REGIONAL SECURITY

ARMS CONTROL IN THE SOUTHERN CAUCASUS

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Introduction

Today, the Southern Caucasus, given its relatively small territory and population density, is among the most militarized parts of the world. Each of the three states in the region has a military capability not only comparable with but sometimes even superior to that of an average European nation (this applies mainly to Azerbaijan and to a lesser extent to Armenia and Georgia). Adding in the military capability of the unrecognized "countries" and state formations that emerged here following the breakup of the Soviet Union—the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia, as well as the Russian military bases in the Transcaucasus—the picture will be even more formidable. The bloody ethnic and internal state conflicts in the region, caused by the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and the emergence of independent states in the region with three national armies could not but precipitate a huge concentration of arms and military equipment here. Therefore, problems of arms control, limitation, and reduction are among the key aspects of security in the Southern Caucasus.

How the Region was Armed

The root causes of militarization in the Southern Caucasus should be looked for, above all, in the situation that evolved there following the break-up of the U.S.S.R. and the formation of three independ-

ent states, recognized by the international community, as well as of several countries and state entities, although unrecognized, still no less important and self-sufficient militarily and politically. In the last few years of its existence, the Soviet Union had in the region bordering Turkey, an active NATO member state, a strong military presence, including large combined-arms units of the Transcaucasus Military District (ZakVO) and the Transcaucasus Border District, the 19th Independent Air Defense Army, the 34th Air Army, the Caspian Flotilla, and a brigade of Black Sea Fleet warships. In addition, several units under central command were based in the region: space reconnaissance facilities (not far from Tbilisi) and missile early warning and space track systems (the Gabala radar station, Azerbaijan), as well as Soviet Interior Ministry and KGB subunits.[1]

The Transcaucasus Military District was comprised of the 4th Combined-Arms Army, the 7th Guards Army, the 31st Army Corps, the 104th Airborne Division, and the 171st Training Center (see Table 1).

Table 1

Deployment of Soviet Military Equipment and Manpower in the South Caucasian States as of 1991

	Tanks	AFVs*	Artillery systems	Helicopter gunships	Combat aircraft	Man-power
Azerbaijan	**391**	**1 285**	**463**	**24**	**124**	**66,000**
Armenia	**258**	**641**	**357**	**7**	**0**	**20,000**
Georgia	**850**	**1 054**	**363**	**48**	**245**	**30,000**

*Armored fighting vehicles.

Sources: *The Military Balance 1991/1992,* IISS, London, 1991, pp. 45, 61, 92; *World Armament and Disarmament, SIPRI Yearbook 1992,* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1992, p. 347.

As for ammunition and military equipment, Azerbaijan had far more of those than Georgia and Armenia taken together. The aggregate amount of ammunition in Azerbaijan was put at more than 11,000 rail cars, as compared to about 2,000 cars in Georgia and approximately 500 cars in Armenia.

As a result of the breakup of the Soviet Union, the bulk of arms and military equipment from Soviet Army subunits deployed in the region went to the South Caucasian states and was used in the course of armed conflicts that subsequently broke out there. Meanwhile, the division of property between the three republics was extremely unequal: Most of the weapons, military hardware, ammunition, and gear and equipment went to Azerbaijan. A considerable part of it was seized by subunits of its emerging national army, some of it was sold off by 4th Army command and officers who found themselves in dire financial straits following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, while the rest was officially transferred to Azerbaijan by the RF Defense Ministry. As a result, Baku took control of all military subunits stationed in the republic's territory, as well as of a considerable share of warships and ground infrastructure of the Caspian Sea Flotilla. Furthermore, Baku appropriated all ammunition and military equipment depots.[2] As a matter of fact, only the 104th Airborne Division, deployed in Ganja, was withdrawn from Azerbaijan, still losing a substantial amount of its military hardware as a result. The only Russian military installation that remained in the republic was the Gabala radar station as part of the ballistic missile early warning

[1] See: M. Pyadushkin, "Arming the Caucasus: Moscow's Accidental Legacy," in: *The Caucasus: Armed and Divided*, ed. by A. Matveeva, D. Hiscock, Saferworld, TSAST, London, Moscow, February 2004, pp. 2-5.

[2] See: V. Baranets, "Tak vooruzhali Zakavkazie," *Obshchaia gazeta*, 22 October, 1998.

