies within the Azerbaijani community, while the authorities recognized the necessity to develop a new approach towards the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic and Armenia "based on own forces".

#### *The positions of the conflicting parties*

The position of Armenia in the negotiations on the Karabakh problem (shared by Yerevan and Stepanakert) was based on the "package principle" which implied settling the status of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic based on the nations' right of self-determination and Azerbaijan regaining control over the territories which constituted the "security belt" for the NKR after the war and were controlled by Armenian armed forces. Azerbaijan relied on the "staged approach" which would enable Baku to gradually regain control over all territories of the former Azerbaijan SSR lost after the war.

Narrowing the gap between the parties' positions, which were mutually exclusive by default, proved impossible, and all attempts to reach a mutually acceptable peaceful solution in the negotiations under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group failed. The Azerbaijani government placed the Karabakh problem in the center of the country's political life, the re-take of "occupied territories" developed into the nation's principal idea designed to consolidate people around the acting government. Today, dropping this idea would be impossible for Baku like a surrender of the NKR for Yerevan.

A rise in energy prices in the early 2000s provided the Azerbaijani government with the financial resources required to pursue an active policy for regaining the lost territories. As it subsequently appeared, the aim of that policy was to exhaust Armenia and force it to

capitulate by exerting continuous pressure on all possible fronts. Concurrently with extensive purchases of modern weaponry, Baku increased tension at the demarcation line persistently as a means to put pressure on the Armenian government and society.

The Azerbaijani government did not exclude the possibility that a forced military settlement of the Karabakh problem might be used. That was evidenced by the commitment to gain military dominance over the Armenian army, statements of Azerbaijani officials (including the Azeri Ambassador to Russia P. Byul-Buyul Oglu<sup>1</sup>) asserting Azerbaijan's right to a military resolution of the Karabakh problem and extensive diplomatic efforts to weaken Armenia's position on the global stage focused primarily on undermining the friendly relations between Armenia and Russia. Baku managed to capitalize on cooperation with Russia in the military and technical field: supplies of Russian weapons to the Azerbaijani army transformed into one of the most painful problems in the Russia-Armenia relations.

Russia sought to prevent new escalation in Karabakh by maintaining a military and political power balance in the region. The huge arms purchases for the Azerbaijani army (from Russia, Israel, Turkey, Belorussia, Ukraine and other countries) were offset by CSTO membership of Armenia, military cooperation agreements and supplies of relevant Russian-made weapons to equip the Armenian army. This enabled Moscow to maintain an approximate parity of power between Azerbaijan and Armenia in the setting of the ever-growing militarization in the region initiated by Baku and neutralize the threat of a new war.

Since the early 2000s, Azerbaijan has been purchasing large quantities of weapons from Russia. The largest set of contracts with an estimated value of at least \$4 bln was signed in the early 2010s. In 2015, due to commercial attractiveness of multibillion deals with Azerbaijan to the Russian defense industry (and arms producers from other countries), the military and political equilibrium was grossly

<sup>1</sup>See: The Ambassador of Azerbaijan: a military option remains on the table to resolve the conflict. 02.04.2016, <http://www.svoboda.org/a/27650737.html>

disturbed in favor of Azerbaijan with regard to certain types of weaponry (tanks, artillery, heavy flamethrower systems, intelligence-gatherings and combat UAVs, etc.). The military build-up in Azerbaijan was accompanied by constantly growing military tension.

The destabilizing moves in the internal political landscape in Armenia in 2015 encouraged revanchist sentiments in Baku. Russia's position of a neutral go-between in the Karabakh conflict engendered discontent on both sides. Both countries were seeking support from Moscow, unwilling to compromise. As a result, the continuous military escalation may "defreeze" the Karabakh conflict which would change the current format of the region (3 + 2 + 1).

In 2015, the Azerbaijani side kept disrupting the ceasefire along the entire line of contact of the armed forces, which in fact transformed back into a front line in recent years. According to the Armenian side, Azerbaijan breached the ceasefire agreement about 300 times<sup>2</sup> between 28 June and 4 July 2015 and about 400 times<sup>3</sup> between 15 and 21 November 2015. In their regular attacks against the NKR and Armenian border areas, the Azerbaijani armed forces used artillery missile units and heavy artillery<sup>4</sup>.

Moscow and Yerevan recognized the potential threat posed by the situation and, in February 2016, Armenia received a \$200 million ten-year state export loan for purchasing Russian-made weapons with payment deferral until early 2018.<sup>5</sup> The agreement would neutralize the dominance of the Azerbaijan army in certain types of weapons in the area of conflict. But in early April 2016 (before Russian weaponry arrived to Armenia), military attacks broke out at the front line. According to military experts, one of the reasons for Baku to commence a large-scale military campaign at that particular time might have been Russia's "arms credit" according to which Armenia

<sup>2</sup>Beglyaryan A., NKR: The Main Results of the Year. 27.12.2015. <http://www.kavkazoved.info/news/2015/12/27/nagorno-karabakhskaja-respublika-glavnnye-itogi-goda.html>

<sup>3</sup>Aksenov S., Karabakh of Discord, 27.11.2015, <http://rusplt.ru/society/karabakh-razdora-19958.html>

<sup>4</sup>Beglyaryan A., op.cit.

<sup>5</sup>Russia Grants a Loan to Armenia for Buying Weapons, 18.02.2016, <https://lenta.ru/news/2016/02/18/armenweapons/>

would acquire Smerch rocket launchers and Solntsepek heavy firing systems. That might impel the Baku government to launch their reckless undertaking before the power balance between the conflicting parties was finally centered<sup>6</sup>. It seems quite possible that Ilham Aliyev's plans were approved in advance during the meeting with the President Erdogan on 16 March 2016 in Ankara. This version is confirmed by statements of the Turkish government supporting Baku and criticizing Armenia's policy that immediately followed the onset of the military action<sup>7</sup>.

#### April 2016

On the night of 1 to 2 April 2016, the Azerbaijani reconnaissance and sabotage groups penetrated beyond the Armenian forward positions located within the "security area" at several points in order to cut off the approaching reserves until they are captured by advanced forces coming from the front line. In the early morning of 2 April 2016, Azerbaijani forces launched their offensive actions; hostilities broke out along the entire 200 km front line. The Martakert (northern) and Hadrut (southern) Armenian flanks came under massive artillery attacks. Concurrently, armored vehicles intended to step up the attack (219 tanks including T-90 and others) were moving in the direction of the central Agdam region. The Armenian artillery opened fire on the attacking troops and areas of concentration of the Azerbaijani second echelon forces. As a result, on 2-3 April, the Azerbaijani offensive broke loose several times 19-20 km off the front line<sup>8</sup>.

The attackers did not manage to break through the Armenian positions, and, on 4 April 2016, the Azeri Defense Minister instructed all branches of the armed forces, including missile and artillery troops,

<sup>6</sup>For more detail, see: The Noah's Ark, No. 5 (280) May 2016, <http://noev-kovcheg.ru/mag/2016-05/5413.html#ixzz4Clr75F1>

<sup>7</sup>Erdogan supported the activities of Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh. 03.04.2016, [http://tvzvezda.ru/news/vstrane\\_i\\_mire/content/201604031118-jo8f.htm](http://tvzvezda.ru/news/vstrane_i_mire/content/201604031118-jo8f.htm); The Turkish Foreign Affairs Ministry brought charges against Armenia. 03.04.2016, <http://www.iranonline.ru/all-news/v-mire/28942/>

<sup>8</sup>Interview with the General V. Balasanyan dated 16.04.2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-2B7kd80KM&feature=youtu.be>



to get ready for “knockout blows” against Stepanakert and other NKR cities using heavy weapons, if “the hostile party does not stop attacking our settlements promptly”<sup>9</sup>. Azerbaijan used Smerch rocket launchers and Soltsepek heavy firing systems for the first time since the military operations began. Nonetheless, on 4 April 2016, the lead eventually passed to Armenia, which successfully neutralized the Azerbaijani reconnaissance and sabotage groups acting beyond the front line and started preparing for its own offensive. In the opinion of Russian political analyst V. Mikhailov, the statement about possible missile attacks against the NKR capital indicated the “close-to-panic state of the Azerbaijani commanders”<sup>10</sup>.

The Azerbaijani offensive failed primarily because of the obstinacy of Armenian advanced forces who prevented defense penetration and efficient shelling by Armenian artillery<sup>11</sup>. As a result of the four-days’ war, the Azerbaijani armed forces managed to take just a small territory located at the front of the main Armenian positions.

Given the loss of the surprise effect and advance of Armenian reserves towards the front line, the Azerbaijani commanders recognized the futility of further military action. Armenia decided not to launch an offensive which could have led to an unpredicted outcome for both parties. Under the circumstances, Baku and Yerevan preferred not to aggravate the situation. As a result of negotiations between the Armed Forces General Staff Chiefs of Armenia and Azerbaijan held through the mediation of Russia in Moscow, the parties agreed to cease fire along the entire contact line from 5 April 2016, 12 p.m.<sup>12</sup> The hostilities ceased but firing resumed in a few days, and the same “smoldering” stationary war designed to exhaust the enemy continued.

<sup>9</sup>The Azerbaijan Defense Minister put the army on full combat alert to attack Khankendi, 04.04.2016, <http://interfax.az/view/669288>

<sup>10</sup>Mikhailov V., The Second Karabakh War: a battling draw with military and political consequences, 15.04.2016, <https://eadaily.com/ru/news/2016/04/15/vtoraya-karabakhskaya-boevaya-nichya-s-voenno-politicheskimi-posledstviyami>

<sup>11</sup>Interview with the General Balasanyan V. dated 16.04.2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-2B7kd80KM&feature=youtu.be>

<sup>12</sup>The agreement on ceasefire in Karabakh was reached in Moscow, 06.04.2016, <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/2112750.html>

The assessment of the outcomes of the military operations of 2-5 April 2016 by Baku and Yerevan was contradictory. The President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev claimed that the military acts of the Azerbaijani army were in fact defensive and that they occurred in response to just another military provocation against Azerbaijan. He highly appreciated the activities of the Azerbaijani armed forces as a “knockout blow against the enemy and big military victory”. The Azeri Defense Minister Zakir Gasanov also stated that “the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April will remain in the history of the Azerbaijani army as a day of great victory”<sup>13</sup>. These conclusions were made at the initial stage of the offensive and did not change after the end of the war which was not triumphant for Azerbaijan at all. For example, on 9 May 2016, Ilham Aliyev stated “our army conducted a successful counteroffensive operation in Karabakh. As a result, some of our occupied territories were liberated from intruders, and our positions on the contact line became even stronger. Once again I congratulate all Azerbaijani people on this great historical victory from the bottom of my heart”<sup>14</sup>.

In the opinion of the President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan, Armenian armed forces accomplished all tasks assigned to them. Responding to the strong criticism from the local opposition, he said: “I set a clear task for our armed forces and security system – to prevent a breakthrough and destruction of our front line, i.e. ruin the plans of the enemy. I believe you all could see that their plans failed”<sup>15</sup>.

S. Sargsyan held back from enthusiastic conclusions: “If you necessarily want me to say we won, I can say that but most correct would be to say, “our armed forces accomplished their task”. Speaking about the territories lost in the course of the war, he commented, “Armenia which had 800 thousand hectares of land constituting the security area lost about 800 hectares, which is less

<sup>13</sup>The President Ilham Aliyev: Azerbaijan had a major military victory, 03.04.2016, <http://news.day.az/politics/765965.html>

<sup>14</sup>Ilham Aliyev equated the Karabakh war in April with the Great Patriotic War, 10 May 2016, <https://eadaily.com/ru/news/2016/05/10/ilham-aliev-privravnjal-aprelskuyu-voynu-v-karabaxe-k-velikoy-otechestvennoy-voynе>

<sup>15</sup>Serzh Sargsyan: The army accomplished the task, 17.05.2016, <http://golosarmenii.am/article/40977/serzh-sargsyan-armiya-vypolnila-zadachu>

than one thousandth. Strategically and tactically, those territories are irrelevant. In a merely psychological context, of course, the Azeri government can persuade their people they got some result". The President of Armenia mentioned huge losses on the part of the Azerbaijani army and stressed that the Armenian armed forces could take those 800 hectares back, but the question was whether they were worth the lives of so many people<sup>16</sup>? Despite the numerous appeals to continue the offensive to broaden the "security area" and even "defeat the aggressor completely", in order to avoid new losses, Armenia decided not to continue its military action purported to regain the lost territory.

The reaction of the international community to the resumed large-scale hostilities in the area of the Karabakh conflict was unfavorable for Baku. On 2 April 2016, the Co-chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group (France, Russia and USA) issued a joint statement condemning the use of force in the area of conflict and called the parties to cease fire and do everything needed to stabilize the situation at the local level<sup>17</sup>. The official representative of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) made a stronger and more straight-forward statement placing the entire responsibility for conflict escalation on Baku and supporting the Armenian army: "the activities of the Azerbaijani side in this case will lead to aggravation of the situation and conflict. The CSTO Secretary General Nikolay Bordyuzha and Head of the CSTO Administrative Office have an on-going contact with the Armenian government and receive exhaustive information about the armed conflict from the republican Ministry of Defense"<sup>18</sup>.

### Conclusion

The military action that occurred on 2-5 April 2016 showed that Azerbaijan was unable to resolve the Karabakh problem by a short and triumphant military blitzkrieg. The offensive involved new types

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Press Release by the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group. 02.04.2016, <http://www.osce.org/mg/231216>

<sup>18</sup>A CSTO source reported an aggravation of the situation in the NKR because of Azerbaijani activity. 02.04.2016, [http://www.gazeta.ru/politics/news/2016/04/02/n\\_8450927.shtml](http://www.gazeta.ru/politics/news/2016/04/02/n_8450927.shtml)

of weapons and best-trained special forces who, together with the tank units, incurred the heaviest losses but did not manage to achieve the goals. The fighting reconnaissance conducted by Azerbaijan showed that all efforts and huge military expenses did not result in any measurable advantage for the Azerbaijani army. In the opinion of some experts, one can hardly refer even to "any meaningful build-up of combat power or proficiency of the military personnel"<sup>19</sup>.

The military action also revealed huge weaknesses in the Armenian armed forces, including intelligence, communications and procurement, which entailed dismissal of three generals who were in charge of these areas<sup>20</sup>. It should also be noted that the fighting troops comprised Armenian advanced forces manned primarily by conscript soldiers. "The main forces, capabilities and reserve components of the NKR defense army and military units of the Armenian armed forces were not even given a chance to participate in the action. A large portion of available modern weapons and military machinery, including high-precision tactical ballistic missile systems, were not used"<sup>21</sup>.

Amidst the chronic stalemate in the negotiation process and soaring tension, the key task of the OSCE Minsk Group and Russian diplomacy is not just continued imitation of the "peaceful process" but a real ceasefire based on efficient mechanisms preventing the renewal of hostilities. The military operations between 2 and 5 April 2016 highlighted the need for a reliable monitoring system, including continuous presence of international military observer groups along the entire contact line, technical means for live recording, etc. An agreement providing for development of such system under the aegis of the OSCE Minsk Group should also include legally imposed obligations of the conflicting parties regarding detection and punishment of those who violate the ceasefire.

<sup>19</sup>Minasyan S., 'The Four-Days' War: The status quo has become more explosion-prone, 01.06.2016, [http://russiancouncil.ru/inner/?id\\_4=7652#top-content](http://russiancouncil.ru/inner/?id_4=7652#top-content)

<sup>20</sup>Mgdesyan A., "Blind and deaf": Why Armenian generals' heads came off? 30.04.2016, <http://easaily.com/ru/news/2016/04/30/bez-glaz-i-ushey-pochemu-poleteli-generalskie-golovy-v-armyanskoy-armii>

<sup>21</sup>Minasyan S., 'The Four-Days' War: The status quo has become more explosion-prone, 01 June 2016, [http://russiancouncil.ru/inner/?id\\_4=7652#top-content](http://russiancouncil.ru/inner/?id_4=7652#top-content)



An efficient international ceasefire control would help step up the negotiation process towards an overall settlement of the Karabakh conflict. Failing that, the level of hostility between the parties will continue growing, and the Karabakh problem will remain the source of tension and an obstacle to the development of the entire South Caucasus.

ARMEN MANVELYAN

## THE IMPLICATIONS FOR EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION SOUTH CAUCASUS ENERGY POLICY

### Abstract

The Eurasian Economic Union could change the economic and political landscape in Eurasia and in the South Caucasus. Armenia, with its recent decision to join the Union, is especially sensitive to resulting changes in the South Caucasus. Low oil prices are changing the energy politics in the South Caucasus, which means that the importance of Azerbaijan as an oil-exporting country is decreasing, and this in turn impacts the entire South Caucasus as an oil transit route. Armenia's ambitions to be involved in the process of establishing a "single energy space" are of strategic importance. This, together with its participation in the "North-South high-voltage energy corridor" project - might help Armenia to reinforce its position in the South Caucasus.

*Keywords:* Armenia, energy politics, the South Caucasus, the Eurasian Economic Union, Energy transportation infrastructure, Azerbaijan.

### Introduction

Energy politics remains a key factor in the South Caucasus. An East-West energy transportation corridor connecting Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey was established in the region after the collapse of the Soviet Union and became dominant in the South Caucasus in the long-term perspective. In recent years, Armenia, in cooperation with neighboring Iran and strategic partner Russia is building a new electricity corridor – the so-called North-South high voltage power-line, which will connect the energy systems of four countries – Russia, Georgia, Armenia, and Iran<sup>1</sup>. Because of this initiative, we can expect a new phase of confrontation in the region, with energy policy a key factor.

This article aims to analyze and show energy policy factors in the South Caucasus and the Eurasian Economic Union as a common pattern particularly in the context of oil price volatility. The low oil

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<sup>1</sup>Participants of Tender for Construction of Armenia-Georgia Overhead Power Line are known, 09.02.2017, <http://www.minenergy.am/en/article/815>

prices are changing energy politics in the South Caucasus. This has lowered the importance of Azerbaijan as an oil exporting country, which in turn has had an impact on the South Caucasus as an oil transit route. Consequently, this situation would allow other countries to create their energy systems in the region in partnership with contiguous states.

The Eurasian Economic Union's vision to create a single economic and energy space can be a trigger for creating the new energy transit corridor involving Armenia as an EAEU member country, as well as Georgia and Iran as neighbors. The realization of this project can change the perception of the South Caucasus as a region transiting Azerbaijan's gas and oil resources. At the same time, it can give the EAEU an opportunity to increase its influence in the region with the help of Armenia and this new energy project.

The significance of this study is in its analysis of the energy factor as the central motive in the inner workings of the EAEU initiative, and the energy policy – as a factor of pushing it forward. Its findings would help fully understand the mechanisms, methods and metrics for measuring “energy weights” – or the *extent of influence* each participating state would be able to exercise. The basis of this study then will be assessing the possible gains and losses of all players.

#### *The impact of the energy politics on the South Caucasus*

Energy politics has a crucial influence on the relations of independent states. All countries - irrespective of whether they are energy exporters or importers - heavily depend on this factor. Energy consumption in the world is constantly increasing, which means that the influence of the factor of energy in the world will grow over time. This was one of the reasons why after the collapse of the Soviet Union the South Caucasus with its small oil and gas resources and transit potential attracted the attention of large consumer countries. The high oil prices in the early 2000s only increased the interest in this region and a number of multinational companies were ready to invest in the Azerbaijan oil deposits and transit infrastructures<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup>Walsh, M., A Smell of Oil, The Dublin Review, Issue No. 13 Winter 2003–4. <https://thedublinreview.com/article/a-smell-of-oil/>  
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Numerous energy and energy transportation infrastructures – gas and oil pipelines in particular – were developed in the South Caucasus during the post-Soviet period; especially Azerbaijan and Georgia, have engaged in several energy projects over the past 20 years. Due to the Karabakh conflict, Armenia has not been able to participate in these projects and has been forced to create its own energy security system out of regional energy projects.

Since regional dynamics of security heavily depends on energy projects in the South Caucasus, these projects, along with several newly-established pipelines, played a certain deterring role in the regional security environment and provided the region with relative stability and security, but it also greatly enhanced the dependence of relative peace and stability on international oil prices<sup>3</sup>. Three regional pipelines were built in the region in the post-Soviet period. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline was commissioned in 2006 and Baku-Erzurum gas pipeline was built in 2006. The oil pipeline Baku-Supsa (Georgia) was built in 1998 but doesn't work now<sup>4</sup>. These developments brought about a significant change in the balance of power in the South Caucasus.

Armenia's absence from the above-mentioned energy projects reduced its role in the regional policy and especially in its energy component. It forced Armenia to look for new ways to create its own energy security system. This provided Russia with an opportunity to strengthen its presence in Armenia's energy sector and gain control of Armenia's gas and electricity industries and infrastructures<sup>5</sup>.

The energy security is a key component of national security of any state, but for Armenia – blockaded by Azerbaijan and Turkey - it is of vital importance. Armenia aimed to create a full-scale energy security system which became possible thanks to its association with an oil-rich ally like Russia. It was one of the reasons why Armenia in 2013 joined the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union.

<sup>3</sup>Tsalik, S., Ebel E. R., “Caspian Oil Windfalls: Who Will Benefit?”, ed. by Robert Ebel, 2003, pp. 71-88, New York.

<sup>4</sup>Supsa Terminal and Pipeline, Georgia, <https://www.hydrocarbons-technology.com/projects/supsa/>

<sup>5</sup>Nixey J., “The South Caucasus: Drama on Three Stages”, 2010, pp. 125-142, London.



But in recent years, namely, since 2014, the plunge in oil prices changed the security environment in the South Caucasus. Azerbaijan's role in the region declined, shaking the foundations of the established security system in the region and giving rise to internal economic, political and social problems. The lifting of economic sanctions on Iran allowed this regional power to intensify its participation in regional politics and to attempt to strengthen its influence and position in the region, especially in the sphere of energy projects<sup>6</sup>.

Currently, Iran and Russia are trying to revive the so-called North-South transport corridor program that has an important "energy corridor" component. The aim of this project is to create a high-voltage power line that would tie the electricity systems of Iran and Russia through the South Caucasus - Armenia and Georgia. This will likely increase Russian-Iranian influence in the South Caucasian energy projects and give this alliance a chance to change the balance of power in the region even further<sup>7</sup>.

Consequently, the region is now facing new realities with new problems, risks, and threats to the fragile regional security (and energy security in particular). These realities could potentially turn the so-called frozen conflicts into hot ones; indeed, one of the reasons of the recent war in Karabakh (April 2016) was the change referred to in the regional balance of power – with the low oil prices playing a significant triggering role.

Azerbaijan which has lost its energy power due to the decline in oil prices on the global energy markets faces huge economic and therefore internal political issues<sup>8</sup>. This situation has an impact on the regional energetic system too. Azerbaijan's role and impact as an oil export country are weakening in both the international and markets. Now the so-called East-West energy corridor from Azerbaijan to

Turkey through Georgia is not as significant as it was several years ago and it opens up new possibilities to promote the so-called North-South energy system in the South Caucasus with the participation of Iran and Russia.

The low oil prices have forced Azerbaijan to review its energy policy in the region. It has lost its powerful energy card and has turned into a spot of instability in the South Caucasus. This situation, a result of the regional security environment, forces the South Caucasus countries to look for alternative sources of energy and other raw materials.

Against the background of these new realities Armenia must now revise its overall security doctrine and strengthen its own energy security system and actively search for new, perhaps alternative means of power generation to attain self-sufficiency, based on internal resources, and not dependent on external suppliers (an example being renewable energy derived from sunlight and/or wind).

For Armenia – against the background of the ongoing confrontation with Azerbaijan – the so-called North-South high-voltage grid project can be a real alternative. Armenia needs its own energy corridor in the South Caucasus and the North-South corridor can serve as such. The North-South energy high-voltage power-line can be a real alternative because Armenia has a key role in this program as the main player in the ties between Iran and Russia. Armenia has a huge experience in energy cooperation with Russia and Iran. It means that Iran and Russia, in turn, need Armenia as a country for transit and coordination of this project.

#### *Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and perspectives of energy policy*

Energy geopolitics is a key factor in the foreign policy of resource-rich countries. In the Eurasian continent, the Russian Federation is one of such states, and its energy policy in this region is crucial for the newly established economic union. Free access to energy resources is crucial for countries with scarce resources, and this is one of the reasons why countries short of energy resources are interested in being part of one union.

<sup>6</sup>Ianchovichina E., Sh. Devarajan, C. Lakatos, Lifting Economic Sanctions on Iran: Global Effects and Strategic Responses, 2016, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/298681467999709496/pdf/WPS7549.pdf>

<sup>7</sup>Melikyan J. "Foreign Policy of Georgia", Globus Analytical Bulletin, No. 4, 2016, (in Armenian) [http://www.noravank.am/upload/pdf/Globus\\_4\\_2016.pdf](http://www.noravank.am/upload/pdf/Globus_4_2016.pdf)

<sup>8</sup>De Waal T., Azerbaijan at Twenty-Five: A New Era of Change and Turbulence, Carnegie Europe, 2016, <http://carnegieeurope.eu/2016/09/23/azerbaijan-at-twenty-five-new-era-of-change-and-turbulence-pub-64671>

The newly created the Eurasian Economic Union can change the geopolitical landscape on the Eurasian continent. The Russian Federation - as the founder and the biggest country of EAEU - has a most significant potential in this Union, an important part of which is the energy resources which Russia utilizes to reinforce its position and to make this Union more attractive especially for the former Soviet republics.

