

# **EAPC and PfP Enhancements in Promoting Security – The Caucasian Perspective**

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## **Abstract**

The aim of the research is to study the relations of the states of the South Caucasus with NATO and its implications on the security of the region.

The research consists of introduction, seven chapters and conclusions.

Introduction outlines the developments in the cooperation between NATO and the South Caucasus states.

The first chapter gives the overview of the situation in the South Caucasus and analyzes the set of inherent problems. It focuses the instigated conflicts owing to which Georgia cannot enforce its jurisdiction over the whole of its area, Azerbaijan has been devoid of one of its former regions and consequently Armenia, though remaining integral, has to deal with unfriendliness from Azerbaijan.

The second chapter deals with the interrelations between the South Caucasus and the West. The oil that was to become one of the main sources of welfare for the regional countries has turned into the issue of sharp confrontation that have badly affected the countries of the South Caucasus. The West has duly evaluated this risky situation, tried to find the alternatives to meet the interests of Russia, and has rendered assistance to the states of the region in the process of building their statehood and consolidating security. One of the main mechanisms of such assistance was cooperation under NACC analyzed in chapter 3.

Introduction of the PfP can be considered as the new stage of development in cooperation between NATO and the states of the South Caucasus. The analysis of the literature shows, that Azerbaijan and Georgia initially pinned the hopes of NATO's close involvement into the settlement of the conflicts, but NATO has avoided to be dragged in them not to develop a gap between its commitments and capabilities. These issues are referred to in chapter 4.

The response to the PfP enhancements of 1997 and 1999 are respectively dealt with in chapters 5 and 6. All the three states have responded in accordance with their positions towards Russia and respectively to NATO, in the security context. The analysis of the partnerships clearly demonstrates that the engagement of Azerbaijan and Georgia has been higher versus that of Armenia. Azerbaijan and Georgia have joined the PARP process, ratified PfP SOFAs, and contributed platoons to KFOR. Partnership has promoted the start of building-up the national armies according to the modern standards. As a step to the enhancement, Ad Hoc Working Group on Caucasus has been established.

Chapter 7, having analyzed the further developments, sets the principles for promoting security in the region.

The research ends with the conclusions summarizing most important observations.

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*Because of the rapidly changing nature of the subject matter, author is unable to guarantee that the information reported herein is complete and disclaims liability to any party for any loss or damage caused by errors or omissions.*

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## Introduction

The three states of the South Caucasus, Republic of Armenia, Republic of Azerbaijan and Georgia are the NATO partners. They became the NACC members in 1992, joined PfP in 1994 and, along with the other partner countries, founded EAPC in 1997. Partnership with NATO could have played a fairly positive role in the development of the region and in promoting security.

However, at present the South Caucasus is one of the most complicated regions. To deal with the issue of partnership of the South Caucasian states with NATO and its effect on promoting security in the region, the research scrutinizes the developments in the three states after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. It is assumed, that if the United States and western countries have economic interests due to the abundance of the Caspian oil deposits, their transportation to the western markets, etc, Russia's interest is in spurring the region into the sphere of its own political and military influence. To this end, conflicts have been instigated in the region as a result of which Georgia cannot enforce its jurisdiction over the whole of its area, Azerbaijan has been devoid of one of its former regions and, consequently, Armenia, though remaining integral, has to deal with the unfriendliness from Azerbaijan. Thus, the oil that was to become one of the main sources of welfare for the regional countries has turned into the issue of sharp confrontation that have badly affected the countries of the South Caucasus.

The West has duly evaluated this risky situation and tried to find the alternatives that would meet the interests of both Russia and the states of the region. At the same time the West rendered assistance to the states of the region in the process of building their statehood and consolidating of security. One of the main mechanisms of such assistance was cooperation with NATO under North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) and the NATO "Partnership for Peace" (PfP) program.

As soon as the South Caucasian states became the NACC members in 1992, this forum touched upon the conflicts in the region.

In 1994 the PfP was designed to promote civilian control of military forces, enable joint operations with NATO peacekeeping and humanitarian missions, and open communications between PfP countries. PfP exercises are devised to improve practical military cooperation and common capabilities, and help to develop interoperability between the forces of NATO allies and partner countries.

All the three states of the South Caucasus signed the PfP Basic Document in 1994.

Having analyzed the chronology of the developments and the statements made by the states of the South Caucasus, particularly the Republic of Azerbaijan and Georgia, one can infer that PfP was also viewed as a mechanism that could have enhanced the solution of conflicts in partnership with the OSCE, UN, etc. In the statements, parallels are drawn between the conflicts in the Balkans and those of the South Caucasus, in particular Abkhazia and Nagorno-Karabakh; it is regretted that the conflicts in the South Caucasus have not drawn much of the international attention, and calls are made for a more active engagement of NATO in the regional matters.

However, later the tone of declarations is observed to get moderate probably due to the facts that the statesmen gained a more realistic insight and besides NATO gradually developed its mechanisms for handling the matters.

The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) established on May 30, 1997 in Sintra, Portugal and unifying the former NACC and PfP was considered to be the main instrument for the harmonization of NATO interests with the requirements of the partner countries

The EAPC created around the axis of the alliance assisted the further integration of Caucasian states into the Euro-Atlantic structures, created additional security guarantees and gave a significant impulse to the trend of closer cooperation with NATO.

PfP enhancement of 1997 implied several components in which the South Caucasian states have been engaged. The Washington Summit endorsed an "Enhanced and More Operational PfP". It contains political-military framework for NATO-led PfP operations, expanded and adapted PARP, enhanced practical military and defence-related cooperation covering the full spectrum of Cooperation in PfP.

All the three states have responded to the PfP enhancements of 1997 and 1999 in accordance with their positions towards Russia and, respectively, to NATO in the security context. The analysis of the partnerships demonstrates that the engagement of Azerbaijan and Georgia has been higher versus that of Armenia. Azerbaijan and Georgia have joined the PARP process, ratified PfP SOFAs, and contributed platoons to KFOR. Partnership has promoted the start of building-up the national armies according to the modern standards.

One of the significant achievements in terms of promoting regional cooperation was the creation of Ad Hoc Working Group on Caucasus within the EAPC, which has identified Defense Economic issues, Civil Emergency Planning, Security-related Science and Environmental Cooperation, Information and Public relations. However, so far the regional cooperation has not sufficiently advanced.

The role of NATO in the direct resolution of the conflicts in the region has not increased in spite of the changes in the Strategic Concept. There is a clear message from the alliance, that NATO cannot and does not claim a lead role in facilitating the peace processes in this region. That responsibility rests first and foremost with the parties of the region, who must find a way to agree on a peaceful way forward. There can be no comprehensive settlement of the disputes in the region without the participation of the region's major powers, including Russia.

Partnership with NATO offers the three South Caucasian states still more potential for the further development, for enhancing regional peace and cooperation. It is also expected that the Prague Summit in November 2002 will probably furnish the dynamic new programs that will equip the EAPC and PfP to continue to play a vital role. This is going to be a challenge for the South Caucasian States and it is up to them to duly utilize the opportunities.

## CHAPTER 1:

### Overview of the Situation in the South Caucasus

The South Caucasus consists of the Republic of Armenia, Republic of Azerbaijan and Georgia, the three former Soviet republics that regained sovereignty after the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991.

The three states are the NATO partners. They became the NACC members in 1992, joined PfP in 1994 and, along with the other partner countries, founded EAPC in 1997. At present the South Caucasus is one of the complicated regions due to a set of factors. Firstly, this is traditionally the region where the interests of the regional hegemonies - Russia, Turkey and Iran, and lately the West, meet; naturally, the collapse of the Soviet Union reactivated rivalries between them. Secondly, the rivalries grew aggravated between the ethnicities within the states, these ending up in separatist movements in Georgia and in Azerbaijan, and consequently, in the conflicts.

To deal with the issue of partnership of the South Caucasian states with NATO, and its effect on promoting security in the region, it is essential to address the conflicts.

The hegemony of Russia is crucial in this issue. Fearing to lose its areas of influence, Russia has instigated ethnic conflicts in Georgia and Azerbaijan. As a result, Georgia cannot enforce its jurisdiction over the whole of its area, Azerbaijan has been devoid of one of its former regions and consequently Armenia, though remaining integral, has to deal with the unfriendliness from Azerbaijan.

For over two centuries Armenia has been Russia's support of defense in the Caucasus. Wedged between Iran, Turkey and Azerbaijan, this land-locked nation of 3.5 million has traditionally looked to Russia as its chief guarantor of security. In the post-Soviet era Armenia was the cornerstone of Russia's forward defense in the Caucasus. As the Caucasus becomes engulfed by the race for Caspian oil, Moscow remains fixated on Armenia's role as a strategic linchpin in its regional security. Of particular concern is the belief that Christian Armenia will drift away from Russia's sphere of interest and deprive Moscow of a key buffer state guarding the Muslim borderlands of the Southern Caucasus. This policy has guided Russia through two centuries of conflict in the Caucasus and throughout the breakup of the USSR<sup>1</sup>.

What are the conflicts in the South Caucasus about? Nagorno-Karabakh is actually an interstate conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. It began in 1988, when ethnic Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh unilaterally declared their independence from Azerbaijan. A series of Armenian offensives began in 1992. Through a combination of martial traits and strong Russian military support, Armenia managed to win the decisive first round of the post-Soviet wars in the Caucasus. By the time a cease-fire was arranged in May 1994, the military balance of power in the region had shifted to the Armenian-backed forces of Nagorno-Karabakh. Armenia's victory on the battlefield led to the seizure of more than 20 percent of Azerbaijan's territory and resulted in more than a million Azerbaijani refugees fleeing from the region. Since then all the attempts to negotiate a settlement have failed.

Georgia has witnessed two intrastate conflicts. South Ossetia (Tskhinvali region) was an Autonomous Region while Abkhazia was an Autonomous Republic of the Soviet Republic of Georgia. These two entities had been formed from indigenous Georgian land under the Soviet regime. In 1990, the Ossetians declared the Autonomous Region as the Sovereign Republic. In response, the Parliament of Georgia abolished the Autonomous Region of Ossetia and the conflict with Ossetia developed into the armed opposition that resulted in substantial human suffering and the eviction of ethnic Georgians from their homes.

Later Abkhazia attempted to secede from Georgia. On August 17, 1992 the Georgian State Council issued a statement that the events in Abkhazia signified "a revision of the existing frontiers of Georgia and the severance of part of its territory" and also "an attempt to complete the process of usurpation of power and to set up a mono-ethnic dictatorship". The State Council deemed it necessary to send troops into Abkhazia, declaring its resolve "to snuff out the conflict at the very beginning". The troops were deployed in Abkhazia in August 1992 due to the need to guard communication links. In response on September 15, 1992, the Presidium of the Abkhazian Supreme Council passed an ordinance declaring that "the armed attack by the forces of the Georgian State Council on Abkhazia on August 14, 1992 and the occupation of part of its territory" was "an act of aggression against the sovereign Republic of Abkhazia". The clashes between Georgian and Abkhazian units at the end of August and in September 1993 took on the features of large-scale military action. After September 1993 separatist administration of Abkhazia began ethnic cleansing, ousting Georgians. This was a clear demonstration of aggressive separatism. Although Georgians comprised 45.7% and Abkhazians only 17.8% of the region's pre-war population, external (Russian\*) help enabled Abkhazians to prevail. The Georgians were forced to flee and became refugees in their own country. According to the official data, the number of Involuntarily Displaced Persons (IDPs), including those from South Ossetia, is about 300,000 persons<sup>2</sup>.