(BMEW) system. In addition to tracking ballistic missile launches in the Indian Ocean, it helps monitor the air space over the territory of Iran, Turkey, India, Iraq, Pakistan, and partially China as well as a number of Asian and Pacific countries. As of 2002, the Gabala radar station received the status as an RF military base, leased from Azerbaijan for a 10-year period.[3]

Thus, despite the 1992 Tashkent agreements and its accession to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), Azerbaijan "privatized" far more arms and military equipment than was allowed under these documents. This was to a very large degree the result of an ill-considered and irresponsible position of the RF Defense Ministry leadership that proved unable to fully supervise and control the process. That caused difficulties over the withdrawal of the arms and military equipment of former Soviet military units from Azerbaijan, disrupting the established time frame for the withdrawal. Furthermore, even the official division and transfer of military equipment to Azerbaijan proceeded under strong pressure on the part of the country's authorities who needed weapons for combat operations against Nagorno-Karabakh. Oftentimes that equipment was seized with the approval of certain representatives of the 4th Army command that, amid the breakup of the centralized military command and control system, did not always coordinate its actions with the RF Defense Ministry, which also was not entirely aware of the situation on the ground. For example, under the ministry's Directive No. 314(3)022 (22 June, 1992), 237 tanks, 325 armored fighting vehicles, and 170 artillery systems were transferred to Azerbaijan, as a result of which the equipment transferred to Baku under this directive alone on some categories exceeded its CFE entitlements several fold. Overall, in 1992, Azerbaijan received more than 325 tanks, 789 armored fighting vehicles, 458 artillery systems, a large number of combat aircraft, and more than 100,000 small arms and light weapons (SALW).[4]

Despite the fact that in Georgia, just as in Azerbaijan, the division of former ZakVO assets proceeded to a very large extent via forcible seizure, Russia retained control over approximately one-half of arms and military equipment deployed in its territory. That was to a considerable degree due to the political situation and the civil war that had broken out in Georgia itself. Furthermore, the main ZakVO subunits in Georgia were based in ethnic minority concentrated settlements or in autonomous regions (Akhalkalaki, Batumi, Gudauta, Tskhinvali, and so on) whose governing authorities and population prevented a forcible seizure of arms and equipment. According to the RF Defense Ministry, in the 1992-1995 period, Tbilisi officially received 12 helicopter gunships, 147 tanks, 169 BMP-1 and BMP-2 infantry fighting vehicles, 92 armored personnel carriers, 40 armored reconnaissance vehicles, 263 guns and mortars, 26 multiple rocket launchers, 210 antitank guided missiles, 436 surface to air missiles, 47,000 units of SALW, and more than 3,000 vehicles, worth an estimated $400 million to $600 million, in all.[5] Still, Georgia forcibly seized a certain amount of ZakVO weapons, military equipment, and ammunition. In the mid-1990s, the Russian military units that remained in the country were reorganized as military bases: the 147th Motorized Rifle Division (Akhalkalaki) as the 62nd base; the 145th Motorized Rifle Division (Batumi) as the 12th base; the 405th Motorized Rifle Regiment of the 10th Motorized Rifle Division, which was moved to Vaziani, and a part of the 171st district center as the 137th;[6] and the 346th Independent Airborne Regiment (Gudauta) as the 50th.[7] The units of the RF Federal Border Service and the Russian naval base in Ochamchira were pulled out by the end of 1999, with all of their arms and military equipment. Also deployed in Georgia are the headquarters of the Group of Russian Forces in the Transcaucasus (GRVZ) of the North Caucasian Military District (SKVO) and a number of small logistic support installations and depots.

The division of military equipment in Armenia proceeded in the most organized manner, although it got several times less equipment than Azerbaijan. Under a number of agreements signed in 1992 be-

[3] See: I. Korotchenko, "Opredelen status Gabalinskoi RLS," *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie*, 8 February, 2002.

[4] See: A. Yunusov, "Azerbaijan: The Burden of History—Waiting for Change," in: *The Caucasus: Armed and Divided*, p. 12.

[5] See: V. Velichkovskiy, "Pochem strategicheskoe partnerstvo? Vzaimoottalkivanie Tbilisi i Moskvy ne prekrashchaetsia," *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie*, 12 July, 2002.

[6] Disbanded in 2001.

