



NATO and the South Caucasus: An analysis of cooperative activities within the IPAP framework in the South Caucasus partner countries

By Simon Schmidt

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Introduction

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) has been undergoing a considerable transformation process after the demise of the Soviet Union. The military alliance decided to shift its focus in security policy by continuously reaching out to new partner countries. Primarily, the Caucasus region and Central Asian countries were considered to be new areas of strategic importance. Concrete security challenges in the Caucasus reach from terrorism to regional conflicts and energy security.¹ For this reason, NATO decided to implement a new partnership initiative called the Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) at the NATO Prague summit in 2002. Within three years, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan all established an IPAP with NATO.²

Simultaneously, the three South Caucasus countries orientate towards Europe. The increasing proximity of the Caucasus to the EU is achieved by partnership agreements such as the European Neighbourhood policy (ENP) and the Eastern Partnership (EaP) that address economic development, democratisation and the promotion of reforms.³ It is therefore visible that both EU and NATO undertake measures to ensure prosperity and stability in the South Caucasus. Areas of action within the IPAP are e.g. security

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**International Center for Human
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19 Sayat Nova Ave.

Yerevan 0001, Armenia

Tel./Fax: +374 (10) 582638

E-mail: mail@ICHD.org

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cooperation, defence sector reforms, public information and civil emergency issues.⁴

Six years after the establishment of the Armenian IPAP, the progress in these fields shall be investigated. This paper is therefore researching the level of action in the areas of cooperation between Armenia and NATO. Second, Armenia's abilities and ambition of implementing IPAP actions are being put in conjunction with the IPAP framework of Georgia and Azerbaijan. By establishing an in-depth analysis of the Armenian IPAP scope as well as a comparative analysis of all existing action plans in the Caucasus region, this paper pursues two objectives: First, we aim to provide a comprehensive breakdown of Armenia's cooperation with NATO and the established progress. Additionally, the similarities and discrepancies of the several IPAP frameworks are determined to lead to an overall comparative statement in regards to the South Caucasus countries' cooperation intensity.

Naturally, all participant states of the Caucasus develop unique cooperation actions with NATO since their political and security environment is different from each other. All three nations also differ in their political ambition

¹ North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (2007), p. 2

² North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (2007), p. 1

³ European Union External Action (2011),

http://eeas.europa.eu/eastern/index_en.htm

⁴ Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Armenia (2009), p. 1 ff.

concerning NATO. While Georgia is willing to join the military alliance in the short-term, Armenia expressed that it has no desire to become a member of NATO.⁵ ⁶ Azerbaijan is yet ambivalent to define the desired cooperation intensity with NATO.⁷ Hence, the comparative analysis of all existing cooperation programs in the Caucasus within the IPAP framework will be faced with each country's political ambition towards the military alliance.

History of NATO engagement in the South Caucasus

The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the following declaration of independence by the former Soviet republics marked the beginning of NATO's engagement in the Caucasus. The North Atlantic Cooperation Council, which functioned as a forum for dialogue since 1991, launched first outreaching steps towards the South Caucasus. The military alliance further launched the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program in 1994 aiming to build up security relations with the former Warsaw Pact members in Eastern Europe and the emerged Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries.⁸ Commitment for democratic values marks the decisive criteria for partner countries to join this cooperation program. The PfP enables individual bilateral cooperation between participants and NATO members. All South Caucasus countries joined PfP in 1994.⁹ As a successor of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) works as a multilateral framework and accompanies the bilateral cooperation in the PfP since 1997.

The partnership mechanism IPAP addresses states that are willing to deepen existing relations with NATO. After the implementation in 2002, it took Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan until 2005 to develop individual IPAPs. At the Istanbul Summit in 2004, NATO declared partnership actions in the Caucasus and Central Asia as a top priority for the

Alliance.¹⁰ The special focus NATO sets in the Caucasus region gets more obvious due to the appointment of the NATO Secretary General's Special Representative to the South Caucasus since 2004. Currently, this position is held by James Appathurai.¹¹

NATO – Armenia cooperation in the framework of IPAP

IPAPs are set in a two-year timeframe. The most recent Armenian IPAP for 2012 – 2013 has been dismissed at the end of 2011 but has not been published until the establishment of this paper. The results of the IPAP 2009 – 2010 are however visible and therefore able to be analysed. Since many measures in the most recent IPAP can be characterized as a deepening of previously established actions, the investigation of the IPAP 2009 – 2010 provides a useful understanding of the level of NATO – Armenian cooperation. Concretely, IPAP actions in the following areas are being taken into account:

- *Political and security related issues*
- *Defence and military issues*
- *Public information, science, environment and civil emergency planning issues*

The actions in these three areas can be described as key measures for NATO cooperation in defence and security policy. Other actions which are mainly concerning administrative and resource related issues aren't included in this research.