Each conflict has its own unique combination of historic grievances, ethnic tensions and social pains that makes it particularly difficult to resolve. None of them are classic interstate clashes and at the same time, none of the conflicts are strictly internal, since all of them feature cross-border interactions with neighboring states or ethnically organized communities. We could argue, that, with the liberalization and further democratization of the Soviet Union, the conflicts were unavoidable. However, the wars there were avoidable had the Russian factor not prevailed. "External forces have long played a major role in the South Caucasus. While local factors have provided the basis for the conflicts, external actors - especially Russia - have played a major role in the escalation of these conflicts into all-out wars."<sup>3</sup> Therefore, they cannot be resolved through local means.

The international community showed remarkably little interest in conflicts of the Caucasus, allowing and sometimes encouraging Russia to play a role of "security guarantor". But, when certain attempts to increase the profile of international involvement in conflict resolution were undertaken, the West had to acknowledge the already established pattern and defer to Russia's leadership.

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\* Some of the representatives of political establishment of Russia do not deny the fact, in particular, the former chairman of the Federal Council of Russian Federation Shumeiko declared on December 12, 1994 in the Russian TV program "SEGODNIA" that the Russians supported Abkhazians in the conflict.

The peace processes in Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region are under way, where Western involvement varies in its form and level. For example, the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process is managed by the Minsk Group of OSCE, where Russia, the US, and France are co-chairs; the peace process in Abkhazia is conducted under the aegis of the UN, where the Group of Friends of the UN Secretary General, consisting of the US, UK, France, Germany, the Ukraine and Russia, is involved. The peacekeeping operation is managed by Russia under the aegis of CIS. But even with the peacekeeping troops present, 1998 witnessed another ethnic cleansing of Georgians in the Gali region. In the Tskhinvali region, the OSCE has taken the mediation mission, and the joint forces of Russia, Georgia, and the South Ossetia conduct the peacekeeping operation.

Besides this, bilateral dialogues are under way between the concerned parties. The political, diplomatic, material, and any other resources of the international organizations and/or certain countries have not settled either of the above-mentioned conflicts. They are pending as “frozen”. Thousands of refugees and IDPs still remain a huge problem both in Georgia and Azerbaijan. There is distrust and lack of confidence among the parties, and perhaps even expectation of the moment suitable for the military action to regain the lost land.

Having witnessed the grave consequences of the lack of regional cooperation between the three states of the South Caucasus, and its negative economic impact, the international community along with the concerned states started search for the formula of the settlement for the South Caucasus. Realizing the importance of peace and cooperation in the region, President Eduard Shevardnadze in February 1996 put forth six principles that should be fundamental for the establishment of the long-term peace and stability in the Caucasus. These principles, which form the basis of what has since become known as the Peaceful Caucasus Initiative, are:

- Respect for the territorial integrity and inviolability of existing borders;
- 
- Commitment to protect human rights anywhere and from anybody;
  - The protection of transport and other communication means and non-acceptance of their blockade;
  - Joint efforts to preserve the natural environment and to fight the consequences of natural disaster;
  - Promotion of ethnic and religious tolerance, and the renunciation of extreme forms of nationalism;
  - Support and comprehensive protection of international projects and investments in the Caucasus region<sup>4</sup>.

The Peaceful Caucasus Initiative enjoyed broad support at the beginning. In June 1996, the leaders of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Russia signed a declaration on inter-ethnic harmony, peace, and cooperation in the Caucasus. In June 1999 the EU-initiated Caucasian Summit was held in Luxembourg with the participation of the President of Georgia, the President of Armenia, and the Prime Minister of Azerbaijan. This meeting spurred political dialogue on the regional level. The Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents have made calls at the OSCE Istanbul Summit in November 1999 for a regional security system. The US Secretary of State advanced ideas for a Caucasus Cooperation Forum in the spring of 1999. The EU encourages regional cooperation with and between the three South Caucasus countries. It has mounted significant regional programs such as TRACECA and INOGATE. However, it is clear that until the intra- and inter-state conflicts are resolved, no boost of regional cooperation is expected. Firstly, because all three economies are suffering due to the actual breakdown of the states and secondly, there is actually no diplomatic relationship between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

It is a sad reality that Russia, holding the leverage to the solution to these conflicts, has this far been unwilling to positively apply it. The policies of "preservation of spheres of influence" and of "drawing red lines" have brought nothing but harm to Russia. For instance, it has inspired the creation of GUAM group (consisting of Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova) in 1997, expanding in 1999 into GUUAM to include Uzbekistan, which dropped out in 2002. The GUAM states are led by Pragmatic Westernizers who are united by a distrust of Russia and a desire for future (i.e. medium-long term) integration into European and transatlantic structures<sup>5</sup>. These countries have highlighted the irrelevancy of the CIS and confirmed their joint opposition to Moscow's geopolitical and military agenda in the region that stretches from Moldova to Georgia and Azerbaijan and signaled their alignment with Western policies after Moscow slammed the door on the OSCE's consensus. Moscow counterattacked both officially and through proxies. It sponsors in the Russian military stronghold of Tiraspol in eastern Moldova the meetings of a mini "Anti-GUAM" group of Transdnier, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Karabakh – that is, of territories that have seceded with Russian support from the GUAM countries of Moldova, Georgia and Azerbaijan, respectively<sup>6</sup>.

Georgia's situation in comparison with Azerbaijan is aggravated by the presence of Russian military bases in the country. Georgia believed striking a "strategic partnership" with Russia would help to restore territorial integrity and the development of its military potential, both of which have not occurred. Although Georgia was the first CIS state to legally facilitate a Russian military presence on its territory, the Russian armed forces refused to grant it a share of the Black Sea fleet and withdrew \$10bn of military equipment. Of the 1,600 former Soviet military installations in Georgia, not a single one has been transferred to it, "in a civilized, peaceful way and in a spirit of cooperation"<sup>7</sup>. Moscow sees the retention of at least residual military presence in Georgia as essential to secure its lines of communication to the Russian forces stationed in Armenia, and more widely as a way of limiting US and Turkish influence in the southern Caucasus. The Georgian administration of Eduard Shevardnadze, backed by the USA and to a lesser extent the Western Europeans, has long pressed their withdrawal. At the Istanbul summit of the OSCE in November 1999, Russia agreed to withdraw two of these bases, at Vaziani near Tbilisi and Gudauta in Abkhazia, by July of 2001. Withdrawal of the Vaziani base has been accomplished with a delay while that of Gudauta in the absence of observers, which makes the Russian declaration on withdrawal rather doubtful<sup>8</sup>. Concerning the other two bases, at Batumi in the autonomous republic of Adjara, and at Akhalkalaki, Russia is pressing the Georgians to grant a 14 year lease while Georgia insists on a three-year lease.

## **CHAPTER 2:**

### **South Caucasus and the West**

Since 1994 the West has displayed a keen interest in the region largely due to the assumed abundance of the Caspian oil deposits. In particular, the United States likely realized, that the South Caucasus could be the end to meet certain regional goals in the Caucasian region and some global objectives.

Proceeding from the economic and political interests, the USA elaborated its objectives in the South Caucasus and Central Asia already at the beginning of 1990-ies. At the initial stage it comprised three principles:

- Support for the independence and sovereignty of the regional countries. In this aspect the oil was considered as the significant factor for reaching economic independence not only by the oil-producing states (Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan), but also by the neighboring states located on the future export routes (Georgia and Armenia);
- Diversification of the oil export routes to exclude the monopolization of oil transport by any state;
- Participation of the US companies in the extraction and export of oil.

This, on one hand, was to strengthen the US position in the Caucasus and Central Asia while on the other, to include this region in the world market<sup>9</sup>.

In supporting the independence of regional states, the US implied Russia, which has always used energy as the chief mechanism for maintaining its influence in the post-soviet space.

The 1994 “National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement”<sup>10</sup> mentions the possibility of using Caspian oil to obtain diversity of supply just as the possibility of limiting the dependency of Persian oil through the creation of new oil exporters to the American market is mentioned in 1997 in “A National Security Strategy for a New Century”<sup>11</sup>. A National Security Strategy for a New Century (December 1999) speaks of securing new energy routes from the Caspian Sea that will allow the newly independent states (NIS) in the Caucasus to prosper<sup>12</sup>.

The importance that Washington attaches to this region is becoming ever clearer as the struggle for energy corridor heats up and parallels the United States’ efforts to construct a world order in Europe and the Middle East. U.S. policies for this region are closely tied to NATO’s enlargement and the dual containment of Iran and Iraq. The US views three aspects of the Transcaucasian equation as crucial: increasing the supply of energy to consumers; excluding Iran from influencing the exploitation, shipment, development, and marketing of energy products; and, preventing Russia from obtaining a monopoly over the local energy supply<sup>13</sup>. Certain fundamental corollaries flow from this list of objectives. Officially, U.S. policy aims to enhance local states’ capability to produce and ship oil abroad, to obtain equal, i.e., competitive, access for the U.S energy firms and other businesses that want to invest in these states, to use U.S. diplomatic auspices to negotiate settlements to local wars, and to create stable, democratic governments as an ultimate outcome of these processes<sup>14</sup>.

Furthermore at the rhetorical level the United States emphasized continued support for the economic and political independence, sovereignty and democratic development of the states in South Caucasus<sup>15</sup>. In this process the ending of regional conflicts in Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Chechnya were important, but since the United States did not want to get involved on the ground besides taking part in the Minsk Group, the conflicts should be solved primarily through regional conflict resolution. Especially the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh was seen as a major obstacle for regional stability<sup>16</sup>.

In September of 1994 the conclusion of the contract on the Azerbaijan oil practically linked the interests of NATO with the Caucasian region. This date is also connected with the start of a “Big Game” in which the Western as well as regional states participate.

The interests of the NATO member countries in the Caspian oil are mainly conditioned by the future of world energy resources, this being the “geo-strategic key” of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The dependency on Persian Gulf is a sensitive factor for the West in a big need of the diversification of energy sources. Taken into consideration, that the difference between the demand and production of oil is expected to increase, the significance of the Caspian oil potential becomes quite obvious.

For extending its own interests and exerting control over the Caspian energy resources the West was to elaborate such policy and mechanisms, that would enable to balance the monopolistic interests of Russia in the region. This could have been reached by building an independent pipeline system to prevent any single country from having a unilateral control over the export route of the Caspian oil.

Against the background of the further expansion of NATO, construction of the independent pipeline acquired the additional strategic significance. In particular, it was essential to safeguard the energetic security of the future NATO members from Central and Eastern Europe.

