

NIKOLAY HOVHANNISYAN

**FORMATION OF THE
TRANSCAUCASIAN-MIDDLE EASTERN
GEOPOLITICAL REGION**



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YEREVAN 2000



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PREFACE

The 1990s became a turning point in the world history. In that period took place many important events which impacted decisively on the destiny of mankind and defined the main directions of political, economic, ideological and cultural development of the contemporary world in the next XXI century.

Among these events, changing radically the political landscape of the world, we would like to mention the end of the cold war, end of an era, terrorizing during forty years the peoples of our planet by possibility of nuclear war, the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the liquidation of the world system of socialism and its political, economic and military structures, including Warsaw Pact military organization, ceasation of bipolar world and formation of unipolar world at the head of the United States of America.

These changes aroused quite new political situation in the world which in its turn put new tasks before the peoples, political forces, political parties, statesmen, etc.

But these changes did not leave the world without problem or the problems did not become less. On the contrary, instead of old ones new problems appeared which make the political, economic, social and psychological life very strained.

One of the characteristic features of our changing world was the appearance on the political stage of new independent states, particularly due to the collapse of the USSR, Yugoslavia, Chekhoslovakia, etc., and formation of new geopolitical regions, mainly at the space of the ex-Soviet Union. We mean at minimum four new geopolitical zones: Baltic (Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia), Western (Belarus, Ukraine), Central Asian (Kazakhstan, Kyrgizistan, Tadjikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) and Transcaucasian which consists of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

This new phenomenon requires serious study and it, we hope, will

facilitate the better understanding of the problems of the contemporary world and finding of more optimal ways for their solution.

We have to keep in mind that the global and regional issues are closely interconnected and impact on each other. The study of the regional issues plays a certain role in understanding of global problems and the international situation and thus it would serve for the noble purpose of liquidation of dangerous centers of conflicts and pave way for mutual understanding and cooperation in different fields.

The paper deals with the elucidation of some principal aspects of formation of the Transcaucasian-Middle Eastern geopolitical region. This problem is large and complicated one and, naturally, it is not possible to embrace all questions in one paper. The author's aim is to highlight such key problems as the background of the origin of the Transcaucasian-Middle Eastern geopolitical region, the mechanism of its action, the main actors of this new region and their political ambitions, geostrategic significance of the region, etc.

1. Historical, Geographical and Political Background

Transcaucasia or South Caucasus historically always was connected with the Middle East. Indeed, it was an organic part of the Middle Eastern political, economic, religious and cultural realities. The three main states of Transcaucasia - Armenia, Alvanq (Caucasian Albania) and Georgia were active factors of the Middle Eastern political life. The geographical proximity gave them an opportunity for close and constant contacts, exchange of cultural and moral values between them. They impacted on each other. Armenia, Alvanq and Georgia sometimes were allies of different states and empires of the Middle East, sometimes they appeared in hostile camps.

The states of the region - Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Byzantine Empire, the Arab Khalifate, Ottoman Empire etc., played a decisive role in the destiny of the Transcaucasian countries and their peoples. The

Transcaucasian states very often were occupied by the above mentioned states, but every time they succeeded to restore their statehood. And there were periods when they became so strong that could keep not only their independence, but also enlarge their territories at the expense of their Middle Eastern neighbours.

Armenia played an outstanding role in the political life of the Transcaucasia and in international relations of the Middle East during the Artashid dynasty (189 B.C. - 1 AD), especially during the reign of the Armenian king Tigran the Great (95- 55 B.C.). He had created a powerful state and attached to his Empire Cappadocia, Mesopotamia, Phoenicia, Syria, Palestine, Judea, etc. His realm extended from the Caspian Sea across the Middle East to the Mediterranean Sea and to the borders of Egypt. After defeating the Parthian king, he proclaimed himself "King of the Kings" and challenged the Roman Empire. For a short period Armenia was the most powerful state in the Transcaucasia and the Middle East. Armenia preserved its significance in further centuries too.

A significant role was playing in the Transcaucasia and the Middle East also Georgia in the XII-XIV centuries.