Key Actions in the area of political and security related issues

Within the first area of cooperation, Armenia formulated 52 actions. In addition to promote security and stability through objectives like to expand cooperation with Euro-Atlantic structures, institutions and international organisations, to improve relations with neighbours and to combat terrorism and organised crime, there are several actions in order to promote democratic reforms. Concretely, the plan mentions promoting the rule of

⁵ NATO Parliamentary Assembly (2007), p. 12

⁶ Euronews (2011), <http://www.euronews.net/2008/11/10/sargsyan-armenia-joining-nato-is-not-on-the-agenda/>

⁷ Fuller, L. (2007), <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1075434.html>

⁸ Borawski, J. (1995), p. 233

⁹ North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (2007), p. 1

¹⁰ ibid

¹¹ North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (2010), http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-3BD5FDEE-070419AE/natolive/topics_50101.htm

law, enhancing the fight against corruption, improving democratic oversight of the Defence and Security sector including fostering Human Rights in the Armed Forces and promoting economic development.¹²

Looking to investigate measures to **expand cooperation with Euro-Atlantic structures, institutions and international organisations** one has to look at undertaken actions for the implementation of regular political consultations with NATO allies. In the timeframe of the IPAP 2009 – 2010 Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan visited NATO headquarters as well as the Minister of Defence and of Foreign Affairs vice versa former NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia Robert F. Simmons visited Armenia for consultation talks.¹³

The objective of **improving relations with neighbours** holds mainly two action fields: Pursuing constructive dialogue with Turkey and working towards a peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in the framework of the OSCE Minks Group. The time period of the IPAP 2009 – 2010 was definitely characterized by strong efforts to promote regional stability. Political rapprochement between Armenia and Turkey led to the agreement to sign two protocols aiming to normalize relations. It marked a decisive effort to engage in peaceful relations after one century of hostility. However, two years later, the rapprochement process was adjourned. Turkey directly links the opportunity of normalized relations with Armenia with demands for a resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh.¹⁴ Regarding this conflict, there is no mentionable progress that improved the current situation.

Armenian – NATO cooperation in the field of **combating terrorism and organised crime** reflects a key area ought to challenge the security deficit in the South Caucasus next to the existing regional conflicts. Armenia participates to the fight against

terrorism via the Partnership Action Plan on Terrorism (PAP-T). The country hereby shares intelligence and analysis with NATO, enhances national counter-terrorist training capabilities and aims to improve its border security.¹⁵ Besides, a draft National Program to Combat Cyber-Terror was established.¹⁶

In the **field of democratic reforms**, we first look at actions undertaken to implement electoral reforms. Armenia stated its commitment to further take into account recommendations from the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) to ensure an effective and impartial electoral framework.¹⁷ The Armenian Electoral Code underwent revisions in line with recommendations by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) in 2010. However, NGOs criticise the insufficient democratic process of this revision.¹⁸ Second, Armenia signaled will to promote the independence of the Judiciary through a number of actions. The Armenian government for instance undertook measures to investigate the violent incidents after the 2008 presidential elections.¹⁹ However, PACE mentions the limited progress achieved so far. Next, Armenia is undertaking actions to train judges, to improve selection procedures for them and to reform the legal assistance system in order to improve access to justice for the population. Another decisive action in the field of democratic reforms is the freedom of media. Independence, diversity and quality improvement of broadcast media are ought to be improved. Several legislative changes have been adopted in the IPAP 2009 – 2010 timeframe. In total, Armenian media is still placed in the “partial free” group according to the Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression (CPFE), which decries authorities to strive for maintaining control

¹² Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Armenia (2009), p. 1 ff.

¹³ Mission of the Republic of Armenia to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (2010), <http://www.armenianatomission.com/>

¹⁴ Avetisian, T.; Musayelyan, S. (2010),

http://www.rferl.org/content/One_Year_On_TurkeyArmenia_Rapprochement_Stalled/2186246.html

¹⁵ North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (2010a),

http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_48893.htm

¹⁶ News.am (2010), <http://news.am/eng/news/41189.html>

¹⁷ Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Armenia (2009), p. 5

¹⁸ Iskandaryan, A. (2011), p. 69

¹⁹ In the framework of PACE resolutions 1609, 1620 and 1643, Armenia launched an expert fact-finding group consisting of people nominated from both opposition and authorities to investigate violent actions conducted by security forces aiming to disperse people protesting against alleged electoral fraud.