The disagreement between the West and Russia had an impact on the cooperation in the region since it forced the regional countries to establish “orientation groups” taking into consideration the interests of “great players” along with their own. For instance, the factor of Caspian oil provoked the creation of Russia-Armenia-Iran and, on the other hand, Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey vectors, the latter clearly enjoying the Western support. However, that support was not sufficient to balance the influence of Russia. On the contrary, to some extent it provoked the reactionary forces of Russia to exert political and physical pressure over the neighboring states – Georgia and Azerbaijan.

Thus, the oil that was to become one of the main sources of welfare for the regional countries turned into the issue of sharp confrontation. The West duly evaluated this risky situation and tried to find the alternatives that would meet the interests of both Russia and the states of the region. At the same time the West rendered assistance to the states of the region in the process of building their statehood and consolidation of security. One of the main mechanisms of such assistance was cooperation under NACC and PfP.

## **CHAPTER 3:**

### **Launching of Cooperation with NATO under NACC.**

NATO's formal involvement in the Caucasus began as early as 1990 with the Treaty in the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. Almost immediately as the South Caucasian states became the NACC members in 1992, this forum touched upon the conflicts in the region. E.g. the participants of the ministerial meeting of June 5, 1992 paid significant attention to the set of regional problems in the South Caucasus. They expressed concern over the escalation of military action in Nagorno-Karabakh and welcomed the decision of CSCE on convening special conference in Minsk.<sup>17</sup> At the next meeting of the NACC foreign ministers on December 18, 1992 the document evaluated the situation created in

Georgia. The ministers welcomed the continuation of the democratization process in Georgia and expressed satisfaction with the cease-fire agreement between Georgians and Ossetians being held. They also welcomed the dispatch of the CSCE mission to the area, expressed hope that it would play a constructive role in promoting a political settlement and that the Georgian-Russian-Ossetian Peacekeeping Force would develop a relationship of cooperation, consultation and trust with the mission. Expressing a deep concern about the conflict in Abkhazia, the meeting called on the parties involved “to establish an effective cease-fire and to work together with the CSCE and the UN Secretary-General's representatives for a lasting peaceful solution”<sup>18</sup>. It was the first time that the Abkhazian issue was touched upon at the NACC high-level meeting.

In the February of 1993, the annual meetings of the NATO military committee and partners at the level of the military chiefs of staff were started, this enabling to develop the mechanism for a regular and complex dialogue. The ministers agreed that it was essential to consolidate the achieved results and seek for the new fields for cooperation. In particular, they deemed it expedient to direct the joint efforts towards the reconstruction of the armed forces, training and exercise, defense management and planning, civil-military relations, etc. They also emphasized the need to focus on the issues of peacekeeping and humanitarian operations.

On June 11, 1993 at the meeting of the NACC foreign ministers, when discussing the regional set of problems, special attention was paid to the South Caucasus. The meeting approved of the plan for a CSCE Conference on Nagorno-Karabakh in Minsk, which, as the statement provides, “continues to offer the best chance of finding a lasting solution to that conflict and of establishing good neighborly relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan.” It also supported United Nations’ Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) No 822, which should be implemented fully and without delay by all countries and parties to the conflict. The meeting called for the immediate cessation of hostilities, the withdrawal of all occupying forces from the Kelbadzhar and other recently occupied districts of Azerbaijan, unimpeded access for international humanitarian relief efforts, and the creation of the necessary conditions for the return of displaced civilians to their homes and resumption of negotiations. The meeting also appealed to the parties concerned to respect an effective cease-fire in the Abkhazian Autonomous Republic of Georgia and refrain from all actions that could complicate constructive dialogue and achievement of a durable settlement. It also called on them to work together with the CSCE and UN Secretary General's representatives to this end. The meeting also touched upon the importance to pursue a full settlement of Georgian-Ossetian relations in the zone of conflict in Georgia.<sup>19</sup>

However, it should be noted that the effort of Georgia to practically involve NATO in the settlement of the Abkhazian problem did not bring forth a realistic result. Engagement of NATO first of all required the special mandate of the UN Security Council and the joint decision of the NATO countries. In this respect, the factor of Russia, considered by the West as a priority, was crucial. The West and the US pursued the attitude “Russia first of all” and viewed from the Russian prism the events developing in the former Soviet Union. It was considered, that the support of the democratic and market reforms in Russia would naturally bring the country closer to the West, and this, in turn, would undoubtedly play a positive role for the independent development of the former Soviet republics. Thus, to help Russia equaled to the help other neighboring countries. It was admitted in the NATO that the excessive assistance to the South Caucasus would irritate Russia too much, which had not yet digested the loss of Central Europe and the Baltics.<sup>20</sup>

In this context the speech made by the Chairman of Parliament of Georgia and the Head of State Eduard Shevardnadze during the visit to NATO headquarters on June 23, 1993 can be considered as the vision for future. Having analyzed the situation in Europe after the “cold war”, Mr. Shevardnadze predicted, that the threats to the democracies would persist until the new states - the Republics of the former Soviet Union and, above all, Russia – achieve final success on their road to democratic transformation and economic reform. He underscored a rising tide of nationalist extremism, creating new centers of instability and new conflicts in Europe and near its borders, calling into question all the gains of the 1989-1991 velvet revolution. In these circumstances, he noted, NATO does not relinquish its unique role as the principal military and political guarantor of stability and security in Europe<sup>21</sup>. Eduard Shevardnadze suggested to the participants the formula, which had a principal importance for the attitude of the West to the former Soviet republics. This formula implies that the equal importance should be attached to the measures in support of the newly independent states in the territory of the former USSR and that without this there was no point in talking about a stable democratic Russia. Mr. Shevardnadze touched NATO enlargement, the issue that was not yet openly discussed. In this context, he positively evaluated the NACC activities and characterized it as a training course for the potential NATO members. However, he expressed concern that the events could take an unpredictable turn “while we are still on the course”. He underscored the urgent need of practical assistance. It is noteworthy, that this statement was made while the military action was underway in Abkhazia and the sovereignty of Georgia was in real danger. In these circumstances, along with the general theoretical views, it was crucial to offer NATO the realistic and efficient plan.

Mr. Shevardnadze also stated that the mechanism of cooperation between the new states and the NATO system should start working at the full scale. For a start, he suggested that the Atlantic Alliance enter with each individual partner state into agreements, that would cover cooperation in the concrete trends – politico-military, scientific-technical, environmental and others. In this context, he underscored the importance of material, financial and methodological assistance in building national armed forces, bearing in mind the opportunity to exert a positive influence upon military and political doctrines and ideologies. Such support would be helpful in building the new democratic societies. Shevardnadze’s perceptions were to a certain degree reflected in the PfP program and the Individual Partnership Programs introduced in 1994 by the alliance.

Mr. Shevardnadze focused the attention of NAC on the South Caucasus. He touched the ongoing conflicts and noted that the Caucasus required as much attention as the Balkans enjoyed. “Events here call for rapid political refocusing, including adjustments within the Atlantic Alliance. Conflicts around Nagorno-Karabakh, in Abkhazia, events in Azerbaijan and the situation in the North Caucasus and the South of Russia carry within them the threat of a breakdown in economic reforms in states in the region and clashes between the powerful geopolitical forces that come together here”<sup>22</sup>.

President Shevardnadze’s statement implying, that the settlement of conflicts should not be a monopoly of one nation or organization, that positive results could be achieved only if international bodies unite efforts and cooperate effectively, each complementing the other in political support and resources, was very much relevant and progressive for that period. He also noted, that Georgia, where UN and CSCE missions were operating, would welcome the additional presence of the Atlantic Alliance and NACC. “We would also support any participation by NATO and NACC in settling the conflict in Abkhazia, up to the peacekeeping operations”<sup>23</sup>. The head of Georgian state did not deny the

role of Russian participation in the settlement of the noted conflicts, but at the same time emphasized the necessity of closer mutually interactive collaboration by Russia with international and European bodies along these lines.

This statement demonstrated that Georgia demanded special attention to the conflicts in the South Caucasus. Therefore the NAC on July 16 discussed the situation in Abkhazia. This was the first case the organization discussed this issue separately.

On September 16, 1993 at the joint meeting of the NATO Council and Partners at the ambassadorial level, the representative of Georgia reported about the situation in Abkhazia noting that the Abkhazian side had violated the cease-fire and started the military action in Ochamchire. The meeting was also informed, that recently a lot of military equipment had been imported through the Georgian-Russian border and that there was the danger of the separatists' attack on the capital of Abkhazia - Sokhumi, Georgia. At the next meeting, the NATO Secretary General introduced the issue of Abkhazia into the agenda and presented the appeal of the Georgian President from the flaming Sokhumi. The participants of the session made the following statement: "We, the representatives of NACC countries, condemn the violations by the Abkhazian forces of the agreement on a cease-fire (27 July, 1993) and urgently call for an end to the fighting for the immediate withdrawal of all Abkhazian forces to the agreed cease-fire lines and for the implementation of all the terms of the agreement on a cease-fire". The NATO Secretary General called the session participants to request their governments to promote the settlement of peace in Abkhazia <sup>24</sup>.

It can be seen from the above discussed developments, that the South Caucasus enjoyed the sympathy in NATO and NACC, but it did not grow into the real political support, as this would first of all mean strong pressure upon Russia. In discussing the conflicts, the western states did neither evaluate nor criticize Russia though all were aware that Russia did deserve strong criticism. Instead the criticism was directed towards the Abkhaz separatists. The criticism of Georgian representatives against Russia, which implied a certain political risk, did not enjoy support. Here a very significant factor should be taken into consideration - the South Caucasus at that stage was not a region of priority for NATO. Its attention was mainly focused on the Central and Eastern Europe, as well as the Baltics.

At that period in the West there likely prevailed the idea that Russia had a special mission in the former Soviet Union and especially in the conflicts there. This was conditioned by the inertia of the Soviet period when Russia was equated to the whole imperial space. The west entertained also kind of a "romantic attitude" towards Russia that was offering wide collaboration and partnership to the west.

## **CHAPTER 4:**

### **Partnership for Peace and its Development**

In 1994 the NATO Program “Partnership for Peace” (PfP) was designed to promote civilian control of military forces, enable joint operations with NATO peacekeeping and humanitarian missions, and open communications between PfP countries. PfP exercises are devised to improve practical military cooperation and common capabilities in the areas on which PfP focuses, and help to develop interoperability between the forces of NATO allies and partner countries.

All the three states of the South Caucasus signed the PfP Basic Document in 1994, Georgia in March, Republic of Azerbaijan in May while Republic of Armenia in October.

On April 28, 1994 in Mons, Belgium at SHAPE, the Partnership Cooperation Cell was opened for the purpose of the implementation of the military part of PfP. Georgian, Armenian and Azerbaijani Liaison Officers are currently working there.

.On May 31, 1995 the Foreign Ministers’ meeting approved the “Agreement between North Atlantic Treaty Countries and Participant Countries of Partnership for Peace Program about the status of their Armed Forces” that laid the legal framework for the deployment of NATO and Partner’s armed forces on the territory of a PfP participant. Georgia and Azerbaijan acceded to the Agreement and its additional Protocols, and the documents have been ratified in the national Parliaments. Thus, the legal framework was created for the deployment of the NATO or Partners’ forces on each other’s territories. Armenia has not signed the document as of yet.

