

**In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful**

**War in the Caucasus and Iran's security and interests**

*Manouchehr Moradi*

Political dispute between Russia and Georgia which led to a full scale war in August 2008, could be evaluate as the most important event of the first decade of the third millennium after the September 11, 2001. With significant regional and international dimensions and consequences, the war in the Caucasus has changed the geopolitics of the region and opened a new chapter in the Russia-west relations, Russian position in the region and some regional trends including pipeline politics, security arrangements and political attitudes of the regional countries.

For the Islamic Republic of Iran, as a main actor in the region, the war in the Caucasus could undermine its security and interests. Any change in the political and security arrangements, developments in the Russian positions and Moscow's relations with the regional and western countries may affect Iran's position, interests and security both regionally and internationally.

This article while evaluating these topics, analyses the consequences of August 2008 war in the Caucasus for the Islamic republic of Iran.

**War in the Caucasus: Russia's September,11**

*Bahram Amir Ahmadian*

In August 8<sup>th</sup> 2008, while Beijing Olympic Games was inaugurated, a military campaign was launched by Georgian troops in South Ossetia. This event should be named the Caucasian 9/11, because it changed the old order and established a new one in the Caucasus. It took place while the United States was involving in the financial crisis, presidential elections and military problems in Afghanistan and Iraq.

NATO's eastward expansion, next to Russian eastern and southern borders, as well as establishment of a missile defense shield in Poland and Czech republic, just closed to Russian western borders, brought about a very fragile situation to Russian national security. Colored revolutions alongside with NATO expansion and missile defense shield, has made Russia very sensitive to this trend.

Georgia's attack to the South Ossetia gave the best pretext to Russia to react seriously to Georgia's campaign. It is clear that Georgian president had made mistakes and failed to estimate his own possibilities. Western support was not done and the Georgia that was waiting to get help from outside, remained alone.

### **Caucasus: A New era in the Russia-West Relations**

*Zahra noparast*

Summer 2008 developments in the South Caucasus opened a new chapter in Russia-West relations. Russian invasion of Georgia might have surprised many observers, but for those who had been familiar with the short Post-Cold War history of the region, was an inevitable consequence of Georgian President's (Saakashvili) excesses in agonizing Russia by threatening its internal security, helping Chechen rebellion with military supplies, attempting to get some sort of NATO membership, and embarking upon military invasion of the South Ossetia. Further, American support and some EU Member States' backing for Georgian actions played a great role in the development.

Having said that, to many observers disproportionate Russian military offensive meant as a Soviet style appetite for annexing Abkhazia and the South Ossetia and Russia's re-entering into the military confrontation of Cold-War era. Either way, the recognition of the South Ossetia and Abkhazia by Russia and inability of NATO and EU to stop Kremlin have been a matter of concern for the West and many regional countries. In this article while this development will be discussed, the attitude of all sides will be dealt with and finally the conclusion will be presented to the readers.

**Eurasia and the rational reproducing of the Cold War: Changing the conflict paradigm**

*Mehdi Abedi*

The emergence of war in the Caucasus was not an unexpected event for political observers. Although such crisis has been interpreted as a new cold war in political literature by the media, it has resulted different questions and considerations for international relation analysis. Different characteristic of the actors and the content of the conflict and the players' objectives, are among above mentioned differences. In spite of uncertain, and fragile ideological bordering which may conclude political or military tensions in specific period of history, continuous structural contrasts, followed by tangible interests of nation-states are always expected. It is even to be claimed that in many periods of history, ideological crises have been narrated as the tangible interest clashes, projected in the form of ideologies. U.S.S.R. collapse and the end of Cold War, eliminated the incentives for ideological contrast between West and East, but the rational sources of those contrasts, based on the concrete national interests may still result in challenges. We suppose that the Georgia crisis indicates a conflict paradigm shift, from an ideological one to a rational confrontation, according to the cost-benefit model.