²⁰ PACE (2008),

<http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/WorkingDocs/Doc08/EDOC11786.htm>

over the media by the legislative actions undertaken rather than aiming for liberalization.²¹

Concerning the **fight against corruption**, the Armenian government launched an Anti-Corruption Strategy which envisages the establishment of an anti-corruption secretariat.²² The area of Human Rights legislation is marked by actions to ensure the full implementation of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) and to ensure the independency of Human Right bodies and to strengthen the capacity of the Human Rights Defender (HRDO).²³ The European Commission noted that the number of complaints received by the HRDO is increasing which can be seen as a sign for growing credibility of this institution. Next, Armenia submitted a number of reports to UN bodies in 2009, including several conventions regarding issues such as economic, social and cultural Rights, racial discrimination and more.²⁴ However, corruption is still considered to be a major obstacle for Armenia's state and human developments and EU integration.²⁵

The next investigated field is the objective to establish **democratic oversight of the Defence and Security sector**. As an OSCE member Armenia has implemented a number of commitments including the Code of Conduct on Political-Military Aspects of Security, which enables wide possibilities to the Armenian legislature for inspecting the work of the Government in the security sector. It for instance includes passing laws regulating the security services, carrying out debates over the security policy documents, adopting budgetary allocations, and launching investigations on defence matters. Furthermore, the Ministry of Defence and OSCE office in Yerevan undertook several actions to forward initiatives to increase civil society involvement in the armed forces and to develop capacities of the Human Rights Defender's office.²⁶

The last area in the field of democratic reforms is the promotion of **sustainable economic development**.

The ENP progress report, which also emphasizes this reform area, mentions improvements such as new training centres for customs and taxation, the launch of an internal corruption risks assessment by the Customs administration among others.²⁷

Key Actions in the area of defence security and military issues

Armenia especially benefits from NATO's expertise in the second area of action. Core objectives in the field of defence and military cooperation are the conduction of the Strategic Defence Review, military contribution via peacekeeping missions and exercises, personnel training and increase of border security.

According to the Armenian Defence minister Seyran Ohanian, **the conduction of the Strategic Defence Review** was the main achievement of the IPAP 2009 – 2010. This action enables the identification of national security risks and consequently the long-term and stable development of the Armenian Armed Forces, which involves bringing the military structure in accordance with existing tasks.²⁸ Next to this review, NATO and Armenia undertake actions regarding efficient budget planning procedures.

Armenia has a long history of **military contribution to NATO via peacekeeping missions and exercises**. In 2004, Armenia sent a platoon unit to Kosovo to support to NATO's KFOR mission. The platoon was deployed under the Greek peacekeeping battalion. In 2008, Armenia increased the number of troops in the Kosovo to 70 soldiers. Since February 2010, Armenia engages in the ISAF mission in Afghanistan by deploying a platoon made up of 40 soldiers under German control in Kunduz.²⁹ In the beginning of 2011, Armenia tripled this number.³⁰ The IPAP 2009 – 2010 formulates the goal for the Armenian Armed Forces to build up one full brigade using NATO standards. Armenia aims to fulfil this objective by 2015. Training of specialists in

²¹ CPFE (2010), p. 4

²² European Commission (2010), p. 4

²³ Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Armenia (2009), p. 7

²⁴ European Commission (2010), p. 5

²⁵ Iskandaryan, A. (2011), p. 69

²⁶ OSCE (2011), <http://www.osce.org/yerevan/74884>

²⁷ European Commission (2010), p.10 ff.

²⁸ Mediamax (2011),

<http://www.mediamax.am/en/news/politics/1907/>

²⁹ Danielyan, E. (2010),

[http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=35906](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=35906)

³⁰ Lomsadze, G. (2011), <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/63466>

accordance to NATO standards has been launched in 2008.³¹ Next, Armenia hosted the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre's civil emergency exercise in the Kotayk region in 2010. More than 600 participants from NATO and partner countries as well as members from international organisations were involved in this exercise.³²

The Armenian Armed Forces receive broad **personnel training** by NATO staff. Cooperation actions include regular lectures for the cadets of Armenian Defence Ministry's Military Institute and for students of Defence Ministry's Aviation Institute.³³ The development of an education and training concept is another concrete IPAP action, which is assisted by NATO experts.³⁴ Due to NATO support, a modernized junior officer course has been launched in 2010, which marks a significant step towards achieving military interoperability among the military alliance and the South Caucasus country.³⁵

Regarding actions to increase **border security**, the Armenian State Border Force has been receiving support and recommendations by NATO experts. A further NATO-Armenia workshop on border security took place in October 2011.³⁶ Next, a project was launched to modernize Bagratashen, Bavra and Gogavan state border crossing points (BCPs). The construction works in the three border-crossing points are expected to commence in the first quarter of 2012.