Russia's initiative of creating a new economic union with the former Soviet republics – Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan – is a new possibility for these republics to recover former ties with each other and Russia, and to restore cooperation within the old and familiar markets. The idea of a union appeared attractive to these countries, largely due to familiarity, the experience of a common market along with its standards and demands<sup>9</sup>. This economic union is envisioned as a single market that provides for free movement of people, goods, services, and capital.

The energy factor was at the core of this initiative: all the mentioned states needed a closer cooperation especially in the energy sector; and according to the EAEU treaty, it might be the main locomotive to move this process on and bring the former republics together at the same place<sup>10</sup>. This energy attractiveness could play a key role in the creation and reinforcement of this economic union in the future.

The EAEU is one of the most resource-rich organizations in the world; it possesses an estimated 1/5 of the world's gas and about 8% of the world's oil resources. The EAEU produces about 5% of the world electricity, and its energy sector makes up to about 1/6 of its GDP and 1/3 of overall industrial production<sup>11</sup>.

Members of the EAEU have different energy powers but have close, and high, energy interests, which unite them politically and economically. They all want to create a single energy space that would

<sup>9</sup>Eurasian Economic Integration: Facts and Figures, Moscow, 2015, [http://www.eurasiancommission.org/en/Documents/broshura26\\_ENGL\\_2014.pdf](http://www.eurasiancommission.org/en/Documents/broshura26_ENGL_2014.pdf)

<sup>10</sup>Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union, Eurasian Economic Commission, 2015, [http://www.un.org/en/ga/sixth/70/docs/treaty\\_on\\_eeu.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/ga/sixth/70/docs/treaty_on_eeu.pdf)

<sup>11</sup>Prospects of Energy Cooperation, Eurasian Economic Commission, 2015, [http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/Documents/\\_eec\\_energy\\_all\\_150623.pdf](http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/Documents/_eec_energy_all_150623.pdf)

ensure equal opportunities in acquisition, consumption, distribution, and transit. Currently, a so-called energy dialogue is underway among the EAEU members, aiming to reach decisions that will be acceptable for all sides in creating the mentioned single energy market<sup>12</sup>.

One of the key issues in this energy dialogue is a phased approach to the formation of a single energy market. Current talks pertain to the formation of a single electricity market on the basis of coordinated power systems operating in parallel. Future talks will cover single gas and oil (primarily petroleum) markets<sup>13</sup>.

The Russian Federation, as one of the energy superpowers, is a key player in the Union and dominates the energy markets of the EAEU. Russian companies control most of the energy corporations and infrastructures in the EAEU countries – hydro or thermal power stations, electricity grids, etc.

Meanwhile, energy interests of EAEU member countries have certain differences as well. For example, for energy consumer countries like Armenia, Belarus, and Kyrgyzstan, a common energy grid and a network are more attractive due to the perspective of access to Russia's internal electricity, oil, and gas networks at more favorable conditions economically and financially. This also creates additional opportunities for energy exports on the part of the member states.

For Kazakhstan, the energy dialogue is interesting because it provides an opportunity to use the Russian pipeline infrastructure for its own gas and oil exports at transit rates that are in line with Russian internal market prices as opposed to the current higher tariffs<sup>14</sup>. At the same time, Kazakhstan has an electricity deficit and a common energy market gives it an opportunity to take additional electricity from other members of the EAEU. Unlike Kazakhstan, Armenia has a

<sup>12</sup>Vinokurov E., Eurasian Economic Union: Current state and preliminary results, Russian Journal of Economics 3, 2017, pp. 54–70, [https://ac.els-cdn.com/S2405473917300041/1-s2.0-S2405473917300041-main.pdf?\\_tid=d316ceca-01e1-11e8-8f91-00000aab0f6c&acdnat=1516893185\\_2a0660ab4570ca3673bd451ed0f9a74b](https://ac.els-cdn.com/S2405473917300041/1-s2.0-S2405473917300041-main.pdf?_tid=d316ceca-01e1-11e8-8f91-00000aab0f6c&acdnat=1516893185_2a0660ab4570ca3673bd451ed0f9a74b)

<sup>13</sup>Strategic Goals and Objectives of EAEU in Energy Field explained by EEC Minister Tair Mansurov, Eurasian Economic Commission, 2015, <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/en/nae/news/Pages/17-11-2015-15.aspx>

<sup>14</sup>Oil Export Routes From Kazakhstan, Facts and Details, 2016, [http://factsanddetails.com/central-asia/Kazakhstan/sub8\\_4e/entry-4678.html](http://factsanddetails.com/central-asia/Kazakhstan/sub8_4e/entry-4678.html)



surplus of electricity and now it has the opportunity to export it to the EAEU market and make up for the electricity deficit not only in Kazakhstan, but also in Kyrgyzstan.

Energy prices are crucial for the economies of the EAEU member countries, while Russia has an opportunity to play the energy card to strengthen its political influence in the region. On the one hand, a common energy sector/market threatens Russia with some economic loss (Russia would have to sell energy at lower rates and charge less for transit than now), but, on the other, it provides Russia with additional political leverage in overall regional energy infrastructures and policies and, subsequently, significantly increases its political influence. The significance of this policy is that Russia sees the "Energy dialogue" as a tool for increasing its geopolitical and geostrategic influence on the Eurasian continent.

The analysis shows that Russia is attempting to use the energy strategy as a means of attracting other – not only former-USSR – nations into cooperation with the EAEU<sup>15</sup>. This means that energy remains a key factor in this Union.

### Conclusion

The EU's future will be dependent of success on the energy industry and the capacity to build common energy markets. The EAEU can be seen as a new energy union because energy is one of the motivating factors for the ex-Soviet nations to join the EAEU.

The Eurasian Economic Union is changing the geopolitical landscape in the South Caucasus, especially in the energy sector. Armenia as a key member of this Union can use it for enhancing its energy influence in the region. The implementation of the North-South energy corridor gives Armenia, as the coordinator of this project, additional leverage for increasing its influence in the South Caucasus. The North-South can be a real alternative for Armenia in

the regional confrontation with Azerbaijan's East-West energy corridor.

It can be concluded that the energy component is a vital part of the EAEU. The future and the success of this Union heavily depend on the possibility to create a single energy market with its own energy standards and exchanges. To sum up, of this article, we can state that energy will continue to play a crucial role in EAEU's success or failure politically, energy consumer-states have national interests in this energy policy, an "energy dialogue" idea might become a new format and framework in theoretical energy geopolitics, Russia gains politically but suffers economically.

<sup>15</sup>Kirkham K., The formation of the Eurasian Economic Union: How successful is the Russian regional hegemony?, Research Paper, The Eurasian Economic Union: Deals, Rules and the Exercise of Power, 2017, <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S187936651630001X>

## MUSHEGH GHAHRIYAN

## POLITICAL CRISIS IN IRAQI KURDISTAN, 2013-2017

Abstract

Iraqi Kurdistan faces harsh political and economic problems because of the unstable situation in the Middle East and within the autonomy. The aim of the paper is the study of the political crisis in Iraqi Kurdistan and the political transformations the Kurdish region undergoes in recent years. It explores the developments in Iraqi Kurdistan since 2013-2014 as well as regional situation and its influence on the Kurdish autonomy. The article concludes that the crisis of legitimacy and undiversified economy are major problems for the Kurdistan Region and undermine its stability. Both were not solved by the end of 2017. Another significant point is the end of the era of long-time charismatic leaders in the Kurdish region of Iraq.

**Keywords:** *Iraqi Kurdistan, Barzani, oil, crisis, presidency*

Introduction

Since 2014, when the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL) conquered broad areas in Iraq and Syria, the Kurdistan Region in Iraq has become a key player on regional chessboard. In addition to political and other problems within Iraqi Kurdistan and complicated relations with the authorities of Iraq, the Kurdistan region has entered a phase of political turbulence. The aim of this article is the study of the political crisis in Iraqi Kurdistan and the political transformations the Kurdish region underwent during the last three years. Now, while the focus is on the independence referendum, which was held on 25 September, 2017, and the reactions of neighboring and other countries, it is important to understand the internal processes in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Political crisis

One of the reasons of political crisis is the issue of the presidency of the Kurdistan Region and competition of political parties behind it. This issue remained unsolved until the end of 2017 and moreover, paralyzed the work of the parliament. Political crisis is accompanied with a financial crisis as low oil price reduced financial inflow into

Iraqi Kurdistan.

The fourth elections of parliament in Iraqi Kurdistan took place on September 21, 2013. For the first time a third party was able to break the hegemony of KDP-PUK tandem – two strongest Iraqi Kurdish parties for decades. The Gorran party led by former KDP member Nawshirwan Mustafa took 24 of 111 seats in the parliament and became the main opposition party in the Kurdistan Region. The KDP won 38 seats and the PUK only 18. For the first time since 1992, the KDP and the PUK, which together had formed the Kurdistan Alliance, ran on separate electoral lists. The PUK was affected by the problems of leadership since its founder and leader, former Iraqi President Jalal Talabani, suffered a stroke in December 2012. The PUK lost a big part of its electorate to the Gorran movement, whose founders previously had broken from the PUK. The representative of the Gorran Yousif Mohammed Sadiq was elected as the parliament speaker. The new elected parliament functioned until October 2015, when the issue of presidential elections evolved into violent actions.

The Kurdistan Parliament established the Kurdistan Region Presidency (KRP) in 2005. The President of the Kurdistan Region has the highest executive authority, and is elected by the people of the Kurdistan Region every four years. Masoud Barzani was elected as the Kurdistan Region's first president on 31 January 2005 by the Kurdistan Parliament, and re-elected in July 2009<sup>1</sup>.

President Masoud Barzani's second term came to end in 2013. The KDP and PUK alliance in the parliament extended Barzani's presidential term for two more years without holding elections. The Parliament of Iraqi Kurdistan voted for the extension of Barzani's term to two years, stating: "the current president will stay in office for two more years. The current president will not be allowed to nominate himself after his term comes to an end. Parliament ratified the bill, and later President Barzani approved the amendment<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>Official website of Department of Foreign Relations Kurdistan Regional Government, <http://www.dfr.gov.krd/p.p.aspx?p=88&l=12&s=030400&r=403>

<sup>2</sup>Shamulddin S., Barzani vs. Parliament; The Crisis of Legitimacy in Kurdistan, 29.08.2015, <https://kurdishpolicy.org/2015/08/29/barzani-vs-parliament-the-crisis-of-legitimacy-in-kurdistan/>



The legal provision adopted and ratified by the majority of Kurdistan parliament extended the term of the Kurdistan region president from August 20, 2013 to August 19, 2015<sup>3</sup>. The discussion in parliament on June 30, 2013 devolved into physical fighting between the PUK and the Gorran. As the Speaker from the PUK tried to read the relevant paper there was uproar, with opposition MPs heckling and shouting "Fraud!" and "Illegal!". There were fights between MPs from the ruling KDP and PUK and those of the opposition parties. The police arrived and they arrested one opposition MP, Abdullah Mullah Nuri<sup>4</sup>.

On August 20, 2015 the extended term also expired, however Masoud Barzani refused to step down and hold new elections, arguing that Kurdistan is in a state of war. The refusal to seize power evolved into political crisis in Iraqi Kurdistan.

According to the law in Kurdistan, Barzani cannot run for presidency anymore. Barzani told al-Monitor. "My objective is to reach that point, to have an independent Kurdistan. And that is a pledge from me. The day we have an independent Kurdistan, I will cease to be the president of that Kurdistan. And I will congratulate the Kurdistan people and let someone else take my place. This is a pledge from me — I will not be the president of Kurdistan"<sup>5</sup>.

The Gorran opposed him and demanded to step down. Protests and violence broke out in Sulaymaniyah and Halabja because of unpaid salaries. The KRG accused the Gorran of fueling the protests to use it as leverage in the talks over the presidential stalemate<sup>6</sup>. The prime minister of Iraq's Kurdish region Nechirvan Barzani fired four cabinet ministers and barred the speaker of parliament from entering the

capital Erbil<sup>7</sup>. After this incident the parliament ceased to function until September 2017, when it voted in favor of holding independence referendum.

A major problem in the way of sustainable governance and democracy remains nepotism and tribalism. As noted D. McDowall, following the demise of traditional tribalism as the prime form of social-political organization during the 1970s, the 1990s saw the emergence of neo-tribalism as two major «confederations» competed for hegemony in Iraqi Kurdistan. At the center of each party, as with traditional confederations, lay a core of those loyal to the paramount. Beyond this core lay a widening group of people who supported one confederation or the other less directly. Thus the system of patronage and power still reached down to the street through intermediaries who themselves acquired followings through patronage<sup>8</sup>.

Democratic institutes in Iraqi Kurdistan largely have been fictive ones. The real power belongs to the KDP and the PUK leaders. They and their relatives control economic and financial resources. The Peshmerga consists of the military units of two parties rather than a state army run by the government. Nepotism is widespread in the KRG and within party structures. For example, the President of Kurdistan region is Masoud Barzani. His nephew Nechirvan Barzani is the prime minister. The son of Masoud Barzani, Masrour Barzani, heads the Kurdistan Region Security Council. Members of the families of Kurdish party leaders have high ranks in the party system and the KRG. According to accusations, many of the most profitable companies, such as those controlling construction projects, are owned by a Barzani or Talabani, and relatives of the two leaders. The Kurds have long honored tribal and family ties. Military tribalism pervades their sense of loyalty, in particular the Barzani Kurds<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>3</sup>See: The provision in Kurdish, <http://www.perlemanikurdistan.com/files/articles/210713115701.pdf>

<sup>4</sup>Fistfight in Iraq's Kurdistan Parliament, between PUK and Gorran members, 30.06.2013 <http://ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2013/6/state7183.htm>

<sup>5</sup>Zaman A., Massoud Barzani Vows to Fight Corruption with Same Dedication as KRG has Fought IS, 22.03.2016, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/03/turkey-iraq-syria-kurds-massoud-barzani-interview.html>

<sup>6</sup>Goudsouzian T., Machiavellian Politics in Iraqi Kurdistan, 13.10.2015,

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/10/analysis-machiavellian-politics-iraqi-kurdistan-151013094035698.html>

<sup>7</sup>Political Crisis Escalates in Iraq's Kurdistan Region, 13.10.2015, <https://www.rferl.org/a/political-crisis-escalates-in-iraqi-kurdistan/27303307.html>

<sup>8</sup>McDowall D., A Modern History of the Kurds, (Revised Edition), I.B.Tauris, 2016, pp. 385-386

<sup>9</sup>Yaphe J., Middle East Policy Council, Tribalism in Iraq, the Old and the New, Volume VII, N 3, 2000 <http://www.mepc.org/journal/tribalism-iraqi-old-and-new-0>

*Financial difficulties*

In recent years Iraqi Kurdistan also faces economic and financial crisis. The main reason of it is the high dependence on oil revenues which have plunged more than twice since 2014. Another problem is contradictions with central government in Baghdad, which often does not fully pay 17% of oil revenues fixed in the Iraqi constitution<sup>10</sup>. Baghdad uses this lever against Iraqi Kurdistan to halt their separate oil policy. On the other hand, the KRG had to allocate additional finances for the war against Islamic State and sheltering hundreds of thousands refugees fleeing from other parts of Iraq and Syria.

A decade-long economic boom in the autonomous region came to a sudden halt in 2014 when Baghdad slashed funding to the Kurds after they built their own oil pipeline to Turkey and began exporting oil independently<sup>11</sup>.

That left the KRG struggling to meet a bloated public payroll of 875 billion Iraqi dinars (\$800 million) per month. The KRG has tried to make up the shortfall by increasing independent oil sales to around 600,000 barrels per day, but at low prices the region is still left with a monthly deficit of 380-400 billion Iraqi dinars (\$717 million). The war against the Islamic State and an influx of more than a million people from the other parts of Iraq has deepened the crisis even more<sup>12</sup>.

Public officials in the Kurdistan region of Iraq have been forced to bear a 75% cut in salaries as the region struggles with an economic crisis. The salaries of the region's highest paid employees were reduced by up to 75%, while the salaries of low wage earners ranging from 100 thousand to 200 thousand dinars were reduced by 15%<sup>13</sup>.

The current Iraqi constitution adopted in 2005 secures for the KRG around 17 percent of Iraq's national budget annually after certain sovereign and governance expenses were deducted. That amounted to

<sup>10</sup> See Iraqi Constitution, Article 112

<sup>11</sup> Protests intensify in Iraqi Kurdistan Amid Economic Crisis, 09.02.2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-protests/protests-intensify-in-iraqi-kurdistan-amid-economic-crisis-idUSKCN0V111X>

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

<sup>13</sup> أزمة كردستان العراق الاقتصادية تتلعب رواتب الموظفين، 05.02.2016, <https://www.alarabiya.net/ar/aswaq/economy/2016/02/05/>

around \$13 billion per year in 2012 and 2013 when oil prices were at their peak. The income from oil sales as well as foreign investments generated rapid economic growth. However, the sharp fall of oil prices starting in summer, 2014 halved the revenues of KRG. Total revenues from oil sales did not even reach \$6 billion per year in either 2014 or 2015<sup>14</sup>.

The situation was particularly acute in Sulaymaniyah province where anti-establishment sentiments are stronger. Struggling to pay its dues, the KRG is estimated to now be \$14 to \$20 billion in debt<sup>15</sup>. The other major problem is the region's heavy reliance on imports, which account for some 80 to 90 percent of goods, analysts estimate<sup>16</sup>.

The poverty rate has hit yet another high level in Kurdistan Region by increasing more than four times since 2013, from 3 percent to 15 percent. According to the head of the statistics department in Sulaymaniyah Mahmud Othman, the poverty rate in Kurdistan Region is still relatively low compared to the rest of Iraq. The KRG struggles to finance the monthly wages of some 1.4 million people on its payroll, with around 730,000 of them directly employed by the KRG, while another 700,000 people have monthly payments from the Kurdish government in pensions, social protection for the underprivileged, student stipends and payments to families of Peshmerga victims<sup>17</sup>.

In spite of having political, financial and other problems, the Kurdish elite decided to hold an independence referendum on September 25, 2017. The independence referendum could have been a good opportunity to take a time-out and temporarily push back these problems from the agenda. Also, the success in battlefield against ISIS made the Kurds a key player in the Middle Eastern scene and an

<sup>14</sup> Salih M., Low Oil Prices Complicate Iraqi Kurdish Independence, 09.03.2016, <http://www.mei.edu/content/low-oil-prices-complicate-iraqi-kurdish-independence>

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>16</sup> Dziadosz A., The Economic Case Against an Independent Kurdistan, 26.09.2016,

<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/09/kurdistan-barzani-iraq-turkey-blockade-oil/541149/>

<sup>17</sup> Poverty rate in Kurdistan Region quadrupled to 15 percent, official, 28.12.2016, <http://www.rudaw.net/english/kurdistan/281220162>



important ally of the West. The Kurds tried to convert international support and relative weakness of Iraq into independence.

After two years of break the parliament of Iraqi Kurdistan convened a session and approved the independence referendum to be passed on September 25 despite the Gorran and Komal parties boycotted it. 65 MPs voted for the Kurdistan Region to hold an independence referendum on September 25 in the Kurdistan Region and the disputed areas<sup>18</sup>. After the independence referendum MPs gathered again and in an urgent session on October 1 and rejected the list of measures announced by the Iraqi parliament. The government of the Kurdistan Region also refused to receive any military or Iraqi security personnel to oversee the airports<sup>19</sup>.

After the referendum the Iraqi army and Shia militias, supported by Iran, took back large territories from the control of Peshmerga, including oil rich areas in Kirkuk. The difficult situation forced Kurds to postpone general elections scheduled on November 1.

On October 29 Masoud Barzani announced he would not seek to extend his term. He announced his resignation from the position of president because of the crisis sparked by the independence referendum in September 2017. Barzani's legal authorities will be distributed between the Parliament, Government and Judiciary authorities in the Kurdistan Region<sup>20</sup> until new general elections, which had to take place in November 1 and were postponed by 8 months.

The general elections of 2018 mark the end of the era of charismatic leaders. The longtime leader of Iraqi Kurdistan and Kurdish movement refused to be nominated as a candidate. Shortly before the elections another Kurdish prominent leader and former Iraqi president Jalal Talabani and as well as the Gorran leader Nawshirwan Mustafa Amin passed away. The representatives of the

younger generation are the prime minister of KRG Nechirvan Barzani, the son of M. Barzani Masrour Barzani, two sons of Jalal Talabani – Bafel and Qubad, sons of Nawshirwan Mustafa Amin Chia, Nma and Jwamer, sons of vice-president of Iraqi Kurdistan Kosrat Rasul Ali – Shalaw and Darbaz. New political parties were established in the eve of elections. Former KRG prime-minister Barham Salih announced registration of a new party. Another new party was founded by owner of Nalia Company Shaswar Abdulwahid, who announced the New Generation political platform (Naway Nwê) for the future elections in Iraq's Kurdistan region. Abdulwahid said during a conference on the announcement of the New Generation that the new political platform will include all those who have not participated in the political process<sup>21</sup>.

As noted N. Barzani "Mam Jalal's [Jalal Talabani] exit from the political scene created a big vacuum. At a certain point we thought we could deal with [Gorran leader] Nawshirwan [Mustafa], that he could rise to the occasion, fill the gap. But we were really very disappointed. There is nobody either in PUK or Gorran who has either the charisma or status [Talabani has]. Plus, they are all fighting each other. It's against this background that they perceive us [the KDP] as some kind of giant<sup>22</sup>.

### Conclusion

The crisis of legitimacy both in the executive and legislative powers undermined the stability in the Kurdistan Region and democratic governance which the Kurdish leadership underlines as an advantage compared with the states in the Middle East. This hardship has not been overcome as of the end of 2017. The resignation of M. Barzani also aimed to resolve the crisis of legitimacy.

The undiversified economy and high dependence on oil incomes are factors capable to threaten the stability in Kurdistan Region and make it vulnerable under the pressure of Iraqi government.

<sup>18</sup>Kurdistan parliament approves independence referendum on Sept 25, 15.09.2017, <http://www.rudaw.net/english/kurdistan/15092017>

<sup>19</sup>Kurdish Parliament Rejects Iraqi Measures, 01.10.2017, <https://english.aawsat.com/theaawsat/news-middle-east/kurdish-parliament-rejects-iraqi-measures>

<sup>20</sup>الرئيس بارزاني : ساستر في الدفاع عن حقوق شعبي كمتقل في صفوف البيشمركة, 29.10.2017, <http://www.basnews.com/index.php/ar/news/kurdistan/389063>

<sup>21</sup>New Generation 'Naway Nwê' political platform announced in Iraqi Kurdistan, 02.10.2017, <http://ekurd.net/naway-nwe-political-kurdistan-2017-10-02>

<sup>22</sup>Transcript of Al-Monitor Interview with KRG Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani, 27.12.2016, <http://cabinet.gov.krd/a/d.aspx?s=040000&l=12&a=55246>

The era of long-time charismatic Kurdish leaders comes to end. The sons and other relatives will be successors of the former leaders in party leadership.

Besides fulfilling national aspirations, the independence referendum aimed to unify political parties and society around national agenda and also temporarily postpone the solution of the internal problems. It was also an attempt to raise the stakes and gain more privileges from central government in Baghdad and the international community.

ARAM ABAJYAN

### NEW ERA WITH NEW OPPORTUNITIES: THE PERSPECTIVES OF CHINA AND THE GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL ECONOMIC AND ENERGY RELATIONS

#### Abstract

The main purpose of this article is to analyze the origins, historical background, development plans and the future between GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) unit and rising China. Investigating various aspects of economic, as well as energy cooperation between the sides help us comprehend present situation and also predict the possible perspectives among them.

The GCC's economic advantageous status in world affairs with its significant global shifts is attractive to major powers. Especially its cooperation with principal economic partner China, tends to enter new and more promising level in the field of international relations.

Although China-GCC relations are developing in multilevel perspectives, oil sector is going to remain the most significant 'driving force' shaping these ties at least in foreseeable future: Beijing's growing energy demands will stimulate the process. On the other hand, ensuring world major power's huge energy needs can help GCC unit make its transition processes from regional to global international arena more rapidly and softly.

*Keywords: China, GCC, economy, energy, cooperation*

#### Introduction

China's growing energy demands on the one hand, and its development of diverse economic projects with the Council on the other highlight the growing significance of bilateral cooperative ties, which the article tends to explore. Indeed, in 21<sup>st</sup> century the main goal of China is to intensify its energy cooperation with oil-rich GCC, however, it will be more proper to accept the year of 1993 as a milestone for their relations, when China becoming a net oil importer country started to attach more significance to GCC. It will be illustrated below that energy security naturally became an essential objective and important factor between China-GCC relations. New era opens up new opportunities, and the prospects of cooperation will be



more promising in the coming future. The GCC states' economic advantageous positions, development plans and significant global shifts will be presented, as all these developments are attractive to China. Furthermore, in new era those states have started to adopt 'Look East' strategy and their cooperation especially with rising China will enter new and more promising level in the field of international relations. We can notice that China-GCC economic relations are developing in multilevel perspectives, however, oil undoubtedly remains the most significant factor shaping their ties. This sphere will be analyzed properly. About two-thirds of those countries oil reserves are being channeled to Asia, which is more than the GCC oil exports to North America and Europe together. International media also pays considerable attention to China-GCC mutual interdependent policy. The article is going to prove that economic ties between China and the GCC are stable, strong and the prospects of cooperation will be more 'fruitful'.

