

Strategic estimate of the caucasus region essay sample



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US Domestic Considerations are the oil pipeline through the Southern Caucasus Region and the Black Sea for trade access. • Non-US/Multinational Policy Goals, include NATO expansion in size and influence. Relations with Russia. Creation of an independent Kurdish nation. • Iran's objectives to reconstitute former borders, control the oil pipeline from Caspian Sea and U. S. presence gone from Caucasus region. Iran interests include abandoning nuclear programs. • Iran lost control of Azeri Turks who formed the Republic of Ahurastan. The Southwest province seceded and formed the Republic of Luristan. • Ahurastan interests to have international recognition as a sovereign nation and 25% share of oil reserves from the Caspian Sea. Ahurastan engaged in talks with North Korea about procuring nuclear weapons. • South Azeri Peoples Party a non-state political movement challenging the government of Azerbaijan. South Azeri People's Army a non-state military (insurgency) movement supported by Ahurastan.

• Free Karabakh Movement (FKM) a non-state actor backed by Azerbaijan. • Azerbaijan objectives to increase oil rights in the Caspian Sea, restore its territory and have integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structure. Opposed to Ahurastan due to their support of SAPA. • Azerbaijan currently supported by many U. S. programs (Peace Keeping Operations, Coalition Solidarity Funds, Counter-Terrorist Fellowship Program and Humanitarian Assistance.) • Russia, allowing U. S./NATO support in Georgia as long as Abkhazia/South Ossetia status quo maintained due to Tatarstan aspirations of independence. • Russia objectives include modernizing military, maintain control of Chechnya, and high tech sectors. Russia has blocked all Caspian Sea traffic other than Russia and Kazakhstan-flagged vessels. • Armenia

interests in modernization and improvement of their economy for sustainable levels of growth. Developing global partnerships with the Council of Europe and Eurasian Economic Community.

- Armenian nuclear power station attacked in Nov 2019 by the FKM. Turkey is detecting radiation from the damaged plant. Armenia won't agree to U. S. support out of fear of power-plant shutdown.
- Georgia is the fastest growing economy in the Caucasus region. Objectives include increasing defense capabilities, improving infrastructure, and establishing energy security.

- Georgia has no formal diplomacy with Russia but does have bilateral relations with U. S. The U. S. sponsors several programs within Georgia.

1. BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION. The Republic of Azerbaijan is continuing efforts to sustain and increase its economic growth by protecting proven oil reserves from deep water Caspian Basin oilfields and securing its transport to western markets. Azerbaijan uses this energy development to build strategic partnerships and attract international attention in favor of its independence. Since 2017 the U. S. has provided support to Azerbaijan through various U. S. Army Reserve engineer units participation in stability related construction efforts directed at upgrading the Azerbaijani infrastructure to allow for better more secure transport of energy reserves.

a. In 2015 the South Azeris People Party (SAPP) formed to represent the people in the southern region of Azerbaijan. This group was unable to affect change and in 2016 the South Azeri People's Army (SAPA) was formed. This was a fundamentalist insurgent group whose goal is to overthrow the secular government in Baku. Ahurastan openly supports this insurgency providing

funding, equipment and training to the SAPA in order to conduct attacks against the Azerbaijani army and destabilize the region.

b. The Free Karabakh Movement (FKM) has interfered with Azerbaijani police efforts to maintain order in the region and is a growing problem. In November 2019 the FKM who is funded by GOAZ attacked an Armenian Nuclear Power station at Metsamor, 20 kilometer south of Yerevan.

c. The Caspian Sea is bordered by five states and remains a source of tension in Caucasus region. More than 15 rounds of negotiations have failed to reach an agreement by all parties. Azerbaijan, Ahurastan, and Iran all independently claim the Araz-Alov-Sharg oil field in the Caspian Sea.

d. Russia has enforced a naval blockade of all maritime traffic since October 2017. North of 42 degrees north latitude in the Caspian Sea, while expanding oil exploration there. Russian and Kazakhstan assert their claims over the territorial sea area. 2. CURRENT STATUS. Azerbaijan's rail system from Georgia to Baku has been upgraded by U. S. Army Reserve engineer units. Additional U. S. lead efforts have been in place to assist in the over-haul and improvement of road and water distribution networks along the Kura River valley as well as efforts to pave and enlarge several regional airfields.

a. Ahurastan seceded from Iran in 2018-2019 and claims rights to the oil reserves in the Caspian Sea. Ahurastan's open support for SAPP/SAPA creates additional conflict in the Caucasus region.

b. Armenia's primary domestic issue is a reliable source of energy to sustain its manufacturing. Industry employs over 50% of the work force. A new nuclear power plant should come on line in 2021. Both Armenia and Turkey
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are experiencing fallout from the reactor after the nuclear power plant in Metsamor was attacked by the FKM. Turkey has requested technical assistance from the U. S. Department of Energy to deal with the issue. Armenia has resisted the U. S. involvement because they are fearful they will be pressured to shut down the current plant and stop work on the second one.

c. Azerbaijani government receives significant income from the oil and gas production in the Caspian sea that is having a profound effect on Azerbaijan's society. Residents in the northern portion of Azerbaijan have benefited the most from this income and thereby have remained more secular. Residents in the southern portion of Azerbaijan however have seen fewer economic benefits from the oil and gas production and have thereby become more susceptible to extreme Shiite Islamist tensions.

d. Russia signaled a willingness to allow U. S. led coalition operations in the South Caucasus region in response to Ahurastanian aggression if the U. S. and NATO agree to the following quid pro quos:

(1) Continued acceptance of the presence of Russian forces in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, with the understanding that any movement of the forces from these regions into Georgia proper would entail " serious consequences."

(2) Support for a mutually-agreed upon amount of oil and gas from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to transit through Russian-controlled pipelines.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS. The United States should continue to utilize soft power approaches, diplomacy, and a strong Information Operations campaign to prevent the destabilization of the

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Caucasus region and to leverage Russian influence while improving our regional standing. Continue U. S. governmental and commercial involvement in the Caucasus and Caspian Sea region.

Ensure as much as possible, social, political and economic progress and stability in the region. The United States must disrupt and deter regional terrorist groups through the regional Defense Attaché Office and Office of Security Cooperation supported initiatives and programs with the assistance of the US Department of State. Primary recommendations to the command include joint regional military cooperation exercises in Georgia and Turkey, targeted humanitarian assistance through USAID and local NGOs, and a joint operation with the US Department of Energy to provide technical and security assistance to prevent the loss or destruction of nuclear facilities and materials within this region.