³¹ PanArmenian.net (2006),

<http://www.panarmenian.net/eng/politics/news/16596/>

³² North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (2010b),

http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_66198.htm?selectedLocale=en

³³ Information Center on NATO in Armenia (2008),

<http://www.natoinfo.am/eng/?sub=education>

³⁴ North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (2010a),

http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_48893.htm

³⁵ North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (2010c),

http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_65233.htm?selectedLocale=en

³⁶ North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (2010a),

http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_48893.htm

Key actions in the area of public information, science, environment and civil emergency planning issues

In the third field of the IPAP commitments, Armenia implements information campaigns about NATO to enhance public awareness on the military alliance, it tries to launch cooperative activities in the field of science for peace and security and it aims to enhance Armenia's capability of crisis management.

To fulfil the requirements of **enhancing public awareness on NATO**, Armenia organizes an annual NATO week. The Foreign Affairs Ministry and the Defence Ministry of Armenia together with the US Embassy in Armenia organized a Yerevan-Kosovo TV bridge between Armenian peacekeepers and their relatives. Several meetings and discussions were held also on perspectives of cooperation with respective NATO divisions on fight against terrorism, on cooperation in the field of science. Lectures and TV interviews on the Development of NATO-Armenia cooperation took place during the week.³⁷ A NATO information centre was opened in Yerevan in 2007.³⁸ The Armenian Atlantic Association (AAA) also contributes to communicate NATO principles and cooperation aspects.³⁹

Regarding the **Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme**, Armenia has been given grant awards for about 38 projects for scientific and environmental collaboration. Researchers from Armenia have also gathered comprehensive seismic observations, conducted hazard analyses and prepared for effective response to emergencies. Furthermore, environmental collaboration on improving trans-boundary water quality with Azerbaijan and Georgia has been achieved. Armenia takes part in the Virtual Silk Highway project, which aims to improve internet access for research communities in the Caucasus countries and Central Asia through a satellite-based network. SPS also sponsors several workshops to examine energy security. According to NATO, experts

³⁷ Mission of the Republic of Armenia to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (2010a),

<http://www.armenianatomission.com/index.php?cnt=3>

³⁸ North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (2010a),

http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_48893.htm

³⁹ AAA (2011), <http://www.euro-atlantic.am/>

from Armenia have had leading roles in 143 science activities.⁴⁰

Several actions have been rolled out to enhance Armenia's **crisis management capabilities** in terms of civil emergency planning. The country is aiming to enhance links with the NATO-based Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) in order to contribute to international disaster relief operations. The Armenian Rescue Service is preparing two search and rescue teams to be made available for operations. In September 2010, Armenia hosted a large NATO/Partnership for Peace field exercise called "Armenia 2010".⁴¹

NATO cooperation activities in Georgia and Azerbaijan

NATO – Georgia cooperation

The Georgian government publishes the actions undertaken in the IPAP 2004 – 2006. However, Georgia's cooperation with NATO differs from Armenia and Azerbaijan since it is conducting reform action in the Annual National Programme (ANP) since 2009. The Georgian IPAP was hence transformed into the ANP to enforce the information exchange and overall cooperation. The main difference between the former IPAP instrument and the ANP is the annual review process by NATO in comparison to IPAP's timeframe of two years.⁴² This intensified partnership reflects Georgia's ambition to become a full member of the military alliance. Political leaders in Tbilisi fear the Russian influence in the Caucasus which aims to promote separatist movements in Georgia's provinces South-Ossetia and Abkhazia. The 2008 South-Ossetia War between Georgia and Russia among these separatist regions showed the real escalation potential in this conflict. Georgia was seeking NATO membership before these incidents but now sees its sovereignty even more endangered by the Russian military presence in

Abkhazia and the nearby Russian provinces.⁴³ The ANP is therefore expected to contribute to Georgia's wish for a quick accession to NATO by Georgia's government.

In general the actions formulated in Georgia's IPAP/ANP address the same areas of cooperation as seen in Armenia's case. We will therefore compare Georgia's performance and level of action in these areas with the Armenian commitment.

Key actions in the area of Political and security related issues

Georgia basically performs the same actions as Armenia regarding political and security related issues. In the field of **Euro-Atlantic Integration and promotion of relations with neighbours** however, Georgia's cooperation level seems to be more intense in comparison to Armenia. The IPAP 2004 – 2006 mentions the objective of developing a National Security Concept to achieve integration in the structures of NATO. This concept has been finalized in 2005 by the Georgian authorities.⁴⁴ Armenia delivered a similar document in 2006.⁴⁵ Concerning neighbour relations, Georgia is considered to follow constructive dialogue within the South Caucasus and the Black Sea region. Cooperation with Azerbaijan regarding energy transportation is of special interest for NATO.⁴⁶ Both countries are connected via several energy projects such as the "Baku-Supsa" and "Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan" oil pipelines and "Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum" gas line.⁴⁷ Due to the intensity of the undertaken actions and the geopolitical environment, Georgia's results exceed Armenia's achievements in this IPAP sector.