In order to participate in the NATO peace operations it was necessary to join the Planning and Review Process (PARP) which implies the achievement of interoperability by the partner countries with the NATO forces, PARP identifies interoperability trends, priorities, and parameters of which PfP should be based. Georgia and Azerbaijan joined PARP in 1999 to realize the undertaken interoperability objectives, later in 2000 to be replaced by Partnership goals. By joining PARP the two states made a significant step forward towards the reformation of the armed forces in the NATO standards. Armenia has not gone as far in partnership in the military field.

The level of engagement of the three Caucasian states with NATO has not been motivated on the equal basis and hence the commitments have not been similar. The analysis of the Presented IPP

Documents demonstrates that owing to the capabilities in their possession and certain political reasons their commitments are not similar.

Armenia in its Document is much too reserved in wording as well as vague. It tends to give particular importance to education and regional stability. Planning to participate in Peace Support Operations (PSO), Armenia's new objective is to train PS military units, which "can be interoperable with PS units from other countries participating in PSO"..<sup>25</sup> The document does not specify the units of which other countries aspires to achieve interoperability with or who is going to lead the PSO it intends to participate in. When reading the document, one cannot help the feeling that the word "NATO " is avoided.

In its Presentation Document, Azerbaijan states, that it highly estimates NATO's role in preserving peace and stability in Europe and, therefore, Azerbaijan's decision to join the PfP represents an essential element of its policy to achieve the integration in the Euro-Atlantic political, economic and security structures and diminish threats to peace and security caused by regional conflicts.<sup>26</sup>

Under the National PfP Policy, Georgia considers PfP as an important step towards establishing Euro-Atlantic security system, which will prevent a new division in Europe.<sup>27</sup>

Contribution of facilities by the three south Caucasus countries is unequal.

In order to ensure its participation in PfP Armenia is ready to allot the following forces and assets:

- liaison officers to work on the permanent basis at NATO Headquarters in Brussels and the Partnership Coordination Cell at Monse (Belgium); - a group of military observers as well as officers for international headquarters of the peacekeeping forces (5 personnel);
- a rescue battalion for emergency situations (civil defense regiment).

Armenia is ready to provide training center to conduct military exercises and field training within the framework of the partnership: for this purpose Armenia will provide a battle field and mechanical and other equipment for emergency and rescue operations.<sup>28</sup>

The Azerbaijan Republic intends to contribute the following to be used in the framework of the PfP:

- infantry company of about 120—130 men for peacekeeping and humanitarian operations;
- search and rescue platoon of about 20-30 men;
- helicopter unit – 2 Mi-8 helicopters;
- training center of a battalion/brigade level for peacekeeping exercise;
- air traffic control services for aircraft of NATO countries overflying the territory of Azerbaijan with due account of subsequent technical improvement of the relevant services /within the framework of international and domestic law;
- airport facilities and services for aircraft of NATO countries, with the assistance of NATO in training technical staff/within the framework of international and domestic law.<sup>29</sup>

In its Presentation document, Georgia states, that due to the current economic situation, Georgian participation with manpower, equipment, infrastructure and the facilities in the framework of PfP, will be limited. Nevertheless, the country declares the following human and technical resources:

- one army company for Peacekeeping, search and rescue and humanitarian operations;
- one combat engineer platoon, which will be operational when appropriately trained and equipped;
- a training area;
- two airfields;
- a military harbor in Poti.<sup>30</sup>

Having compared the scope and nature of the activities given in the Individual Partnership Programs it gets obvious that Armenia's areas of cooperation under PfP are almost similar with those of Azerbaijan and Georgia. It is clear, that in accordance with its complimentary policy, Armenia tries to benefit as much as possible from the opportunities offered by PfP.

Significantly, at the outset the PfP activities were seen by the NIS as a first step to inclusion in NATO, probably because NATO members made overly ambitious statements and the regional leaders held unrealistic expectations. As stated in the PfP invitation document, active participation in the PfP will play "an important role in the evolutionary process of expansion of NATO"<sup>31</sup>. This most probably could have allowed different interpretations.

In the certain states of the South Caucasus, in particular, in Georgia and Azerbaijan, PfP was also viewed as a mechanism that could have enhanced the solution of conflicts in partnership with OSCE, UN, etc. In the statement of Georgia at NACC in 1995 the parallel is drawn between the bloodshed in Bosnia and Abkhazia and it is regretted that this conflict has not drawn much of the international attention. "Abkhazia is a vivid example of how a late reaction, initial unclear mandate, lack of contingency planning and half measures lead to a quagmire"<sup>32</sup>. The calls for more active engagement of NATO in the regional matters have been registered in the statements made at the EAPC ministerial meetings as well. Significantly, later the parallels to Bosnia-Herzegovina are replaced by Kosovo. For instance, at the EAPC Foreign Ministers Meeting in 2000 Georgia stated, that to build a long-term security, stability and regional cooperation in the Caucasus, so called "frozen conflicts", as the one in Abkhazia, must not be forgotten since one more lesson learned from Kosovo conflict is the unacceptability of shortsightedness of international community playing "hide-and-seek" while dealing with certain conflicts for number of years. Moreover, the timely solution of the conflicts would establish favorable conditions for the intended "Pact for the Caucasus" to take place.<sup>33</sup>

Presumably Azerbaijan also pinned some hopes to the more active involvement of NATO into the regional matters. In the Statement to the NATO Security Council during the signature of the Framework Document on May 4, 1994 at the NATO headquarters the President of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev, having spoken about the chronicle of the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh and, of the developments under the OSCE Minsk Group, pointed out that in the course of 1993 the UN Security Council had adopted four resolutions that categorically demand the withdrawal of Armenian forces from the territory of Azerbaijan, but not even a single resolution had been ever implemented. He noted, that in its decision of January 10, 1994 NATO had conveyed its special concern with the situation that had been created in the Southern Caucasus, and expressed its conviction in the necessity of stopping the conflict in the region, in particular in Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia. The President was as straightforward as this: "We as a state which is in the state of war

subjected to aggression on the part of neighboring Armenia hope that our participation in the NATO PfP program will allow us to achieve in the future the just peaceful settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, liberate occupied Azerbaijani territories and liquidate all the consequences of war. The high authority of NATO may become an important factor in seizing this bloody war. I think that democratic principles lying in foundation of the North Atlantic Alliance will promote our successful co-operation, practical elimination of those obstacles that are on the way of the peace and stability in Transcaucasian and other regions as well as will promote progress and prosperity of all peoples”<sup>34</sup>. By the decision of 10 January, most probably Paragraph 8 of PfP framework document presented at Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council/North Atlantic Cooperation Council, NATO Headquarters, Brussels, on 10-11 January 1994 is implied. The mentioned paragraph stipulates: “NATO will consult with any active participant in the Partnership if that Partner perceives a direct threat to its territorial integrity, political independence, or security”<sup>35</sup>. This paragraph, which actually meant that NATO could engage in consultations with Azerbaijan in connection with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan,<sup>36</sup> had provoked the desirable, not realistic interpretation.

However, gradually the approach towards NATO grows more realistic. This can be observed in the meeting of the President of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev and the Secretary General of NATO Javier Solana on April 23, 1996 at NATO headquarters. Solana stated that the agreement signed between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the European Union on partnership and co-operation is very important in terms of integration of Azerbaijan in Europe. Mr.Solana, outlining the essence of the “Partnership for Peace” program, underlined that its main purpose, along with preserving and maintaining peace and stability in the world, was to render assistance and to strengthen independence and sovereignty of states. The Secretary-General stressed, that preservation and maintenance of the independence of Azerbaijan located in a very important geopolitical space had a great significance to NATO and emphasized the importance of co-operation in restoring peace, security and stability in the region for the sake of wealth of the peoples and states of the region.<sup>37</sup> In his statement the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mr. Heydar Aliyev reiterated his hope, that NATO would exert its efforts to settle the Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict on these conditions by peaceful means and that he considered the activities of NATO to be of a peacemaking nature.<sup>38</sup> In the Statement for the Press the President speaks of the NATO-Azerbaijan cooperation in more global terms: “We consider significant the work done by NATO in order to ensure security in Europe. We think that even more attention should be paid to the provision of security in the Caucasus, in the Transcaucasus, including Azerbaijan and around it, which are a part of Europe. After this meeting and conducted negotiations the ties between Azerbaijan and NATO are even more expanding. All this has one particular goal - to provide security in the region”.<sup>39</sup>

This moderate tone can be explained by the fact that likely the statesmen gained a better insight into the reality and besides NATO gradually developed the mechanisms for handling the matter. The EAPC offered some different levers for settling the above-like issues. For instance, on November 19, 1997 Secretary General of NATO Javier Solana informed the UK Atlantic Council: "Allies and Partners are already exploring in the EAPC the possibilities for regional security cooperation in the Caucasus and South East Europe".<sup>40</sup> This statement clearly defines that NATO through EAPC was exploring the possibilities of cooperation and in no way did it mean NATO's direct engagement.

Against the active aspirations of Georgia and Azerbaijan, the stand of Armenia towards NATO has been very much reserved and the statements from the very start rather moderate. NATO's road to Yerevan began in October 1995 when Deputy Commander of NATO forces in Europe, General Jeremiah McKenzie visited Armenia with a five-member NATO delegation. The purpose of his mission was to inspect the progress of Armenia's participation in PfP and encourage Armenia to commit its scarce resources to establishing military ties with NATO. During his 3-day stay in Yerevan, General McKenzie made a public appeal for the Armenian government to take a more active role in the PfP program. Acting Armenian Foreign Minister Vahan Papazian indicated that Armenia planned to play a more active role in the program, but emphasized that the country would proceed at its own cautious pace. True to his word, Armenia proceeded cautiously in its efforts to participate in PfP exchanges during the first several years of the program. Armenian policymakers had more important strategic concerns in 1995 than taking advantage of NATO's PfP program.<sup>41</sup>

From 1995-96 Armenia embarked on a major rearmament program aimed at replenishing equipment lost during the war with Azerbaijan. According to NATO officials, Armenian military representatives registered little interest in the PfP program or NATO sponsored regional conferences on regional security during that period.<sup>42</sup>

Armenia made a stunning turnaround in its participation in the PfP program in 1997. Ties began to improve after NATO Secretary General Javier Solana visited Yerevan in February 1997. During Solana's visit Armenian Defense Minister Vazguen Sarkissian announced that Armenian forces would participate in military training exercises with NATO in order to familiarize themselves with how the Alliance operates. Upon the conclusion of Solana's visit Armenia relatively increased the level of its participation in PfP.