#### *Development processes between China and GCC states*

Before economic modernization reforms along with 'opening up to outside world' of 1978 China's foreign policy towards the 'Third World' countries was guided in accordance with its basic principles. These principles were defined by Beijing's worldview and national ideology. During the period of 1960-1963 Sino-Soviet confronting relations were followed by mutual competition through revolutionary movements in the 'Third World'. Later the Soviet Union's invasion of the Middle East seemed to be the most significant factor that made China establish and develop its cooperative relations with the GCC states<sup>1</sup>.

Another phenomenon is relatively deep investigation of strategically significant Gulf region in China by Chinese experts of Arab world. They examine the strategic configuration in the Gulf region within a framework consisting of five periods. The first period is from 1949 to 1958, when the domination of pro-Western monarchies

was evident in the region. The second period dates from 1958 to 1979, when the Iraqi revolution became a conflicting cause based on ideological contradictions between two Gulf major courses-radical republic and conservative monarchies. The third period is from 1979 to 1990, when the Islamic Revolution of Iran once again 'updated' the previously-existed confrontation between the Arab world and Persian civilization based on national-religious elements. The fourth period is from 1990 to 2001, when the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait established a triangular structure based on political, as well as strategic conflicts among Iraq, Iran and the GCC countries. And finally, the fifth period relates to period from 2001 to the present times, when the September 11 terroristic attacks regenerated antagonism between two main religious branches of Islam-the Sunnis and the Shiites. Thus, since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the religious contradiction in the Gulf region became a dominating factor<sup>2</sup>.

China's Gulf policy can be divided into the following stages in accordance with this strategic form:

1958-1967: China focused its foreign policy on Iraq, and the main reason were the ideological stand and revolutionary orientations of Iraqi regime during the Cold War period;

- 1967-1971: China focused on revolutionary developments in the Gulf region during extreme radicalization period of its foreign policy;
- 1971-1979: China aimed to create broader united front against the Soviet imperialistic expansion. The US President Nixon's visit to China put closer geostrategic Sino-US interests in the Gulf region;
- 1979-1990: China used Iran-Iraq war to increase its public revenues, becoming a major arms supplier to both sides;
- 1990-2001: China started to pay special attention to Iran;
- 2001-to the present: China focused on two major giants in the Gulf region-Saudi Arabia and Iran. In regard to Beijing's foreign policy objectives and approach to the region those states are presenting the highest priority<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>Cheng J., *The Evolution of China's Foreign Policy in the Post-Mao Era: From Anti-Hegemony to Modernization Diplomacy*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1989, pp. 190-194.

<sup>2</sup>Cheng J., *China's Relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council States: Multilevel Diplomacy in a Divided Arab World*, *China Review* 16 (1), 2016, p. 39.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

Beijing took the Gulf region seriously starting from the 1970s. In 1971 China established relations with Kuwait. Later in 1978 China established diplomatic relations with Oman, then with the UAE in 1984, with Qatar in 1988, and with Bahrain in 1989. In 1990, after one year of China's Tiananmen incident, Saudi Arabia became the last GCC state establishing diplomatic ties with China. Thus, China established diplomatic ties with all six GCC states immediately after launching economic modernization programs and reforms. China's main reason to strengthen its ties with the 'Third World' in general and with the GCC states in particular, possibly could be viewed as consequence of Tiananmen incident together with Western sanctions imposed on the country. Nevertheless, It is more proper to accept the year of 1993 as the milestone for China-GCC relations. China became a net oil importer country, trying to enlarge its economic relations with oil-rich GCC region. Energy security naturally became essential objective between China-GCC cooperation. During June and July of 1993 China's then deputy premier Li Lanqing visited all six GCC countries (also Iran). Beijing's fundamental goal was to secure its peace oil supply. While seeking new markets for its labor-intensive products China succeeded in 'discovering' the GCC states which showed rising interests to Chinese products. For instance, the UAE has become the most significant location for China's manufactured products for re-exporting them to neighboring states since 1990s. The Emirate's imports from China increased significantly accounting from \$2.1 billion in 2001 to nearly \$24 billion in 2008<sup>4</sup>.

The basic trade cooperation between China and the GCC states has been clear-cut, covering some fundamental aspects. China is mainly importing oil, natural gas, and also chemical products from the GCC states, and it is exporting electronic and telecommunication equipment, textile fabrics and garments. China's overall considerations related to the Gulf region are based on some basic assumptions and foreign policy objectives, including a recognition of the PRC as the sole legitimate representative of China, a maintenance of friendly cooperative ties with all the other actors in the region, an encouragement of multi-polarity

in the region, a guarantee of Beijing's regional interests, a coordination of China's Gulf policy with the broad objectives of advocating its modernization perspectives, and the increase of Beijing's international status together with its rising influence. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century despite China's growing economic and energy cooperation with the GCC states, the above mentioned objectives are becoming very important and promising for China in regard to China-GCC relations and their perspectives<sup>5</sup>.

#### *Diplomacy, Economic Relations and New Opportunities*

'Arab Spring' developments have prompted Chinese to improve their comprehension of complexities of the Arab world. It illustrates new significance regarding China's further moves in the Middle East. The fall of Gaddafi regime in Libya, as well as current Syrian developments forced Beijing become more involved in the Middle East and North Africa for better protection of China's interests, meanwhile pursuing its major power status. In both of these crises China used its right of veto in the UN Security Council new challenges<sup>6</sup>.

In regard to GCC-China relations the Council has been and still remains attractive to China especially because of huge oil reserves. As China intends to play increasingly important role in the Middle East and as economic relations between China and the GCC states are growing dynamically, Beijing will undoubtedly continue to give high priority to its relations with those states. On the other side, the GCC views China as a significant major power in global affairs, meanwhile they both wish to enhance their strategic maneuverability through restricting the US hegemonic role. China's approach towards the GCC states can be viewed as an attempt of seeking 'soft balance'. Chinese policymakers are implementing multilevel diplomacy while dealing with the GCC states, and close coordination of various policies are in their future plans. In January, 2014 National Security Commission was established in China chaired by President Xi Jinping. This event

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, p. 38.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid, p. 39.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid p. 36.



was viewed as significant step to foster Beijing's coordination actions<sup>7</sup>.

China's interests in the Gulf region have been evolving, and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century they cover the following objectives and interests: geopolitical interests, economic and trade cooperation interests, energy security interests, non-traditional security interests.

Thus, Beijing's approach in this region is multilevel:

- Maintain diplomatic relations with GCC countries individually;
- Initiate formal mechanisms of regular regional forums;
- Engage in people-to-people diplomacy: student exchanges and establishments of Confucius Institutes in each GCC state;
- Maintain dialogues with other major powers;
- Take participation in important multilateral conferences referring to regional affairs<sup>8</sup>.

China's willingness to collaborate and deepen its energy cooperation with the GCC states is evident, as the country needs to meet its rapidly growing energy demands<sup>9</sup>.

Despite energy sector the notable wealth of the GCC states let them seek for investment opportunities with China as well. China-GCC mutual projects regarding telecommunication and infrastructure development are notable. For example, Arabic 'Etissalat' and China's biggest telecom-equipment maker 'Huawei' reached an agreement of further cooperation in order to develop this field. Another significant approach is development of tourism. In regard to three major airlines in the Gulf region-'Emirates', 'Etihad' and 'Qatar Airways', Chinese and Arab populations will have more opportunities for social interaction.

From 2003 to 2009 China and the GCC states were implementing large investment projects, which attracted much media attention. Nevertheless, the fact is that China's foreign direct investment (FDI) flow from Arab states rose only from 0.17 percent to 0.27 percent of the total with the heap coming from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. At the same time, Beijing's FDI in Arab world stayed at one

percent of its total: China's focus was concentrated mainly on oil-producing states. Thus, in accordance with the lack of China-GCC substantial foreign exchange reserves it is becoming obvious that the process of this improvement is necessary and vital for both sides.<sup>10</sup>

The GCC states became a significant trading bloc. In 2012 they showed a total trade of more than \$1.4 trillion. In the same year their GDP reached to \$1.5 trillion, ranking 12<sup>th</sup> globally. In 2012 the GCC total exports reached \$934 billion (the fourth in the world), and their imports amounted to \$484.2 billion (the ninth in the world). Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century volume of total trade between China and the GCC states increased in a rapid speed rising from \$6 billion in 2002 to \$92 billion in 2010. Moreover, according to McKinsey & Co., China-GCC trade volume could reach \$350-550 billion by 2020.<sup>11</sup>

By adopting 'Look East' policy the GCC states completely realized the significance for developing good relations with China. Indeed, the GCC states are expanding their economic cooperation with India as well, hence in the Gulf region India is becoming keen competitor for China. The statistic data clarifies the growing trend of China-GCC trade relations (see table 1)<sup>12</sup>.

There are both similarities and differences in trade between China and individual GCC states, so we need to analyze China's trade volume along with its import-export policy in an individual category. Beijing's leading trade partner continuously has been Saudi Arabia, followed by the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman and Bahrain. UAE and Bahrain had trade deficits, while other four states enjoyed multitude trade surpluses (see table 2)<sup>13</sup>. Bahrain has little to export, and its imports from China are also small in comparison with other member-states. A distinctive feature is becoming noticeable while exploring trade relations between China and UAE. Although the UAE's oil and gas exports to China are notable, however, significant size of its

<sup>7</sup>Ibid, p. 37.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid, p. 35.

<sup>9</sup>Yetiv S and Chunlong Lu, China, Global Energy and the Middle East, Middle East Journal 61 (2), 2007, pp. 207-208.

<sup>10</sup>Cheng J., China's Relations, op. cit., p. 47.

<sup>11</sup>Molavi A., The New Silk Road, 'Chindia' and the Geo-Economic Ties That Bind the Middle East and Asia, China and the Persian Gulf, eds. Bryce Wakefield and Susan L. Levenstein, Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2011, p. 48.

<sup>12</sup>See: Table 1, Source: Cheng J., China's Relations, op. cit., p. 42.

<sup>13</sup>See: Table 2, Cheng J., China's Relations, op. cit., p. 44-45.

imports from China are based on other phenomena: this country demonstrates itself as an entry point supporting China's exports to be further distributed through the whole Middle East<sup>14</sup>.

Table 1: China-GCC trade relations, 1998-2013 (US\$ Billions)

Year	Trade between China and the GCC States		China's Imports from the GCC States		China's Exports to the GCC States	
	Total	Growth Rate (%)	Total	Growth Rate (%)	Total	Growth Rate (%)
1998	42.47	-	18.64	-	23.83	-
1999	46.01	8.34	19.9	6.76	26.11	9.57
2000	101.23	120.0	64.43	223.8	36.80	40.94
2001	97.57	-3.6	56.02	-13.06	40.73	10.71
2002	115.67	18.56	60.17	7.42	55.53	36.3
2003	168.75	45.9	87.99	46.09	80.57	45.07
2004	247.31	46.55	142.96	62.64	104.38	29.57
2005	337.57	36.49	199.95	39.85	137.65	31.87
2006	449.49	33.15	265.62	32.85	183.88	33.6
2007	580.2	29.08	302.69	13.97	277.21	101.39
2008	923.12	59.1	537.25	77.49	385.83	39.18
2009	679.18	-26.42	366.71	-31.74	312.47	-19.01
2010	925.26	36.22	564.76	54.01	360.50	15.37
2011	1337.13	44.5	868.45	53.77	446.70	23.71
2012	1551.12	16.0	1007.83	16.0	543.29	21.62
2013	1653.47	6.5	1056.70	4.85	596.77	9.84

Table 2: Trade between China and the Individual GCC states, 2002-2013 (US\$ Millions)

	BAHRAIN			KUWAIT		
	Exports	Imports	Total	Exports	Imports	Total
2002	57.92	51.76	109.68	262.98	464.35	727.33
2003	83.15	52.13	135.28	674.99	513.25	1188.24
2004	120.57	92.4	212.97	484.05	764.06	1248.11
2005	187	68.94	255.94	628.47	1020.5	1648.97
2006	283.92	64.82	348.73	861.31	1924	2785.31
2007	384.69	102.44	487.14	1338.63	2290.62	3629.25
2008	655.07	131.31	786.39	1751.30	5038.81	6790.11
2009	475.26	211.23	686.50	1542.85	3500.69	5043.54
2010	799.50	251.91	1051.42	1848.59	6708.36	8556.95
2011	880.01	325.84	1205.85	2128.41	9175.20	11303.62
2012	1202.78	348.03	1550.81	2089.18	10467.81	12556.99
2013	1238.93	305.18	1544.11	2675.51	9586.64	12262.15
	OMAN			QATAR		
	Exports	Imports	Total	Exports	Imports	Total
2002	60.18	1446.47	1506.65	49.54	174.01	223.55
2003	81.96	1985.75	2067.72	61.8	293.08	354.88
2004	111.02	4278.49	4389.51	103.52	334.26	437.78
2005	190.99	4138.91	4329.9	203.67	472.72	676.39
2006	339.54	6129.47	6469.02	436.81	561.98	998.79
2007	547.56	6722.73	7270.29	620.87	588	1208.88
2008	794.51	11626.84	12421.36	1074.16	1311.62	2385.78
2009	747.50	5411.23	6158.73	872.11	1381.76	2253.87
2010	944.50	9779.23	10723.72	855.44	2455.84	3311.28
2011	998.18	14876.49	15874.66	1198.76	4694.31	5893.07
2012	1811.58	16975.44	18787.02	1205.1	7278.1	8483.2
2013	1900.84	21040.61	22941.46	1710.91	8463.35	10174.26
	SAUDI ARABIA			UAE		
	Exports	Imports	Total	Exports	Imports	Total
2002	1671.54	3435.35	5106.89	3450.9	445.36	3896.26
2003	2146.8	5172.32	7319.12	5037	773.46	5810.46
2004	2775.46	7522.65	10298.1	6841.14	1304.48	8145.61
2005	3824.42	12245.72	16070.14	8729.84	2045.6	10775.44
2006	5055.83	15084.53	20140.37	11404.78	2796.75	14201.53
2007	7807.82	17559.68	25366.96	17023.62	3012.02	20035.64
2008	10823.46	31022.69	41846.16	23643.68	4613.25	28256.93
2009	8977.45	23570.94	32548.39	18631.80	2595.08	21226.88
2010	10366.44	32829.05	43195.49	21235.34	4451.54	25686.89
2011	14849.71	49467.54	64317.24	26812.85	8306.37	35119.22
2012	18452.35	54861.87	73314.22	29568.32	10851.97	40420.29
2013	18739.81	53450.71	72190.53	33411.30	12823.53	46234.82

<sup>14</sup>Ibid, p. 43.



Because of harsh consequences of international financial crisis in 2008, China-GCC trade volume declined in 2009, recovering again only in the following year. In China's Zhejiang province (Yiwu city) vast population of Arab businessmen are involved in economic various activities. Here China is producing the county's main exporting goods to the Gulf region. There are also many Chinese people actively working in the GCC states, especially relatively large Chinese population is visible in UAE<sup>15</sup>.

Between 2004 and 2007 China's increase in global oil consumption accounted for about 40 percent, and through 2030 its world demand for oil is predicted to plus another 40 percent. In 2009 for the first time China surpassed the United States in the volume of oil exports from Saudi Arabia<sup>16</sup>.

Despite the cooperation with the West as it used to be in the past, the GCC states are currently deepening economic and energy ties with their Asian partners. In March 2009 the Emir of Qatar said the following: "China is coming, India is coming, and Russia is on its way, too... I don't know if America and Europe will still be leading"<sup>17</sup>.

During the 2000s various economic initiatives took place between individual GCC states and China. Trade and investment volume was gradually rising. Mutually beneficial economic cooperation helped the sides to deepen their ties by establishing Kuwait-China Investment Company (KCIC) in 2005. Another notable achievement was the revival of interest in GCC-China Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in 2009.

Hydrocarbon sector clearly remains significant area in Gulf-Asia relations, however, other fields are developing rapidly as well. An illustrative point for this case can be the substantial rise in Gulf-China capital investments and joint ventures since the beginning of the new

century. The formation of mutual upstream-downstream interdependence between the sides became obvious as the GCC states initiated to invest in China's oil refining and petrochemical industries. At the same time China invests in oil production and exploration in the Gulf States<sup>18</sup>.

Former GCC Secretary General Abdul Rahman Al-Attiyah while referring to China-GCC relations expressed his wish that the two sides need to do their best to quicken negotiation processes and also work hard for completion of establishment of China-GCC free trade area. He encouraged the sides to create bilateral strategic dialogue mechanisms as soon as possible in order to comprehensively reinforce the spirit of China-GCC relations<sup>19</sup>.

People's Liberation Army strategist Luo Yuan well-known for his hawkish views stated the following: "China's Middle Eastern strategy is to keep the balance of various forces while that of the United States is to control oil, as well as regional situation through military might and democratization... China tries to stabilize situation in the Gulf and it pursues self-balance inside the region"<sup>20</sup>.

The level of China's commitments and diverse mechanisms it has been developing in accordance with China-GCC cooperation serve as clear illustration of its proactive diplomatic and strategic efforts for expanding bilateral relations<sup>21</sup>.

In order to strengthen relationships between China and the Arab states in 2004 China-Arab States Cooperation Forum (CASCF) was established. This forum generally focuses on economic cooperation between the sides regarding trade, infrastructure, investment and

<sup>15</sup> Niblock T., Jacqueline Armijo, Lina Kassem and Ismail Fajrie Alatas, *The Gulf and Asia*, Singapore Middle East Papers, Spring 2012, pp. 22-45. <https://www.mei.nus.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Vol.-1-The-Gulf-and-Asia1.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Simpfendorfer B., *China*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, pp. 30-32.

<sup>17</sup> Ulrichsen K., *Repositioning the GCC States in the Changing Global Order*, *Journal of Arabian Studies* 1 (2), 2011, p. 231, <http://sci-hub.tw/http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/21534764.2011.630894>

<sup>18</sup> Ghafouri M., *China's Policy in the Persian Gulf*, *Middle East Policy* 16 (2), 2009, p. 89.

<sup>19</sup> Harding H., *China's American Dilemma*, *the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 519 (1), 1992, p. 16, *China's Foreign Relations*, 8 September 2016, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0002716292519001002?journalCode=anna>.

<sup>20</sup> Luo Yuan, *China's Strategic Interests in the Gulf and Trilateral Relations among China, the US and Arab Countries*, Washington D.C and Dubai: The Nixon Center and the Gulf Research Center, 2010, p. 29.

<sup>21</sup> Murphy D., *Testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission in Its hearing on China and the Middle East*, 2013, USCC, 6 June, 2013, p. 4-7, [https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/MURPHY\\_testimony.pdf](https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/MURPHY_testimony.pdf)

economic security issues, and the participants meet every two years at ministerial level<sup>22</sup>.

In June 2014 during the sixth meeting of CASC in Beijing, there were signed three major documents, including 'Beijing Declaration', 'Action Plan for 2014 to 2016', 'Development Plan for 2014-2024'. China proposed a comprehensive strategy on cooperation which became known as 1+2+3. Three basic cooperation fields were including:

- Energy cooperation;
- Improvement of trade and investment;
- Cooperation in new sectors: nuclear energy, aerospace technology, new energy<sup>23</sup>.

Beijing asserted that it will initiate steps for increasing bilateral trade volume in coming ten years period from \$240 billion in 2013 to approximately \$600 billion. Meanwhile, it promised to expand nonfinancial investment in Arab countries in coming decade from \$10 billion in 2013 to \$600 billion<sup>24</sup>.

At the opening ceremony of conference China's President Xi Jinping highlighted the significance of Chinese 'One Belt, One Road' initiative, which includes the Silk Road Economic Belt and Maritime Silk Road of the 21<sup>st</sup> century focusing mainly on trade and infrastructure development projects. China's leader also emphasized the importance of development of Chinese and Arab societies close integration processes, thus forming 'community of common interests and destinies'. Furthermore, in the Middle East China established a strategic partnership with Egypt (1999), Saudi Arabia (1999), Algeria (2004), Turkey (2010), United Arab Emirates (2012)<sup>25</sup>.

In July, 2004 finance ministers of all six GCC states visited Beijing and the sides confirmed a 'Framework Agreement on Economic, Trade, Investment and Technological Cooperation'. In addition, they agreed to negotiate on China-GCC free trade zone plan, which was

<sup>22</sup>Chengxi Y., China lays out '1+2+3' strategy at CASC ministerial meeting, CCTV News, 06 June, 2014, <http://english.cntv.cn/2014/06/06/VIDE1402009324468536.shtml>

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid

<sup>25</sup>Cheng J., China's Relations, op. cit., p. 52.

going to cover services, goods and investments<sup>26</sup>. Six rounds of negotiations between China and the GCC states were held during the period from 2004 to 2012<sup>27</sup>.

In January 2012 China's former-Premier Wen Jiabao visited Riyadh. During his meeting with the GCC Secretary General Abdullah bin Rashid Al Zayani an agreement was reached for speeding up the negotiation processes between the sides<sup>28</sup>.

#### Beijing's special approach towards GCC 'key players'

Substantial warming of financial and trade ties between the GCC countries and Asian partners became a good opportunity for strengthening Saudi-Chinese nexus. The two states established diplomatic relations in 1990 and economic cooperation between them mainly was focused on hydrocarbons. In 1999 the 'Strategic Oil Cooperation' agreement paved the way for Riyadh to become Beijing's leading oil supplier by 2002. Furthermore, similar to KCIC, Saudi Arabia's Saudi Basic Industries Corporation (SABIC) drew up a strategic 'China plan' aiming to establish strong and reliable supply partnerships, as well as joint ventures with China's companies. In February 2009 Chinese president Hu Jintao visited Saudi Arabia. During this trip China's leader promised to work with the GCC with a view to reform the global financial institutions<sup>29</sup>.

In 2006 for the first time China's former President Hu Jintao visited Riyadh, and the two states came to an agreement of establishing 'strategic friendly relations'. In June 2008 China's moves were continued by then Vice-President Xi Jinping's visit to Saudi Arabia. This time the two sides agreed on signing 'Joint Statement of the People's Republic of China and Saudi Arabia on Strengthening Cooperation and Strategic Friendly Relations'. Furthermore, in three

<sup>26</sup>China FTA Network. 2004, China-GCC free trade talks continues, 08 June 2004, [http://fta.mofcom.gov.cn/enarticle/engcc/engccnews/200911/1636\\_1.html](http://fta.mofcom.gov.cn/enarticle/engcc/engccnews/200911/1636_1.html)

<sup>27</sup>China FTA Network. 2017, China-GCC FTA, 10, November, 2016

<sup>28</sup>China, GCC agree to accelerate FTA negotiations, China Daily, 16 January 2012, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/business/2012-01/16/content\\_14451880.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/business/2012-01/16/content_14451880.htm)

<sup>29</sup>Ghazanfar Ali Khan, China to Boost Relations with GCC: President Hu. Arab News, 12 February, 2009, <http://www.arabnews.com/node/320921>



years period former President Hu Jintao made his second trip to Kingdom in January 2009. During this visit along with other issues Hu Jintao and his Saudi colleague King Abdullah agreed on putting mutual efforts on the program of 'reforming global financial institutions'. The two leaders came to an agreement to work together on this ambitious plan, as well as adopt new rules and regulations for facing challenges of global financial system mutually. They also coordinated their policies for the coming April 2009 G-20 summit<sup>30</sup>.

After ascending the throne in Saudi Arabia King Abdullah visited Asian region in 2006 for the first time. It is worth pointing out that China was also included in his Asian tour. Moreover, since establishment of Sino-Saudi diplomatic ties in 1990 this became the first visit of a Saudi ruler to Beijing. In July 2004 then Kuwaiti Prime Minister and the current Emir Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah visited China, and the two sides confirmed their interests and readiness for expanding mutual cooperation. The main purpose of Emir's visit was to enhance pragmatic cooperation at governmental, non-governmental, as well as enterprise levels. Meanwhile, he expressed Kuwaiti desire that official Beijing would support and encourage economic various programs in the Gulf region in general, and in Kuwait in particular. Some other important figures from the GCC states come to China became Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and also ruler of Dubai Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum in 2007, as well as Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Qatar Shaikh Hamad Bin Jassim Al-Thani and Saudi Crown Prince and Defense, Aviation Minister Prince Sultan Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud. Both two officials visited China in 2008. During the Prince's visit two pacts were signed to encouraging and strengthening Sino-Saudi economic cooperation and strategic ties<sup>31</sup>.

Kuwait continued to foster its economic ties and cooperation with China, and in 2005 Kuwait-China Investment Company was created in accordance with further development of Sino-Kuwaiti partnership. Saudi Arabia together with its Saudi Basic Industries Corporation

<sup>30</sup>Cheng J., *China's Relations*, op. cit., p. 48.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid, p. 45.

(SABIC) adopted a strategic 'China plan'. The Kingdom's economic strategy was intended to establish stronger and deeper economic partnership with China, as well as create joint ventures which can help Beijing to face its rapidly growing economic demands<sup>32</sup>.

Three of the GCC states, including Kuwait, Bahrain and the UAE (especially Dubai), while developing their economic plans for future are applying some basic elements of 'East Asian model'. Moreover, in rigid competition with Qatar and Bahrain the UAE's Dubai became a regional financial center which is serving European and East Asian exchanges<sup>33</sup>.

#### *GCC states in global economy alongside 'look east' strategy*

During the second oil-price boom in terms of level of capital outflows and inflows, the GCC as a regional organization and trading block became more integrated and globalized. Dubai developed into a regional financial center covering a broad area between European and East Asian exchanges, meanwhile 'competing principles' towards Dubai from Qatar and Bahrain are still actual<sup>34</sup>.

During the period of 2002-2008 all the GCC states in their further development plans attempted to adopt, develop and implement some basic elements of 'East Asian model'. For instance, Dubai showed its sympathy expressing interest especially Singapore's model of proactive leadership along with harmonious combination of state guidance with private sector initiative<sup>35</sup>.