[7] Disbanded in 2001.

tween the Armenian and the RF defense ministries, the Armenian side received the arms and military equipment of the 164th and the 15th Motorized Rifle Divisions, while the 127th Motorized Rifle Division, deployed in Gyumri, stayed under RF control and in 1995 was reorganized as the 102nd GRVZ base. Units of the Transcaucasus Border Military District deployed in Armenia were incorporated into the RF Federal Border Service Operational Group Armenia. Considering that only two army division ammunition depots (in Kirovakan and Balaovit) were transferred to Erevan, it received a total of approximately 300 rail cars of ammunition. The division and transfer of arms and military equipment of the former Soviet Army to Armenia was not completed until late 1996.[8]

As for the high-profile case of purportedly illegal arms transfers to Armenia by Russia (in 1992 through 1996), in circumvention of the OSCE and U.N. embargo, that in fact applied to the ongoing division of the former Soviet Army property. Meanwhile, some figures about arms transfers to Erevan were either distorted (due to researchers' incompetence) or simply inflated out of propaganda considerations. A commission, set up on orders from then President B. Yeltsin to investigate the case (comprised of representatives of the defense ministries of Russia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan), failed to prove the illegality of the arms transfers. Furthermore, many of the allegations had no basis in reality, while the commission found no evidence of any wrongdoing. On the other hand, according to both Russian and international experts, the transfer of arms by Moscow to Erevan (as well as to Tbilisi) in 1993 through 1996 did not violate the embargo imposed by the OSCE and the U.N. on arms transfers to conflict zones: It was a case of Soviet military equipment being divided up under bilateral agreements between Russia and the South Caucasian states.[9]

Thus, arms transfers to Armenia in the 1993-1996 period were part of the ongoing treaty-based division of Soviet military equipment, not transfers in circumvention of the international embargo. Still, the canard, on the one hand, was used for internal political speculation in Russia and on the other, was designed to justify militarist statements by Azerbaijan and Turkey.[10] Allegations that the transfer disturbed the military balance are also groundless. Rather, the opposite was true: The division and transfer of former Soviet Army assets to Armenia in the 1993-1996 period was, in the admission of experts, a factor of stability and security in the region.[11] As a result of Azerbaijan's de facto "privatization" of the bulk of weapons belonging to Soviet military units stationed on its territory, Baku achieved an absolute military-technical superiority over Armenia and the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. Thus, according to Russian sources, the amount of Treaty limited equipment (TLE) transferred to Azerbaijan was far in excess of its entitlement under the CFE and the Tashkent Treaties.

As of 1993, the correlation of forces between Baku and Erevan was as follows: Azerbaijan had 286 tanks, 480 infantry fighting vehicles, 372 armored personnel carriers, 330 artillery units, 50 combat and 50 training aircraft, and eight helicopter gunships, while Armenia had 160 tanks, about 200 IFVs and APCs, and 257 artillery systems.[12] It should be noted here that these figures do not include the arms and military equipment that Azerbaijan lost in the course of combat operations in Nagorno-Karabakh and on the border with Armenia: Otherwise the difference (between the sides' military capabilities) would have been far greater.

The unrecognized states of the Southern Caucasus came by their weapon arsenals in a different way—as a result of armed conflicts, mainly by seizing them from the armies of their former "parent state." For understandable reasons, the unrecognized states could not count on their share in the property of the former Soviet Armed Forces. Nonetheless, some ZakVO units were deployed in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, while armed formations of these two republics seized or bought a certain amount of weapons from them, mainly SALW. Although Nagorno-Karabakh served as a base for the 366th Motorized Rifle Regiment of

[8] See: M. Pyadushkin, op. cit.

[9] See: B. Hagelin, "Arms Transfers to the South Caucasus and Central Asia Compared, 1992-2002," in: *Armament and Disarmament in the Caucasus and Central Asia*, SIPRI, Stockholm, 2003, p. 28.

[10] See: E. Nuriyev, "Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy Strategy and National Security Concerns," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 4 (22), p. 19.

[11] See: M. Kenzhetaev, "Oboronnaia promyshlennost' Respubliki Armenia," *Eksport vooruzhenii*, No. 3, 1997, pp. 7-11.

[12] See: *The Military Balance 1993/1994,* IISS, London, 1993, pp. 71-73.

Table 2

Declared TLE Levels in the CFE Area, as of August 1992

	Tanks	AFVs	Artillery systems	Helicopter gunships	Combat aircraft
Azerbaijan*	**134**	**113**	**126**	**9**	**15**
Armenia**	**77**	**189**	**160**	**13**	**3**
Georgia	**77**	**28**	**0**	**0**	**0**

* Including combat losses in Nagorno-Karabakh.
** As of December 1992.