This turnaround in Armenia's participation in PfP may be attributed to Russia's participation in the NATO summit in Madrid in mid-1997 where the Alliance created the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council. It apparently signaled Armenia to have greater flexibility in pursuing its ties with NATO and significantly increased its level of activity in the program shortly after the conclusion of the historic summit. Evidence of a turnaround in support from the Armenian government occurred a survey of the views of senior Armenian policymakers on security issues in the Caucasus. The study "Armenia's Security Policy: The Vision of Senior Policymakers" offered a positive assessment of NATO's role in the Caucasus, particularly from the Armenian Minister of Defense. In the survey Armenian officials insisted that their country has a strong European identity and emphasized that the political spectrum of European security has now become broader due to NATO expansion.<sup>43</sup>

The visit of the NATO Secretary General Javier Solana to the South Caucasus states became the landmark of the NATO-South Caucasus relations. This was the first visit of the NATO Secretary General to the region and, with no exaggeration, of the historic importance. First of all, this meant the increasing interest of NATO towards the Caucasus that was playing the expanding role in the context of European security. The increase of interest was proportional to the ongoing reforms in the region, on the one hand, and the implementation of the Caspian energy projects, and, on the other hand, to the transformation of the NATO and expansion of the cooperation with partners.

The significant event of the visit was the meetings of Eduard Shevardnadz and Javier Solana at which the situation in the Caucasus, current political, economic and international situation in Georgian

and Georgia-NATO cooperation were considered. The Secretary General asked for the Georgian President's opinion on the NATO enlargement to which the President replied, that integration process currently underway in the European space was not directed against any state or region and provided for the security guarantees in the form acceptable for any state.<sup>44</sup> When discussing the Abkhazian issues and the possibility of the NATO engagement was also discussed. There prevailed the general view that the new reserves and facilities should be searched and put in action to reach the political settlement. Mr. Solana gave a comprehensive explanation of the NATO's stance towards the conflict settlement in the South Caucasus in the interview to the newspaper "Sakartvelos Respublika (11.2.1997). To the correspondent's question if it was possible to apply the experience of the Implementation Force (IFOR) for settling the conflicts in the Caucasus, he pointed out that there is no overall model for peace operations and that each conflict possesses its own specificity and the ways of settlement. In this connection, the Secretary General reminded the Georgian public that different missions were functioning in the territory of former Yugoslavia, in particular, the UN mission in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Joint military-civilian mission in the East Slavonia and the Stabilization Forces (SFOR) and in spite of the structural differences between them, all the missions possessed common characteristics as well, essential for conducting peace operations. These had been joint objective, the will for implementation and the clearly defined objectives for each institution. Thus, Secretary General found it crucially important that the alliance members and the partners were working in collaboration. In his view, in different environment and in different form the same criteria could be adjusted to Abkhazia. He concluded, that the UN and OSCE were already working on that issue, though replenished efforts were required for the continuation of the process and for taking the political decision.<sup>45</sup> As seen from this interview, the Secretary General did not exclude the possibility of the NATO engagement in this form or the other in the settlement of the Abkhazian conflict. In what form would NATO get involved depended on a lot of circumstances, including the transformation process in the alliance and the process of adaptation to the new realities.

In his statement at the Georgian Parliament the Secretary General considered the issue of the place of the Caucasus in the European security system and concluded that Europe cannot be completely safe and will be unable to fully apply its potential if the Caucasian states remain outside the space of the European security. Mr. Solana stated, that the main objective of NATO was to safeguard the security of its members but at the same time it had been understood in the alliance that the security of the NATO members is integrally connected with the security of those countries, which are included in the transatlantic space and share the common values since security is possible only then when there is stability in Europe and in the periphery.<sup>46</sup>

As seen from these and the former statements of the Secretary General, the alliance considered the South Caucasus to be the region to which European security was directly connected. This meant, that the issue of security and stability support in the region was on the NATO agenda.

Further on as the Kosovo campaign was launched, Azerbaijan and Georgia, though disillusioned with the prospect of settling the conflicts directly through NATO, perhaps found a source of optimism in view of NATO's campaign to halt Serb repression in Kosovo. The governments grappled with the implications of the Yugoslav war for their own conflicts. The Azerbaijani foreign aide Vafa Gulizade told AFP on July 6, 1999: "Thanks to a NATO operation, the Kosovo refugees are returning home. I think that if NATO forces were brought into the region, the Armenians would be forced to leave our occupied territories." Georgian President Shevardnadze compared Belgrade's aggression against the

Kosovars to Georgia's IDP problem after the war in Abkhazia. "Genocide and ethnic cleansing are unacceptable and should be punished," Shevardnadze said. Gulizade sounded even more optimistic, arguing that over the long term NATO should have to justify why human rights had to be defended in Kosovo and not in the Caucasus, which is also part of Europe.

To cut short the expectations the NATO Secretary General Solana was quick to end all talk on NATO's presence in the South Caucasus. Speaking after a meeting in Brussels with Armenian President Robert Kocharian, Solana said that the alliance was not thinking of deploying any troops and that it enjoyed good relations with all the countries in the region.<sup>47</sup>

## **CHAPTER 5:**

### **Creation of the EAPC and the PfP Enhancement**

The EAPC established on May 30, 1997 in Sintra, Portugal and unifying the former NACC and PfP was considered to be the main mechanism for the harmonization of NATO interests with the requirements of the partner countries.

Such attitude was mainly conditioned by the fact, that there had emerged several groups of partner states that had different stakes. Thus, e.g. the Central European and Baltic countries aimed at the eventual integration into NATO. Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, and Azerbaijan tried to gain as much as possible from the politico-military cooperation with NATO but were not considering integration into the alliance at that moment. The Central Asian states were the most passive in this context. Russia was the key player, which still considered NATO to be its strategic adversary but had realized that by refusing the cooperation with NATO it would stand isolated from the European processes. As for Byelorussia and Armenia, they mainly viewed relations with NATO through the Russian prism and therefore their cooperation with the alliance was limited in the format.

The noted realities and principles became the basis for the EAPC Basic Document adopted in Sintra at the Foreign Ministers' meeting. According to the document "The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council will be a new cooperative mechanism which will form a framework for enhanced efforts in both an expanded political dimension of partnership and practical cooperation under PfP. It will take full account of and complement the respective activities of the OSCE and other relevant institutions such as the European Union, the Western European Union and the Council of Europe."<sup>48</sup> As for the political dimension, the EAPC envisaged wide political consultations on the security issues, including political and security related matters, crisis management, regional matters, arms control issues, nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) proliferation and defense issues, international terrorism, defense policy and strategy, etc. In this context, as a new element the partners can implement direct political relations, individually or in the groups of limited format.<sup>49</sup> And they can also create special regional groups.

As the document stipulates, the EAPC bases itself on two principles. First - the door of the alliance is open for all the NATO members and partners for political consultations and practical cooperation; second - partnership is based on the self-differentiation principle, i.e. partners are to define themselves the fields and levels of cooperation.

Thus, the South Caucasus joined the new international mechanism with the most significant functions in building the Euro-Atlantic security system. The close political and military linkage with NATO, which was in the process of enlargement and adaptation with the new realities, determined the special features of that mechanism. The EAPC created around the axis of the alliance assisted the further integration of Caucasian states into the Euro-Atlantic structures, created additional security guarantees at least for the two, Azerbaijan and Georgia, and gave a significant impulse to the trend of closer cooperation with NATO.

The role of NATO and EAPC was widely discussed at the meeting of NATO and EAPC state leaders in Madrid on July 8-9, 1997. This was the most important summit since the foundation of NATO as it officially invited Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary, thus ending the “Cold War” balance and giving to NATO the role of the main security guarantor on the continent. It was also noted in the summit declaration, that “no European democratic country whose admission would fulfil the objectives of the Treaty will be excluded from consideration.”<sup>50</sup> NATO tried to enlarge with the minimal damage of its relations with Russia. The NATO-Russia Founding Act signed on May 27 of the same year served that very purpose. The “NATO-Ukraine Charter on Partnership” was also signed.

The EAPC was evaluated in the NATO summit declaration as the “essential element” in building security system in the Euro-Atlantic space.<sup>51</sup> It is noteworthy, that such evaluation is qualitatively higher than the evaluation of its predecessor NACC as “one of the elements” of the Euro-Atlantic Security architecture”. It was stipulated that EAPC based on the NACC and PfP experience would raise the cooperation on the qualitatively new level, enhance and specify the discussions on the security issues, extend the fields of practical cooperation and content, increase transparency and confidence among the alliance members”.<sup>52</sup> It is significant, that concurrent to these the peace process in Bosnia under the Dayton Agreement was underway through the joint NATO and partner efforts.

Confirming the crucial significance of the strategic cooperation between the US and the European allies, the summit emphasized ESDI within the alliance, meaning the strengthening of European component in the NATO military-political structure and granting to it a certain autonomy. This implied the activation of the role of European states in settling the conflicts on the continent and in conducting the peace operations. It was connected with the reorganization of the NATO military command system and the implementation of CJTF (Combined Joint Task Force) concept.

The summit also focused on the issues that jeopardized democratic development and peaceful life in a number of countries. The speech of the Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze held some criticism. Having analyzed the processes underway in the Euro-Atlantic space, he made a significant conclusion, that today’s difficulties are mainly conditioned by the obsolete thinking, and that the cold war is not willing to surrender its position, this being detrimental for Europe as well as for Russia. He evaluated the creation of the EAPC, signature of NATO-Russian Charter and of the NATO-Ukraine Charter as the examples proving the vitality of the new political reasoning.<sup>53</sup> He expressed his wish that EAPC be not only a body of political consultations but also an efficient instrument for settling the

problems existing in the partner countries. In this context, it was suggested to establish within the EAPC the regional groups, which, in the President's opinion, would help in applying the experience of the alliance and creating additional incentives for the regional cooperation. "While life integrity is violated in different countries, we cannot celebrate the victory", - with this statement did Shevardnadze sum up the attitude of Georgia towards building the Euro-Atlantic security system. In this context, he again underscored the Abkhazian problem and the necessity of its settlement based on the experience of Bosnia: "It is possible to restore peace only through the collective efforts and the Bosnian experience is a proof for it. I think, it is high time for the collective efforts to restore the peace and fairness trampled during the conflict in Abkhazia".<sup>54</sup>

Mr. Alexander Arzoumanian, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Armenia emphasized the peculiarity of Armenia's moderate participation: "It is now up to us to make certain that the opportunities offered by the Euro-Atlantic Council materialize in practice, and that each nation achieves the level and quality of engagement it is willing and able to achieve". This demonstrates the flexibility of Armenia's participation due to its earlier discussed situation. At the same time Armenia tried to use this forum for touching the relations with Turkey: "Now allow me to refer briefly to military-political aspects. As you know, Armenia is bordering with NATO, but with a heavy heart I must declare that there are still no diplomatic relations with that NATO member state bordering with Armenia – Turkey, moreover political strain is still preserved. The existing situation greatly obstructs the development of full-fledged relations between Armenia and NATO, forms unfavorable public opinion about NATO in Armenia."<sup>55</sup>

As for the Georgian President's suggestion on creating regional groups within the partnership, it should be noted that with the aim to draw NATO's closer attention to the South Caucasus and to the problems of our country, Georgia had made a suggestion already in 1996. According to the initiative, the expert teams should regularly discuss the situation in the region, the current or potential conflicts and prepare respective recommendations taking into consideration the experience gained in Bosnia. Besides the concerned states, the UN and OSCE representatives would be able to participate in the activities of the expert groups. This initiative had been considered at the meeting of the NATO Political Committee on 12 January 1996 and then on the ambassadorial meeting. It was decided to continue working on creating the group in view of the topicality of the issue.