In the XVII century the major part of the Transcaucasia was occupied and divided between the Persian and Ottoman Empires. But at the beginning of the XIX century the whole Transcaucasia was attached to the Russian Empire. So during three centuries, up to 1990s, the Transcaucasia ceased to be an independent political entity and did not play any role in the political life of the region.

Despite this fact, the rich and multiplan relations existing throughout the centuries between the Transcaucasia and the Middle East, was not forgotten. They had left deep trace in the memory of the Transcaucasian peoples. That is why, when at the beginning of the 1990s the Transcaucasia again appeared on the political scene as an independent entity, it was so easy, even natural, to make bridge to the Middle East. The peoples of Transcaucasia were prepared historically, geographically, politically and psychologically for close political, strategic and economic cooperation with their ancient Middle Eastern neighbors. >

2. Political Composition of Independent Transcaucasian Entity

The wave of political changes which embraced the whole Soviet Union, swept over its southern corner - the Transcaucasia too. At the end of 1980s here started organized and strong national movements for large political rights and full equality, which later turned into a movement for political independence. During 1990-1991 Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia had declared their independence. It received a juridical background when the presidents of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus signed a declaration in December 1991, on dissolution of the Soviet Union, stressing that the USSR had ceased its existence and cannot be regarded further as a subject of international law.

On the base of these decisions the independence of three Transcaucasian Republics was recognized by the International community. They became members of the United Nations, the European Council and other international organizations. Due to this fact the Transcaucasia again appeared on the world political scene as an independent political entity with its own political, economic, cultural and ethnic-national problems.

Among these problems the most dangerous and keen were the ethno-political conflicts. The Transcaucasia, the first in the ex-Soviet space, became a dangerous zone of ethno-political clashes, embracing Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. We mean the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between the Azeris and Armenians, and the South Ossetian and Abkhazian conflicts in Georgia between the Georgians and Abkhazians, Georgians and Ossetians.

As a result of long and bloody struggle the Nagorno-Karabakh and Abkhazia declared themselves as Republics, refusing to recognize anymore the Azeri and Georgian jurisdiction and sovereignty over them. The Nagorno-Karabakh Republic did not recognize the Azeri domination which was imposed on it in 1921-1923 by the bolshevick-communist leaders of Soviet Russia and Soviet Azerbaijan against the will of the local Armenian population which formed an overwhelming majority of that region. Now NKR has all attributes of a state: Constitution, adopted by its people, President, Government, Parliament and other

state bodies, and is functioning as a State. Under its jurisdiction are all internal questions: economic, social, educational, cultural, health service, internal security, etc.

In the analogous situation is Abkhazia, rejecting the Georgian sovereignty. In the territory of Abkhazian Republic are acting only Abkhazian laws and Georgia has not any influence on that Republic.

The Nagorno-Karabakh Republic and Abkhazia are not recognized by the International organizations and International community as an independent states. But they are de-facto independent states.

Their existence in the capacity of de-facto independent states is a reality which is impossible to ignore. It impacts on the political situation and formation of political climate in the whole Transcaucasia and beyond its borders. And many states and International organizations are obliged to take into account this peculiar situation and to contact with the NKR and Abkhazia. We mean first of all the USA, Russia and France contacting with the leaders of the NKR through the Minsk group of the OSCE, the European Council, the representatives of the USA Congress and Parliaments of other countries, World Bank, etc.

So we can say that the Transcaucasia now consists of three de-jure independent states (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) and two de-facto independent states (the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic and Abkhazia).

After the collapse of the USSR, the Transcaucasia had appeared in the focus of the Middle Eastern countries, first of all Turkey, Iran, as well as Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, etc. For them was opened a new field for political, economic and strategic activity. And they did and continue to do everything in order to incorporate the Transcaucasian Republics into the Middle Eastern geopolitical, economic and cultural structures.

Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia in their turn also aspire to establish large scaled cooperation with the Middle Eastern countries, understanding their vital importance for their national security, political stability and economic development.

So we can confirm that the Middle East and the Transcaucasia are coming towards each other.

Due to this phenomenon a new situation came into presence, fully different of the situation, which existed prior to the liquidation of the Soviet Union.