Source: *World Armament and Disarmament, SIPRI Yearbook 1993*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1993, pp. 602, 609.

the 23rd MRD, military sources note that virtually all of its military equipment was destroyed in February 1992, during the evacuation of the regiment's personnel from Stepanakert by helicopter. The bulk of military equipment in the arsenals of the unrecognized states are trophies captured from Georgian or Azerbaijani troops. For example, according to some Russian sources, in fighting with Georgian regular army units in 1992-1993 period, Abkhaz armed formations seized more than 100 tanks and armored fighting vehicles, five BM-21 Grad multiple rocket launchers, more than 80 artillery systems of various calibers, 42 mortars, and a considerable amount of ammunition.[13] A similar pattern was observed in the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (NKR): Most of the military equipment in the NKR Army was seized in battles with Azerbaijani troops. According to Maj. Gen. A. Ter-Tadevosian, former army commander, during that period NKR servicemen seized a substantial amount of arms and military equipment, including more than 100 tanks.[14]

Arms Transfers

Talking about arms transfers (especially in the first half of the 1990s, when armed conflicts in the region had reached their peak), it should be taken into account that in the majority of cases this refers to the so-called gray or even black export schemes—that is to say, the bulk of these transfers moved via unofficial channels, but with sanction or approval by some government agencies in an exporting country.[15]

Azerbaijan

As of 1992, Kiev became the principal supplier of military equipment for Baku. According to Radio Liberty, in September 1993, 85 T-72 tanks were sent from Ukraine to Azerbaijan. In about the same period, it received approximately 50 T-55 tanks and several MiG-21 combat aircraft, while following queries from a number of arms control organizations, Baku had to admit the fact and notify CFE member

[13] See: V. Mukhin, "Sukhumi gotov ko vsemu," *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie*, 19 October, 2001.
[14] From the author's conversation with A. Ter-Tadevosian (Sept. 1994).
[15] See: K. Makienko, "Cherno-bely spektr v oruzheinom eksporte," *Pro et Contra*, Vol. 4, No. 1, Winter 1999, pp. 95-99.

states about it. In the winter of 1993-1994, Ukraine transferred, in addition to that, more than 50 T-54/55 and T-62 tanks.[16]

Responding to an official note of protest from the Armenian Foreign Ministry, in September 1993, the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry denied transferring tanks to Azerbaijan: Apparently it only returned tanks that had been repaired at Ukrainian enterprises.[17] Nonetheless, units of the 4th Army, which was in its time stationed in Azerbaijan, had T-72 tanks, but not T-54, T-55, or T-62 tanks—moreover, not in such large numbers. Therefore Azerbaijan must have received these types of tanks, which were widely used in combat operations in Nagorno-Karabakh, from other states. True, in a 1993 report that it presented to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms (UNROCA), Ukraine admitted that it had transferred 100 tanks and 10 combat aircraft to Azerbaijan. Later on, in 1994, new information came to light about Ukrainian tank shipments to Azerbaijan.[18]

As far as other exporters are concerned, in 2000, Ankara transferred to Baku an AB-34 class PCC, while Azerbaijan received yet another PCI from the United States.[19] Prior to that, in 1995-1996, the Turkish Defense Ministry sent large shipments of field clothing and more than 100,000 pairs of footwear. In 1996-1997, the Turkish firm Aselsan exported military communication facilities to Azerbaijan, in 1998 completing the training of specialists in the maintenance and repair of this equipment (at a cost of almost $20 million), which, according to experts, enables the Azerbaijani military to adopt Western-standard communication systems, almost fully replacing previously used systems.[20] In the context of Azerbaijani-Turkish military cooperation, it should also be noted that Ankara transferred to Baku Soviet-made arms and equipment from the former GDR Army that (following the German reunification) the FRG had been transferring to Turkey since 1992. Thus, in addition to the so-called "cascade" deliveries, Ankara received a total of more than $3 billion worth of military equipment from the former East German Army.

Considering that Turkey's arsenals include almost exclusively NATO standard equipment, experts note that these weapons were intended for the subsequent transfer to Azerbaijan or for re-export to the gray market. German TV Channel 1 in its time reported on the export of German-made arms and military equipment to conflict zones in the CIS, above all, shipments to Azerbaijan (via Turkey).[21]

Armenia

As far as Armenia is concerned, the only reliable information about the import of arms to the republic is the delivery of four WM-80 Typhoon 273-mm multiple rocket launchers from China in 1998-1999.[22] Russian government officials describe the arms transfers to Armenia (in the 1993-1996 period) as a "process legally independent of the OSCE imposed embargo since it was subject to and regulated by RF international obligations—namely, bilateral agreements on the division of the military equipment of the former Soviet Armed Forces." So these shipments were made as part of the division of Soviet military assets and equipment and were not arms transfers in the technical sense of the word. Therefore all assertions to the effect that arms supplies to Erevan violated international rules are entirely groundless. At present Russia refrains from supplying arms to South Caucasian states, strictly adhering to the OSCE imposed embargo.[23] Within the framework of the existing Collective Security Treaty Organization mechanisms, Arme-