The EAPC ambassadorial meeting of July 16, 1997 chaired by the Secretary General was dedicated to discussing the results of the Madrid summit. The representative of Georgia emphasized President Shevardnadze's suggestion on creating regional groups within the EAPC. This suggestion was strongly supported by Germany and Great Britain. It was decided, that the next meeting of the NATO political committee to be held on October 10 would consider the issues of cooperation on security issues in the Caucasian region.

Georgia's consultations, held before the political committee meeting, revealed different attitudes to the creation of the regional group and left it alone to handle the issue: a) Russia was rather unenthusiastic and argued that CIS was the only forum to discuss the set of the problems in the South Caucasus; b) Armenia shared the Russian view on the issue; c) Azerbaijan was first against participating in the Caucasian regional group together with Armenia and discussing the programs of joint cooperation, but such a position subsequently changed.

When on the scheduled meeting of the political committee Georgia submitted the proposals for the activities of the regional group, the majority of the meeting participants supported the idea of creating the regional group. At that meeting Armenia in principle supported the proposal while Azerbaijan suggested that it was crucial to study the experience of IFOR for the further activities of the group, hinting at engaging NATO in the settlement of the Karabakh problem. Russians did not deny the expediency of creating such a group but at the same time underlined, that such organizations as the UN, OSCE and CIS were already functioning in the region.

It is significant, that on October 15, 1997 most of the participants of the ambassadorial meeting supported the document and recommendations on establishing the AD Hoc Working Group (AHWG) on Caucasus. The representative of Armenia, though supported consultations on regional issues, considered the creation of the AHWG to be pre-mature. Russia objected arguing that the creation of separate regional groups would complicate and break down the procedure of the EAPC activities.<sup>56</sup> Owing to the consensus principle of the EAPC activities, the issue was returned to the political committee for the additional consideration, this meaning practically the negative decision.

The consideration of the AHWG issue in the EAPC revealed several significant factors. a) The initiative on creating the AHWG on Caucasus meant the increase of NATO's interest towards the region. b) Russia was opposed to the NATO's political activities in the region. c) The Russian interests in the Caucasus were taken into consideration in the NATO, this being the reason why the NATO did not push the establishment of the regional group at that stage.<sup>57</sup>

The Madrid Summit in 1997 launched PfP enhancements, which implied several components. The level of engagement of the states of the South Caucasian on those components is analyzed below:

- Participation of Partner nations together with NATO Allies in future PfP operations;
- An expanded scope of NATO/PfP exercises to address the full range of the Alliance's new missions, including Peace Support Operations.

Georgia and Azerbaijan had been involved in the NATO/PfP exercises while the above particular components laid the basis for them to consider the participation in NATO-led PSO and later on to contribute platoons each to Kosovo Force ( KFOR) later in 1999.

- Expansion of the Planning and Review Process (PARP) modeled on the NATO defense planning system and including the development of Ministerial Guidance and of Partnership Goals (PG), replacing the Interoperability Objectives (IO), which form part of the former PfP process. These measures would be combined with increased opportunities to develop transparency among PARP participants.

In January 1995, a Planning and Review Process (PARP) was introduced within the PfP framework in order to advance interoperability and increase transparency among Allies and Partners. 18 of the 27 PfP members chose to participate, selecting IOs to implement. None of the South Caucasus states were able to join immediately; however, Georgia and Azerbaijan started to study the issue and were able to join in 1999. Having completed IO-s they are now implementing PGs. Armenia is not the PARP member.

- Modalities for extending in principle the scope and orientation of the NATO Security Investment Program to include Partnership projects.

The three states are participating in this program.

- Increased scope for regional cooperation activities in the context of the Partnership, including consultations on both regional security matters and on practical cooperation.

As already discussed earlier, to the end of promoting regional cooperation, Georgia initiated the establishment of an open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group (AHWG) already in 1997 which was established later only in 1999.

The developments after 1997 ran upon the principles set out at the summit.

After enhancement the second visit of the Secretary General Javier Solana to the South Caucasus took place on September 29-30, 1998. The issues of European security and generally the South Caucasian set of problems were highlighted. Strategic importance of the Caucasian region in the context of the projects on Eurasian Transit Corridor and Caspian Energy Resources was emphasized. At the meeting in Tbilisi, President Shevardnadze underscored Georgia's new role and function in the regional and world context as well as the position of the country towards European security, and the role of the alliance.

Standing at the threshold of enlargement expected at the Washington summit of the next year, Secretary General was cautious of the steps to be taken so that to make the process less painful for Russia. Shevardnadze confirmed, that the NATO-Russian cooperation was in the Georgian interests. In regards with the New Strategic Concept, Georgia affirmed its interest that NATO undertake more actively the role of the security guarantor in the Euro-Atlantic space. In this context, the necessity of the EAPC's regional dimension was noted, in particular, the issue of settling the conflicts in the South Caucasian region at different levels. It was mentioned, that the enhancement of regional consultations would promote not only the political settlement of the conflicts in the region but also lay grounds for the possible international peace operations in the future.

The article of Javier Solana published in the Georgian press is of particular interest. It gives the basic approaches of NATO to a set of topical Caucasian problems. Secretary General first of all noted that the purpose of the visit was to analyze with the Georgian side the positive changes occurred in the European security system, and to consider the potential of NATO-Georgian relations in the context of preparations for the Washington summit. Of particular importance is Solana's statement saying, that NATO considers the Caucasus as one of the important regions where it has direct interests, as Caucasus is the integral part of Europe.<sup>58</sup>

The Secretary General underlined the role of NATO in enhancing regional cooperation and touched the discussions on creating the Caucasian regional group in the EAPC framework, noting that the aim of the consultations would be not to create the closed "regional groups" but to open a transparent permanent forum open for all the interested states. He briefly touched the importance of the peaceful resolution of the Abkhazian conflict in accordance with the OSCE standards. The article mentioned also the restriction of conventional weapons in terms of the Georgian security. In this

context, he underscored the negotiations on the adapted CFE treaty and called upon Georgia to support the process.

During the meeting with the President of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev, the necessity to solve the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict on the basis of the principles adopted at the Lisbon summit of the OSCE was stressed. The Secretary General made a special emphasis on the fact, that as a result of a wise far-sighted policy of President Heydar Aliyev, the ties between Asia and Europe were being established, and the bridge of co-operation was being set up. It was stressed, that the Silk Route project would open huge opportunities, in particular for Azerbaijan which would become the most important and major hub along the Silk Route, even the deeper merger of its economy with the world economy, and enhance its authority and image at the international level.<sup>59</sup>

The Azerbaijani president underlined his concern, that despite the existing regime of the cease-fire between Armenia and Azerbaijan, one billion USD worth heavy weaponry, arms and ammunition had been secretly and illegally transferred during the past three years from Russia to Armenia. The President was worried about the location of Russian military base in Armenia and the presence of Russian troops on the territory of Georgia. He expressed his view, that there was no ground or a need to keep army units or a military base of another country on the territory of Armenia and Georgia, these factors undoubtedly hindering the insurance of security in the Caucasus.<sup>60</sup>

The two visits of the Secretary General in 1997 and 1998 pointed to the fact that the region was taking a prominent place in the policy of the Alliance.

Immediately after the visit of Secretary General, significant activities were conducted in Georgia: the meeting of the NATO land group (for only alliance members) and a seminar on de-mining and bridge classification (for alliance members and partners). A week later an EAPC seminar held in Georgia on "The Practical Aspects of Cooperation in Regional Security in the Caucasus" was an attempt to consider the security aspect. Representatives from 21 NATO and partner countries participated. Taking in view the difficulties in the Azerbaijan-Armenia relations, the seminar aimed at identifying the common interests in the field of security in the region and setting the trends for practical cooperation. Therefore, such issues were selected for consideration, which were topical for all the three states of the region, but would not be the matter of political discourse. In particular, the issues discussed were: defense economy, cooperation in science and environmental issues, civil emergencies and civil defense, cooperation in military-technical fields like de-mining, storing of the explosives, transportation and neutralization.

The seminar practically confirmed the need and possibility of the establishment of AHWG on Caucasus that had so far been blocked due to the earlier discussed factors. The seminar enjoyed a broad support. The alliance evaluated it as the desire of the EAPC countries, and first of all of the states of South Caucasus, to overcome the difficulties present and to consolidate security and stability. The fields considered at the seminar laid the grounds for the spheres of cooperation of the AHWG on Caucasus established in the EAPC framework in 1999.

## CHAPTER 6:

### **Washington Summit and Next Enhancement.**

Preparations for the Washington Summit ran against the complicated international events connected with Kosovo, Yugoslavia. In EAPC it was reiterated, that the support of the Kosovo Albanians by the West did not in any way mean advocacy of separatism. It was just a reaction to the policy of ethnic cleansing and the violation of the minorities' rights practiced by Belgrade while none doubted sovereignty and territorial integrity of Yugoslavia. The political consultations ongoing in the EAPC were of particular significance as they displayed the partners' position towards the situation in Yugoslavia on the one hand, and to the policy of NATO, on the other. The position of Georgia was based on the unacceptability of the aggressive separatism of ethnic minority as well as on the unacceptability of ethnic cleansing. In this context, Georgia underlined, that the international mechanisms, first of all the UN, did not meet the modern requirements. In confirmation the parallel was drawn to Abkhazia, where the international efforts have born no results.

Kosovo problem allowed drawing the attention of the EAPC to the problems of the South Caucasus. In this context Georgia consecutively exercised the idea, that the South Caucasus needed the attention of NATO and EAPC equal to that enjoyed by Kosovo and former Yugoslavia. The fact that the latter enjoyed advantageous attitude from NATO can be illustrated by a simple example – at the EAPC meetings Bosnia and Kosovo were registered as number one in the agenda while other regions were considered in the framework of “other regional issues” though neither Bosnia nor Yugoslavia were the EAPC members. Such was the geopolitical reality. Being supportive of the NATO policy, at the Foreign Ministers' meetings of May 28-29 and 8-9 December, 1998 Georgia underlined that there should not exist first- and second-rate conflicts in the Euro-Atlantic space. In this aspect, the necessity of the activation of the efforts of European security organizations, including EAPC was emphasized. Armenia, definitely alluding to Nagorno-Karabakh, supported Kosovar Albanians implying that the territorial integrity does not constitute the main category of international law and that in certain circumstances the principle of the self-determination of the nations should enjoy a similar right. The position of Azerbaijan was fully supportive of the alliance policy in Kosovo. Consequently, in 1999 Georgia and Azerbaijan dispatched peacekeeping platoons to participate in the KFOR.

The decision of NATO to use military force against a sovereign state was the new stage in the history of the alliance. With this decision NATO and its members practically made political declaration that the state sovereignty should not serve as immunity for committing crimes against humanity. Thus, NATO was giving advantage to the moral principle rather than to the international law. This was a revolutionary event since NATO was undertaking the right of the UN to take decision on applying force against a sovereign country.