First, by the collapse of the Soviet Union from the Middle Eastern arena had disappeared one of the superpowers, which played for a long time very active, sometimes decisive role in the Middle Eastern affairs;

Second, the significance and role of the USA in the Middle Eastern-Transcaucasian affairs had increased unprecedentedly;

Third, on the Middle Eastern scene had appeared three new Transcaucasian independent countries - Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, who are still weak politically, economically and from the point of view of their military potential. They cannot represent any serious danger for the countries of the region, as the ex-Soviet Union;

Fourth, the above-mentioned situation brought to the change of balance of forces and establishment of new balance of powers in favour of the most powerful countries of the Middle East - Turkey and Iran;

Fifth, resulting from the formation of new geopolitical region and incorporation of the Transcaucasian Republics in the different Middle Eastern structures the problems of the Transcaucasia were added to the old problems of the Middle East. As it is well known the Arab-Israeli conflict is the most old conflict in the world. Now to this conflict were added the Nagorno-Karabakhian, Abkhazian and South-Ossetian conflicts. It makes the region more explosive.

3. The Main Actors and Their Geopolitical Goals

The countries, located in the Transcaucasian-Middle Eastern region, and the states, which geographically do not belong to this region, but have vital interests, pursue different geopolitical and economic interests. We call them main actors, because they have enormous possibilities and influence for the formation of the political situation in the region and the balance of power, they keep in their hands the keys of the conflict resolution, they are capable to define the main directions of political and economic development and future of the region.

Taking into consideration these factors we divide the main actors into three groups.

In the first group we include, naturally, the three countries of the Transcaucasia - Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. We can include in this group also two de-facto independent states of the region - the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic and Abkhazia which are playing certain role in the political life of the Transcaucasia.

They all had declared that one of the main aims of their foreign policy is to have good and friendly relations with all their neighboring countries. But in fact the vectors of their policy have different directions.

Azerbaijan is openly oriented to his "elder brother" Turkey. They are cooperating closely practically in all fields of political, economic and cultural life, as well as in the military field. In fact they are allies.

The relations of Azerbaijan with Georgia are very warm and they are cooperating mainly in the transferring the Caspian oil from Azerbaijan through Georgia to Turkey. This is a powerful lever in the hands of Azerbaijan to press on Georgia, who is interested very much in the transferring of the Caspian oil through her territory.

As for the relations of Azerbaijan with another powerful state of the region - Iran, Azerbaijan during the presidency of Elchibey had occupied an open hostile attitude towards Iran. Now it would be true to qualify the Azeri-Iranian relations as cool and not cordial. Between them periodically occurred different problems and Azerbaijan every time is looking towards Turkey and the Western countries.

Armenia is the only country in the region with whom Azerbaijan has not established normal relations, including diplomatic ones. Moreover, Azerbaijan together with Turkey had imposed blockade on Armenia and the NKR, accusing Armenia in aggression and support of NKR in her struggle for self-determination and freedom.

The second country of the first group - Georgia develops very close relations both with Azerbaijan and Turkey. Usually their leaders qualify their relations friendly, having strategic importance. That is why some sources prefer to speak about the formation of Ankara-Tbilisi-Baku axis. The realization of this project would change the balance of power in the region in favour of these three countries which, consequently, would be in contradiction with the interests of Armenia, Iran and Russia.

Georgia has good relations also with Armenia. Their leaders constantly declare about brotherly relations between two neighboring countries.

The Georgian - Iranian relations also have to be qualified as normal. But the political and economic contacts between them are limited and not developed so much. The reason of it, as it seems to us, is in the approach of Georgia to the Middle Eastern problems. Georgia is more oriented to the Azeri-Turkish areal, regarding it more preferable from the point of view of her national interests.

It is necessary to pay attention also to the following fact. Both Azerbaijan and Georgia aspire to become as soon as possible members of Western political, economic and military structures, including NATO. The Georgia's and Azerbaijan's attitude in these questions has strained the relations with Russia. Iran and some Arab countries also are worried about the new orientation of Georgia and Azerbaijan. It concerns Armenia too.

The third member of the first group Armenia, after becoming an independent state, had declared that one of her main principles of foreign political doctrine is to establish and develop friendly relations with her four neighbors - Turkey, Iran, Azerbaijan and Georgia. But she did not succeed in this field and it is not her fault.

Armenia has friendly relations only with Iran and Georgia and their further preservation and development is vital for Armenia, for her national security and economic development.