The GCC's internalization is becoming more and more evident and this regional organization is broadening its cooperative relations in terms of geographical scope. The multiplied relationships of the GCC constitute macro-trend initiatives which help the GCC states to upgrade their development model. An illustrative example is food-energy security concept, and the interdependency regarding to this

<sup>32</sup>Yetiv S. and Chunlong L., *China*, op. cit., pp. 207-208.

<sup>33</sup>Cheng J., *China's Relations* op. cit., p. 45.

<sup>34</sup>Ulrichsen K., *Repositioning the GCC States*, op. cit., p. 235.

<sup>35</sup>Hvidt M., *Planning for Development in the GCC States: A Content Analysis of Current Development Plans*, *Journal of Arabian Studies: Arabia, the Gulf, and the Red Sea* 2 (2), 2012, 03 December 2012, p. 399. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/21534764.2012.735454>

nexus clearly demonstrates this case. During 2007-2008 the escalation of commodity prices fuelled inflationary pressures on the GCC states, and an economic dissatisfaction started to take place. Food security became a significant priority for the GCC. Meanwhile, a careful managing of scarce water resources was not sustainable as well. As the GCC states were facing serious problems regarding the lack of food and water resources, new economic linkages between individual Gulf countries and food-producing states started to develop significantly. In this context, the GCC's main partners were African countries, as well as the South and Southeast Asian states. Thus, 'oil-for-food' objective is becoming more beneficial referring to the GCC-Asia and GCC-Africa collaboration. Through 'oil-for-food' initiative GCC is cooperating closely with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). In 2009 GCC-ASEAN joint meeting at foreign ministers level took place in Bahrain and the sides expressed their willingness to give continuation to political and economic ties initiating various programs and necessary steps for deepening the scopes of mutual cooperation<sup>36</sup>.

Moreover, the ASEAN Secretary General Suring Pitsuan while referring to GCC-ASEAN relations mentioned the following: "You have what we don't have, and we have plenty of what you don't have, so we need each other"<sup>37</sup>. This initiative clearly illustrates how the changing geo-economic balance of powers impacted and repositioned the GCC's role and status in the global economy. The notions of global governance with their significant changes beginning from the new century influenced on the GCC's development mechanisms, as emerging new powerful players became involved in the global system of power, politics and policy-making processes<sup>38</sup>.

In June 2009 the BRIC forum was established in the city of Yekaterinburg, Russia (Brazil, Russia, India, China)<sup>39</sup>. This new initiative

<sup>36</sup>Ulrichsen K., *Repositioning the GCC States*, op. cit., p. 235.

<sup>37</sup>McCartan B., *Farmers forgotten in Oil-for-Food Deals*, *The Peninsula*, 2009, <http://khmerization.blogspot.am/2009/07/farmers-forgotten-in-oil-for-food-deals.html>

<sup>38</sup>Ulrichsen K., *Repositioning the GCC States*, op. cit., p. 237.

<sup>39</sup>In 18 February 2011 South Africa also joined the organization; hence its abbreviation became BRICS.

and annual summit of several leading emerging economies created a platform aiming to counterbalance Western economies, especially the US leadership and hegemonic role in the global system<sup>40</sup>.

The GCC's direct participation in international financial architecture pushed the regional organization to take steps for promoting new structures of energy governance. The examples for this case are the creation of the Gas Exporting Countries' Forum based in Qatar, and the International Renewable Energy Agency, the headquarter of which is situated in Abu Dhabi. The GCC's active participation in the issues related to international politics of climate change is significantly visible as well. Thus, there is a good opportunity for the GCC states to position themselves within the greater global rebalancing processes<sup>41</sup>.

Nevertheless, there are also some negative effects affecting to regional stability and GCC's further development plans. The 'Arab Spring' uprisings starting from December 2010 in Tunisia, thereafter its rapid spread throughout the whole Middle East impacted rigidly on Arab societies. The Gulf region demonstrated vulnerability to the fusion of political pressure, as well as it faced socio-economic disorder. The GCC states were influenced on various levels in regard to 'Arab Spring' uprisings. Qatar, Kuwait and some parts of UAE were relatively less affected from this political wave than, for instance, Bahrain, Oman and Saudi Arabia's Eastern provinces. Spread of political turmoil within the GCC states highlighted, that the rising dissatisfaction is not only in the less resource-rich states of North Africa, but also it affected the GCC oil-rich states in general, and Bahrain and Oman in particular<sup>42</sup>.

In accordance with the GCC's perspectives, there are still many important issues remaining unresolved. One crucial question is about the possibility whether in future the GCC regional organization will deal with foreign states and institutions on a basis of bilateral ties

<sup>40</sup>Ulrichsen K., *Repositioning the GCC States*, op. cit., p. 238.

<sup>41</sup>Ulrichsen K., *Rebalancing Global Governance: Gulf States' Perceptions on the Governance of Globalization*, *Global Policy* 2 (1), 2011a, p. 65, [http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1758-5899.2010.00054.x/epdf?r3\\_referer=wol&tracking\\_action=preview\\_click&show\\_checkout=1&purchase\\_site\\_license=LICENSE\\_DENIED](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1758-5899.2010.00054.x/epdf?r3_referer=wol&tracking_action=preview_click&show_checkout=1&purchase_site_license=LICENSE_DENIED)

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.



between individual member-states cooperating through inter-regional level, or it will continue its future way as a global collective actor in world politics through greater participation in the new institutional architecture<sup>43</sup>.

#### *Oil as most significant aspect*

In regard to China-GCC economic relations oil is undoubtedly the most significant 'driving force' shaping this cooperation. About two-thirds of those countries oil reserves are channeling to Asia, which is more than the GCC oil exports to North America and Europe together. In accordance with OPEC data statistics in 2012 the GCC states each day produced nearly 13 million barrels of crude oil. Meanwhile, along with its total oil imports China imported 35 percent of crude oil only by the GCC states. Saudi Arabia was topping the list of suppliers meeting 20 percent of Beijing's oil import demand<sup>44</sup>.

The oil demands of China are gradually growing and in 2030 it is expected to reach up to 15.5 million barrels per day, and 17.5 million in 2040. Ultimately, Beijing will import about 10-12 million barrels per day, which will cover around 70-80 percent of its future oil consumption. The following statistic data is highlighting significant consumption of oil by regions in coming future: China's annual oil consumptions are increasing dynamically<sup>45</sup>.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), 2017. Monthly Oil Market Report, 12 April 2017, [http://www.opec.org/opec\\_web/static\\_files\\_project/media/downloads/publications/MOMR%20April%202017.pdf](http://www.opec.org/opec_web/static_files_project/media/downloads/publications/MOMR%20April%202017.pdf)

<sup>45</sup>See: Table 3, Source: Joseph Cheng, *China's Relations*, op. cit., p. 41.

Table 3: World Oil Consumption (in Millions of Barrels per Day)

	2011	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	Annual Growth 2011-2040
<i>United States</i>	18.6	19.4	19.1	18.7	18.5	18.6	0.0
<i>OECD Europe</i>	14.2	13.8	13.8	13.9	14.1	14.2	0.0
<i>China</i>	9.8	13.2	14.7	15.5	16.6	17.5	2.0
<i>India</i>	3.2	4.2	4.9	5.6	6.2	6.8	2.6
<i>Japan</i>	4.46	4.41	4.3	4.2	4.1	3.9	-0.4
<i>South Korea</i>	2.3	2.5	2.61	2.66	2.69	2.4	0.6

Moreover, long-range forecasts are proving that in terms of purchasing power parity China has potential to overtake the United States as the largest economy in 2017, and in market exchange rate terms by 2027<sup>46</sup>.

In order to reduce its domestic demand for oil Saudi Arabia has recently initiated various programs for increasing its natural gas production. The Kingdom also declared that in that case it will be able to increase its oil exports to China. The United Arab Emirates tries to keep its status as China's stable energy supplier as well, and the construction of the Fujairah pipeline by a Chinese company is highlighting the point. Nevertheless, this pipeline borders the risky Strait of Hormuz and its capacity is restricted. Generally, the UAE's energy exports to China are not very huge<sup>47</sup>.

China's energy cooperation is significant with another GCC member-state-Qatar. In 2009 Qatar-gas, China National Offshore Oil Company (CNOOC) and PetroChina signed a 25-year agreement to provide five million tons of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) per year. Indeed, this agreement will create a long-term interdependency between China and Qatar. According to CNOOC President Fu Chengyu it will establish 'great complementarities' between the sides. Regarding this

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>Alterman J., *China's Balancing Act in the Gulf*, CSIS, August, 2013, p. 3. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/chinas-balancing-act-gulf>

case the latter stated: "China can secure a long-term reliable market for Qatar, meanwhile Qatar will be the Chinese market's stable supplier"<sup>48</sup>.

In recent decade along with substantial increase of capital investment and joint ventures between the GCC states and China, those countries started to invest heavily in China's petrochemical and oil refining industries. At the same time Beijing is investing in GCC states' oil exploration and production sectors. These economic policies could form mutual upstream-downstream interdependence between two cooperative sides<sup>49</sup>.

International media pays considerable attention to China-GCC mutual upstream-downstream interdependence policy. Saudi Arabia assisted China's Sinopec's participation in its two major gas exploration and development projects in Rub al-Khali, hence it opened part of its domestic oil and gas upstream market for China's investment. On the other hand, Riyadh itself invested in China's downstream sector including investments in refineries in Qingdao, Shandong province. There were Saudi investments in petrochemical plants in Fujian province as well<sup>50</sup>.

### Conclusion

Traditionally the GCC states have been developing their relations especially with the Western Hemisphere. Gulf region's Arab monarchies are mainly 'trustful' to Western partners, referring them as security holders. China has no objective or intention to act as protector in Gulf region. Deepening its political, economic and cultural ties with Arab world, China continues its basic policies and principal strategies, including 'Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence', 'the One China principle', and 'South-South' cooperation. At the same time, in order to maximally benefit from economic cooperation with Arab states, Beijing's diplomacy is flexible enough to support political causes of Arabs: especially Arab-Israeli conflict is presenting great significance

<sup>48</sup>Cheng J., *China's Relations*, op. cit., p. 43.

<sup>49</sup>Ghafouri M., op. cit., p. 89.

<sup>50</sup>Leverett F. and Bader J., *Managing China-U.S. energy competition in the Middle East*, *The Washington Quarterly* 29 (1), 2005, p. 190-192 [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/20051216\\_leverett\\_bader.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/20051216_leverett_bader.pdf)

in China's calculations. The 'rise of China' finds attractiveness among Arab elite and intellectuals, and it supports for further development of Sino-Arab relations. China is attractive to Arab world because of its rapid economic achievements and successful model of modernization. On the other hand, some hopes are emerging among Arabs to 'adopt' China as potential counterbalance against the United States. Beijing is often viewed as the only credible alternative to 'save' the region from unipolar dominance.

New era 'discovers fresh global actors' in international arena. Currently, rising China fosters and deepens its economic, especially energy cooperation with GCC. The unit completely respects China's 'diplomatic style' together with Beijing's traditional noninterference policy in domestic affairs of other states' national interests. China's global shifts, development models, as well as growing significance in world politico-economic system seem to be very attractive to GCC states. In my opinion, despite economic calculations China's approach to oil-rich GCC is typical 'balance of power' or 'hedging strategy'.

China-GCC ties are expanding drastically, as both sides are benefiting from bilateral cooperation. With its relatively smart diplomacy Beijing is gaining more significance for those states, meanwhile it supports the GCC unit's soft transitional process from regional to global economic level. In the era of globalization oil-rich GCC's internalization processes and rapid shifts in global economy are naturally paving its transition perspectives from regional to global status. Energy capacity of the Council is 'strong' enough for meeting rapidly growing major power's energy needs. In my opinion, this phenomena also helps GCC in its global moves from regional to international arena.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century along with its principled foreign policy lines Beijing is developing multilevel diplomacy throughout the whole world, thus aiming to expand its ties with various regions and states. Especially because of its growing energy needs China's relations with the Council will enter new stage, and mutual beneficial cooperation will help Beijing to feel more confidence in regard to future economic calculations. In new era China's foreign policy objectives, as well as its emergence as a global power present a significant and new-



developing case study. In this context, China-GCC coming perspectives will be more promising.

'Arab Spring' became an illustrative factor that the Middle East region is still remaining 'vulnerable' area, and that turbulences are still actual in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Beijing will continue to put more efforts for ensuring its 'completely stable ties' especially with the Council, as it is going to meet huge portions of China's energy needs.

Time is on China's side, its diplomacy towards GCC is flexible and attractive, and bilateral interdependent economic cooperation will flourish. China's leaders will develop new and more successful foreign policy objectives in order to safeguard their global actor status in 'valuable' Gulf region. I argue, that together with its rapid economic drive and growing energy needs Beijing will try to maximally strengthen its global status in Gulf region, preserving its complex geostrategic interests.

SUBRAMANIAN KRISHNAN MANI

## THE MONUMENTS HERITAGE: THE INDIVIDUAL'S ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY IN PRESERVING

### Abstract

Protecting the built heritage and conserving the local traditional and cultural values of communities for future generations present a real challenge for developers, architects, and professional education programs which are responsible for preparing the courses focused on heritage conservation aspects, learning respectful aware design with cultural context, and qualified graduates in planning, design, and implementation of conservation projects.

These monuments, in a way bring to the forefront, the elegance and splendour of the bygone era. We can get a glimpse of the world's past through these monuments. With their elaborate superfluities and wonderful architecture, Indian monuments represent one of the most outstanding facets of the multi-faceted Indian culture. The monuments of India must become an inspiration for the future generations.

The paper looks into the historical aspects of the preservation of monuments, fate of the unprotected monuments, and responsibility of the society/individuals.

*Keywords:* Heritage, preservation, protection, monuments, UNESCO, legislation, cultural property

### Introduction

As I walked to the India Gate..... and gradually the long walls of the monument came into view. Nothing I had heard of or written had prepared me for the moment. I could not speak. I looked on and wondered. There are the names. The names! . . . For twenty years, I have contended that these men died in a cause as noble as any cause for which a war was ever fought. Others have contended, and will always contend, that these dead were uselessly sacrificed in a no-win war that should never have been waged at all. Never mind. . . .

India Gate is a memorial to 82,000 soldiers of the undivided Indian Army who died in the period 1914-21 in the First World War, in France, Flanders, Mesopotamia, Persia, East Africa, Gallipoli and elsewhere in the Near and the Far East, and the Third Anglo-Afghan

War. 13,300 servicemen's names, including some soldiers and officers from the United Kingdom, are inscribed on the gate.

Why, then, given that I find it moving, will I say that it "does not speak"? In what way do I believe that a monument should speak, and to what purposes? How are monuments supposed to represent our ideals? What if our ideals are contested? What sort of thinking should our monuments engender? Why, according to me, and for what purposes might monuments be superior to words?

On my visit to the memorial, walking that slow descent into the earth along the face of the wall, I was deeply lost in my own museum. It was indeed the names, the names beyond counting. As I walked, and stood, and moved on again, I passed and was passed by the people who had come that day to find the names of friends or kin, or simply to see this memorial to the war that had touched us all in some way or another. Those of us who had come to see simply stood and ran our eyes over the length and height of the wall. But those who had come to find—they had a more pointed mission. They could be seen kneeling or standing before one particular spot in the wall, staring long at one name out of the thousands, their eyes welling with tears. We others allowed a circle of distance around each of these solitary mourners lost in their thoughts, keeping our own shared thoughts to a quiet murmur.

And we realized, in that pondering, how the monument spoke to the memories of the private grievers. This wall of names arranged by date of death encompassed the private reality, and not the corporate enterprise, of war. That reality, for those kneeling in thought, must have been one of sequential loss, of one particular friend taken at one particular moment, over and again until the circle closed and all who had been sent away were gathered in again. Even those of us who sought no particular death found ourselves reading individual names and, unbidden, imagining the places and the circumstances of their deaths.

What monuments have traditionally done is embody an idea important to those who erected them. That is what Jefferson did with his idea of an ideal academic society, and what the builders of the Virginia War Memorial did for their ideas of war and sacrifice. But a

monument endures beyond its time, holds that idea before us, in our time, and asks us to contemplate that idea—turn it over in our heads, stand it next to our own experiences and ask if it still applies. Do people and institutions act as they do out of allegiance to this idea? And if they do, do I want people and institutions to keep on doing those things? Do I want them to do those things out of allegiance to this idea, knowing what that might entail? And if people and institutions do not act in accord with this idea, would I wish them to? In short: Do I want this idea, and all it might entail, to be an operative force in our society?

Monuments confront us with that choice. They tell us that people like ourselves once chose to affirm a certain set of ideals, but in that telling, they remind us that we too must face the decision of which ideals to affirm. Monuments thus set before us the task of reassessing our values. And they do it by giving us both the means to criticize and the reason for doing so. By asking us to contemplate imaginatively the ideas they embody, monuments prod us to think through the implications of our social ideals. Through the free contemplation which they engender, we can know an idea more wholly—see more clearly and feel more deeply both the dangers and the glories to which it might lead. In that sensing of both danger and glory we have a surer means, a firmer basis for judging.

History is an important part of human existence. History is what created us all, it is how we progressed. Just like a photograph which you preserve, maybe of your family, reminds you of the love for each other. In the same way history and historical heritage tells about the love for humanity. Love for how we progressed. How we are what we are today.

Monuments are not only of historical value but also of economic as well as social value. Egypt is famous for its pyramids. Tourism is Egypt's second largest source of revenue, bringing in \$13 billion in 2010. (Pyramids at Giza - National Geographic) Taj Mahal in India, one of the Seven Wonders of the World attracts around 3 million visitors every year.

The other importance is that of culture. These monuments and other artifacts tell us about what culture our ancestors followed. A



society without a culture is like a car without wheels. When we preserve the facts in museums, people visit those places and learn about our cultural heritage which leads to peace and prosperity. It also shapes a person's thinking towards the society. It helps distinguish between good and bad.

Every place has a history. There isn't any monument which doesn't have some or other value. If something was destroyed in war, it is a reminder for the people that wars lead to misery and thus we should try to solve all the disputes by discussion. Kangra Fort in Himachal Pradesh, India was destroyed by an earthquake in early 1900's but still after all the repairs remain one of the places which wasn't captured by the Mughals and thus attracts people from all over the world.

The art and architecture of any country are the indicator of its historical and cultural wealth. They tell the story of the evolution of mankind and reflect the values, traditions, and sensitivity of the society. Monuments or buildings are engraved with the time and space in which they are located and are representatives of collated memory. As the monuments grow old, they become important carriers of our history and important cultural resources. They bring us the messages from the past, and are the living witnesses of the age of traditions. If we trace the history of a conscious conservation, we find that the need to preserve the Greek ruins as markers of cultural heritage was first realized by the early Romans. The fundamental rules and principles of conservation were set up as early as the 8<sup>th</sup> Century AD. However, the practice became a law only in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in European countries.

### Definition

What exactly is a monument? The term Monument is very general, and - according to [Wikipedia](#) - is commonly used for all kinds of structures. This definition is not specific enough. We would like to differentiate monuments from a memorial statue or a rune stone.

The main features of a monument include:

- It is considerably larger than a memorial statue
- It is very important
- One can walk on or through it

- It commemorates a person or a historical event.

As Albert Einstein aptly put it a long time ago: "*knowledge is to know where it is written.*"

Monuments do not only commemorate public figures who have deserved well of the nation. They commemorate the nation, raise it above the land on which it is planted and express an idea of public duty and public achievement in which everyone can share. Their meaning is not "he" or "she" but "we". And the successful monument does not stand out as a defiance of the surrounding order but endorses it and adds to its grace and dignity.

All attention comes from the monuments, onto the city and the people who live and move within their sight. They are like the eyes of a father, resting on his children at play. They are full of joy of belonging, and convey a serene acceptance of death in the national cause. The sculptors and architects are forgotten, their forms and materials are the forms and materials from which the city around them is built. And they retire into corners as though in acknowledgment that their work has been done.

What is it that makes a monument special? How should its specialness be conserved? First, a function of a monument is commemoration. The essential value communicated by the monument is an evocation of the notions of memory and time. The origin of the word "monument" comes from the Latin *moneo, monere*, which means 'to remind', 'to advise' or 'to warn', suggesting a monument allows us to see the past thus helping us visualize what is to come in the future<sup>1</sup>. In English the word "monumental" is often used in reference to something of extraordinary size and power, as in monumental sculpture, but also to mean simply anything made to commemorate the dead, as a funerary monument or other example of funerary art.

The *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* more narrowly defines a monument as "a structure, edifice or erection intended to commemorate a notable person, action or event", generally in the singular-an isolated case of brilliance which stands out from the rest

<sup>1</sup>Cole John Young and Reed Henry Hope, *The Library of Congress: The Art and Architecture of the Thomas Jefferson Building*, Norton, 1997, p. 16.

of the world and is not to be forgotten<sup>2</sup>. Buildings have tended to express this by taking the form of towering columns, such as London's Monument, a giant Doric column built sixty-two and a half meters high to commemorate the fire of London, or the Washington Monument, an even higher column.

Memory and time as the dual essence of the monument is a broader concept of the term than that suggested by the dictionary—a tower structure, which in this day and age is doomed to be quickly outreached by the next skyscraper in its vicinity. The dictionary's "monument" is likely to be stillborn in significance at the outset: "erected over the grave or in a church, etc., in memory of the dead", like some would-be Ozymandius' tomb.

There are different kinds of definition. Historical monuments are considered as a cultural asset, including both the single architectural handmade (such as a palace, building, church, etc.) and city walls, a garden or a whole landscape or a movable artistic evidence. Cultural Heritage is the whole set of material documents put together in years, that compose a city or part of it, an urban landscape or a non-built environment, a series of evidences, etc. that are worth the conservation and preservation. Cultural Heritage is also the set of oral and written evidences of a population or of a single person (e.g. farmers' culture) that have historical interest and thus represent a document. Cultural Heritage is the set of goods that have a high historical importance, that are of public interest and compose the richness of a place and of that population.

The Estonian Heritage Conservation Act defined the historical monuments as a "movable or immovable, a part thereof, a body of things or an integral group of structures under state protection which is of historical, archaeological, ethnographic, urban developmental, architectural, artistic or scientific value or of value in terms of religious history or of other cultural value and due to which it is designated as a monument pursuant to the procedure provided for in Heritage Conservation Act".

<sup>2</sup>Franklin S. and Widdis E., "National Identity in Russian Culture: An Introduction", Cambridge University Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 2006, p. 171.

According to the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act 1904, "ancient monument" means any structure, erection or monument, or any tumulus or place of interment, or any cave, rock-sculpture, inscription or monolith, which is of historical, archaeological or artistic interest, or any remains thereof, and includes:

- (a). the site of an ancient monument;
- (b). such portion of land adjoining the site of an ancient monument as may be required for fencing or covering in or otherwise preserving such monument; and
- (c). the means of access to and convenient inspection of an ancient monument

#### Emergence of concept of preservation

The destruction and looting of cultural heritage has been intertwined with conflict for thousands of years. To steal an enemies' treasures, defile their sacred places and burn their cities has been part of war throughout history. And sadly, in the modern battlefields of the ancient world, in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Egypt, and elsewhere, it continues to this day.

The Colosseum in Rome, for example, was built using spoils from the sack of the Temple of Jerusalem in AD 70. Many of the Louvre's collections were "acquired" by Napoleon while rampaging through Europe (albeit later returned). In fact, much of Napoleon's collection of war booty – acquired during his failed campaign in Egypt – was declared forfeit by the British victors and given to the British Museum under the Treaty of Capitulation of 1801. The Rosetta Stone, which famously enabled the deciphering of the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic script, was acquired through this treaty and is still on display there today.

Enter the Monuments Men. In 1943, the Allied forces approved the formation of a new unit: the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives Commission (MFAA). For the first time in history, armies went into the field with officers dedicated to protecting art and monuments during the conflict. It was going to be a tough job. Entire historic quarters in cities such as Warsaw were demolished in days and the artistic treasures of Europe were vanishing.



Just 345 men and women, with no dedicated resources, were tasked with protecting historic buildings, monuments, libraries and archives across the whole of Europe and North Africa. Most were museum staff, art historians, scholars and university professors, yet their success was incredible. They found and returned more than five million stolen objects and artworks and ensured the protection of numerous buildings, often using no more than their own ingenuity.

A part of their story is told in the film, *Monuments Men*, based on author Robert Edsel's book of the same name, by the Monuments Men Foundation, and also in the book and ensuing film *The Rape of Europa*. In 1951, the MFAA was disbanded as politicians drafted the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, followed by the First Protocol in 1954 and the Second Protocol in 1999 (which extended and clarified the original tenets).

The concept of preservation when it first emerged as far back as the 19th century, was concerned mainly with the world's historical assets. Although the terminologies associated with preservation has varied over the last two centuries, it evolved from the principle of conservation espoused in the theory of Eugene Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc a renowned French restoration architect and writer who set up a movement in the 1830s to restore medieval buildings and who was also commissioned in this period to restore Notre Dame and other important historic structures throughout Paris.

Importantly, the essential principles and the implications of Viollet-le Duc's movement towards conservation in terms of "defining the history of a building and returning it to its original character"<sup>3</sup>, has basically remained unchanged. However, a further evolution of this concept occurred with the development of scientific methods and its influence on historic research. As such, historic accuracy and authenticity then became an ideal and this notion was further strengthened when the League of Nations established the International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation (IIIC). Among the bureaus of the IIIC, was the International Office of Museum (IOM) which was responsible for

<sup>3</sup>Iser Yudhishtir Raj, ed. "The Challenge to Our Cultural Heritage: Why Preserve the Past?", Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, 1986.

bringing together leading experts in the fields of conservation and restoration of monuments and sites to resolve differences that came out of World War I and to arrive at internationally accepted principles of cooperation concerning conservation.