[16] See: S. Shakariants, *Politika postsovetskoi Rossii na Kavkaze i ee prioritety*, ATsSiNi, Erevan, 2001, p. 164.
[17] See: *RFE/RL News Briefs*, 13 September, 1993.
[18] See: I. Anthony, P.D. Wezeman, S.T. Wezeman, "The Trade in Major Conventional Weapons," in: *Armaments, Disarmament and International Security, SIPRI Yearbook 1995*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1995, p. 496.
[19] See: *The Military Balance 2002/2003,* IISS, London, 2002, p. 269.
[20] See: S.I. Cherniavskiy, "Azerbaijan i Turtsia— strategicheskoe partnerstvo," in: *Nezavisimy Azerbaijan: novye orientiry*, ed. by E.M. Kozhokin, Vol. 2, RISI, Moscow, 2000, pp. 186-187.
[21] See: K. Makienko, "*Sery* rynok oruzhia i voennoi tekhniki v gosudarstvakh SNG: tendentsii i perspektivy razvitia," *Nauchnye zapiski PIR-Tsentra* No. 8, *PIR-Tsentr politicheskikh issledovanii v Rossii*, 1997. *Nauchnye zapiski* No. 6, pp. 18-19.
[22] See: *The Military Balance 2002/2003*, p. 269.
[23] See: B. Hagelin, op. cit., p. 28.

nia may receive arms and military equipment supplies at internal Russian (preferential) prices, but in recent years there has been no information about such shipments.[24]

Georgia

In the second half of the 1990s-early 2000s, Georgia was also importing arms and military equipment. But in light of the country's economic difficulties, they were transferred to it by NATO states, including the United States, mainly on a gratuitous basis or at preferential prices. Thus, in the second half of the 1990s, the republic received (mostly as part of technical assistance for its armed forces) several warships and patrol boats from NATO countries and Ukraine. In particular, Turkey provided an SG-48 class PCI; Germany, two Lindau MSCs; Britain, two patrol boats; Ukraine, a Konotop-class PFM, while the United States transferred (in 2000-2001) 10 Iroquois UH-1H multi-mission helicopters.[25] Furthermore, in the second half of the 1990s, 120 Soviet made T-55AM2 tanks were bought in the Czech Republic (the first 11 tanks were delivered in 2000). According to Georgian sources, the contract for their transfer was signed at a fairly preferential price—approximately $30,000 to $35,000 per tank,[26] which was politically rather than economically motivated, possibly under U.S. pressure. By the time the contract was signed the Czech Republic was already a candidate for NATO membership and Washington could have used that situation to provide indirect support to the armed forces of its principal partner in the Southern Caucasus. This also applies to the transfer to Georgia (again as part of a military-technical assistance program) of 10 U.S. made UH-1H helicopters (four of them for spare parts). This part of the program, including, besides the price of the helicopters themselves, the costs of their operation and maintenance as well as flight and technical personnel training, was worth a total of approximately $14 million.[27]

As for SALW, back in 1991, on Z. Gamsakhurdia's watch, the republic leadership bought a large consignment of SALW (mostly 7.62-mm Kalashnikov automatic rifles) in Romania. Some of the rifles, which were delivered after the overthrow of the Z. Gamsakhurdia regime, were distributed among the country's population. Later on, 5.45-mm and 7.62-mm Kalashnikov automatic rifles were shipped in from Romania and the Czech Republic, respectively. Tbilisi received about 8,000 to 9,000 Kalashnikov rifles from Tashkent, thanks to personal contacts that V. Nadebaidze, Georgian defense minister at the time, had with senior officials at Uzbekistan's Defense Ministry.[28] SALW were also supplied from conflict zones in the Southern Caucasus and Chechnia to Georgia and back.[29]

Export from States in the Region

Since the states of the Southern Caucasus acquired independence, Georgia has probably been the only large arms exporter. In addition to this, Armenia transferred a small shipment of SALW and ammunition to Kyrgyzstan at the height of Islamic armed separatist activity in 2000, as part of military assistance to a partner/party to the Collective Security Treaty.[30]

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[24] See: S. Minasian, "CIS: Building a Collective Security System," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 1 (19), 2003, pp. 135-137; M. Pyadushkin, op. cit., p. 8.

[25] See: *The Military Balance 2002/2003*, p. 270.

[26] See: I. Aladashvili, "Georgia Should Not Rely Only on Armament Imports," in: *The Army and Society in Georgia*, CIPDD, Tbilisi, November 1998.

[27] See: "SShA peredali vooruzhennym silam Gruzii 6 vertoletov 'Irokez'," *RIA "Oreanda,"* 23 October, 2001.