Armenia could not normalize her relations with Turkey and Azerbaijan. Turkey demands from Armenia to pay very high price for the establishment of diplomatic relations, putting forward three preconditions: a) do not accuse Turkey for the genocide of the Armenians conducted by the Turkish leaders in 1915; b) Armenia has to make an official announcement that she has no territorial claims towards Turkey (i.e. Western Armenia which is under the Turkish domination); c) Armenia must not support the NKR in her struggle for liberation and self-determination, on the contrary, she must force NKR to accept the Azeri option of the solution of the Karabakh problem, based on the principle of restoration of the Azeri domination over the NKR.

Armenia, naturally, rejected the Turkish preconditions, considering that not only Armenia is interested in the normalization of relations, but Turkey too, and the normalization of the Armenian-Turkish relations is

possible only on the principle of equality, without any preconditions.

And it is necessary to remind that Turkey had closed her borders with Armenia, thus imposing a blockade on her eastern neighbor.

As for Armenian-Azeri relations, we have talked already about it and there is no necessity to repeat it again.

From the three Transcaucasian Republics only Armenia has close and friendly relations with Russia. In 1997 they signed a Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, including military support. This Treaty serves for ensuring of the national security of the Republic of Armenia. At the same time Armenia has friendly relations with the USA and the countries of European Union, and is successfully developing political, economic and cultural relations with them, but without pretending to become a member of NATO.

It is not difficult to note that the Transcaucasia is far to be regarded as a united entity by its geopolitical aims. In fact, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia pursue different policies and it is one of the reasons why the region could not be regarded as stable.

Armenia, taking into account the existing circumstances and desiring to change the situation, put forward a new plan of a Pact of Stability and Security in the Transcaucasia on the base of the formula 3+2+3. The Pact of Stability according to the suggestion of Armenia has to include Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia(3) + Turkey and Iran(2) + the USA, Russia and the EU(2).

The Armenian proposal has supporters, as well as opponents.

It seems us that this proposal is realistic. The format of the Treaty includes not only the Transcaucasian three Republics, but also two of the most influential countries of the Middle East and three most powerful states of the contemporary world - the USA, Russia and the main Western countries, united in the EU, such as England, France, Germany, Italy, etc.

On our view the conclusion of the Pact of Stability and Security would create favourable conditions for the resolution of many Transcaucasian problems, and open great perspectives for political and economic cooperation, for stability, peace and security in the Transcaucasian-Middle Eastern geopolitical region.

The second group of states consists of the Middle Eastern countries - Turkey, Iran, as well as some Arab countries and Israel.

Turkey, taking advantage of Russia's temporarily weakness after the collapse of the USSR, attempts to become the Transcaucasian-Middle Eastern regional superpower, to strengthen her positions here, to push out Russia completely from our region, to neutralize the influence of Iran and other potential pretenders and thus to put the region if not under her domination, but at minimum under her absolute political influence.

But this is not the final aim of Turkey. Turkey regards the Transcaucasia as a natural bridge and aspires to use it to reach the Central Asia and thus to realize her Pan-Turkish dreams.

Iran also pretends to increase her role in the Transcaucasia, to strengthen her influence and to decrease or neutralize the Turkish influence. Turkish domination and realization of the Pan-Turkish projects represent serious danger for Iran and are in contradiction with her national interests.

It is necessary to take into consideration also the Iran's strained relations with the USA. Turkey is the USA ally by NATO. Iran evaluates the strengthening of the position of Turkey as strengthening of the position of the USA in the region. And Iran, naturally, will undertake necessary steps in order to prevent the geopolitical development in this region in a direction unfavourable for Iran. And one of the principal steps from her side would be to ensure at any price her political, economic and cultural presence in the region, to develop her relations with the countries of the region. Guiding by this principle, Iran is cautious in her policy towards the Transcaucasian Republics and Russia. He is not going by the way of contradiction with them and tries in every case to take into consideration their national interests.

Certain interests have in our region also Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, United Arab Emirates, etc. The Transcaucasia is important for them as a bridge to Europe, as a field for economic and financial activities.