In the aftermath of World War 2, when the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) was founded, it took over many of the IIIC's responsibilities. It seemed however that it was at this juncture that the importance of preserving the world's cultural heritage, was recognised and included in the mandate of the newly formed UNESCO. Notably, part of the responsibility of this new organisation as set out in Article 1 of the UNESCO constitution was to: "Maintain, increase and diffuse knowledge; by assuming (inter alia) the conservation and protection of the world's inheritance of books, works of art, and monuments of history and science and recommending to the nations concerned the necessary international conventions"<sup>4</sup>.

Between 1950-1970s, various countries across the globe have adopted major conventions, recommendations and charters for the protection of cultural heritage through UNESCO. A number of these are as follows:

- Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event Of Armed Conflict- 1954
- International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites- 1964
- The Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property- 1970
- The Convention Concerning Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage- 1972

Among the myriad of conventions and charters, the Convention Concerning Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage has enjoyed the most success, since it has been ratified by more than 85% of UNESCO's member states. It has been said that the ratification of this Convention by member states in UNESCO complements heritage

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

conservation programmes at the national level. UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage in its operational guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention in 1972 recognised that: "The cultural and natural heritage are among priceless and irreplaceable possessions, not only of each nation but of mankind as a whole. The loss, through deterioration or disappearance of any of these most prized possessions, constitute an impoverishment of the heritage of all peoples of the world."

Despite the initiatives during the period of the 1950s to the 1970s, it should be noted that preservation/conservation interests have proliferated in our own time because of the intensification of following forces:

- Resurgent tribal and local loyalties require the reaffirmation of symbolic links with the material past
- Pace of technological change
- Radical modernization of the built environment
- Speed of material obsolescence
- Migration to new homes
- Greater longevity which results sometimes in leaving us in ever less familiar environments

#### *Evolution of preservation of monuments in India*

The principles of preservation and monument making, as they are known in India today—that is, state-driven, bureaucratically controlled, and centralized—were introduced under British rule. Throughout the entire period of the rule of the East India Company from 1765 to 1858 little more than sporadic attempts were made by the company to preserve historical structures. These efforts were largely limited to the heartland of the former Mughal Empire in Delhi and Agra and, as recent research suggests, had much to do with the efforts of the company to legitimize its rule as the natural successor of the Mughal rulers of India.

The real impulse of a frenetic phase of state-driven conservation came with the appointment of George Nathaniel Curzon, Marquess Curzon of Kedleston, or Lord Curzon (1859–1925) to the office of

Viceroy of India, which he held from 1899 to 1905. As has been adequately documented, Curzon not only had a deep interest in preserving India's architectural heritage, he saw this as the fundamental, divinely ordained duty of the colonial government and thus outlined a clear line of archaeological policy to be pursued by the state.<sup>5</sup> In addition to using India's pre-colonial, Mughal public buildings to stage elaborate imperial rituals of state power, and vigorously insisting on the employment of the so-called Indo-Saracenic building style in order to create the illusion of British rule in India as a natural and legitimate successor to Mughal rule<sup>6</sup>, he also radically restructured the department of archaeology. This last included a centralized department of archaeology and appointing a Director-General of Archaeology who would be responsible for this centralized policy and its implementation<sup>7</sup>. The man chosen for the position was a young scholar of the classics and archaeology, aged twenty five and with no previous experience of, or family history related to, India. Nevertheless, he was the personal choice of the viceroy, who wished to entrust the task of India's monument management to a scholar of the classics and European archaeology rather than a philologist and orientalist. That man, of course, was John Marshall<sup>8</sup>. Curzon also dramatically increased the government's

<sup>5</sup>See, for example, the many speeches of Curzon on the subject, both in India and in Britain. Probably the most famous, and certainly most often quoted of these is the speech he gave to the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1900, in which he rather grandly proclaimed that India's ancient, religious architecture was "a part of the heritage which Providence has committed to the custody of the ruling power." Lord Curzon, Speech before the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 7 February, 1900.

<sup>6</sup>On Curzon's attempts to use India's architectural heritage for staging imperial power (Metcalf Thomas R., *An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj*, 2002, Oxford University Press, New Delhi).

<sup>7</sup>For the restructuring of archaeology by Lord Curzon, Chakrabarti, Dilip K., *A History of Indian Archaeology from the Beginning to 1947*, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, 2001, p.122; Roy Sourindranath, *The Story of Indian Archaeology, 1784–1947*, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi, 1996.

<sup>8</sup>On the background to Marshall's appointment, see Lahiri Nayanjot, "John Marshall's Appointment as Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India: A Survey of the Papers Pertaining to his Selection", *South Asian Studies*, Vol. 13, 1997, pp. 127–139.



expenditure on archaeology and succeeded in passing the Ancient Monument Preservation Act in 1904<sup>9</sup>.

Despite these measures, what remained unclear was the precise way in which preservation should be undertaken, which as late as the early twentieth century remained ad hoc and unregulated. Curzon's early response to the way in which the colonial state in India went about the task was unequivocal: "[...] there is neither principle nor unity in conservation or repair, while from time to time horrors are still committed that make the student shudder and turn grey"<sup>10</sup>. The appointment of John Marshall, with his experience of working in Crete, Turkey, and Greece, was expected to change all this. Marshall himself tried to define the task that the Director-General of Archaeology in India should undertake: the most important of his functions is to secure that the ancient monuments of the country are cared for, that they are not utilized for purposes which are inappropriate or unseemly, that repairs are executed when required, and that any restorations, which may be attempted, are conducted on artistic lines<sup>11</sup>.

But what were the principles of preservation that Curzon and Marshall were referring to? Curzon's choice of the terms "conservation or repair" is an unwitting reference to what was a central issue in the debate on preservation that had been going on in Britain and Europe for the better part of the nineteenth century, i.e. how were the material remains of the past to be presented to the present? Were they, with the help of modern technology, to be restored to their original form? Or should they be conserved in the state of decay or ruin that they were in, in order to preserve their historical authenticity? These were the questions that John Marshall

<sup>9</sup>For instance, in 1898–1999, the total expenditure of the Government of India and all provincial governments on archaeology was a total of £7,000 a year; by 1904, this had gone up to £37,000. IOL, IOR/L/PJ/6/674 File 803, President of the Council of the Governor General, or Viceroy Curzon, 18 March 1904, Proceedings of the Legislative Council, Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, Act VII, 1904, Judicial and Public Dept.

<sup>10</sup>Sourindranath Roy, *The Story of Indian Archaeology, 1784–1947*, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi, 1996.

<sup>11</sup>Chakrabarti D. K., *A History of Indian Archaeology from the Beginning to 1947*, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, 2001, p.122.

sought to address in his *Conservation Manual* and in his dealings with the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB).

Long before the manual was published in 1906, John Marshall brought out a shorter and less ambitious version called *Conservation of Ancient Monuments: General Principles for the Guidance of Those Entrusted with the Custody of and Execution of Repairs to Ancient Monuments*. In this pamphlet, Marshall spelt out the precedence that preservation should take over restoration. "Officers charged with the execution of the work of repair," Marshall wrote, "should never forget that the reparation of any remnant of ancient architecture, however humble, is a work to be entered upon with totally different feelings from a new work or from the repairs of a modern building. Although there are many ancient buildings, whose state of disrepair suggests at first sight a renewal, it should never be forgotten that their historical value is gone when their authenticity is destroyed, and that our first duty is not to renew them but to preserve them"<sup>12</sup>.

It is fairly evident from these remarks that the principles of preservation of ancient structures that Marshall was articulating stemmed from a philosophy of preservation and heritage management that had become dominant in Victorian Britain and large parts of Western Europe by the late nineteenth century<sup>13</sup>. The conservation movement began to exercise increasing influence on prominent architectural and antiquarian bodies of Victorian England, such as the Society of Antiquaries and the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). In 1877, at William Morris's (influential intellectual and thinker) initiative the movement got its own learned society, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, also known as the Anti-Scrape Society. The SPAB was rooted in the Arts and Crafts movement, and came to stand for a particular notion of aesthetics which held that the value of historical buildings lay in their age, in the

<sup>12</sup>Marshall J., *Conservation of Ancient Monuments: General Principles for the Guidance of Those Entrusted with the Custody of and Execution of Repairs to Ancient Monuments*, Government Press, Shimla, 1906, pp. 3-4.

<sup>13</sup>Swenson A., "Conceptualising 'Heritage' in 19th and Early 20th-Century France, Germany and England", PhD dissertation, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, 2007. Forthcoming as *The Rise of Heritage. Preserving the Past in France, Germany and England, 1789–1914*.

continuity of material over time, and that the aesthetics of old structures was to be found in their age<sup>14</sup>.

Against the prevailing trends of Gothic Revival and energetic church restoration undertaken, especially by the parishes and defended by restoration architects such as George Gilbert Scott as befitting places of worship in the mid-nineteenth century younger architects, antiquarians, and preservationists, usually members of the SPAB, began to militantly assert that the worth of old buildings and structures lay in their age and beauty. Some architects, such as John James Stevenson emphasized that an important purpose for engaging with old buildings was antiquarian research and that churches, for example, were merely records of history<sup>15</sup>. So steady was the growth in influence of the preservation movement that by the end of the nineteenth century opposition to restoration or any attempt to 'de-historicize' ancient buildings had become the most prevailing trend in thinking about built heritage.

#### *Why protect monuments – a cultural property? Case study*

Monuments as cultural property have unfortunately played a part in conflict throughout history. Some notable examples include the 2001 destruction of the Bamiyan Buddha statues<sup>16</sup> by the Taliban, which dated back to the pre-Islamic era of Afghanistan. The Taliban, despite international pleas to stop their atrocious behavior, stated that while they were part of the cultural heritage of Afghanistan they contradicted

<sup>14</sup>Miele Ch., "Conservation and the Enemies of Progress?" In William Morris, Building Conservation and the Arts and Crafts Cult of Authenticity 1877–1939, edited by Miele Ch. Yale University Press, New Haven, 2005, pp. 1-29.

<sup>15</sup>Davies Reginald W. J., "The Preservation of Ancient Monuments", Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), 1913, unpublished manuscript.

<sup>16</sup>It should be noted that the statues were "inscribed" on to the "List of World Heritage in Danger" by UNESCO in 2003. Once a country signs the Convention, and has sites inscribed on the World Heritage List, the resulting prestige often helps raise awareness among citizens and governments for heritage preservation. Greater awareness leads to a general rise in the level of the protection and conservation given to heritage properties. A country may also receive financial assistance and expert advice from the World Heritage Committee to support activities for the preservation of its sites. More information on the Bamiyan Buddhas and UNESCO can be accessed at: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/208>

Islamic beliefs.<sup>17</sup> In the last few years, the violence in the ongoing conflict in Syria has taken a heavy toll on the ancient cities of Aleppo<sup>18</sup> and Damascus<sup>19</sup>. While these situations are different in terms of the conflict classification analysis involved (Syria is still considerably under debate), the situations are similar with regard to the destruction of cultural property. Is cultural property protected under international law? Yes. There seems to be multiple conventions that discuss the protection of cultural property (both moveable and immoveable).

Let's take an example of the destruction of the statue of Bamiyan Buddha in Afghanistan in 2001. In March 2001, the statues were destroyed by Mullah Omar of the Taliban following a decree issued by him. The Taliban supreme leader Mullah Omar explained why he ordered the statues to be destroyed in an interview: "I did not want to destroy the Bamiyan Buddha. In fact, some foreigners came to me and said they would like to conduct the repair work of the Bamiyan Buddha that had been slightly damaged due to rains. This shocked me. I thought, these callous people have no regard for thousands of living human beings -- the Afghans who are dying of hunger, but they are so concerned about non-living objects like the Buddha. This was extremely deplorable. That is why I ordered its destruction. Had they come for humanitarian work, I would have never ordered the Buddha's destruction"<sup>20</sup>.

Soon after the Mullah's decree, there was a predictably deafening international outcry and the international community appealed to the Taliban regime to see reason. The director general of the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Koichiro Matsuura called the destruction a "...crime against culture. It is abominable to

<sup>17</sup>Rashid A., "After 1700 years, Buddhas fall to Taliban dynamite", The Telegraph, March 12, 2001, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/1326063/After-1700-years-Buddhas-fall-to-Taliban-dynamite.html>

<sup>18</sup>UNESCO inscription 1986, World Heritage in Danger inscription 2013, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/21>

<sup>19</sup>UNESCO inscription 1979, World Heritage in Danger inscription 2013, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/20>

<sup>20</sup>Shehzad M., "The Rediff Interview-Mullah Omar", The Rediff, Kabul 3rd March, 2001.



witness the cold and calculated destruction of cultural properties which were the heritage of the Afghan people, and, indeed, of the whole of humanity"<sup>21</sup>.

Situated at an important junction on the ancient Silk Route, Afghanistan in general has come to acquire a unique composite cultural heritage reflecting a history underscored by a diversity of influences of Persia, Greece, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. However, many of the tangible treasures of this heritage, including the Bamiyan Buddhas, have suffered the onslaughts of conflicts and disasters. The priceless collections of historical treasures at the Kabul museum came under attack in 1995 and 1996 and were subjected to theft and vandalism. The Afghan people have been rightly proud of their cultural heritage. The fact that the Afghan rulers (including Timurides) respected and protected the cultural heritage of their land for the past 1,500 years speaks volumes about their patriotism, and cultural values.

Can a ruling regime in a country vandalise and destroy so wantonly the treasures of its cultural heritage? Are there international norms against such historically irresponsible and morally reprehensible conduct of a state?

Professor V. S. Mani, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Director of the School of Law, Jaipur National University and former President of the Asian Society of International Law (2011-2013), the legal luminary expressed serious concern on the damage that is today being caused to, what he calls, the "prized cultural heritage of the entire world" and the manner in which these "monuments are directly attacked".

According to him, the sovereignty of a state within its territory is no longer "exclusive and absolute". It is subject to international law. A state undertakes international obligations under treaties or under general international law. The totality of these obligations determines the permissibility or otherwise of a state action. The argument that the above cultural properties are situated within the territory of Afghanistan and belong to the state of Afghanistan is not good enough for the Taliban to escape international legal accountability. The

<sup>21</sup>"U.N. Confirms Destruction of Afghan Buddhas", ABC News, 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2001.

Taliban must show that its conduct is not inconsistent with any applicable international obligations to which Afghanistan, like any other country, is subject<sup>22</sup>.

There are at least three categories of international obligations, which Afghanistan must respect in this regard. They relate to (a) international humanitarian law applicable in international armed conflicts (the Afghan situation has not been an 'internal' armed conflict, pure and simple, as it has had foreign participants); (b) obligations specifically relating to protection of cultural property; and (c) obligations emanating from international human rights law<sup>23</sup>.

International humanitarian law, perhaps a forerunner of the contemporary human rights law, has always sought to 'humanise' warfare by endeavouring to strike a balance between the principles of humanity and the requirements of military necessity, although the balancing act has often been left to the commander in the field to implement<sup>24</sup>. Article 27 of the Hague Regulations on the Laws and Customs of War, 1907 (following a similar provision in their 1899 version), clearly obligates a party to an armed conflict to take "all necessary steps... to spare, as far as possible, buildings dedicated to religion, art, science, or charitable purposes, historic monuments... provided they are not being used at the time for military purposes." It is this time-honoured provision that paved the way for the eventual adoption, at the initiative of UNESCO, of the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, in 1954. All that the 1954 convention does is to elaborate the 1899-1907 Hague principle of protection of cultural property. Thus, the principle of protection of cultural property is deeply embedded in international humanitarian law, regardless of whether a state is a party to the 1954 treaty. The Taliban cannot escape a customary law obligation by saying that Afghanistan is not a party to the 1954 treaty. Afghanistan's

<sup>22</sup>Mani V.S., "Bamiyan Buddha and International Law", *The Hindu*, 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2001.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*

non-party status has relevance only with regard to the role of UNESCO in procedural implementation of the treaty<sup>25</sup>.

The general treaty law relating to cultural property is embodied in the UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, 1972, to which Afghanistan became a party in 1979<sup>26</sup>. The purpose of this treaty was to recognise that all countries have an obligation to protect the "cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value" and that to that end there was a need to evolve a cooperative international framework to make resources available to countries where the property is situated. The treaty defines "cultural heritage" in terms of "monuments", "groups of buildings", or "sites". Cultural heritage "monuments" would encompass "architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave-dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science." (Article 1: similar definitions follow in the same provision on "groups of buildings", and "sites"). Article 4 of the treaty imposes on each state party "the duty of ensuring the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage... situated on its territory."

While it is the primary duty of each state party in whose territory the heritage is situated, the treaty also recognises "the duty of the international community as a whole", to cooperate and assist the former if called upon (Article 6). Thus, India was merely seeking to perform its part of the duty under the treaty, when it offered to take over the Afghan heritage treasures and bring them to India, an offer that the Taliban rejected outright. Afghanistan has already been a recipient of international assistance in this regard<sup>27</sup>.

How does one enforce the law against the Taliban? Here is a case of a nearly decade-long armed conflict with a mix of terrorism, both domestic and international, and international arms and drug

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Warikoo K., *Bamiyan: Challenge to World Heritage*, Pentagon Press, 2004, p.130.

<sup>27</sup>Mani V.S., *op. cit.*

trafficking. Prof V.S. Mani would not be averse to any coercive action by the Security Council based on its assessment of the situation vide Article 39 of the U.N. Charter, provided, of course, it is all based on international consensus. Prof Mani emphasized on the need for consensus, for that is perhaps the only way a U.N. action can be legitimised. He also emphasized the need to protect cultural property around the globe given that in contemporary armed conflict we increasingly witness the targetting of monuments, places and structures of cultural significance.

"The protection of cultural property is governed by several legal instruments. In each conflict one has to see which of the instruments have been ratified to determine the level of protection cultural property should be afforded. The 1907 Hague Regulations have become part of customary law and are binding on all states. The provisions relating to cultural property, namely, Articles 23(g) and 56 are therefore applicable to all states in an international armed conflict"<sup>28</sup>.

Beyond the 1907 Convention, there was the Hague Convention in 1954 and then the Second Protocol to the Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in Armed Conflict 1999<sup>29</sup> ("Second Protocol"). The Second Protocol was adopted in response to the gaps contained within the 1954 Convention. The main crux of the Hague Conventions is to prevent the destruction of cultural property and artifacts during war, including eliminating the use of cultural property as a weapon of war<sup>30</sup>. Beyond the treatment of cultural property in war, the Second Protocol states that Prosecution is warranted when there is a violation of the conventions. Beyond these specific conventions, crimes relating to cultural property can also be found in the ICC Rome Statute ("Statute").

<sup>28</sup>The Protection of Cultural Property in Armed Conflict, ASSER Institute, [http://www.asser.nl/default.aspx?site\\_id=9&level1=13336&level2=13374&level3=13459](http://www.asser.nl/default.aspx?site_id=9&level1=13336&level2=13374&level3=13459)

<sup>29</sup>Protocol text, [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=15207&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=15207&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

<sup>30</sup>Maas P., *Cultural Property and Historical Monuments, Crimes of War*, <http://www.crimesofwar.org/a-z-guide/cultural-property-and-historical-monuments/>



Why, amongst the many horrors of war, most particularly the great suffering and loss of life, should humanity care about the fate of objects and buildings? In fact, the argument for protecting cultural property in wartime has both ethical and practical foundations. Museum conservator and Monument Man George Stout wrote in 1942: "As soldiers of the United Nations fight their way into lands once conquered and held by the enemy, the governments of the United Nations will encounter manifold problems...In areas torn by bombardment and fire are monuments cherished by the people of those country sides or towns: churches, shrines, statues, pictures, many kinds of works. ...To safeguard these things will not affect the course of battles, but it will affect the relations of invading armies with those peoples and [their] governments...To safeguard these things will show respect for the beliefs and customs of all men and will bear witness that these things belong not only to a particular people but also to the heritage of mankind"<sup>31</sup>.

Stout explains the ethical importance of respecting cultural property. "We should not protect ancient manuscripts and statues simply because they are beautiful or historic buildings of worship because they serve as a gathering place for the faithful; we must understand them to be part of the culture and history of a people. In a time in which Hitler was attempting to destroy a people and conquer many cultures, to show respect for the cultures and the symbols of others was to fight for the liberation of Europe in another, meaningful way. What's more, these objects do not belong solely to the people who cherish them"<sup>32</sup>. Stout argues that they also belong to "the heritage of mankind." This recognition that the symbols of one civilization are also part of the history of all mankind is an idea that has been further embraced and recognized post-World War II and has become an integral part of the ethical argument for protecting culture in conflict.

<sup>31</sup>Edsel R. M. and Witter B., *Monuments Men: Allied Heroes, Nazi Thieves and the Greatest Treasure Hunt in History*, Arrow Books, the Random House Group, London, 2010, p. 23.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

As Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, wrote in a 2012 article on the importance of preserving embattled states' cultural heritage, "This [the destruction in Syria] is a loss to all humanity. Some cultural sites have an outstanding universal value-they belong to all and must be protected by all. Let's be clear. We are not just talking about stones and building. This is about values, identities and belonging"<sup>33</sup>.

In addition to the ethical foundations for protecting cultural property, there are several very practical arguments for the benefits of doing so.

1. The loss of cultural property is not only a loss to the heritage of mankind, but also to the better understanding of that heritage. As Rodrigo Martin, a heritage expert monitoring the damage to Syria's sites, expressed it, "[t]he destruction of things that have not been studied is like burning pages in the book of history"<sup>34</sup>. Archaeologists can recover stolen artifacts, but as Colonel Matthew Bogdanos, leader of the U.S. investigation into the 2003 looting of the Iraq Museum, explains, without the context of the item, little can be learned about the civilizations that came before us. This limits our educational resources and collective knowledge of the past<sup>35</sup>.

2. The destruction or looting of sites and objects of cultural significance, especially when intentional, can create lasting resentments and obstacles to peace. As Bokova writes, "[d]estroying culture hurts societies for the long term....Warlords know this. They target culture because it strikes to the heart and because it has powerful media value in an increasingly connected world. We saw this in the wars in the former Yugoslavia, where libraries were often burned first"<sup>36</sup>. When the deliberate destruction of cultural property is linked with genocide or ethnic cleansing, such as the intentional

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Otterson M. J., *The Fate of Cultural Property in Wartime: Why it Matters and What Should Be Done*, Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs, 17<sup>th</sup> September, 2013.

<sup>35</sup>Chmelenko Y., *The Plundering of Iraq's National Museum: What Really Happened?*, *Oriental Review*, 18<sup>th</sup> July, 2010.

<sup>36</sup>Khoday A., *War Crimes and Cultural Property – Recent Events at the International Criminal Court*, *Robson Crim Legal Blog*, 25<sup>th</sup> August, 2016.

destruction of mosques in Kosovo, it is easy to understand why resentment would endure. To protect cultural property is a way to avoid one more obstacle to peace.

3. Even when cultural property losses are not linked to genocide, the issue of repatriating and restituting looted objects of cultural property remains expensive, contentious, and legally complex. For example, amongst the "trophies of war" removed by the Soviet Union in World War II were books of important cultural value to Hungary. The books were not returned until 2006, after years of negotiation. Similarly, reconstruction of cultural heritage sites, if even possible, is a long-term process that can be extremely controversial and expensive. Afghanistan's Bamiyan Buddhas, destroyed by the Taliban in 2001, are a case in point.<sup>37</sup>

4. In certain circumstances, the theft of cultural property can fuel further conflict. As Bogdanos writes, "things have become even more troubling-when tracking down terrorists, we now find antiquities..." Bogdanos notes that antiquities trafficking provide a source of funding for insurgents in Iraq, and one must be concerned that this trend could continue in other conflict zones<sup>37</sup>.

Now, let's talk about India. With a civilization dating back to 3200 BC and being the birth place of four major religions, namely, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism, while Islam and Christianity came with empires that ruled this land for centuries, India is the site of thousands of historical monuments. All the preceding civilizations have left their historical imprint on the country, from temples to palaces and stupas to mosques. Despite such an ancient civilization, with vast reserves of monuments and architectural geniuses, the practice of heritage conversation was brought to India by the British, with the introduction of the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904. In the present day context, according to the Article 51 A(f) of the Constitution of India, "it shall be the duty of every citizen of India to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture". The question, however, is: "are we, as citizens of this country, abiding by the Constitution Duty?" Are these monuments

<sup>37</sup>Mollick Jennifer Otterson, op. cit.

being protected? Are the laws and regulations to protect and preserve these monuments adequate? If there are laws then, are they being enforced by the authorities? What are the hurdles that the authorities face in this process? Has the issue of conservation of heritage monuments been able to catch the fancy of common people? What are the steps that can be taken to preserve the historical and heritage monuments of this land?

India has an extraordinary, vast and diverse pool of cultural heritage and ancient monuments in the form of buildings and other archaeological sites and remains. The sheer number of these historic heritages is astounding. And the fact that these monuments are the reminiscence of the living witnesses of the golden historic era of over a thousand years and of the pre-independence battles, they carry a special and a well-deserved respect in the eyes of the Indians. They are the epitome of courage, stand testimony to the evolution and are a symbol of cultural expressions.