On the other hand, NATO additionally considers the **solution of conflicts** in Abkhazia and South-Ossetia as a fundamental step to promote regional security. In the recent years, no mentionable success could be achieved in this area. On the contrary, Abkhazia

⁴⁰ North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (2010a), http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_48893.htm

⁴¹ *ibid*

⁴² State Minister of Georgia on European and Euro-Atlantic integration (2011), <http://eu-nato.gov.ge/index.php?que=eng/G A N E/Annual%20national%20Program/ANP>

⁴³ BBC (2010), <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-10940297>

⁴⁴ Civil.ge (2005), <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=9887>

⁴⁵ Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Armenia (2007), p. 1

⁴⁶ Parliament of Georgia (2004), p. 1

⁴⁷ GlobalSecurity.org (2011), <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/georgia/oil-politics.htm>

conducted elections in August 2011 which further increases the separation of this region from Georgia and limits chances of a solution. NATO does not recognise these elections and shows support for the territorial integrity of Georgia's internationally recognised borders.⁴⁸

Georgia's actions to **combat terrorism** are running under the PAP-T which is similar to Armenia's cooperation. Additionally, Georgia participates in NATO's Operation Active Endeavour, a counter-terrorist maritime surveillance operation in the Mediterranean Sea. The country primarily contributes via intelligence exchange.⁴⁹

Regarding Georgia's progress to **promote democracy, human rights and the rule of law**, we will oppose Armenia's achievements with the ones in Georgia. In general both countries are considered to be "partly free". Georgia was assessed as improving in civil liberties because to increasing media diversity.⁵⁰ The Georgian government has also initiated actions to fight corruption in order to create a business environment that attracts Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and promotes the creation of new businesses. As a result, Georgia outranks Armenia regarding ease of doing business and progress regarding fight against corruption.⁵¹ In terms of economic freedom, both countries show similar overall achievements in accordance with The Heritage Foundation and Wall Street Journal.⁵² Similar to Armenia, Georgia passed amendments to strengthen the Public Defender's Office (human rights ombudsman). According to official NATO statements, Georgia has still work to do in order to fulfil the requirements embedded in the ANP 2009 – 2010 concerning to media freedom, the rule of law and juridical reform.⁵³ Moreover, Georgia

needs to undertake legislative measures to protect minorities.⁵⁴

Georgia is striving to ensure **democratic control of the Armed Forces**. The National Security Review (NSR) process is one instrument to establish open and transparent security policy planning. Its goal is to guarantee that every security policy decision shall be communicated to all relevant actors, including parliament, non-governmental organisations, the general public and partner states.⁵⁵ Georgia's participation in the Partnership Action Plan on Defence Institution Building (PAP-DIB) is reinforcing these efforts, such as by promoting effective judicial oversight and appropriate defence command and control arrangements through a range of measurable objectives within the ANP.

Key actions in the area of defence security and military issues

Comparable to Armenia, Georgia also developed a **SDR** as an IPAP action. The final report was presented in 2007.⁵⁶

Regarding **defence planning issues**, Georgia is committed to a broad range of reforms that restructure the Armed Forces to a high extent. The developed SDR functions as a basis to reorganise and restructure land forces, the navy and coast guard and the air force. Furthermore, a modern air surveillance system was established and the mobilisation and reserve system was improved.⁵⁷ The Armenian IPAP also includes the development of a SDR; however the defence planning actions in the Georgian cooperation document can be described as of higher detail. Coherent to Armenia, Georgia cooperates with NATO to train civilian staff in the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and to develop a military personnel management system. Besides, Georgia has a mountain training site, which functions as a Partnership Training and Education Centre and is available to Allies and

⁴⁸ North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (2011), http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-2C344DB9-87A4E5E8/natolive/news_77437.htm?selectedLocale=en

⁴⁹ North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (2011a), http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_38988.htm

⁵⁰ Nichol, J. (2011), p. 27

⁵¹ Caucasus Analytical Digest Nr. 26 (2011), p. 13

⁵² The Heritage Foundation (2011), <http://www.heritage.org/Index/Ranking.aspx>

⁵³ Civil.ge (2009), <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=21747>

⁵⁴ MRG (2009), <http://www.minorityrights.org/9516/press-releases/new-laws-protecting-minorities-a-must-in-georgia-mrg-briefing.html>

⁵⁵ Chochua, D. (2011), p. 15

⁵⁶ GFSIS (2007), p. 2

⁵⁷ Parliament of Georgia (2004), p. 6

partner countries.⁵⁸ Another mentionable achievement is the signed Memorandum on Mutual Understanding on host nation support for NATO operations between Georgia and the Military Alliance. Host nation support implies military or civilian support offered by a host nation in case of the deployment of NATO forces.⁵⁹ Georgia also requested to launch a Professional Development Programme for Civilian Personnel in the MoD which was conducted in 2009. Training and education provided in this program is closely aligned to Georgia's reforms outlined in the ANP.⁶⁰

Looking into **Defence economic and investment issues and logistics**, it gets obvious that the actions undertaken are very profound. Georgian military sites are improved or disposed based upon needs and the whole defence infrastructure is catalogued and assessed. Forecasting tools are being implemented to improve and assess economic resources available for defence. An inventory of all equipment and ammunition is being conducted. The overall logistics system is being restructured.⁶¹ Armenia's IPAP concerns the same fields of actions by establish the SDR but doesn't show the same far-reaching level of action.