Besides that the strengthening of Turkish positions and the Turkish ambitions to become the only regional superpower is worrying the Arab countries too. It is not unlikely that they would feel themselves more secure if near their borders will arouse a new superpower with her great geopolitical ambitions.

And the last but not the least, the realization of the Pan-Turkish projects. We have to bear in our minds that the Arab countries remained under the Ottoman yoke about 400 years and the Arab people has not

forgotten the bloody pages of their dark history, connected with the Sultans rule. The rebirth of the Pan-Turkism represents great danger not only for Russia, Armenia, Iran and other countries, but for the Arab countries too.

In the last years, especially in 1990s, the another Middle Eastern country - Israel became more active on the Transcaucasian scene. She has good relations first of all with Azerbaijan and Georgia. At the same time she makes declarations on her desire to have analogous relations with Armenia. Armenia is ready to develop her relations with Israel in the economic, financial and scientific fields. But until now their declarations remain as good wishes, while the relations of Israel with Azerbaijan and Georgia have already taken practical character and Israel became one of the participants of the economic life of these two countries.

It is important to note that the activation of Israel on the political scene of the Transcaucasia is directly connected with the establishment of military cooperation between Turkey and Israel. The formation of the Turkish-Israeli military alliance had been perceived by the majority of the peoples of the Transcaucasian-Middle Eastern region as a serious menace to their national security and interests. Accordingly, they had occupied negative position towards that alliance.

Now about the third group of the main actors of the Transcaucasian-Middle Eastern geopolitical region. This group consists of Russia, the USA and the EU.

Russia did not pay much attention to this region in the first years after proclaiming her independence, being much busy with her serious internal problems. But soon her leaders understood their mistake, especially when they noted that the place of Russia in this important geopolitical region attempted to occupy Turkey, backed by the USA.

The Transcaucasia has important strategic significance for Russia. It is the rear of the North Caucasus, a Russian region of conflicts and very complicated inter-ethnic relations. That is why the attitude of the Transcaucasian Republics towards the events in the North Caucasus is not a secondary question for Russia. It is also not a secondary question for Russia who will become the dominating power in Transcaucasia.

From the other hand, Transcaucasia is very important for Russia from point of view of preserving and developing her ties and contacts

with the Middle Eastern countries which once were on a very high level.

So the loss of the Transcaucasia would have catastrophic consequences for the Russia's national interests and would worsen her international positions.

The understanding of this obvious truth brought Russia to the adoption of new, more active and effective policy towards the Transcaucasia and, in consequence, towards the Middle East. It was officially declared by the Russian government that Transcaucasia has vital strategic interest for Russia and she will not tolerate any attempt of pushing her out from this region and establishment of domination of any state over this region. Russia's hint was addressed to Turkey and the USA.

But the realization of this policy is not so easy, first of all because of complicated relations of Russia with Georgia and Azerbaijan. The attitude of both these states towards Russia is hardly possible to qualify pro-Russian. On the contrary, it is rather anti-Russian, despite the fact that on the territory of Georgia are located four Russian military bases. We have already mentioned that Georgia and Azerbaijan had reoriented from the traditional pro-Russian into the pro-Western policy.

From the other hand, Turkey and the USA had recorded some successes in penetration into the political, economic-financial, and, during the last period, in the military structures of Azerbaijan and Georgia.

So the only state in the Transcaucasia with whom Russia has close friendly relations, remained Armenia. The leaders of both countries usually qualify the Armenian-Russian relations as strategic. We have already spoken about the Russian-Armenian Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance. It is necessary to add that Russia has a military base in Armenia, which serves for the security interests of both countries, for protection of the southern borders of the Commonwealth of the Independent States(CIS).

Now Russia is overcoming her political and economic crisis and is recovering her forces and significance of world power. In these circumstances any attempt to ignore Russian interests in the Transcaucasian-Middle Eastern geopolitical region would not have any perspective.

The USA is comparatively new actor in the Transcaucasian political scene. Despite that fact, she had decisively demonstrated her geopolitical and economic interests and ambitions in the region. The USA government had announced many times that the Transcaucasia represents

vital strategic importance from the point of view of the USA national interests.