In order to have a comprehensive understanding of the conservation of heritage monuments, one needs to first explore the meaning of the terms, heritage, conservation, and monuments. According to the dictionary, the word heritage refers to legacy. Heritage thus, belongs to mankind as a whole and has an important role to play in the shaping up of people's cultural identity. The term conservation, in the context of heritage monuments, can be described as a practice that amounts to protection and augmentation of the cultural and traditional value of any monument or building. Moreover, conservation here should be understood from the point of view of economic interest as well as cultural interest and value. According to Section 2 (a) of The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1985, the meaning of the term ancient monuments includes any structure, erection or monument, or any tumulus or place of interment, or any cave, rock sculpture, inscription or monolith, which is of historical, archaeological or artistic interest and which has been in existence for not less than one hundred years<sup>38</sup>. Moreover, it

<sup>38</sup>The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act 1958. The Act came into force on 15<sup>th</sup> October, 1959, vide Notification S.O. 2307, Gazette of India, Extraordinary Part II, Section 3, Sub-section (ii) 15<sup>th</sup> October, 1959.



includes the remains of an ancient monument, the site of an ancient monument, such portion of land adjoining the site of an ancient monument as may be required for fencing or covering in or otherwise preserving such monument, and the means of access to, and the convenient inspection of an ancient monument. Section 2 (j) of the article defines protected monuments as an ancient monument which is declared to be of national importance by or under this Act<sup>39</sup>.

Based on the above definition, INTACH (The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage), a private NGO (non-governmental organization) based in New Delhi, estimates 70 000 odd historical monuments across the length and breath of this country<sup>40</sup>. There are other estimates, which say that there are 100 000 plus monuments in India. The country's main heritage conservation body ASI (Archaeological Survey of India), established in 1861, declares 5 000 odd monuments out of 70 000 as protected monuments. The ASI is solely responsible for the structural conservation, chemical preservation, and protection of these monuments. The various state departments of archeology have identified an equal number of monuments for protection and preservation. The rest of the monuments across the country, which amount to more than 50 000 have as yet gone completely unprotected! Even the fate of those that are overtly protected either by ASI or by the various state archaeological departments is highly uncertain. The reasons are varied and complex without any easy answers<sup>41</sup>.

#### *Fate of unprotected monuments*

The biggest problem that these monuments face are encroachment, expanding urban space, climatic changes as well as limited functioning of the ASI and other authorities. In Delhi itself there are about 1200 monuments. According to figures provided by INTACH, only 174 of these 1200 come under the umbrella of protected monuments and are taken care of by the ASI or the Delhi state

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Environment Chronicles: the best of TerraGreen, The Energy and Resources Institute, TERI, 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2011, p. 115.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

Department of Archeology. Many of the unprotected monuments in the capital have turned into living quarters. A 600-year-old Lodi era tomb was recently reported to having been converted into living quarters, right in the heart of the city. A family had been living in this tomb for three generations, no less! According to ASI officials, they had completely turned the ancient monument into private living quarters with no regard for its heritage status; the walls inside the gumbad had been painted white in several places; the facade is broken and in urgent need of attention. After the encroachment was finally removed by the ASI, this 15th century tomb, standing on a 4.35 metre high terrace and made of random rubble masonry, has been given the highest archaeological value by INTACH.

In the month of March, the Times of India carried out a story of encroachment in Atgah Khan's tomb located in the Nizamuddin dargah area of New Delhi. The 16th century mausoleum of Atgah Khan, husband of one of Akbar's wet nurses, Ji Ji Angah, rated as "A" by INTACH in terms of heritage value has been encroached upon by 12 families<sup>42</sup>. According to ASI officials, a strategy is being worked out to remove the families and rehabilitate them elsewhere. "We have been unable to evict the occupants till now as they have been extremely hostile. But now we have been able to communicate with the families and they are more open to leaving the area", said an ASI official. Similar stories of encroachment pour in almost every day.

It is for the protection and preservation of such unprotected monuments that NGOs such as INTACH step in. INTACH, set up in the year 1984, works for the preservation and protection of unprotected monuments, cultural heritage, and awareness building on such issues<sup>43</sup>. INTACH has shortlisted a number of monuments across the country and has helped preserve them. Over the last two decades, with a growing network of 140 voluntary chapters spread across the country, INTACH has documented and listed nearly 65,000 monuments and sites across 150 cities in 23 states. One of the best

<sup>42</sup>Richi V. and Neha L., At home in Akbar-era ASI-'protected' tomb, Times of India, 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2009, p. 1.

<sup>43</sup>Monumental Loss: Are We Losing Our Historical Heritage?, April 2009, [http://terragreen.teriin.org/popup.php?section\\_id=243&category\\_id=1](http://terragreen.teriin.org/popup.php?section_id=243&category_id=1)

known conservation cases is the plan prepared by INTACH for the thousand-year-old Mangyu Monastery in Ladakh. The body undertook partial restoration of the monastery supported by the Department of Culture, Government of India. In 2006, the roof and wall paintings were restored. The Architectural Heritage Division of INTACH prepared similar conservation plans for the Jagajit Palace in Kapurthala and Sheesh Mahal in Patiala and is in the process of preparing another plan for the Old Moti Bagh Palace in Patiala. In 1996, World Monuments Watch listed the Jaisalmer Fort as one of the 100 most endangered sites in the world. INTACH has been running a variety of conservation and restoration projects, as part of the Jaisalmer Conservation Initiative. The INTACH project includes restoration of Rani Ka Mahal, setting up of art and craft training centres, theatre workshops, and so on. These illustrations bring home the fact that if on one side we have dilapidated monuments due to sheer neglect on the part of the concerned authorities and common people, on the other hand we have organizations like INTACH, addressing the cause of conservation with renewed passion.

Sanjay Jain is however of the opinion that though organizations such as INTACH are working and doing a good job, yet the structure and functioning of these organizations are always under suspicion<sup>44</sup>. They are elite, ivory-tower institutions, lacking transparency and without any accountability.

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) describes ancient monument as "*Ancient Monument means any structure, erection or monument, or any tumulus or place of interment, or any cave, rock-sculpture, inscription or monolith which is of historical, archaeological or artistic interest and which has been in existence for not less than 100 years*"<sup>45</sup>. Some of these ancient heritages include The Taj Mahal, Agra; Qutub Minar, Delhi; Tomb at Sikandara, Qutb Minar, Sanchi and Mathura; Ajantaa and Ellora Caves, Nasik, Maharashtra; The Jantar Mantar, Delhi, Jaipur; The Red Fort, Delhi; The Charminar, Hyderabad and others. There are about a thousand more such places spread all over India.

Also included are other palaces, forts, epigraphs, coins, drawings, architecture, wells and sculptures.

Most of the sculptures in historic temples and tourist places have been damaged by vandals and inscribed gold/silver/bronze idols have been taken out of the country, the epigraphs are vanishing during construction of additional facilities in old temples and mindless applying of fresh coat of paint during renovation. Some monuments have gone missing due to encroachment, granite quarrying and construction of dwelling units near the temples and collapse of fort walls.

For the maintenance of ancient monuments and archaeological sites and remains of national importance the ASI has divided the entire country into 24 Circles. The ASI has a large work force of trained archaeologists, conservators, epigraphist, architects and scientists for conducting archaeological research projects. Earlier a lot of laws and acts had been passed by the government to protect these monuments, but major of them were done on structures that were beneficial to the contemporary society. Also, the work that was carried out had a dearth of funds, enthusiasm and awareness. Later, the '*Ancient Monuments and Preservation Act, 1904*' was passed with the prime objective to ensure the proper upkeep and repair of ancient buildings in private ownership excepting such as those used for religious purposes.<sup>46</sup> Under this program, the conservation work is carried out in three main broad categories<sup>47</sup>:

1. **Chemical Preservation** – The ASI's Science Branch is responsible mainly for the chemical conservation treatment and preservation of some three thousand five hundred ninety-three protected monuments besides chemical preservation of museum and excavated objects countrywide. The main aim of the Science Branch includes – Material deterioration process, basic studies of intervention technologies, basic studies on materials and diagnostic technologies.

2. **Structural Conservation** – The workers in the field are acquiring cumulative knowledge of several generations and gaining expertise on the ways to improve and stabilize the structures by maintaining their

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Sonali J., Protecting The National Heritage: Here's How, Youth Ki Awaaz, 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2011.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.



pristine looks. The structures are given additional strength and reinforced to undo the harms done by pollution, acid rains, and other chemicals over the years. The foundations are so improved so as to make these structures natural-disasters resistant.

3. **Contemporary Awareness Program**— The citizens of India in general and students in specific are being roped in by the government to spread awareness and advertise about the preservation of the heritage. Many seminars are being organized every year where the students are lectured not only about the basic steps each can take individually on this issue but also are made familiarized with the amount of money, time, expertise and labour that goes into protecting these structures via chemical and other methods.

According to section 3 of the Ancient Monuments, Sites and Remains Act 1958, all ancient and historical monuments and all archaeological sites and remains which had been declared by the Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Declaration of National Importance) Act, 1951 or by Section 126 of the State Re-organisations Act, 1956 to be of national importance shall be declared to be of national importance<sup>48</sup>. The Act stated that protected monuments should be the ancient monument and archaeological sites and remains which are of historical, archaeological or artistic interest and which have been in existence for not less than 100 years<sup>49</sup>. However, the Act did not define the term “national importance” in objective terms with a defined set of criteria. Even the Ministry so far had not specified any detailed criteria for declaring any monument to be of national importance.

According to Para 26 of the John Marshall’s Manual of Conservation<sup>50</sup>, the Living monuments were those structures that were

<sup>48</sup>Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains, Declaration of National Importance, Act, 1951, Updated as per the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Amendment and Validation Act, 2010.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>Sengupta I., A Conservation Code for the Colony: John Marshall’s Conservation Manual and Monument Preservation Between India and Europe, in Michael Falser and Monica Juneja, ‘Archaeologizing’ Heritage?: Transcultural Entanglements between Local Social Practices and Global Virtual Realities, Springer Science & Business Media, 31-May-2013.

still in use for the purpose for which they were originally designed at the time of notification of the monument. This implied that any activity, such as worship, which was subsequently introduced in a monument, but was not being carried out at the time of notification, would be deemed as unauthorised.

It was found that in many monuments such unauthorised activities were being carried out. The ASI replied (May 2012) that presently 955 monuments were being used for worship and prayers<sup>51</sup>. However, the ASI did not have the details of monuments where prayers/worships were being held prior to issue of notification. It was also found that in many monuments electrical points, loudspeakers, fans, etc. were also installed by unauthorised persons to facilitate these activities. Some examples were Ancient Mosque, Palam and The Mosque, Qudisia Garden in Delhi Circle. The ASI, thus, failed to protect the monuments of national importance by not restricting the unauthorised activities being held there<sup>52</sup>.

The ASI did not have an updated and approved Conservation Policy to meet its requirements of preservation and conservation. There were no compiled instructions for the Circles. The ASI stated that it was following the conservation manual of Sir John Marshall, which was published in 1923. Besides, ASI was also following the Manual of Archaeological Survey of India, published in 1984, and Archaeological Works Code which were more than 30 year old. In the absence of a comprehensive conservation policy, the performance evaluation of these agencies was found highly subjective. The process of revising the Manual and Works Code which had started in August 2011 did not yield any result till December 2012<sup>53</sup>.

The Circle offices were responsible for carrying out the works for preservation and conservation of the monuments. As per the ASI Works Code, the Superintending Archaeologist of the Circle was responsible for reporting any irregularity during the execution of the

<sup>51</sup>Report of CAG on Performance Audit of Preservation and Conservation of Monuments and Antiquities, Ministry of Culture, Government of India, Report No. 18, 2013, pp. 63-66.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

work and for maintenance of the documents. The DG ASI was overall responsible for monitoring the performance of the Circle in-charge. We noted the following irregularities in carrying out conservation works: No mandatory requirements for inspection by Superintending Archaeologist were prescribed; Non preparation of inspection notes after site inspection, Absence of complete documentation of the works estimates, Faulty budgeting of the conservation works resulting in inclusion of extra items, Delays in completion of works and Non preparation of completion reports along with photographs after conservation<sup>54</sup>.

#### *Role of individuals in preservation of monuments*

People have always lived next to or in the remains of those who lived before them. Structures of older cultures or the house of their grandfather - sometimes seen as old rubbish or source of cheap building materials - can be places of wonder and stories. Ancient temples were re-used as churches and mosques, walls disassembled and used to build houses. A first academic interest in these remains can maybe be seen in the Renaissance period, when scholars got interested in the remains of the antiquity.

Some of the steps that we as citizens of this country can follow to do our share in their protection are:

1. Prevent ourselves and others from scribbling on the walls.
2. Participating in the regular Cleanliness Drives.
3. Being a part of the 'Adopt a Heritage' initiative
4. Spreading awareness around about these monuments and their importance.

In recent times, digitalization has played major parts in the preservation of precious materials. Making high quality images available electronically can reduce wear and tear of fragile items. According to Jones (2001), we live in an increasingly digital world. Hundreds of libraries, museums and archives have recently launched projects designed to digitize their collections and place them on the web. The main reasons to digitize are to enhance assess and improve preservation. By digitalizing their collections, cultural heritage

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

institutions can make information that was previously only available to a select group of researchers accessible to all. Digital projects allow users to search collections rapidly and comprehensively from anywhere at any time<sup>55</sup>.

One of the primary problems confronting library profession is lack of commitment by the available human resources, particularly, in the areas of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and preservation of resources on cultural heritage<sup>56</sup>. The knowledge explosion brought about by the acceleration of scientific and technological progress is adding a new dimension to education, capacity building, amongst other essential human development endeavours. Librarians, irrespective of their levels in the professional hierarchy must possess the conceptual knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant to the performance of their jobs. Training refers to the manifestation of knowledge, skills and attitudes in a person which enables him to apply them in his work situation. In essence, education is to cause a permanent change in behaviour potential of the concerned individual and it is regarded as the key with which to unlock the stores of knowledge and for their use by the society. As a result of its importance for professional upliftment, libraries have often tried to inculcate some desirable professional orientations in their personnel through training<sup>57</sup>.

Digitization can also be the first step for conducting advanced research on historical materials. Ancient documents present a prime candidate for digitization because of their historical import, combined with centuries of exposure and degradation habits in their arrangement. However, Oketunji (2001) observed that the library schools are inadequate in meeting the challenges of modern information technologies owing to lack of financial resources to procure the necessary equipment needed for the training of students<sup>58</sup>.

<sup>55</sup>Jones T., An Introduction to Digital Projects for libraries, museums and archives, 2001, <http://images.library.uuic.edu/resources/introduction.htm>

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

<sup>58</sup>Oketunji I., Education of Librarians in an electronically oriented society, Paper presented at the Cataloguing, Classification and Indexing Section of the Nigerian Library Association, Seminar/Workshop on Software Choice Parameters for



Similarly, Singh (2004) argued that skill in information Technology (IT) can be gained only when one gets hands on training and experience in laboratories under simulated conditions or in real life situations<sup>59</sup>. The graduates and past graduates turned out by library schools do not possess adequate skill and expertise to interact confidently with IT specialists, evaluate what is recommended by their and full fall their requirements.

Protecting cultural heritage is economical, as well as historical and also a cultural process. Cultural heritage is based on the aspects of our past that we cherish, want to keep and pass on to the future generations and outside world. However, the economic benefits of preservation are secondary to the intrinsic value of that heritage which is been preserved.

As rightly observed by Sekler, "tangible cultural heritage has the great advantage over its intangible counterpart, such that with proper care it will remain authentic over centuries. As long as historic monuments remain without falsification and misleading imitations, they will, even in a neglected state, create a sense of continuity that is an essential part of cultural identity"<sup>60</sup>.

In today's competitive world, we have to preserve the monuments and showcase them to the next generation as the contributions or achievements of our ancestors. A little effort on our side can create drastic changes that will make the past, the present and the future generations of the country and the world proud of India.

Cataloguing in Nigerian Libraries held in Akure, Ondo, 22<sup>nd</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> October, 2001.

<sup>59</sup>Singh R., Restructuring library and information Science Curriculum, LIS Education in India, 2004, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/310673907\\_Restructuring\\_Library\\_and\\_Information\\_Science\\_Curricula](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/310673907_Restructuring_Library_and_Information_Science_Curricula)

<sup>60</sup>Serageldin I., Shluger E., Brown M., Historic Cities and sacred Sites: Cultural Roots for Urban Futures, The World Bank, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/693441468769796497/Historic-cities-and-sacred-sites-cultural-roots-for-urban-futures>

## ISIS RECRUITMENT FROM THE SOUTH CAUCASUS: THE CASE OF GEORGIA

### Abstract

The Islamic State of Iraq and Levant is the most discussed terrorist organization of our days and has reached new levels recently. With the evolution of the organization many foreign fighters have been attracted to join the ranks of ISIS. This research concentrates on the case of recruitment of new fighters from Georgia and tries to give answers to how and why some Georgian citizens from some regions are becoming part of the Islamic State. The sources covered have showed that the recruitment processes taking place in the region of Pankisi Gorge carry both online and face-to-face characters. The population of the Pankisi Gorge is an easy target for the ISIS; Chechen fighters, Kists (Muslim Georgians) and young men from poor families are included in the targeted population of the IS. The analyses made show that there are both religious and socio-economic reasons for the Georgian citizens from this region to decide in favor of joining ISIS: feeling vulnerable as religious minorities under Orthodox church, eliminations of justice, earning money and becoming a hero. Considering the importance of the issue of terrorism, the research also includes a section on how the Georgian government deals with the external and internal threats of terrorism.

**Keywords:** Georgia, terrorism, ISIS, recruitment, Pankisi Gorge.

### Introduction

Terrorism has reached new levels since the eruption of Syrian war in 2011. This event led to the development of a new terrorist organization – the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (Syria) (ISIS/ISIL), or Daesh (داعش) in Arabic, fighters of which have been carrying out terrorist attacks all over the world. The organization is actively popularizing the ideas of the recreation of the Caliphate. With these ideas of propaganda, the Islamic State started its recruitment process from around the world.

Taking into consideration how rapid the ISIS has been developing in its numbers, the importance of studying such a topic is indisputable in today's reality. Since the ranks of ISIS have been covering even

more diverse nationalities, it is now important to determine how exactly the members of ISIS join the organization, how the propaganda is run and which are the main locations that are under the attention of ISIS recruitment.

The topic is not of a less importance for Armenia as well: it is important to understand how active the recruitment processes in South Caucasus are to determine the level of threat for the country. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union Armenia has been in the situation of geographical and geopolitical blockade and its only way or "window" to Europe has been neighboring Georgia. However, recent news, statements by world officials and the IS members themselves as well as official and unofficial statistics have shown that the Islamic State has been finding new potential members to recruit from Georgia, hence studying the issue of ISIS recruitment at the example of Georgia carries big importance for Armenia as a matter of security, it will raise awareness and help get prepared for the possible upcoming threats.

It needs to be mentioned that due to being a relatively new issue and due to the secret nature of this topic, there have been some limitations and difficulties in finding relevant data for further research. The sources used include scholarly articles, media, ISIS press and analyses of documents. The limitations of the study are the time limitations, secret nature of the topic and some information possibly lost in translations.

#### Literature Review

There have been many studies on the Islamic State, however there have been not so many researchers conducted on issues connected with the recruitment of ISIS, especially in regards to Georgia. Still, some scholars have covered the issue of foreign fighters in this terrorist organization, through analyses of motives, incentives, tactics and the life after being recruited. The majority of the scholars have come to the conclusions that the main ways of luring foreigners to becoming an ISIS fighter lies in their online propaganda and "attraction" through social media. Some scholars, on the other hand, try to explain the attraction of foreigners to fight for ISIS through their

personal characteristics, which is education, socio-economic position, welfare, etc<sup>1</sup>.

The number of foreign fighters in ISIS varies in every study. In fact, these numbers vary from 10,000 to, in some cases, 60,000 people<sup>2</sup>. This difference in data can be explained by the fact that the actual numbers are kept in secrecy<sup>3</sup>.

Scholars Charlie Winter and Tiffany Tse underline the importance of online recruitment and propaganda in getting foreigners to become IS fighters. Winter builds his study around the "three mechanisms of recruitment: echo chamber, propaganda and enlistment"<sup>4</sup>. He gives explanations of each phase, thus making the procedure of ISIS recruitment look smooth and organized. Tiffany Tse's work also includes a research on the main characteristics, based on which the potential ISIS fighters are being chosen by the ISIS itself: gender (10% of fighters are women), geography, religion, and socioeconomic status of the person<sup>5</sup>. Gogvadze and Kapanadze on their turn add to the importance of bad socio-economic factor, by saying that "lack of proper education allows spread of fundamentalist-radical ideas"<sup>6</sup>. They bring the example of Georgian families in the region of Pankisi Gorge, that are in better economic conditions because of having a family member fighting in the ranks of ISIS.

Many authors have also concentrated on the issue of recruiting women and children to the ranks of IS fighters. Such authors as

<sup>1</sup>Winter C., An integrated approach to Islamic State recruitment, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 25.05.2016, <https://www.aspi.org.au/report/integrated-approach-islamic-state-recruitment>

<sup>2</sup>ISIS Foreign Fighters: Which Countries Do They Come From?, Retrieved January 15, 2017, <http://time.com/4739488/isis-iraq-syria-tunisia-saudi-arabia-russia/>

<sup>3</sup>Kirk A., Iraq and Syria: How many foreign fighters are fighting for Isil? The Telegraph, 29.03. 2016, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/03/29/iraq-and-syria-how-many-foreign-fighters-are-fighting-for-isil/>

<sup>4</sup>Ibid

<sup>5</sup>Tse T., (2016) ISIS and Recruitment: How Do Demographics Play a Role? Carnegie Mellon University.

<sup>6</sup>Gogvadze, G. and Kapanadze S., Daesh and Challenges Facing Georgia. Georgia's Reforms Associates (GRASS) Policy Document, 25.11. 2015, <http://grass.org.ge/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Daesh-and-Challenges-Facing-Georgia.pdf>



Anderson, Azzam, and an article published by the General Intelligence and Security Service of the Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations (The Netherlands), also address the importance of studying the issue of women and children recruitment in Daesh. The authors have concluded, that women should “recruit new women, bear many children to populate the organization, carry out punishments and get trained to use weaponry (limited use)”<sup>7</sup>. Children, on the other hand, should “witness atrocities, take regular jihad lessons along with regular education; boys should get trained from the age of nine, while at this same age girls should start wearing veils”<sup>8</sup>. There are some claims that women do not undergo the same procedures of being chosen as the men usually do, and they are expected to give birth to as many children as possible to enlarge the number of ISIS fighters. While talking about children recruitment, some authors claim that there are two ways of recruiting children: voluntarily and involuntarily<sup>9</sup>. The former is being carried out through propaganda in public places or luring with toys, while the latter includes such atrocities as kidnapping. The author also states that the recruitment of children, like the adult recruitment, is not solely from the Middle East: many children are being brought to ISIS from Western countries as well<sup>10</sup>.

Some authors address another aspect of recruitment – psychological pressure and working with the potential recruit face to face. Anaya, Azzam and a Final Report of The Task Force on Combating Terrorist And Foreign Fighter Travel (U.S. Department of Homeland Security)

<sup>7</sup>Life with ISIS: the Myth Unravelling, General Intelligence and Security Service, 2016, [https://english.nctv.nl/binaries/Life%20with%20ISIS%20-%20the%20Myth%20Unravelling\\_tcm32-90366.pdf](https://english.nctv.nl/binaries/Life%20with%20ISIS%20-%20the%20Myth%20Unravelling_tcm32-90366.pdf)

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Azzam C., Australian Foreign Fighters: The Long Reach of the Syrian Conflict, A Journal of The International Centre For Political Violence and Terrorism Research, Volume 6, Issue 9, October 2014, pp. 9-13, <https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/CTTA-October14.pdf>

Anderson K., “Cubs of the Caliphate” The Systematic Recruitment, Training, and Use of Children in the Islamic State, 2016, <http://www.drake.edu/media/departments/offices/international/nelson/2016%20aper.%20Children%20in%20ISIS.%20K.%20Anderson.pdf>

<sup>10</sup>Ibid

have addressed this issue, saying that the face-to-face recruitment affects the mental condition of the recruit and makes him believe that the recruiter standing in front of him is talking about justice and peace. They also claim that the majority of the recruits are being affected by the idea of “living in a Caliphate” and how prestigious and prosperous the life in that case would be<sup>11</sup>. Kala Kristina Hartman Anaya in her “Persuasion Strategies in Terrorist Recruitment: The Case of ISIS” argues that the IS recruiters use the “shaming tactics” to affect the minds of future recruits<sup>12</sup>. This “shaming tactic” plays on the ideas that “their brother Muslims are fighting for justice, it is everyone’s duty to help them in their fight and they serve their ideas as “enlightenment, inner peace and spiritual awareness”<sup>13</sup>.

A few authors have also conducted research on the issue of ISIS recruitment specifically from Georgia. They all have one strong similarity: all of the authors think of the region of Pankisi Gorge as of the biggest threat in the region, since exactly its locals are more likely to leave for ISIS in large numbers. Authors that cover the issue of foreign fighters’ outflow from Georgia claim that the outflow of young people from Georgia is easier than from any other remote countries, due to the fact that Turkey (through where they actually travel to Syria or Iraq) is weakly controlled in that sense<sup>14</sup>. Some scholars also underline the importance of Russian involvement in regards to this issue, saying that nowadays, the Russian presence has risen so much that “Russian has become the third language of Daesh”<sup>15</sup>. These authors emphasize the region of Adjara as well,

<sup>11</sup>Final Report of the Task Force on Combating Terrorist and Foreign Fighter Travel. (2015). Homeland Security Committee, <https://homeland.house.gov/task-force-on-terrorist-and-foreign-fighter-travel/>

<sup>12</sup>Hartman Anaya K., Persuasion Strategies in Terrorist Recruitment: The Case of ISIS, Leiden University, 2015, <https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/handle/1887/35008/Masters%20Thesis%20PDF.pdf?sequence=1>

<sup>13</sup>Ibid

<sup>14</sup>Gogudze G. and Kapanadze S., op. cit.