The Georgian IPAP 2004 – 2006 doesn't mention **military contribution to NATO via peacekeeping missions and exercises**. Still, Georgia already supported KFOR since 1999 via sending a company-sized unit to serve as part of the German brigade, while a platoon-sized unit serves as part of the Turkish contingent.⁶² 50 soldiers have been deployed to the ISAF mission in Afghanistan in 2004. This number continuously increased and currently accounts to 936 soldiers. Moreover, the South Caucasus country will become the largest non-NATO contributor state to ISAF since the Georgian parliament is about to approve the deployment of an additional battalion. The final number will then

account to 1,685 peacekeepers.⁶³ Besides the deployment of peacekeepers, Georgia also allows NATO to transit supplies through its territory since 2005.⁶⁴ In 2009, a military exercise with soldiers from more than 18 countries took place in Georgia. Russia called this exercise an open provocation.⁶⁵

Key actions in the area of public information, science, environment and civil emergency planning issues

In the third key area of Georgian cooperation with NATO the actions undertaken are basically similar to the ones of Armenia. However, due to Georgia's membership aspirations **public information** is considered to be a key action area. "NATO Weeks" and summer schools are organized annually to reach out to youth audiences. Next, the Ministry of Euro-Atlantic Integration has established an Information Centre on NATO, with its main office in Tbilisi and branches in Kutaisi and Zugdidi. There are also regular meetings between NATO officials and opinion leaders from Georgia.⁶⁶

Georgia has been involved in NATO **science and environment activities** since 1994. In total, scientists from Georgia have been involved in 132 activities. Via activities organized EADRCC Georgia is enhancing its national **civil emergency** and disaster-management capabilities similar to Armenia.⁶⁷

NATO – Azerbaijan cooperation

When establishing the cooperation analysis in the case of Armenia and Georgia, we were able to use the published documents of the Armenian IPAP 2009 – 2010, the Georgian IPAP 2004 – 2006 and information about the ANP. Considering Azerbaijan, no IPAP documents are published by the government and are hereby not available for this report. For the investigation of the level of actions undertaken we are therefore consulting reports by several organisations and NATO. Azerbaijan has completed

⁵⁸ North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (2011a), http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_38988.htm

⁵⁹ <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=12623>

⁶⁰ North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (2011a), NATO's relations with Georgia, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_38988.htm

⁶¹ Parliament of Georgia (2004), p. 8

⁶² Partners south caucasus, p. 4

⁶³

http://www.messenger.com.ge/issues/2510_december_21_2011/2510_isaf.html

⁶⁴ Partners south caucasus

⁶⁵ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8035130.stm>

⁶⁶ North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (2011a),

http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_38988.htm

⁶⁷ Ibid

its first IPAP in 2007 and established the second IPAP cycle in 2008. Currently, there is stagnation in relations between Azerbaijan and NATO since the approval of third IPAP cycle is being delayed by NATO. The government in Baku accuses some NATO members to be biased regarding demands to adapt the IPAP document.⁶⁸ However, Azerbaijan has yet not made a clear statement regarding its future association of NATO cooperation and partnership. Next, the surprising accession to the Non-Aligned Movement in 2011, which indicates the neutrality of the South Caucasus country in case of any “Great Power conflicts”, creates confusion about Azerbaijan’s cooperation expectations with NATO.⁶⁹ For NATO and also the EU, Azerbaijan plays however an important role due to its energy reserves and transportation routes.

Key actions in the area of political and security related issues

To **expand cooperation with Euro-Atlantic structures, institutions and international organisations** political dialogue is conducted through regular contacts of Azerbaijani and NATO officials, participation in summit meetings and NATO+Azerbaijan consultations. The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the NATO Secretary General also conduct regular meetings.⁷⁰

Regarding the **improvement of neighbour relations**, the conflict around the Nagorno Karabakh Republic marks the most important obstacle to decisive improvements in this action area. To normalise its relations with Armenia Azerbaijan did not take any actions, on the contrary it continued militaristic rhetoric and substantially increased the level of armament procurement, in average doubling the military budget annually since 2003.⁷¹

Similar to Armenia, Azerbaijan contributes to **combat terrorism** by participating in the PAP-T. Additionally, the country is also working on the establishment of

an international Anti-Terrorism Training Centre at the Academy of the Ministry of National Security.⁷²