[28] See: I. Aladashvili, op. cit.

[29] See: S. Demetriou, "Politics from the Barrel of a Gun: Small Arms Proliferation and Conflict in the Republic of Georgia (1989-2001)," in: *Small Arms Survey*, Geneva, 2003, pp. 13-14.

[30] See: *Vecherniy Bishkek*, 25 September, 2000.

The relatively large volume of Georgian arms export is due to the fact that back in the Soviet era the 31st Tbilisi Aircraft Factory (now AO Tbilaviastroi) was building Su-25 ground attack planes of various modifications, while after the breakup of the Soviet Union the remaining parts and components were used to repair them and build several new aircraft. Thus, a contract was signed to repair Su-25s of Turkmenistan's Air Force to count toward Georgia's debt for Turkmen natural gas shipments. In 2001, 22 aircraft were repaired, each at an approximate cost of $1 million. Georgian specialists also participated in training Turkmen pilots at the Mary-2 air base.[31] At the same time, Ashghabad expressed the intention to buy two new combat and training aircraft. The deal is estimated at $20 million,[32] while the total number of ground attack planes repaired for Turkmenistan could have exceeded 40[33] (in all, Turkmenistan's Air Force had 46 Su-25s).[34] In addition, Georgia supplied Su-25s to Croatia and the Democratic Republic of Congo (four aircraft) and was also in negotiations with Uzbekistan on selling it two Su-25s.[35] In 1997, there were reports about the transfer of three ground attack planes (it could have been a case of re-export or repair).[36] There is no information about Tbilisi's exporting other types of arms and equipment except SALW.

Arms Control

Reciprocal constraints on the acquisition of weapons, regardless of whether they are nuclear or conventional, is the foundation of both international and regional security systems. This holds true for virtually all conflict regions—be it in the Balkans, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, etc. In a situation where states continue to regard regional security issues as a zero sum game—i.e., where a strengthening in the security of one side is automatically perceived as a loss by another—the concept of "arms control and limitation" has yet to catch on. This greatly complicates the application and enforcement of arms control regimes, and the Southern Caucasus is not an exception here.

It should be noted that international experience in the application of arms control regimes and mechanisms was gained mainly during the era of the bipolar system and the confrontation between the superpowers as well as military-political blocs such, e.g., the Warsaw Pact and NATO during the Cold War. By contrast, regional arms control regimes are still relatively undeveloped and ineffective. True, even here there are some success stories, but they refer mainly to nonconventional arms control—e.g., creation of nuclear free zones, nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction, missile technology, etc. On the whole, the Southern Caucasus is characterized as a region sufficiently stable in terms of WMD and missile technology proliferation control.[37]

Still, conventional arms control regimes in all regions with ongoing, potential or latent interstate or ethnic conflicts are still imperfect, coming up against numerous problems. Except for security and confidence building measures, periodic inspections and other activities provided for under the CFE Treaty or implemented within the OSCE framework, there are virtually no viable mechanisms to control or limit the main types of conventional weapons in the Southern Caucasus with only first steps being made to establish control regimes over the spread of SALW.

The study and analysis of arms control problems in the conflict rich Southern Caucasus is accompanied by a number of difficulties and mistakes that have to do with the fact that experts oftentimes ig-

[31] See: R. Burnashev, I. Chernykh, "Turkmenistan's Armed Forces: Problems and Development Prospects," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 4 (22), p. 39.

[32] For more detail, see: A. Alexeev, "Vooruzhennye sily Turkmenistana," *Eksport vooruzhenii*, May-June 2002.

[33] See: "Military Chronicle," in: *The Army and Society in Georgia.*

[34] See: *The Military Balance 2002/2003*, p. 136.

[35] See: "Military Chronicle."

[36] See: K. Makienko, "Peregovory, kontrakty i transferty vooruzhenia i voennoi tekhniki iz Rossii i stran SNG v noiabre 1996-dekabre 1997 godov," *Yaderny kontrol'*, Vol. 37, No. 1, January-February 1998, p. 77.

[37] For more detail, see: *Yaderny doklad. Yadernoe oruzhie, yadernye materialy i eksportny kontrol' v byvshem Sovetskom Soyuze*, Issue 6, December 2002, Washington, Moscow, 2002.

nore reality or allow themselves to be affected by partiality and bias, taking sides. A large number of specialists from the Southern Caucasus, let alone journalists, often do not bother to get to the heart of the matter, using isolated facts pertaining to regional arms control problems, taking them out of context and using them as elements of information and propaganda wars. Without setting out to provide a comprehensive analysis of these problems, let us first of all try to assess the prospects for this process in the Southern Caucasus and set the record straight on its main aspects.