<sup>15</sup>Lang H. and Al Wari M., The Flow of Foreign Fighters to the Islamic State Assessing the Challenge and the Response, Centre for American Progress, March 2016, <https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/17132821/ForeignFighters-report.pdf>

taking into consideration the Muslim population of Adjara and their recruitment.

Nearly all authors have stressed out the importance of the threat of returnees. According to the studies examined, the threat of returning fighters is an actual issue nowadays, since the foreign fighters are being lured by the ideas of Caliphate, are being taught the tactics and then, after returning to their countries of origin, they represent a threat of carrying out terrorist attacks in those remote territories (Europe, Australia, Asia<sup>16</sup>). Moreover, nearly all authors claim that the brutal videos posted by the organization online are a special force for affecting the minds of future recruits.

The common grounds that the scholars have agreed upon include the strength of ISIS online propaganda, which is the most efficient tool for recruiting new fighters, the dissemination of the propaganda and the threat of returning fighters. The articles also studied focus on the threats caused by such worldwide recruitment, especially when new fighters are being picked from women or children from different countries of the world.

#### Methodology

This research paper mainly uses qualitative approach, focusing on literature review and analysis of press and articles. A part of this work examines the main tendencies of ISIS recruitment as a whole, covered by literature and scholarly articles, while the other half is concentrated on the issue of the recruitment from Georgian regions. International and ISIS press and media articles, as well as some documents that tackle the issue of Georgian IS fighters and steps against this threat, have been used as sources to base the analyses on. During the research, ISIS press and videos were studied and examined in the scope of the topic of the research. Addressing the issue of how the local government deals or tries to deal with the problem, Georgian National Security Strategy and media were examined, as well as Georgia's annual reports on terrorism to the Bureau of Counterterrorism

<sup>16</sup>Azzam, C., op. cit.  
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and Countering Violent Extremism of the U.S. Department of State of the years of 2014, 2015 and 2016<sup>17</sup>.

The main purpose of this study is to analyze both the reasons for Georgian citizens to join ISIS and the methods of the recruitment; hence the paper will try to give answers to the following questions: a) What are the peculiarities of the ISIS recruitment process in Georgia?; b) Why do Georgian citizens choose to join the Islamic State? Based on the covered literature and documents, the following hypothesis have been formulated: a) Numerous Georgian citizens are leaving Georgia to fight in the ranks of ISIS. b) Georgian citizens from Pankisi Gorge are driven by economic, social and psychological motives to join ISIS.

#### Manifestations of Radical Islam in Georgia

Even though Islam in Georgia dates back to the early history, the year 2011 can be considered as a year of change in the history of Islam in Georgia. That year the state adopted a "new legislative amendment into the country's civil code stating that religious minority groups with "historic ties to Georgia" or those defined as religions by members of the Council of Europe can register as legal entities of public law"<sup>18</sup>. Whether coincidental or not, this is the year of the start of the Arab Spring and drastic enlargement of the Daesh. With its development, the Islamic State started its active propaganda to lure as many new members from around the world as possible.

Until the time that the Georgian government started to assess the Muslim communities of the country as a state-level issue, these minorities had been being supported by Turkish side, and, evidently, did not enjoy freedom of expression much; despite the existence of some mosques in Georgia, the minority group felt "vulnerable" and "unconsidered"<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>17</sup>Chapter 2, Country Reports: Europe. (n.d.). Retrieved March 1, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2016/272231.htm>

<sup>18</sup>Georgia Adopts Law on the Status of Religious Minorities. (2011). CRRC. Retrieved March 1, 2017, <http://crrc-caucasus.blogspot.am/2011/07/georgia-adopts-law-on-status-of.html>

<sup>19</sup>Baramidze R., Islamic State and Georgia's Muslim Community. The Heinrich Boell Foundation, 17.06.2017, [http://ge.boell.org/en/2015/06/17/islamic-state-and-georgias-muslim-community#\\_ftn1](http://ge.boell.org/en/2015/06/17/islamic-state-and-georgias-muslim-community#_ftn1)



Some parts of the Muslim minorities of Georgia have supported one of the main goals of the Islamic State that is changing the world order in its structure. In a short term many representatives of Georgian youth from some regions started to feel the need to stand among the Jihadi fighters. Muslim youth of Georgia, unsatisfied with the social and legal condition they had been put in the state, "dissatisfied with existing traditional norms, viewing various threats and searching for various methods for eliminating injustice, including radical ones"<sup>20</sup> started to adjoin the Islamic State. These claims were later proved to be true based on the interviews conducted with the citizens living in Pankisi Gorge<sup>21</sup>. The above-mentioned factors contributed to the involvement of the ISIS recruitment processes from Georgia.

#### Reasons to become an IS fighter for Georgian citizens

As the literature studied suggests, the socio-economic background of a person plays a big role in the recruitment process, some connect it with education, others with the perception of Islam as a whole. The case of Georgians is not an exception. The young men, who flee their country in order to fight in Syria, also have their personal motives to act so. However, while the majority of the literature covered proposed that young men mostly from poor families choose to join ISIS in order to financially help their families, case studies in Georgia show that this is not necessarily true. As different interviews by BBC or CNN show the two main driving forces are the "desire to become a hero" and "radical islamization"<sup>22</sup>.

As mentioned earlier the rising interest in joining ISIS can be also explained by rising dissatisfaction of being a minority and being a part of Christian Orthodox society. Since Daesh is actively promoting Islam and urging the Muslims to stop living under the rule of "infidels", they become the ray of hope for Georgian Muslims to fight for their religion and get rid of the Christian governance. ISIS Georgian members themselves have underlined the importance of

<sup>20</sup>Ibid

<sup>21</sup>Demytrie R., Jihadist shadow hangs over Georgia's Pankisi Gorge, 21.04.2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36035312>

<sup>22</sup>Goguadze G. and Kapanadze S., op. cit.

following the organization and urged young men of Pankisi Gorge to join them: "Oh, my Muslim brothers, know that you are forbidden to live with the kafirs [infidels]"<sup>23</sup>.

Today the data on the size of the ISIS fighters from Georgia varies. The official position of Georgia is that only approximately 100 Georgians are fighting in the ranks of ISIS<sup>24</sup>. However, the videos by ISIS fighters try to show that the number is much larger.

#### Recruitment processes in Georgia

Since the literature and scholarly articles address the main methods ISIS uses to recruit new members, local press is more accurate on what's concerning specifically the case of recruitment from Georgia (numbers, specifics, etc.). As a Georgian newspaper "Rezonansi" reports, Georgia today plays a role of a "transit country for ISIS militants, and terrorist attacks are not ruled out on the territory of the country"<sup>25</sup>. The valley of Pankisi Gorge is most frequently seen in any news piece or articles that concern IS fighters of Georgia. Located in the Northern part of Georgia, Pankisi is close to Chechnya and the population of Pankisi Gorge, along with the so-called Kists (Muslim Georgians), is also comprised of Chechen fighters who fought against Russia in Chechen wars<sup>26</sup>. Having such backgrounds, the militants are an easy target to be recruited to fight for the Islamic State. Some scholars have expressed their ideas of the correlation between anti-Russian attitudes and recruitment. In their understanding, the recruiters often use Russia as leverage for waking up the spirit of revenge.

<sup>23</sup>Soon there will be time of beheading you - Video address to Georgians released on behalf of Islamic State. Retrieved March, 2017, <http://www.georgianjournal.ge/society/31860-soon-there-will-be-time-of-beheading-you-video-address-to-georgians-released-on-behalf-of-islamic-state.html>

<sup>24</sup>Mardasov, A. Georgia - A Transit Corridor for ISIS?, 28.06.2016, Forth Russ. <http://www.forth-russ.com/2016/06/georgia-transit-corridor-for-isis.html>

<sup>25</sup>Ibid

<sup>26</sup>Burchuladze N., The So-called Caucasian Governance of the Islamic State has a New Emir. Georgia: Georgian Journal, 31.07.2015, <http://www.georgianjournal.ge/military/31138-the-so-called-caucasian-governance-of-the-islamic-state-has-a-new-emir.html>

Press at times publishes news about detainment or sentencing of ISIS fighters of Georgian origin. On June 2015 a piece of news was spread all over Georgia that four people had been detained because of being related to the Islamic State. News like this only proves that the recruitment process of new young fighters from Georgia was in an active phase at that period. ISIS even uploaded and spread a video message, in which four jihadi fighters with the ISIS black flag were addressing their fellow Muslim brothers to join them in their "fight for justice"<sup>27</sup>. As it turns out from their speech, all four of them are Kists and have left Pankisi to start fighting in Syria.

In 2015 Huffington Post published an article, with pictures and short biographies on world's five most wanted Jihadists<sup>28</sup>. Among those was Tarkhan Batirashvili. He is also known as Omar the Chechen or Abu Omar al-Shishani. Omar the Chechen was a former officer at the Georgian Army and he also fought during the Chechen war against Russia. He is believed to have recruited tens of young Georgians from Pankisi Gorge. The influence and the position of Omar the Chechen within the ISIS only proves that the Muslim Georgian population of Pankisi Gorge play important role in the formation of ISIS foreign fighters.

On the other hand, some recruiters were actually based in the region and were recruiting on ground through using their power. During some interviews conducted in the region, the locals talked about mosques that were being opened rapidly all over the region and the propaganda of Arabic language in these mosques – all the attendants could study Arabic without any fees. The mosques and the language classes are of a concern for local people, who are unaware of where the funding of such endeavors comes from<sup>29</sup>. The issue of funding is deeper than it may seem from the first sight: if considered

<sup>27</sup>Civil Georgia (2015, November 23). Islamic State Group, Georgian-Language Propaganda Video Emerges. Retrieved January 09, 2018, from <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=28796>

<sup>28</sup>Tarabay J. These Are The World's 5 Most Wanted ISIS Jihadists, 27.06.2015, [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/06/27/isis-most-wanted-jihadist\\_n\\_7673466.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/06/27/isis-most-wanted-jihadist_n_7673466.html)

<sup>29</sup>Demytrie R., Jihadist shadow hangs over Georgia's Pankisi Gorge. BBC News, 21.04.2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36035312>

that the funding goes from the Islamic State itself, it becomes clear that the whole activities carried out under this funding are exceptionally aimed at recruiting and luring more and more perspective young fighters to their ranks. If so, by funding construction of mosques or Arabic language lessons, the ISIS leaders not only assure successful recruitment process here, but also secure that the new members of the organization are well educated in the religious sense.

While talking about the mosques and propaganda, one name should not be escaped mentioning - Aiuf Borchashvili – an imam in the village of Jokolo of Pankisi region. He, using his privileges as the imam, was helping young men from Pankisi to join fight in Syria and then was sentenced to 14 years for this in 2015<sup>30</sup>.

Today, the region of Pankisi Gorge is still serving as a platform for ISIS to recruit new young and fresh forces and minds. However, Georgian Government is today taking steps in order to at least lessen the numbers of its citizens that fight for ISIS, to not let more outflows from its regions.

### Steps against terrorism

Having such outflows of young Georgian citizens to terrorist organizations could not but be a concern for the local government. Latest two versions of National Security Strategy documents of Georgia have always included special points that were dedicated to underlining the importance of the issue of terrorism and of the fight against it.

### Issue of Terrorism In NSS documents of Georgia

The national security strategy documents of Georgia have tackled the matter of terrorism many times. The last amendments of national security document of Georgia were made in 2011, which explains why these amendments did not cover the matter of threat from the Islamic State and it's recruitment, however the document covers the matters of regional security. And even though the importance of fight against external forces in occupied territories is mentioned several times

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.



throughout the document, it here does not refer to the territories of Pankisi or Adjara, but the ones there were "occupied" by Russia in the August War of 2008. The document mentions that these regions now serve as a convenient platform for transnational organized crime and transfer of terrorists<sup>31</sup>.

Even before the issue of ISIS recruitment from Georgia reached its peak, the phenomenon of terrorism was included in its NSS documents. Considering that the document is 27 pages long, having terrorism mentioned 29 times is quite enough to claim that even in the days when ISIS was not yet recruiting from Georgia, the issue of terrorism still highly bothered the government.

The document also mentions that the government of Georgia "actively cooperates with the UN counterterrorism committee and strengthens the means to fight terrorism including the Armed Forces and the special forces of the law enforcement agencies"<sup>32</sup>. This is also a weighty fact in defense to the Georgian Government's activeness towards solving or trying to solve the problem of uprising terrorism.

The annual reports of countries to the Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism under the U.S. Department of State also include ones about Georgia. Since the years 2014 and 2015 were harsh in the sense of the activities carried out by ISIS, the Georgian annual reports were concentrated on ISIS, its enlargements and steps to be taken to fight it.

#### Georgia's Country Report of 2014 of the US DS

International media had many times touched upon the Georgian citizens being recruited by the Islamic State, when Georgian government started its way towards fighting the spread of international terrorism in Georgia in 2014. That's when the Georgian government announced to be "committed to provide humanitarian

support as part of Georgia's contribution to and membership of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL"<sup>33</sup>.

According to the report, the Georgian Government took steps both on the international arena and on the level of country's legislature. The amendments in laws were addressed towards strengthening the counterterrorism fight in Georgia and to ban, on a state level, any propaganda or recruitment of ISIS<sup>34</sup>. Moreover, the Georgian Bureau of Investigation established the Counter Terrorism Task force, which was aimed at creating "a state-level protective-security/rapid-reaction task force"<sup>35</sup>. This body is supposed to rapidly react to any kind of threat or supposed threat of terrorist act, as well as to prevent further development of the recruitment from the regions of Georgia.

Importance is also given to the financing of the terrorist organization, which, according to the report, Georgian government counts as equal of a crime as being an actual member of an organization. That is why, the state during these years joined international organizations that concentrate on fighting against financing terrorist organizations. These organizations include the Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL) and Financial Action Task Force (FATF)<sup>36</sup>.

Since terrorism is a matter of concern for many countries of the world, there have been some regional counterterrorism organizations created, a member of which Georgia also is. The Georgian government has been expressing its attitude towards terrorism and their actions towards helping the counterterrorism organizations through annual reports to the U.S. Department of State.

<sup>31</sup>National Security Concept of Georgia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, 2011, <http://www.mfa.gov.ge/MainNav/ForeignPolicy/NationalSecurityConcept.aspx?lang=en-US>

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

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<sup>33</sup>Chapter 2, Country Reports: Europe Overview, 2014, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2014/239406.htm>

<sup>34</sup>Ibid

<sup>35</sup>Investigation Division, Counterterrorism Task-Force, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, <https://investigative-gbi.georgia.gov/counter-terrorism-task-force>

<sup>36</sup>Chapter 2, Country Reports: Europe Overview, 2014, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2014/239406.htm>

### Georgia's Country Report of 2015 of the US DS

The following year's report also included the new steps that Georgia had been taking during the previous year. As the government of Georgia claims in this report, there had been taken many steps in the direction of securing Georgia's borders from not only any foreign threat, but for eliminating the chance of illegal transfer of people or future terrorists. Georgia started to concentrate more on the document security, especially on borders with Turkey, to ensure that travelling with fake documents (what recruits always used) was not possible. Considering the geographic position of Georgia and Turkey, the threat of the movement of terrorists could also be posed from the side of the sea (water transportation). This is why, as the report claims, "with significant U.S. support, the Georgian Coast Guard is better equipped to patrol the country's maritime borders"<sup>37</sup>.

While looking at both documents and trying to compare them, one can come to a conclusion that in the years of the apogee of the ISIS violent activities and active recruitment, Georgian government undertook some major steps in order to ensure security for its country and citizens on some level. The Georgian Government stresses out that the steps undertaken by them do not only concern the security of their own state but the whole region with its neighboring countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Turkey). According to the report the counterterrorist steps that the State of Georgia undertook in 2015 show that even in one-year period the Government had come up with new steps to strengthen the fight not only against the terrorist organizations themselves, but also against the recruitment of young Georgian citizens.

### Conclusion

The study tried to analyze the special features of the ISIS recruitment processes that have been taking place in Georgia. The research included literature, press and media, and official documents. As the literature suggests there are two major ways to recruit: online

and on ground. The process in Georgia includes both ways described in the literature. The online recruitment is considered to be the most effective in the matter numbers of people recruited, whereas the on ground recruitment, though being harder, is considered to be more efficient, since it leaves its effect in the roots.

Main incentives of the Georgian citizens from the region of Pankisi Gorge to join the ranks of ISIS are the following: feeling vulnerable as a minority under the rule of orthodox church, past experiences of fighting in the Chechen war, desire to become a hero and fight for justice, financial motives. These conclusions were made, based on both the press covered and the interviews that have been conducted with the locals by world's prominent news agencies.

Realizing the threat that the ISIS and its recruitment from Georgia represents, the Georgian government has been taking steps in order to at least reduce the number of people in the outflow towards the Daesh through the following means: annual reports to the US Department of State, participation in counterterrorism organizations, signing of treaties, raising the issue in the National Security Strategy document of the Republic of Georgia, etc.

<sup>37</sup>Chapter 2, Country Reports: Europe Overview, 2015, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2014/239406.htm>



NAREK MKRTCHYAN

## NEW LANGUAGE POLICY OF KAZAKHSTAN: A PROJECT OF KAZAKHIZATION?

Abstract

The article aims to analyze the role and influence of the language policy of independent Kazakhstan on identity construction processes of the Kazakhs. A language as a marker of ethnic identity emphasizes the boundaries of the particular ethnic entity. In the wake of post-Soviet nation-building, Nazarbayev's administration faced with challenges regarding the use of native language in various spheres. This paper also develops the claim that the marginalization of Kazakh's language and ethnic identity is the result of different historical processes carried out by Tsarist and Soviet authorities. The paper also tries to examine the language policy of independent Kazakhstan as a counter-hegemonic struggle aiming at overcome the negativity derived directly from Russian colonial administrations. The publicization of Kazakh language and transformation of the educational system tend to provide a wide range of opportunities to establish the hegemony of Kazakh identity or in other words to make *Kazakhs first among equals*.

**Keyword:** *Kazakh language, colonization, hegemony, kazakhization, nation-building.*

Introduction

After the declaration of independence, the government of the Republic of Kazakhstan pledged to revive the native language. The Nazarbayev administration initiated multidimensional policies in an attempt to develop and publicize Kazakh language within informal and formal institutions. The political system of sovereign Kazakhstan has worked hard to initiate various cultural and social policies to create a national identity for the titular group. Also, given the fact that Kazakhstan has historically been multicultural and multiethnic country, in which the Russian language played a dominant role, the promotion of Kazakh language has become a strategically important factor. Kazakhstan's language policy is the reflection of its domestic ethnic policies. In support of the idea of the construction of unified and harmonious Kazakhstani society, a considerable emphasis placed

on the promotion of other ethnic groups' languages, especially on Russian.

To understand contemporary identity and language problems in Kazakhstan the article will discuss various Tsarist and Soviet language policies towards Kazakhstan. Due to long-term Tsarist and Soviet political superiority, the Russian language became a primary medium of communication while transforming the Kazakh language into a poor marker of ethnic association.

The publicization of the Kazakh language became one of the necessary policies for the transformation of post-Soviet Kazakhstan and strengthening the ideas of ethnic identities statehood<sup>1</sup>. The language policy of post-Soviet Kazakhstan plays a vital role in shaping national and civic identities. To link native language with collective identity, the government of Kazakhstan promoted the idea of common language. Thus, language can be seen as a national-collective will. By manipulating the idea of language as a national-collective will, ruling authorities had an opportunity to found their hegemony<sup>2</sup>. Such kind of hegemonic processes would help Nazarbayev's administration to influence and alter people's sovietized thinking and worldviews shaped out within more than five decades.

Even after the establishment of independence many Kazakhs still prefer to speak Russian. The influence of Russian language caused various sociopolitical difficulties for Kazakhstan's nation-building processes. In this context, the establishment of national imagination among ethnic Kazakhs could be measured as a privileged policy. *Based on Benedict Anderson's conceptual thinking one can argue that identity is an "imagined community"*<sup>3</sup> shaped out through *narration*. The concept of "imagined communities" puts more emphasize on nation-building rather than nationalism. Therefore, communication (print-language) creates a sense of nationhood and triggers the rise of national identity by creating unified fields of exchange and

<sup>1</sup>Fierman W., "Kazakh Language and Prospects for its Role in Kazakh 'Goriness,'" *Ab Imperio* no. 2, 2005, pp. 393-423.

<sup>2</sup>Ives P., *Language and hegemony in Gramsci*, London: Pluto Press, 2004, pp. 111-112.

<sup>3</sup>Anderson B., *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso Press, 2006.

communication<sup>4</sup>. Thus, the production of national identity through Kazakh language is a long way project, which must be implemented not only by certain political authorities but also by the Kazakh's collective will. In the wake of nation-building processes, Nazarbayev administration tied the Kazakh language with the titular ethnic population of Kazakhstan population. The Kazakh as a state language is inclined to be also a significant ethnic symbol in supporting *Kazakhification* of the state<sup>5</sup>.

#### Nazarbayev's language policy

The revival of the national language in Kazakhstan is considered one of the key priorities for the successful nation and state-building processes. The language policy of independent Kazakhstan, especially the proliferation of Kazakh language, seems to be a denotative code of national identity. However, to success the latter process, it is necessary to transform Kazakh into a vernacular language, which could hardly happen shortly. The idea here is that Kazakhstan's language policy is only the very start of the great national project. The ethnic Kazakh elite being agents of the process of *kazakhification* faces a couple of specific difficulties. Firstly, Kazakh elite set up certain preconditions for the development of state language by referring negative ethnic experiences inherited from Russianness, next they have to be careful not to offend the emotional feelings and interests of ethnic Russians, who constitute approximately 24 % of the population<sup>6</sup>.

Another challengeable factor for the regime is the achievement of legitimacy. It is noteworthy to mention that all of the abovementioned policies government should organize under the umbrella of collective identity. Despite the establishment of ethnic management organizations Kazakhstan's government tries to set up a particular identity mechanism through which ethnic Russian, German, Uyghur, Tatar,

<sup>4</sup>Anderson B., op. cit., p. 44.

<sup>5</sup>See: Kesici Ö., "The Dilemma in the Nation-Building Process: The Kazakh or Kazakhstani Nation?", *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe*, Vol 10, No. 2011, pp. 31, 58.

<sup>6</sup>Results of the 2009 National population census in the Republic of Kazakhstan, Ed. by Smailov A., Astana: Agency on Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2011, p. 19.

Ukrainian or Korean citizens can consider the land in which they live as their homeland. In fact, the cornerstone of the project is the establishment of an institute of civic identity. The idea of *land* is essential to understand not only the tendencies of making Kazaks first among equals but also the civic values of identity construction. The fact that current territory of Kazakhstan historically had been native *land* of Kazakhs put the ethnic Kazakhs into a moral obligation to speak their native language. It is essential to mention that for other citizens with different ethnicity the idea of homeland should not be understood as an indicator of "otherness." Of course, Nazarbayev administration supports the idea of common homeland based on civic patriotism. As President Nazarbayev mentioned in the "*Strategy Kazakhstan 2050*" "*the basis of patriotism in Kazakhstan is equal rights for all citizens based on their share of responsibility for the honor of our homeland.*" Further, he emphasized the importance of Kazakh usage in supporting the peace and harmony: "*Language should function as a unifying influence for the people of Kazakhstan*" who should be worthy and respect history culture and language of Kazakhstan<sup>7</sup>.

#### Kazakh as a state language: Official policy

The process of strengthening of the status of Kazakh language has started since Soviet times. According to 1989 language law the Kazakh became state language and was used at all educational levels<sup>8</sup>. The process continued during first years of independence, and according to the 1992 Degree on Education Kazakh was confirmed as the state language, and in 1993 the first Kazakhstani Constitution defined Kazakh as the *state language* demoting the status of Russian as the *language of interethnic communication*. Although in the formal rhetoric President Nazarbayev repeatedly expressed his gratitude to

<sup>7</sup>Official Site of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Events of 14.12.2012, Address by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Leader of the Nation, N. Nazarbayev, Strategy "Kazakhstan-2050": new political course of the established state. [http://www.akorda.kz/en/addresses/addresses\\_of\\_president](http://www.akorda.kz/en/addresses/addresses_of_president)

<sup>8</sup>Matuszkiewicz R., "The language issue in Kazakhstan-institutionalizing new ethnic relations after Independence", *Economic and Environmental Studies*, Vol. 10, no. 2, 2010, p. 215.



the Russian language; he straightforwardly supported the development of an informal organization *Qazaq tili qoghamy* (*Kazakh language society*) devoted to the development of the role of Kazakh language in society<sup>9</sup>. So, Kazakhs were allowed to retain their indigeneity. In the case of post-Soviet Kazakhstan, the 'indigenization' of the country is represented by wresting control from Russian domination. If we consider that colonial subject is also produced by language, then Kazakh's public use of Russian language gives Russia an opportunity to use dominant discourses to its advantage. Kazakhstan's current tendencies to overcome *Russification* are similar to the model of Gramscian 'counter-hegemonic' politics. The critical point here is that the counter-hegemonic struggle of Kazakhs, regarding the language policy of Nazarbayev, is an attempt to re-indigenize not only Kazakhs' language but also culture and education. The hegemony of Kazakh language can be established by developing counter-hegemonic world conception. For example during the first days of its operation the *Qazaq tili* organization has been actively engaged in propagations of official language policy. The members (intellectuals, academics, public figures) of *Qazaq tili* organization emphasized *counter-hegemonic* world conception by claiming that Russian is a colonial language hence Kazakh should be served as the sole state language<sup>10</sup>. Indeed the Kazakh government supported ideologies of Kazakhification, but at the same time due to the deep roots of Russian language among Kazakhstani people, there was a risk of ethnic instability. Taking into consideration the necessity of the peace and stability of multiethnic society of Kazakhstan the article 7. 2 of the 1995 constitution defines that "*in state institutions and local self-administrative bodies the Russian language shall be officially used on equal grounds along with the Kazakh language*"<sup>11</sup>.