In terms of **democratic reforms**, Azerbaijan is considered to be behind Armenia and Georgia since the country at the Caspian Sea is assessed as “not free” by the Freedom House in 2010. Especially in terms of media freedom, the country has made less progress than its neighbours.⁷³ The presidential elections in 2008 have shown considerable progress according to international observers. Yet, they still don’t meet international standards concerning a pluralistic and democratic election.⁷⁴

Efforts to **enhance democratic and civil control of armed forces** haven’t been decisive enough to bring any considerable change to the military structures. President Aliyev is the only civilian who exercises effective control over the armed forces as commander-in-chief. There is also little control by the parliament which can’t exercise mentionable oversight over the armed forces. According to the International Crisis Group, the MoD is preparing amendments to laws to meet the IPAP commitments for increased democratic control over the armed forces. However, the NGO also states insufficient participation of the parliament in this process.⁷⁵

Key actions in the area of defence security and military issues

The **establishment of a SDR** is, just as in Armenia’s and Georgia’s case, a decisive instrument to strive for a deeper alignment to NATO. To achieve this goal though, Azerbaijan’s MoD needs to develop a military doctrine. After a long time period of delays, this policy objective has been fulfilled in 2010.⁷⁶ The SDR is currently under preparation while Georgia and Armenia have delivered this policy earlier.

Azerbaijan’s **military contribution via peacekeeping missions and exercises** are mainly visible via contributions for KFOR and ISAF. Together

⁶⁸ AzerNews (2011), http://www.azernews.az/en/Nation/38795-Azerbaijan-NATO_coop_in_%E2%80%98stagnation%E2%80%99-foreign_ministry

⁶⁹ Abbasov, S. (2011), <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/63774>

⁷⁰ Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to NATO (2009), p. 26

⁷¹ International Crisis Group (2011), p. 5 ff.

⁷² North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (2010d),

http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49111.htm

⁷³ Nichol, J. (2011), p. 28 f.

⁷⁴ OSCE (2011a), <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/75250>

⁷⁵ International Crisis Group (2008), p. 13

⁷⁶ Global Research (2010),

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=19687>

with a Turkish battalion, 34 Azeri soldiers were deployed to Kosovo. The Azeri engagement at the Balkans lasted from 1999 until 2008.⁷⁷ 47 servicemen from Azerbaijan joined ISAF. Moreover, in 2008 the National Assembly decided to send additional 45 soldiers to Afghanistan.⁷⁸ In 2009, the US-Azerbaijan Regional Response 2009 military exercises were conducted in Azerbaijan.⁷⁹

Concerning **personnel training and military education**, NATO and Azerbaijan are cooperating on reorganizing units in accordance with NATO standards and on improving the command and control structures of armed services and improving logistics.⁸⁰

NATO members, particularly the U.S., Turkey and the UK, assist Azerbaijan bilaterally in terms of **border security**. The U.S. supported upgrade actions concerning the naval forces, border guards and an airbase. Next, a mobile radar system was set up to prevent arms proliferation and drug trafficking.⁸¹ Comparable to Armenia, international workshops take place to establish efficient border control systems.

Key actions in the area of public information, science, environment and civil emergency planning issues

To **enhance public awareness on NATO**, NATO has been co-sponsoring a summer school in Baku. Moreover, the NATO International School in Azerbaijan (NISA) was founded in 2005. NISA organizes NATO-related conferences and workshops twice a year.⁸² Similar to Armenia and Georgia, an annual NATO week takes place in Baku.⁸³ Next, visits to NATO Headquarters of opinion formers from

⁷⁷ Ismayilov, R. (2008), <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav032808a.shtml>

⁷⁸ Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to NATO (2009a), <http://www.aznatomission.be/?/en/content/46/>

⁷⁹ Jamestown Foundation (2009), <http://jamestownfoundation.blogspot.com/2009/04/nato-exercises-conclude-in-azerbaijan.html>

⁸⁰ North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (2010d), http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49111.htm

⁸¹ International Crisis Group (2008), p. 17

⁸² North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (2010d), http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49111.htm

⁸³ Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to NATO (2010), <http://www.aznatomission.be/?/en/announces/view/57//>

Azerbaijan take place on an annual basis. However, when analysing public information on a comparative basis it also has to be considered that Azerbaijan is the only Caucasus country which doesn't publish the official IPAP documents.