Most experts believe that a key to the arms control problem in the Southern Caucasus is to estimate the number of weapons transferred to countries in the region and actually used in armed conflicts. After all, the OSCE embargo applies only to deliveries to armed forces engaged in combat in Nagorno-Karabakh (i.e., the local forces of Nagorno-Karabakh and those of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh).[38]

This is closely connected with the problem of so-called gray zones where South Caucasian countries do not apply CFE provisions, hiding or distorting the amount of their holdings of Treaty limited equipment (TLE). These include the unrecognized states of the Southern Caucasus and regions of Georgia and Azerbaijan bordering them. Furthermore, recently something strange has been happening with TLE levels that Azerbaijan declares in its annual reports. Whereas during the first few years following the cessation of hostilities in Nagorno-Karabakh the number of tanks, armored fighting vehicles, and artillery systems declared by Baku greatly exceeded its TLE levels, today it declares exactly as much as it is allowed to have under the protocol on territorial holdings of conventional Treaty limited equipment (see Table 3) without reducing its holdings. Even Azerbaijani researchers admit: "In so far as this agreement (the CFE Treaty.—*M.S.*) imposes strict numerical limits on manpower, arms and military equipment, it has to hide the real numbers."[39] Baku attributes this to the fact that it is purportedly impossible to provide TLE information about its army units deployed in areas bordering the NKR.[40] As for Georgia and Armenia, on the whole, they do not violate the basic provisions of the CFE and the adapted CFE Treaty.[41]

Of course, arms control regime is a rather tricky instrument since disarmament measures can serve as a front or cover used to hide the existing threats to regional stability. There is no sense in upholding the essentially abstract arms control idea as an end in itself. On this score, Alyson J.K. Bailes, director of SIPRI (the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute), one of the most authoritative international centers for disarmament and international security studies, notes: Under certain circumstances, arms control as such can be counterproductive; if it is imposed on some party by way of punishment, without any effort to change and improve the security situation by other means, it is quite likely that this subject will be obsessed with the idea of regaining its weapons and will be able to find even more dishonest and dangerous methods of doing this in the future.[42]

Another threat that can be posed by an inadequate application and enforcement of an arms control regime may be the imposition of this regime (e.g., an embargo on arms supplies to a conflict region) on a certain territory where for some reason one side has achieved a substantial priority in arms and military equipment over another. In this case an embargo on arms supplies to conflicting sides could hurt the weaker side. It would end up at a disadvantage, which would in and of itself create a potential aggressor and upset the balance of forces in the region. A case in point is the embargo (OSCE, 28 February, 1992 and UNSCR 853, 29 July, 1993) on arms supplies to the Karabakh conflict zone, when one of the sides involved (Azerbaijan), having already appropriated a substantial amount of

[38] See: B. Hagelin, P.D. Wezeman, S.T. Wezeman, N. Chipperfield, "International Arms Transfers," in: *Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*, pp. 388-389.

[39] A. Iunusov, op. cit., p. 17.

[40] See: Z. Lachowski, "Arms Control in the Caucasus," in: *Armament and Disarmament in the Caucasus and Central Asia*, pp. 34-36.

[41] See: Under the adapted CFE Treaty, the ceiling on IFVs in the AFV category for the South Caucasian states is limited to 135 units. The number of IFVs declared by Armenia in 2002 was 168, while after approximately 60 IFVs were transferred to Interior Ministry troops, it declared 110 IFVs (in 2003).

[42] See: Alyson J.K. Bailes, "Kakovo budushchee kontrolia nad vooruzheniiami?" *Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnoshenia*, No. 11, 2003, p. 36.

Table 3

The Declared Levels of Basic TLE and Manpower in the 1992-2003 Period and the National Ceilings on Conventional Weapons and Manpower (indicated in the brackets) of Azerbaijan under the CFE and the Adapted CFE Treaty

Year	Tanks (220)	AFVs* (220)	Artillery systems (285)	Combat aircraft (100)	Helicopter gunships (50)
1992	134	—	126	15	9
1993	278	338	294	50	6
1994	279	822	350	48	23
1995	285	835	343	58	18
1996	300	580	302	46	18
1998	270	361	301	37	15
1999	262	331	303	48	15
2000	220	490	282	50	15
2003	220	516	282	48	15

* Including MT-LB armored towing trucks.

Sources: *The Military Balance (1992/1993, 1994/1995, 1996/1997, 1998/1999, 2000/2001, 2002/2003); SIPRI Yearbook (1996, 1998, 2000, 2002); Armament and Disarmament in the Caucasus and Central Asia.*

arms and military equipment of the former Soviet Armed Forces, was able to secure an absolute military superiority over Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, stepping up its combat operations in the area.