In her policy the USA is actively cooperating with Turkey. Even at the beginning of 1990s she was acting in the Transcaucasian arena mainly through Turkey. The American leaders regarded Turkey as a model for the new independent ex-Soviet republics. But later the USA had changed her tactics and started to act directly, without any mediator. The USA government obviously understood that they were overestimating the potential, possibilities and significance of Turkey. From the other hand, the USA had accumulated during the years certain experiment in the Transcaucasian affairs, sufficient enough to act independently and without Turkish consultations and recommendations.

Now the USA is an important factor in the region and her role in the Transcaucasia is more and more increasing.

New actors are also the Western states, united in the European Union (EU), not all of them, of course, but the most powerful ones. Among them the Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy. For them the Transcaucasia is the shortest and most comfortable natural bridge, connecting Europe with the Middle East, Central Asia and further India, China, Japan, Korea, etc. In this sense the region for Europe has strategic significance.

The above mentioned states are acting as within the framework of the EU, i.e. collectively, as well as individually. They are very interested in the establishment of peace and stability in the Transcaucasia, which would create an atmosphere of tolerance and thus facilitate first of all their economic, trading and financial activities.

The EU is playing an active role in the involvement of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia into the European political, parliamentary, economic and cultural structures, in development of democracy and democratic institutions in these Republics, etc.

And though the political weight of the EU in the Transcaucasia is not yet so high as those of Russia and the USA, nevertheless, it is very important factor, having great potentiality.

4. The Greater Middle East

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of new independent states have radically changed the geopolitical situation not only in the Transcaucasia, but also in Central Asia and even in the neighbouring regions. On the base of this new situation appeared several new ideas, conceptions and projects, relevant to the formation of new alliances, unions and entities, different geopolitical combinations, etc.

Among them the most interesting is the project on the formation of the new Geopolitical Macroregion - the Greater Middle East. Its idea was generated in many institutions and research centers. But this project was worked out in detail in the Harry S.Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

This project was carried out in 1996-1997 by a group of scholars - Prof.J.Landau, Dr.R.Enoch, Dr.V.Mesamed (The Harry Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace), Prof. N. Hovhannisyan (Institut of Oriental Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia) and Dr. Gali Odeh (Royal Reseach Center of Jordan).

The analyses of the new geopolitical situation, balance of powers and the tendency of political, ethnic and economic developments in the vast territory of the Southern part of the ex-Soviet Union (The Transcaucasia and the Central Asia), and Middle East, as well as global developments had brought the authors to the conclusion that we are on the eve of great changes in the above mentioned region. The Transcaucasian and Central Asian Republics became participants of the global political and economic processes and an essential factors of formation of new geopolitical structures. They are involved in the integrative processes. According to the authors, a new macroregion with its social-historical roots is evolving, which they called the Greater Middle East.

The Greater Middle East consists of four subregions:

a) Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kirgызstan, Tadjikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan), b) Caucasus or the Transcaucasia (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia), c) Western Asia (Turkey, Iran) and d) the Middle East (the

Arab countries, Israel and the Palestinian entity).

The realization of this project is possible by uniting the Transcaucasian and the Central Asian subregions with the Western Asian and the Middle Eastern subregions.

We would like to make an essential comment. When we speak about the formation of a new geopolitical macroregion and the Greater Middle East, it does not mean to unite the countries of the four subregions and to create a single state. It is practically impossible, moreover, it would be very dangerous and hazardous affair.

The integrative and formative processes of the new geopolitical macroregion are only at the initial stage and they develop slowly. But it is not difficult to observe that though slowly but unevitably is going the process of rapprochement of the four subregions. There are some very important projects, as the Silk road, pipelines, railways, etc., the implementation of which will facilitate largely their integration and the formation of the Greater Middle East.

At the same time we have not to forget that there are certain problems and factors working in opposite direction. We cannot say that the harmony of interests is reigning within this new geopolitical macroregion. On the contrary, there are many problems, even contradictions within each subregion and between the subregions. All these, as well as the attitude of other countries, especially the big states towards the emergence of new geopolitical macroregion, are serious obstacles on the way of formation of the Greater Middle East.

The authors of the project regard the formation of the Greater Middle East as part of globalization of the contemporary world.

But regardless of the possibility of formation of the Greater Middle East, the Transcaucasian-Middle Eastern geopolitical region is a reality and plays a significant role in the contemporary international relations.

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