The South Caucasus was geographically remote from the Balkan events. However, the NATO military operation was connected with a number of geopolitical risks, which presumably could have a serious impact on the security of the South Caucasus.

First of all, neglect of the requirements of the international law by NATO (lack of the UN Security Council's permission) was creating a dangerous precedent - the pseudo-moral motives could become the arm of expansionist policy of some countries. This could have instigated a very dangerous trend in the states with weak democratic institutions and traditions. In this aspect, the impact of NATO's military campaign on the domestic and foreign policy of Russia was remarkable. In the context of the South Caucasus it could be forecasted, that Russia would try to use its levers to exert pressure upon Georgia or Azerbaijan.

It was particularly significant whether the NATO's military operation would implement successfully or fail. In both cases, it was crucial to take into consideration the specific issues. First of all the success of NATO would be a strong warning for the politicians, who, like the Yugoslavian authorities, were trying to institutionalize the achievements and demographic changes reached through ethnic cleansing. The syndrome of not being punishable and the apprehension that international organizations can do nothing but adopt resolutions, would be shattered. This would be a clear warning for the Sokhumi and perhaps Nagorno-Karabakh regime, that the time had started to work against. At the same time, it was to be taken into consideration, that support of the Kosovo Albanians (the victims of the Belgrade regime) by NATO could serve as an impetus for other separatist forces. In this context, it was clear, that after the successful military operation it would be very hard to persuade the Kosovo Albanians to stay in the composition of Serbia, or the Yugoslav Federation. How would it influence other separatist activities in the Euro-Atlantic space, in particular the regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali, was a topical issue.

If the success of NATO would create certain problems, its failure would be equal to a catastrophe. First, the situation in the whole former Yugoslavia would get extremely complicated, this meaning the destabilization of the Balkans with the ensuing geopolitical consequences and putting under question the perspective of building the New European Security System. Taking into view these circumstances, Georgia was to formulate its fundamental position towards the alliance's military operation. Already throughout 1998, the representatives of Georgia several times expressed the position of Georgia towards the Kosovo issue. A parallel was drawn to Abkhazia. In this context it was noted, that this problem required more attention from NATO and EAPC, since similarly in Abkhazia ethnic cleansing and violation of human rights had occurred and, at the same time, like in the Kosovo case, the UN resolutions were not implemented. Therefore it was not fair to discriminate between the first and second-rate conflicts in the Euro-Atlantic space. The danger of further spread of separatism in the Euro-Atlantic space was observed, the incentive of which could be unconditional support of the Kosovo Albanians by the West. The position of Azerbaijan was similar.

On April 6, 1999 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia made an official statement that Georgia was ready to participate in the international humanitarian operations conducted by the international humanitarian organizations for aiding the Kosovo refugees. At the same time, the Georgian mission in NATO applied to SHAPE with the suggestion to engage the representative of Georgia in PCC in preparing the peace operation in Kosovo. On July 20, 1999 the Parliament of Georgia officially approved of the Georgian President's decision to send a Georgian platoon to participate in KFOR. Azerbaijan also contributed a platoon. With this attempt to get engaged in the international peace operation, Georgia and Azerbaijan underlined, that in spite of the difficulties in both countries, they were firm in the decision to practically participate in building the new European security system.

NATO and EAPC summits were held in Washington on April 24-25 against the background of the Kosovo events. This had an impact on the general atmosphere. Russian delegation did not participate in the summit due to the deterioration of the NATO-Russia relations. There was a wide discussion on the topical issues of Euro-Atlantic cooperation and the prospects of future. The heads of states targeted the situation in Kosovo. The majority of the central and eastern European states supported the NATO military operations. The heads of the South Caucasus states seized this chance to use the Kosovo events for promoting their positions in the conflicts of the South Caucasus. The President of Armenia R. Kocharian drew the parallel between Kosovo and Nagorno-Karabakh in the context that “the forceful violation of the right of self-determination of nations causes war and humanitarian catastrophes, and therefore cannot be considered to be the internal problem of a single country.” At the same time he called the conflicting sides in Kosovo towards the search of compromise and ending of the armed conflict. As for the problem of the Nagorno-Karabakh, Mr. Kocharian avoided “subjectless discussions”<sup>61</sup> and underlined that both, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh support the proposals developed lately by the OSCE Minsk group.

The President of Azerbaijan used this forum for criticizing “the military aggression carried out by Armenia” against his country, and for supporting the activities of the Minsk Group. He also stressed, that it was unacceptable “to illegally supply one conflicting side with arms”, hinting at the military support of Armenia by Russia. As for the issue of Kosovo, H. Aliyev supported NATO actions and noted that it was necessary to end ethnic cleansing and give the refugees a chance to return to their homes. The Azerbaijani leader also supported the New Strategic Concept and declared “Azerbaijan would make all the efforts to further enhance relations with the alliance.”<sup>62</sup>

The President of Georgia E. started his presentation with the recollections of 19 years ago when the Berlin wall fell and the Soviet empire collapsed. However, this did not develop into a happy ending, but into dramatic episodes of ethnic cleansing, of millions of refugees, of the deeds of terrorists and extremists applying old and new techniques.

The President underlined that the developments in Kosovo have again, with particular drama, confirmed the tragic consequences of the unsettled, "frozen" conflicts, including the Abkhaz conflict. He stressed the imperative need to completely overhaul existing security mechanisms that were formed in a different epoch for different purposes. This idea that the leader of Georgia clearly articulated at the summit was a serious support of the new vision of NATO's role in the international affairs. One of the main components of this role is, that “without strong guarantees for security and diplomacy backed by force - including the actual enforcement of peace - the world will not be healed of the epidemic of conflict.”<sup>63</sup> Thus Shevardnadze pointed to the principle of peace enforcement, one of the main aspects of the New Strategic concept. Although practically that principle was underway only in Kosovo, nevertheless it was a serious declaration of the position towards the similar events.<sup>64</sup>

The President of Georgia touched the relations of NATO with partners and noted, that the co-operation ensures a secure and friendly environment in which NATO can operate, while strengthening the independence and democracy of EAPC member states remains the best way to prevent extremism, revanchism and aggressive nationalism in these regions.

The President also noted that the core of NATO partnership must be a humanistic, moral high ground approach and a common worldview rather than considerations of geopolitics and balance of power alone. In the noted context, Shevardnadze directly mentioned Abkhazia again and expressed his hope, that “the time has come for the Euro-Atlantic Community, already rich in experience, to invigorate the joint effort to achieve a settlement in this conflict.”<sup>65</sup>

The Washington Summit endorsed an "Enhanced and More Operational PfP". It contains three elements: political-military framework for NATO-led PfP operations, expanded and adapted PARP, enhanced practical military and defence-related cooperation covering the full spectrum of Cooperation in PfP.<sup>66</sup>

A Political-Military Framework for NATO-led PfP operations has enabled the participation Georgia and Azerbaijan in KFOR in which 20% are covered by non-NATO nations. The two countries have also joined an expanded and adapted PARP.

"Operational Capabilities Concept", which places increased emphasis on improving the military effectiveness of multinational forces, will increase military cooperation still further to help Partners develop forces that are better able to operate with those of NATO members in future crisis response operations. This could open new opportunities for the three South Caucasian states.

As a step to the enhancement, the AHWG on Caucasus was finally established in July when in protest of the military operations carried out by NATO in Kosovo, Russia suspended its relations with the alliance. Thus, during the absence of Russia in the EAPC the establishment of the AHWG on the Caucasus was not blocked by any state. The group identified the following topics for exploration of possibilities for further developing practical regional co-operation in the near future:

- Defense Economic Issues;
- Civil Emergency Planning;
- Security Related science and environmental co-operation.
- Information and Public relations

These areas proved to be successful as they were positively accepted and the AHWG on Caucasus was finally established in July 1999. From then on the AHWG has held a number of activities. To illustrate the intensity of work carried out, below follows the analysis of the activities carried under this format in the identified areas of cooperation.

***Defence economic issues.*** An EAPC seminar on “Economic Aspects of Defence Budgeting in Transition Economies” was held in Tbilisi from 4-6 June 2000, at the invitation of the Georgian authorities. The seminar was very well attended (about 80 participants from 26 countries). Several parliamentarians from France, Georgia, Moldova, Portugal, Turkey and the U.K. were also present. As a follow-up to this meeting, Georgia proposed the organization of a sequence of presentations on specified security and defence economic issues, given by experts to a selected audience from the three countries of the South Caucasus. The follow-up seminar was held in October 2000. Together with the colleagues from Azerbaijan and Armenia common problems in the field were discussed.

Organised by the Economics Directorate in cooperation with the Georgian MFA, a training course on security and defence economic took place in Tbilisi, Georgia on December 18-19 2000. The meeting brought together experts from different ministries of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia. Discussions covered a wide range of issues, such as: economic transformation and its impact on internal security, budgetary impact of financing security and defence, impact of interoperability needs on the defence, cooperation opportunities in the South Caucasus preconditioned for attracting foreign investment and the role of international donors.

***Civil emergency planning.*** Armenia, as follow-up to the recommendations of the AHWG, hosted a PFP Seminar in Yerevan (5-7 September) on Civil Emergency Planning in case of natural disasters which was very well attended. However, the Azerbaijani colleagues did not attend while the CEP-CIMIC course held in Baku in April 2000 was not attended by the Armenian colleagues.

A seminar on “International Deployment of Rescue Units in the Area of Natural and Man-made Disaster” was held in Baky, Azerbaijan, 12-13 July 2001. The aim of the seminar was to bring together experts from NATO nations, partner countries, and international organizations in order to exchange experience and enhance expertise. 55 experts from 15 EAPC members participated in the seminar.

***Security related science and environmental co-operation.*** Following the signature in Tbilisi, Georgia on 27-28 April 2000 by representatives from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia of a Memorandum of Understanding to create “CARENA” (The Caucasian Academic, Research and Educational Networking Association supported by the NATO science Program), Georgia and Armenia established their own representative national organization (GRENA, ARENA).

In the framework of the CARENA program, the NATO Science Committee approved during its meeting of October 2000 the principle of an initiative launched by the Advisory Panel on Computer Networking, which aimed at a considerable improvement of the international connectivity to the Internet and among themselves of the scientific communities in the three Caucasus countries. The project intended to purchase bulk satellite connectivity in order to improve the present bandwidth and intended the upgrading of already existing earth stations in Tbilisi and Yerevan, and the addition of a new earth station in Baku. Nevertheless the implementation of the project failed, as there was lack of cooperation between Armenia and Azerbaijan. It has been replaced by “Silk Road” project which plans to bring highly effective, global internet connectivity to the Caucasus and Central Asia through state-of-the-art satellite technology, thus creating a virtual Silk information highway.

A meeting of the Science Committee was held in Tbilisi on 29-30 October 2001. On this occasion, the NATO Science Committee organized a regional scientific conference the purpose of which was to further enhance cooperation within the framework of the EAPC between the scientific communities of the NATO countries and the three Caucasus Partners. Leading members of the scientific communities of the three countries, with an emphasis on younger scientists, the “leaders of tomorrow”, were invited to participate in the conference.