The civic discourse on language issues still exists in contemporary Kazakhstan. In Strategy Kazakhstan 2050 President Nazarbayev

simultaneously emphasizes the necessity of the promotion of the state language and importance of Russian language by mentioning that "*No one can ignore the fact that through the Russian language in centuries the Kazakhstan citizens gain additional knowledge, increase their perspective and communications both domestically and abroad*"<sup>12</sup>. Despite the existing discourse on bilingualism, there are *monolingualizing* tendencies in Kazakhstan. The *monolingualizing* tendencies in Kazakhstan are evident in different practices of society like *the law, education, mass media, etc.* According to the 1999 census, approximately 95 percent of ethnic Kazakhs of Kazakhstani population mentioned that they have proficiency in Kazakhs language<sup>13</sup>. Of course the results of the census could be contradictory, but it is obvious that there was a tendency to show their ethnic aspirations by confirming their proficiency in native language. In the same way, Bhavna Dave explains the census-based language politics of Kazakhstan as a demonstration of "*the 'steady success' of its ethnolanguage policies*"<sup>14</sup>.

Another important policy of national language promotion in Kazakhstan is the government's decision to change alphabet from Cyrillic to Latin.<sup>15</sup> Initially, Latin alphabet was replaced with Cyrillic one by Russian authorities to ease learning and understanding processes of Russian concepts<sup>16</sup>. The discourses on alphabet change

<sup>12</sup>Official Site of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Events of 14.12.2012, Address by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Leader of the Nation, N. Nazarbayev, Strategy "Kazakhstan-2050": New Political Course of the Established State.

<sup>13</sup> Dave B., Kazakhstan: Ethnicity, Language and Power, London: Rutledge, 2007, p. 113.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid, p. 114.

<sup>15</sup>The Latin Kazakh alphabet consists of 30 letters. There are 9 vowels and 21 consonants in this alphabet.

<sup>16</sup>In this context, one should emphasize the influential role of Ibray Altynsarın (1841–89) in supporting Russianness among the Kazakhs. He was an inspector of public schools for Turgai oblast (province), where he developed Russian-Kazakh school system. Furthermore, he made a significant contribution to the development of translation of Russian literature into Kazakh and introduced Cyrillic alphabet for the Kazakh language. During the Soviet period, the Kazakh alphabet was changed to Cyrillic to ease the learning processes of the Russian language. See, Bacon E., Central Asians under Russian rule: a study in culture change, Cornell University Press, 1966, pp. 101-102.

<sup>9</sup>Fierman W., op. cit., p. 410.

<sup>10</sup>Luong P. J., "The Transformation of Central Asia: States and Societies from Soviet Rule to Independence", Cornell University Press, 2004, p. 128.

<sup>11</sup>Section I, Article 7, point 2, Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

<http://www.akorda.kz/en/category/konstituciya>

have existed in Kazakhstan since the 1990s. In 1992 the director of the Institute of Languages of Academy of Sciences of Kazakhstan and chairman of *Qazaq tili* organization Abdulai Qaydarov raised the question of alphabet change, and in 1995 Turkologist Musaev came out with an initiative to combine elements of Kazakh Latin scripts and Turkish Latin scripts<sup>17</sup>. However, in 1996 State Committee for Nationalities Policy took a first official decision about the introduction of the Latin script in 1996<sup>18</sup>. The issues of alphabet change entered into political agenda in 2006 when President Nazarbayev spoke about the necessity of moving the Kazakh alphabet to Latin script<sup>19</sup>. This decision is an essential issue to understand ethnic aspirations of Kazakhstani elite. In 2012 the Latinization of Kazakh alphabet was recognized by president Nazarbayev as an essential aspect for modernization of Kazakh language, and as he mentioned: “*from 2025 we need to modernize our language to use Latin fonts and a Latin alphabet*”<sup>20</sup>. Of course, there would be various difficulties connected with existing Cyrillic based published literature, but the State Terminology Commission established in 1998<sup>21</sup> will work in an attempt to modernize and adopt terminology to Kazakh Latin alphabet. Thus, the replacement of Kazakh alphabet is a long-run but strategically important decision for Kazakhstan regarding country's integration into the global world. It seems that Kazakh Latin alphabet will give opportunities to Kazakhs to overcome the Russian (Soviet) colonial consciousness and to give birth to new national and sovereign identity among the Kazakhs. Thus, on 27 October 2017 President

<sup>17</sup>See: Landau J. M. and Kellner-Heinkele B., *Politics of Language in the Ex-Soviet Muslim States: Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan*, C. Hurst & Co. Publishers, 2001, p. 140.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid, p. 141.

<sup>19</sup>Tanayeva L., “The Politics of the Latin alphabet in Kazakhstan”, *The Annual of Language & Politics and Politics of Identity*, 2017, p. 79.

<sup>20</sup>Official Site of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Events of 14.12.2012, Address by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Leader of the Nation, N. Nazarbayev, Strategy “Kazakhstan-2050”: New Political Course of the Established State.

<sup>21</sup>Matuszkiewicz R., op. cit., p. 220.

Nazarbayev signed a decree to change Kazakhstan's official script for the Kazakh language from Cyrillic to Latin script<sup>22</sup>.

Despite the fact that the restructuring of Kazakhstan's educational system was in favor of Kazakh language, there are still many problematic issues regarding the low level of Kazakh skills in educational institutions. Kazakh and Russian medium schools were simultaneously established in Kazakhstan, in which both Russian and Kazakh languages are elective. However, as Fierman mentioned most mixed schools have both KMCs (Kazakh-medium classes) and RMCs (Russian-medium classes) and the growth of mixed urban schools from 242 in 1998 to 723 in 2004 is a sign both of the difficulties and success in expanding Kazakh-medium education in urban areas<sup>23</sup>. The opening of Kazakh speaking educational institutions would be transformed into counter-hegemonic spaces if there would be Kazakh textbooks and both students and teachers would have a perfect command of the state language.

One of the most efficient methods of dissemination of national ideas is what Anderson called “*print capitalism*”<sup>24</sup>. The lack of Kazakh-language published literature weakens the strengthening of vernacular language. Most of the textbooks are not introduced in Kazakh, and there are some school textbooks with both Russian and Kazakh titles. For example one of the textbooks of Kazakhstan published in 1997 entitled *Uchimsya I Uchim Govorit Po Kazakhskii* (Learn and teach to speak in Kazakh)<sup>25</sup>. Also, many textbooks in technical subjects in Kazakhstan are in Russian. In fact, the Russian language still has a dominant role in many educational institutions of Kazakhstan. Nevertheless, the creation of Kazakh language textbooks and curriculums would change the situation in favor of Kazakh language.

<sup>22</sup>Official Site of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, [http://www.akorda.kz/en/events/akorda\\_news/meetings\\_and\\_receptions/meeting-with-adilbek-dzhaksybekov-head-of-the-presidential-administration-and-marat-tazhin-first-deputy-head-of-the-presidential-administrat?q=Latin%20script](http://www.akorda.kz/en/events/akorda_news/meetings_and_receptions/meeting-with-adilbek-dzhaksybekov-head-of-the-presidential-administration-and-marat-tazhin-first-deputy-head-of-the-presidential-administrat?q=Latin%20script)

<sup>23</sup>Fierman W., “Language and Education in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan: Kazakh-Medium Instruction in Urban Schools”, *The Russian Review* 65, 2006, p. 102.

<sup>24</sup>Anderson B., op. cit., p. 44.

<sup>25</sup>Landau J. M. and Kellner-Heinkele B., op. cit., p. 200.



One of the aspects of Nazarbayev's innovative policies is the development of Kazakh educational system by international standards. The encouraging example of the said is the establishment of English language Nazarbayev University (2009) and Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools. The support of English in Kazakhstan being the representation of trilingual ideology of Nazarbaev's language policy is also a part of Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy. To change the orientation of *gifted* students from Russian language institutions of higher education and provide multidimensional knowledge, Nazarbayev set up preconditions for the development of English speaking or western institutions of higher education.

Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools in which education is in Kazakh, Russian and English, make a significant contribution to implementing and testing educational programs for kindergarten, pre-school education programs, and 12-year study<sup>26</sup>. Even after establishing such modern schools the Russian language continues to dominate in education processes. As mentioned by the director of Nazarbayev Intellectual school of Physics and Mathematics of Uralsk Sholpan Kadirova: *"The history of Kazakhstan and Geography should be taught only in Kazakh, Russian literature and informatics in Russian language and physics, chemistry, biology, and mathematics should be taught in team decisions together with foreign teachers"*<sup>27</sup>, whose lectures are often translated into Russian to ease the learning process.

Thus we can argue that since independence Kazakh language has not established itself not only as a language of science. Under this light, we want to emphasize the importance of incorporation of native language into the various *academic disciplines* for the creation of national identity. One of the most successful methods of counter-hegemonic politics is the creation of cultural hegemony among *others*. One should pay attention to the fact that resistance against "colonial" heritage takes palace through culture (literature, language).

<sup>26</sup>Ministry Of Education And Science Republic Of Kazakhstan, National Report On The State And Development Education And Science Of The Republic of Kazakhstan (Short Version), Astana, 2011, p.63

<sup>27</sup>You Tube (Aug. 2012), Хабап, НИИИ, пyc, [Video File] Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LuZUGDAcVVQ>

The example of discourse on literature/cultural resistance would be the works of Soviet Armenian prominent writer Hrant Matevosyan, in which resistance is represented not only by *"bringing of undesirable topics into literature but also in discourse strategies"*<sup>28</sup>. Such kind of manifestations could hardly be imagined in Kazakhstan, in which discourse works in favor of Russians. Since Soviet times Russian has been considered as a language of science and everyday life in many former Soviet republics. However, it is important to mention that the languages like Armenian and Georgian did not suffer due to the strong Russian influence, but conversely owing to the translation, the terminology of various sciences had been adopted to the Armenian language. Indeed, this is also speaking about the languages' rich vocabulary. As a consequence, the classes of history, literature, philosophy, physics, chemistry, biology, and even astronomy were in the native Armenian language.

The media is making a significant contribution to the reproduction of certain ideologies. According to the law on languages, at least fifty percent of media broadcasting should be in the Kazakh language<sup>29</sup>. Russian language TV programmes broadcasting in Kazakhstan played a pivotal role regarding socialization. Mass media became an excellent tool in the hands of Kazakhstani elite to transform members of the society into the consumers of their ideologies. The prioritization of Kazakh language in the spheres of mass media gives opportunities for the Kazakh language to become quite powerful regarding ideological leadership. However, even after such legal backing, many broadcasters of Kazakhstan have ignored the spirit of the law by granting Kazakh a secondary importance<sup>30</sup>. Indeed, the situation is problematic for the government, and even the Ministry of Communications and Information mentioned that only 10 percent of

<sup>28</sup>Bayadyan H., "Soviet Armenian Identity and Cultural Representation", In Representations on the Margins of Europe: Politics and Identities in the Baltic and South Caucasian States, Ed. by T. Darieva, W. Káschuba, Frankfurt/New York: Campus Verlag, 2007, p. 208.

<sup>29</sup>Dave B., "A Year of Growing Unrest and Opposition", Ed. by Peter Rutland in Annual Survey of Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union: 1997- The Challenge of Integration, M.E. Sharpe, 1998, p. 369.

<sup>30</sup>Fiermann W., op. cit., p. 408.



television was broadcasted in Kazakh<sup>31</sup>. According to Article 10 of the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan 'On television and radio broadcasting,' the weekly broadcasting time in Kazakh cannot be less than taken all languages together<sup>32</sup>.

The policies of Nazarbayev regime to make the indigenous language as the state language have also symbolic power aiming to create a sense of domination. Kazakhs' intentions to prioritize the role of their language in the multiethnic country seem to be a tendency to attain official and exclusive status for their ethnicity. Although the constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan defines that Kazakh and Russian shall be used on equal grounds, the mastering of Kazakh is becoming obligatory for non-Kazakh speaking people. Every citizen of Kazakhstan who wants to work in high official positions should learn Kazakh because since 1992 a program has been initiated by the Kazakhstani government to translate all official documentation into the state language<sup>33</sup>.

The mastering of Kazakh language is also a pledge for a good career in Kazakhstan. The Article 41.2 of the state constitution defines that "A citizen of the Republic shall be eligible for the office of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan if he is by birth not younger than forty and has a perfect command of the state language"<sup>34</sup>, and accordingly the Article 58. 1 of the same constitution states that "The

<sup>31</sup>In Kazakhstan, 10% of TV broadcasting is conducted in Kazakh, *Electronic Publication, (В Казахстане 10% телепередачи ведется на казахском языке, Семейское издание, (In Russian), <https://www.zakon.kz/201358-v-kazakhstan-10-televeshanija.html>*

<sup>32</sup>Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan on January 18, 2012 No. 545-IV on broadcasting with amendments and supplements as of 01.01.2017, (Закон Республики Казахстан от 18 января 2012 года № 545-IV о телерадиовещании, с изменениями и дополнениями по состоянию на 01.01.2017 г.), (in Russian), [https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc\\_id=31114820#pos=232;-108](https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=31114820#pos=232;-108)

<sup>33</sup>The efforts to promote official documents in Kazakh are encouraged by some state sponsored programs like "Conception of Broadening the Sphere of Use of Kazakh Language 2006", "The State program for the development and functioning of languages in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2011-2020" adopted by the Decree of the President of Republic of Kazakhstan No. 110 dated June 29, 2011 etc.

<sup>34</sup>Section III, Article 41, point 2, Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, adopted by referendum August 30, 1995, <http://www.akorda.kz/en/category/konstituciya>  
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*Chambers shall be headed by their chairpersons who are elected by the Senate and the Majilis from among the deputies who have a perfect command of the state language"*<sup>35</sup>. Thus, administrative spheres of Kazakhstan are among the most influential areas reflected by the *kazakhization* policies. Since the first years of independence, a visible shift has been recorded in state apparatus regarding ethnic composition: ethnic Kazakhs started to predominate in various governmental and administrative institutions.

Due to some factors (growth rate, the return of ethnic Kazakhs, and immigration of other nationalities), the use of Kazakh language is growing in Kazakhstan. Indeed, under such conditions, Russian language competence can be diminished. On the other hand, the public use of Russian in social institutions created some obstacles for the promotion of Kazakh language identity. The manifestation of the later became evident especially during the emigration of ethnic Kazakhs from Diaspora communities. The representatives of Kazakh Diaspora communities in Mongolia and China have preserved their identity, culture, and language better than Kazakhstan's Kazakhs<sup>36</sup>. Language is among the most important markers of identity and belonging to a nation. In Strategy Kazakhstan 2050 Nazarbayev conceptualized the Kazakh language as a *spiritual pivot* of Kazakh nation, which should be developed by the active use of it in all areas of society<sup>37</sup>. One of the efficient ways of the popularization of Kazakh language in different spheres of the society is the incorporation of the state language standards into inter-personal communications. The workplaces of Kazakhstan are among the most critical areas for the strengthening the position of Kazakh state language. However, the state-owned language policies have been negatively affected by the use of Russian language in workplaces. The problem became much more provocative during repatriation to Kazakhstan. Furthermore, at first glance, it

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Kuscu I., Ethnic Return Migration and Public Debate: The Case of Kazakhstan, IOM, International Organization for Migration, 2005, pp. 8-9.

<sup>37</sup>Official Site of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Events of 14.12.2012, Address by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Leader of the Nation, N. Nazarbayev, Strategy "Kazakhstan-2050": New Political Course of the Established State, [http://www.akorda.kz/en/addresses\\_of\\_president](http://www.akorda.kz/en/addresses_of_president)  
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seems that there would be no problem after repatriation. However, diaspora Kazakhs faced difficulties connected with language in the homeland. The employment for ethnic diaspora Kazakh became a problem because of their zero-knowledge of Russian. To solve the problems, Kazakhstani government amended the Law on Migration and in 2007 an article was added to the Law according to which 'oralmans' or Kazakh return migrants would have opportunities to learn Russian language in temporary accommodation centers<sup>38</sup>. The amendments seem to be quite contradictory to Kazakh government decisions regarding language policies. Ironically speaking in order to become full members of the Kazakh society, the *oralmans* should learn Russian language. Thus, this phenomenon is a compelling case to understand the necessity of the establishment of Kazakhs' cultural hegemony to encourage language policy both at state and society levels.

However, the roots of Russian language are really quite profound, and the language policy of Nazarbayev is just the start of counter-hegemonic struggle, and nobody knows how long it will last. During one of his speeches in the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan President Nazarbayev told: "*I dream of the day when I will speak the state language, and everyone will understand me*"<sup>39</sup>.

### ***Conclusion***

To conclude, the article examined the language policies of independent Kazakhstan and its role on national identity formation processes. The revival of Kazakh language is comprehended as an essential medium to replace Soviet identity with new national one. The paper argued that the destructive impact of Russian language has the potential to be transformed into a positive source of national identity formation. The Russian language is considered as a barrier for ethnic Kazakhs, and the overcoming of that language barrier will establish and strengthen new post-Soviet national identity. However,

the Russian language has quite deep roots among the ethnic Kazakhs, and the creation of the hegemony of Kazakh identity by the native language is possible only through the establishment of Kazakh's cultural hegemony in the society. Nazarbayev's language policy is only the start of 'counter-hegemonic struggle' towards *indigenization* and *khazkhification* of Kazakhs. The policies of Kazakh elites to prioritize the role of their language in the multiethnic country seem to be a trend to attain official status for their ethnicity. Thus, current mandated use of Kazakh as a state language is more effective at an administrative or ceremonial level, than at the societal (vernacular) level. Moreover, the issue of identity and language cannot be finally solved by a state authority or a successful leader alone, as long as a society not been able to reveal a large part of the intelligentsia, which will take upon its shoulders that important task. However, no one can argue that Nazarbayev's language and educational policies of national identity lead to the successful development of identity, language, and culture. The latter is a responsible social order to accompany the social processes in the proper national course of reforming the way of lives.

<sup>38</sup>Kuscu I., "Kazakhstan's Oralman Project: A Remedy for Ambiguous Identity?" Indiana University, Central Eurasian Studies: Pro Quest, 2008, p. 149.

<sup>39</sup>Lillis J., Kazakhstan: Astana Emphasizing Ethnic Harmony Following Kyrgyz Violence, Eurasianet, 2010, <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/62251>

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS AT THE INSTITUTE OF  
ORIENTAL STUDIES, NAS RA

ON THE IRAQI KURDISTAN INDEPENDENCE REFERENDUM

On 27 October, 2017 a roundtable discussion on the independence referendum in Iraqi Kurdistan was organized at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia.

In the opening speech the director of IOS, academician Ruben Safrastyan emphasized the importance of the topic for Armenia as well as in the geopolitical context and represented his evaluation of the current situation.

The keynote speaker was Mushegh Ghahriyan, a researcher at the Department of International Relation of IOS. He represented the political and economic situation in Iraqi Kurdistan prior of the referendum, the reasons triggering the Kurdish leadership to hold a referendum. M. Ghahriyan also summed up the stance of Turkey, Iran, USA and EU on this issue and represented 3 possible scenarios about the development of situation.

A question-and-answer and discussion followed M. Ghahriyan's speech, where Professor Vahan Bayburdyan and other researchers of IOS Tatevik Manukyan, Levon Hovsepyan, Arax Pashayan, Armen Manvelyan, Zvart Hovsepyan expressed their viewpoints, appraisals and notices.

After the discussion, assessing the approaches and opinions represented during the roundtable, R. Safrastyan noted, "I can emphasize impartially, that they are not only interesting, but also well-grounded. Particularly, the report of the keynote speaker is balanced, conclusions are a result of serious research.

This discussion proved that our specialists are capable of studying the issues from different angles. In this regard the presence and remarks of Professor Vahan Bayburdyan were very

important taking into account decades of experience he gained during both scientific and diplomatic work.

I have already formulated my approaches to this issue and stated it publicly. I am sure that the independence referendum must be observed as a step in the long path of the establishment of Kurdish state and the significance of it must not be overestimated.

At the same time I think that the Kurdish factor will become more significant and there is a potential of further escalation in the geopolitical rivalry in the Middle East between global and regional actors. In my opinion, to some extent it is similar to the geopolitical struggle between the British Empire and Russian Empire in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which is often is described as The Great Game.

The escalation of geopolitical conflict will affect the Kurdish factor and the developments around it will become more interesting for scientists and at the same time difficult to predict. I think that we will have further discussions on this topic".



**ARMENIAN-POLISH COOPERATION: PAST, PRESENT AND PROSPECTS**

On 10 November the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Armenian National Academy of Sciences and the University of Warsaw organized a roundtable discussion entitled «Armenian-Polish Cooperation: Past, Present and Prospects». The Polish side was represented by Jaroslaw Turlukowski, Mikhal Sadlowski, Patrik Kalinowski and Jakub Khovanec from the University of Warsaw. Researchers from various departments of IOS of NAS RA as well as from the Armenian State Pedagogical University participated in the discussion.

The director of the Institute of Oriental Studies, academician Ruben Safrastyan and Jaroslaw Turlukowski delivered an opening speech stressing the high level of Armenian-Polish relations and the importance of scientific discussions.

The Chair of the Department of Eastern Sources and Historiography Azat Bozoyan represented the social and economic life of the Armenian community in Poland, its activities, the self-governing system of Armenians, as well as the relations with Polish authorities in 14-18<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the conversion of the Armenians to the Catholicism.

Deputy chair of the Faculty of History and Philosophy of the Armenian State Pedagogical University Hayk Grigoryan spoke about the reactions towards the Polish rebellion in 19<sup>th</sup> century in the Armenian press. There was a difference how the Eastern Armenian and Western Armenian newspapers covered these events. The ones in Western Armenia were sympathetic to the Polish insurgency against the Russian Empire, while the newspapers in the eastern part of Armenia, which was under Russian rule, mainly had a critical and disapproving approach. Grigoryan also represented the situation in the Armenian

community in the 18th century, the policy of Polish authorities towards the Armenians.

Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies, academician Ruben Safrastyan spoke about the modern era of Armenian-Polish relations and stressed the importance of further development of bilateral relations in the light of complicated geopolitical situation in the world. In this regard R. Safrastyan highlighted the role of Parliamentary diplomacy.

A discussion and question-and-answer followed. The participants of the roundtable expressed their thoughts and views on the issues of history and politics.

**RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN SYRIA**

On 24 November the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Armenian National Academy of Sciences held a roundtable discussion on the recent developments in Syria. The keynote speakers were researchers of the Department of Arab Countries Arax Pashayan, PhD, Gor Gevorgyan, PhD, and Ararat Kostanyan. The director of IOS, academician Ruben Safrastyan delivered an opening speech and shared his thoughts on the discussed topic.

In her speech Arax Pashayan touched upon a possible resolution of the Syrian crisis and the policy of Turkey, Iran and Russia were analyzed. A. Pashayan stressed out that, that the defeat of Daesh may bring the resolution of conflict closer. The liberation of Al-Bukamal from Daesh, a settlement on Syria-Iraq border, is of key importance as the two were competing who will reach there first. Now around 90% of the territory of Syria is under the control of the government forces.

According to the specialist, the summit of the Presidents of Russia, Iran and Turkey in Sochi in in mid-November fixed, that these three countries were able to find the key to the political solution of the Syrian conflict. Russia maintained its presence in the Middle East. Turkey succeeded in strengthening its positions in Syria, counteracted the formation of Kurdish autonomy and pumped Syria's oil to the black market. Iran also strengthened its positions in the region. A. Pashayan said that 2-3 years ago the format Russia-Iran-Turkey was unthinkable, however it had was a significant successes.

Pashayan paid attention to the rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia in the context of Syrian conflict.

To sum up, she concluded that the winner of the process was Syrian government, meanwhile the loser were Syrian people. Now Syria is under the influence of the countries, which were able to reach an agreement.

Gor Gevorgyan spoke about the formation of the new correlation of forces and the role of Egypt in the Middle East. In spite of the crisis after the Egyptian revolution, the country has maintained its leading positions in the Arab world. He outlined the importance of contacts between Cairo and Tehran in overcoming the Syrian crisis. G. Gevorgyan said, that the position of Egypt coincides with the ones of Iran and Russia in terms of maintaining Syria's territorial integrity.

Gevorgyan stated that a new portrait of the Middle East is under formation with old actors and new challenges. He outlined some points of that portrait – the renaissance of Egypt, a renewed Turkey, which profited from the process and is pushing or pushed forward its policy of Neo-Ottomanism. Iran also expanded its influence in the region.

Ararat Kostanyan's report addressed Al-Nusra Front, a radical Islamic group, which controls territories in Idlib province of Syria. Kostanyan stressed out the importance of the liberation of Deir ez-Zor province as more than 40% of Syria's oil reserves are concentrated there. The researcher supposed that the defeat of Daesh does not mean the end of war in Syria as Al-Nusra Front and Kurdish forces keep controlling vast territories in the north of Syria.



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