Thus, Georgia crisis is somewhat supposed as a kind of a rational reproducing of Cold War without any ideology. This new Cold War has taken place upon a rational model and must be assessed in respect of a rationalistic point of view. Meanwhile, this analysis shows that a tangible national based challenge is much more realistic to be pursued by pure ideological gaps, and can be reproduced in different categories, so it will have different consequences and any interpretation on such a conflict, deeply relies on the rational content of this strife.

**Media war in Russia – Georgia conflict**

*Mahmoud Reza Mortazavi*

Media war during fighting between Russia and Georgia in the south Ossetia in 2008 included two different strategies. First strategy was based on targeted persuasion aimed to direct and manage public opinion which has been developed during last century throughout academic studies and experience of western scholars in the field of psychological war. Media in west used this method against Russia resulting many advantages and successes for Georgia. On the other side, Russia undertook second strategy rooted into a narrow minded, fixed and singled dimension approach which was based on governmental organized mass communication and mass media. This method of managing communication and media had been shaped by the media culture remained from previous communist administration which prevented Russia to respond effectively in different situations during the war in production, process, distribution and evaluation of the war of information to meet the expectations in the new century.

**Ethnic challenges in The Caucasus**

*Hossein Ahmadi*

Regardless of Armenia , Georgia and Azerbaijan republics of Caucasus with ethnic diversity and different cultural structural, face great challenges in the rule of one ethnicity over the others. Due to their cultural structure and strong civilization and also experiences in local autonomy, the Georgians are more prepared for interaction with other ethnics. However , it seems that the presence of Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Ossetians, Abkhazia, Ajars and the return of Meskhati Turks, will drag Georgia into a deep crisis. This paper is based on the statistics of viable sources and field researches , and aims at examining the vulnerability of Georgia in this ethnic challenge.

**Developments in the Caucasus:  
towards a New Cold War?**

*Enayat-Allah Yazdani, Mojtaba Tuiserkani*

Russian gradual return to the global power stage and the country's political and military elites' willing for reestablishment of its previous position in the international arena have influenced the competition among Moscow, Washington and the European capitals in which the East-West relations has decreased to the lowest level during the post-cold War era. Such circumstances along with NATO presence in the centre of Eurasia and the Middle East and establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) by the eastern powers namely Russia and China indicate that a new version of the Cold War is emerging. Yet, the recent changes in Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Middle East are the signs of changing this important political arena to the great axis of the Cold War which will lead to the challenges between the US, Russia and China in future. Such an arrangement around the Persian Gulf-Caspian axis which is regarded as the new heartland is called the New Great Game.

In this regard, the Central Asian region and the Caucasus are main factors in the Russian post-Soviet policy. However, the US gradual presence in Central Asia and the Caucasus has jeopardize the Russian influence in these regions. From the Russian strategists' point of view the US military bases in the region are big challenges to Moscow's geopolitical ties with the region's republics. So, Russia should attempt to end up the Washington and NATO military presence in the area. In order to find the signs of the new Cold War in the third millennium, the geopolitical regions of Central Asia and Eastern Europe are in the center. Some of these sings are the US-Russian arm race in the framework of the American missile defense shield in Czech Republic and Poland, NATO eastward policy, Moscow-Washington rivalry in the Balkan region, Kosovo independence, competition and rivalry in the Caucasus, confrontation between Russia and Georgia and the West concern about the Russian control over the energy resources in the region and use of these resources as a political means.

**The internal and external factors in the " Rose Revolution" of Georgia**

*Masoume Shaban Faryabi*

Soft “revolution” or “revolution without violence”, in some of the newly independent countries of Central Asia and Caucasus has become one of the main subjects for scholarly debates in international politics after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Due to the direct role of the US in these nonviolent regime changes, the importance of foreign factors in explaining these events has become a focal point. Rose revolution of Georgia in 2003, causing the downfall of Eduard Shevardnadze is a clear example. In Georgia, the convergence of the domestic factors and foreign interventions has been the main question. It is however, argued in this paper that the domestic crisis has been mainly stemmed from not having an indigenous, smooth, and timely process of nation-building; crisis that has been manipulated by Washington. Having said all these, the question would be: under which conditions are such revolutions repeatable in other cases? Addressing this question can be useful both theoretically as well as practically, especially by those independent states who are being challenged by the US.