Nonetheless, the aforementioned problems are not the only impediment to an effective application of arms control regimes in the Southern Caucasus regional security system. This process (as well as arms transfers) as an essential component of the security concept should be associated only with the problem of ensuring a military balance between regional states. It should not be targeted both at removing or reducing asymmetry in the countries' military capabilities and at creating a system of mutual trust, based on transparency and predictability. An important institutional role here is played by international security organizations and major world powers (provided that they have political will) whose economic and political resources can help put such a system in place. The current situation in this sphere, according to Alyson J.K. Bailes, shows that it is very difficult to persuade states to subscribe to arms control, let alone fully observe the provisions of these agreements unless they are backed up with other regional security enforcement measures. The prevailing situation in the world increasingly necessitates package-type agreements whereby arms control is linked to and predicated on other provisions. This happens not only because certain powers are losing interest in arms control per se but also due to the increased complexity of ensuring security and other interrelations between states, resulting from the disappearance of the Cold War barriers and under the impact of globalization. Thus, CFE member states are involved in cooperation in the defense sphere and at the same

time jointly participate in armed interventions, while the majority of them will soon end up in the same alliance.[43]

This assessment could also be applied to the Southern Caucasus where package-type agreements may only be effective if they go together with a further deepening of cooperation in the sphere of security, integration, confidence building measures, and concerted efforts to settle ethnic conflicts. Incidentally, a number of such measures, envisioning the application of CFE mechanisms, are provided for under OSCE documents (e.g., the OSCE Vienna Document on CSBMs) as well as other documents.[44]

It is necessary, based on the relatively successful international experience in arms control, confidence building measures, and cooperation in some conflict zones, to consider whether these measures can serve as models for regional security in the Southern Caucasus. For example, Appendix 1B to the Dayton Agreements empowered the OSCE to exercise sub-regional and regional arms control in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Agreement on CSBMs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, signed in January 1996, "provided for a comprehensive set of measures to enhance mutual confidence and reduce the risk of conflict—such as exchange of military information, notification as well as observation and constraints on certain military activities, restrictions on military deployments and exercises in certain geographic areas, withdrawal of forces and heavy weapons to cantonments or designated emplacements."[45] Implementation of this document did not meet with any serious impediments. After it was signed, more than 130 inspections were carried out that did not identify any serious violations. Six months later, the Florence Agreement on Sub-regional Arms Control was signed between three conflicting sides in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as between Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The agreement imposed numerical limits (ceilings) on five categories of conventional weapons. By the end of the established time frame the sides reduced approximately 6,600 units of arms and military equipment of the specified categories. European experts considered both of these agreements to be quite successful. Given the apparent similarity of the conflicts, it was suggested that analogous activities could contribute to facilitating the arms control process and help implement confidence building measures and promote cooperation in the Southern Caucasus.[46]

There is, however, one fundamental difference between the Balkans and the Southern Caucasus. In the former instance, the aforementioned agreements were to a very large extent imposed by the United States and NATO and were backed up with the deployment of multinational forces (with the requisite capability) within the framework of the so called humanitarian intervention in the former Yugoslavia. By contrast, the regional context and the degree to which neighboring states are involved in security problems in the Southern Caucasus raise serious doubts about the viability of such action.[47] Furthermore, the deployment of a regional arms control regime as well as security and confidence building measures in Bosnia and Herzegovina did not follow until after the sides achieved a formal political settlement of the conflict.

This suggests that the process of setting up viable arms control mechanisms, implementation of confidence building measures, and cooperation between the conflicting sides in the Southern Caucasus is at the very beginning of a tortuous path and to a very large extent hinges on prospects for a political settlement of regional conflicts.

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[43] See: Alyson J.K. Bailes, op. cit., p. 38.

[44] See: M. Shelepin, "Ravnaia bezopasnost' dlia stran OBSE," *Mezhdunarodnaia zhizn'*, No. 2, 2000, pp. 64-75.

[45] See: *OSCE Handbook* [www.osce.org/publications/handbook/9htm].

[46] For more detail, see: N.S. MacFarlane, "Arms Control, Conflict and Peace Settlements: The Caucasus," *GCSP Occasional Paper,* No. 8, Geneva, August 2000.

[47] See: A Kotanjan, "Mezhetnicheskie konflikty v Kosovo i Nagornom Karabakhe: Sravnitel'nye perspektivy," *Upravlenie* (Erevan), No. 3, 2002, pp. 5-15 (in Armenian).