Under the Science for Peace program on 5 October 2000, NATO approved the project “Seismic Risk in Large Cities of Caucasus, Tools for Risk Management”. The aim of the project is to reduce earthquake damage to buildings in the cities of Baky, Tbilisi, Vladikavkaz and Yerevan. This three-year

project is a co-operative effort between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, with the involvement of Russia, Spain and France, with a financial support from NATO.

Three meetings of NATO Advisory Panels were held in the Caucasus. The Panel of “Life Science and Technology (LST) held its meeting in Tbilisi on 24-25 May 2001. The Panel on “Environment and Earth Science and Technology (EST) met in Baky on 28-29 May 2001. The Panel on “Computer Networking met in Yerevan in 28-30 June 2001.

NATO Advanced Research Workshops (ARW) were held in all three countries of the region. An ARW in “Physical and Engineering Science and Technology (PEST) took place in Yerevan on 25-29 June 200, an ARW in EST was held in Baky on 29 May-June 1, Two ARWs in EST and in LST took place in Tbilisi on 3-6 April and 14-18 June 2001.

A CCMS short-term project on Environmental Security of Hazardous Substances in the Black Sea and Caucasus Regions was launched in March 2000 to be led jointly by Georgia and Turkey. The final meeting of this project took place in Ankara, Turkey on 5-7 November. The experts participating in this project identified key points for development of regional strategy for environmental security of transporting hazardous substances in the Black Sea and Caspian regions. Experts from Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Canada, Georgia, Germany, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine were actively involved in this project.

***Information and public relations.*** In June 2001, the NATO Office of Information and Press sponsored a seminar for media representatives of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. This event was held in Tbilisi, and aimed to inform print and television journalists on NATO in general, as well as on Alliance cooperative activities in the Caucasus, both on a bilateral basis and within the EAPC framework. The seminar also fostered an open debate on major security issues amongst media representatives of the three South Caucasus states. During their concluding remarks representatives of Armenia and Azerbaijan thanked NATO for having facilitated what they termed a “unique dialogue reflecting the diversity of opinions on the future of the Caucasian region.”<sup>67</sup>

The cooperation of the three South Caucasus states under AHWG ON Caucasus has not proved a tremendously success story in terms of bringing the two nations very close together. Unfortunately, very frequently the Azerbaijani are absent when such meetings are held in Armenia while the Armenians do not attend those held in Azerbaijan. However, both parties are always willing to attend the activities held in Georgia and engage in lively discussions. In general, the development of AHWG clearly demonstrates the will and necessity of cooperation between the three regional states but the political reasons block relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan. It is urgent that the three states cooperate on the issues of international terrorism, non-proliferation of WMD, arms trafficking, including of small arms and light weapons, crisis management etc.

## CHAPTER 7:

### Way Ahead

The NATO Secretary General, during his visit to Tbilisi in the September of 2000, gave a very concise evaluation of partnership and clear-cut answers to the pending problems.

As the Secretary General stated, the PfP program has added momentum to the reform processes of many partner nations, particularly, concerning practical questions of how to organize and control military forces in democratic societies. It has led to a degree of technical and conceptual interoperability among our forces that is unprecedented. PfP has marked the beginning of a new security culture throughout Eurasia - a culture based on practical security co-operation.

On a political level, NATO's co-operation with Partners in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) has provided a platform for Allies and Partners to discuss issues of common concern and has served as the political "roof" of Partnership for Peace. The EAPC agenda covers a wide range of issues, such as regional security, energy security, and civil emergency planning. Secretary General noted, that Georgia seized the opportunities offered by the EAPC, and became one of the most active participants. Indeed, the first ever EAPC regional security co-operation event was held in Georgia.

At the same time, the role of NATO in the resolution of the conflicts in the region was not stated to have increased in spite of the changes in the Strategic Concept. Secretary General clearly declared that NATO cannot and does not claim a lead role in facilitating the peace processes in this region. That responsibility rests first and foremost with the parties of the region, who must find a way to agree on a peaceful way forward. He underscored, that there would be no comprehensive settlement of the disputes in the region without the participation of the region's major powers- including Russia. Though NATO-Russia relationship is still burdened by Cold War stereotypes, he expressed hope that they would be overcome as in the long run increased security in Europe or the Caucasus could not be achieved without Russia.

He concluded, that the countries of the Caucasus have their own specifics, and their own dynamics. NATO does not have the solution to all the problems here or elsewhere but policies of co-operation will strengthen security for them all. Secretary General stated, that there is a unique chance to turn Europe into a region of co-operation and stability, in which every country has its say, and none considers itself threatened. Nevertheless, NATO is determined to work with the countries of the region, to make this ambitious goal a reality.<sup>68</sup> Thus it was once again confirmed, that NATO would not undertake any responsibilities in the region and Russia would have to play a crucial role.

The year of 2001 was exceptional in the South Caucasus. First time in the region a large-scale multinational PfP exercise "Cooperative Partner-2001" was successfully held in Georgia. The script was based on the interaction of multinational Peacekeeping forces including navy, air- and land forces at a

humanitarian operation and the planning was done by AFSOUTH. The exercise witnessed the participation of NATO countries – the US, France, Turkey, Greece and Italy. From partners Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Romania, Georgia and Ukraine participated. The exercise was commanded by the multinational staff with joint participation of the officers from NATO and partner countries. It had a great political importance for the further development of partnership with the alliance.

Another multinational land exercise “Cooperative Best Effort” was conducted in Georgia in June 2002. Out of the NATO countries the US, Great Britain, Turkey, Greece, Canada and Hungary participated. Partner countries were represented by Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Georgia, Lithuania, Austria, Moldova, and, significantly, Armenia, which was absent a year ago in “Cooperative Partner”. This is a clear manifestation that Armenia has decided to intensify its engagement in Partnership.

The year 2002 is going to be extremely important for the alliance in terms of the expected robust enlargement as well as the new kind of relationships with Russia. On May 28, at Pratica di Mare Air Force Base near Rome, Heads of State and Government from NATO member countries and the Russian Federation “launched a new era in NATO-Russia cooperation”. The Rome Declaration “NATO-Russia Relations: A New Quality” formally established the NATO-Russia Council. NATO member states and Russia will continue to intensify their cooperation in areas including the struggle against terrorism, crisis management, non proliferation, arms control and confidence-building measures, theatre missile defence, search and rescue at sea, military-to-military cooperation, and civil emergencies.<sup>69</sup> Crisis management envisages strengthening cooperation including through regular exchange of views and information on peacekeeping operations, continuing cooperation and consultations on the situation in the Balkans, promoting interoperability between national peacekeeping contingents through joint or coordinated training initiatives, and further development of a generic concept for joint NATO-Russia peacekeeping operations. This, if applied in positive and efficient terms, could perhaps play a constructive role in the settlement of the conflicts in the South Caucasus. It is significant, that at the meeting of the EAPC Foreign Ministers at Reykjavik, Iceland on May 15 Georgia welcomed the establishment of NATO-Russia Council, "which will certainly increase predictability and security in the Euro-Atlantic area, thus contributing to the aims of NATO's Partnership and Cooperation Program towards the perspectives of the NATO-Russia Council was expressed." The hope was expressed, that NATO-Russia Council would, among other issues result in intensified dialogue on a number of outstanding problems, including regional issues.<sup>70</sup> Armenia is also looking forward to the improved NATO-Russian relations. As the foreign minister of Armenia Vardan Oskanyan stated closer NATO-Russian ties could have important stabilization ramifications for Armenia since the closer Russia-NATO ties get, the more effective Armenia's complimentary policy will be.<sup>71</sup>

The year 2002 should also be the time to adapt EAPC and Partnership for Peace in light of their importance in addressing new security challenges such as terrorism or regional instability. The partners have their viewpoint of the arrangements. As stated by Azerbaijan at Reykjavik, development of variable or flexible geometry formats to address differing interests and concerns of partners should mostly imply developing of functional, substance driven interaction between NATO and partner nations rather than regional. Azerbaijan as a Partner Nation is willing to develop integrated and comprehensive framework of bilateral 19+1 cooperation with NATO with set out objectives, which could facilitate focused cooperation on security policy and common defense. EAPC and PfP have a

substantial potential for cooperation in combating terrorism. In addition to the traditional focus on the armed forces, PfP and EAPC could provide relevant support and mechanisms for strengthening cooperation between military and non military agencies and forces, information exchange and coordination among NATO and partner national security agencies on specific issues including border controls and asymmetrical threats.<sup>72</sup>

It is the belief of Georgia that current mechanisms and tools of the EAPC/PfP represent many useful ideas to base the work on, e.g. inclusiveness and self-differentiation principles, 19+n and 19+1 formats. These consultation mechanisms of the EAPC could be extended to include yet unexplored individual, regional and functional areas giving more emphasis to the political and security-related issues, regional security challenges, like regional conflicts. Given the changing security environment, the PfP, too, could take new directions integrating new areas, like border security, thus supporting antiterrorist goals.<sup>73</sup>

The Prague Summit in November 2002, in view of the new realities and the new approaches of the partners, will probably offer the dynamic new programs that will equip the EAPC and PfP to continue to play a vital role.<sup>74</sup>

## **Conclusions**

The conflicts in the South Caucasus prevent the economic development and regional cooperation. International security organizations have not so far resolved any of the conflicts.

The involvement of the Caucasian states with NATO under NACC provided a new forum to articulate the problems in the region. PfP opened vast opportunities for the democratic transformation of the armed forces while EAPC furnished the overall framework for political and security-related consultations and for enhanced cooperation under the PfP. As a result of enhancement, PfP acquired individual character, basing on the self-differentiation principle.

The Washington summit endorsed “Enhanced and More Operational PfP” which has laid foundation for a deeper engagement of the Caucasian states.

With the aim to promote regional cooperation, Ad Hoc Working Group on Caucasus was established.

Since its introduction, the Partnership has played a valuable role in supporting NATO’s overall effort towards conflict prevention and crisis management. Practical PfP cooperation has been instrumental in preparing NATO and Partner forces for joint operations and the South Caucasus states have been involved at different levels in accordance with their positions and requirements. The interoperability achieved through PfP contributed to the successful integration of Partner forces in IFOR/SFOR and subsequently KFOR, Georgia and Azerbaijan being the part of the latter.

Some state officials in the South Caucasus await still a wider NATO role in the region. Whether this will accomplish or not, there is a growing evidence that the Caucasus is ascending in importance in

the strategic thinking of the NATO. As an important energy corridor, the Caucasus deserves close attention from NATO policymakers as the region that will have extreme importance for the energy security in Europe.

However, a lot depends on how successfully the outstanding international energy and transit projects develop. If they realistically establish new function to the region and turn the Caspian energy resources into the alternate source of energy for the western countries, then the issue of the Western and probably even NATO security guarantees covering the respective states of the South Caucasus, will realistically be posed. However, this is possible not through confrontation with Russia but through building a joint Euro-Atlantic security system.

Rapidly changing security environment after September 11 terrorist acts and the expected post-Prague transformation within NATO will affect EAPC and PfP. It will definitely have a direct affect on the South Caucasus states, though varying in scope and angle.

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