Concerning **science and environment activities**, Azerbaijan is also conducting actions within the SPS programme. 30 cooperative projects have been launched and Azerbaijani scientists had leading roles in 87 activities. The country also participates in the Virtual Silk Highway project. NATO and Azerbaijan cooperate to clear large areas that were contaminated due to an explosion in a munitions facility in 1991. Moreover, NATO supported the government in Baku to convert large stocks of the toxic rocket fuel oxidizer mélange, formerly used by Warsaw Pact Countries, into a harmless chemical.⁸⁴

Just as its neighbours in the Caucasus, Azerbaijan conducts **civil emergency** actions in the EADRCC framework. Two search-and-rescue units on high readiness are developed by the government to be deployed for emergency operations.⁸⁵

Comparative analysis

Even though the same fundamental action areas of NATO cooperation are being implemented in all Caucasus partner countries, we were able to detect several variations among their level of action and the performance of each country. When first summing up Armenia's NATO cooperation framework it can be stated that there are areas of both deep cooperation but also actions in which the country needs to enhance its efforts.

Democratic reforms aiming to improve the freedom of media, the electoral framework and to implement legislative changes show limited progress and insufficient commitment by authorities. Regarding the defence objective to develop one brigade using NATO standards, Armenia still requires several years to achieve this IPAP requirement. The improvement of neighbour relations also lacks mentionable progress. Diplomatic tensions and unsolved political

⁸⁴ North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (2010d), http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49111.htm

⁸⁵ *ibid*

issues, which need to be tackled by all regional governmental actors, greatly hinder stability and security in the Caucasus.

On the other hand Armenia's military contribution via peacekeeping missions and exercises reflects the country's contribution towards Euro-Atlantic security. Not only does the small landlocked country participate in the KFOR and ISAF missions, Armenia also hosted important military exercises in 2008 and 2010. The several existing information events, dialogues, meetings and institutions aiming to promote public awareness on NATO are important measures to provide information about NATO cooperation and to ensure transparency.

Georgia and Azerbaijan show several variations concerning the level of cooperation actions in comparison to Armenia. Georgia is generally as equally developed as Armenia in many areas of democratisation and exceeds Armenia's performance in terms of economic freedom. It also shows strong Euro-Atlantic integration. The Georgian ANP measures furthermore ensure more intensive reorganisation and upgrade of its Armed Forces compared to Armenia. Georgia's ISAF contribution largely exceeds the number of soldiers deployed by its neighbours. The country can also be described as the most important ally in the South Caucasus due to the allowed transit through its territory in order to support NATO's mission in Afghanistan. Next, Georgia's measures to contribute to NATO's fight against terrorism can be described as more intensified in comparison to Armenia. Actions undertaken to promote public awareness show similar intensity compared to Armenia and are essential regarding Georgia's objective of NATO accession. However, the critical relation with Russia turns NATO exercises within Georgian territory to an open confrontation towards Russia which has destabilizing impact on the region's security and NATO – Russian cooperation.

Azerbaijan lags behind its neighbours and needs to undertake decisive reforms to improve media freedom and electoral processes. Especially regarding democratic and civil control of armed forces, Azerbaijan didn't yet implement reforms to reach a

satisfying status. In terms of defence and security the government in Baku also stays behind its counterparts in Tbilisi and Yerevan. The establishment of a SDR can mean a deeper alignment to NATO but Armenia and Georgia undertook this step earlier than Azerbaijan. Armenia's neighbour to the east shows similar cooperation efforts in terms of peacekeeping missions and exercises. However, even though Azerbaijan has been establishing several schools and institutions to enhance public awareness on NATO, the government's lack of transparency is reflected by its decision to keep the IPAP documents closed from the public.

Conclusion

NATO is today far more than a military alliance. Euro-Atlantic countries are based upon democratic values. In consequence, NATO member states need to ensure the enduring existence of the rule of law and individual liberty in their societies.⁸⁶ With existing concerns over the freedom of speech and press in Turkey and recently Hungary, this issue is as current as ever. NATO partner countries are equally encouraged and bound to commit themselves to these principles and to the pursuit of peace and stability. The comparative analysis delivered an overview of the individual progress of each partner country and a combined summary of their aspirations towards NATO. Deriving from this analysis it can be concluded that all three South Caucasus countries in particular require decisive progress in the field of democratic reforms and relations with neighbours. Even though Armenia isn't aiming for NATO membership, its aspiration towards deeper European Integration goes hand in hand with enhanced efforts to combat corruption and to reach for a more open and liberal society.

Furthermore, taking into account the current security situation in the southern Caucasus, all three partner states are tangled in conflicts. The conflict around the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic which results in an increased armament of Azerbaijan in large scale and Armenia in smaller scale is a major driver for regional

⁸⁶ Moore, R.M. (2007), p. 72

instability and maintains the threat of escalation.⁸⁷ Second, Georgia's conflicts related to Abkhazia's and South Ossetia's urge of independence including Russia's support for the demands of the two provinces let a prospective Georgian NATO membership appear unsafe. Even though NATO emphasizes the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia, NATO accession is far from being achieved with these conflicts remaining unsolved peacefully. After all it is strongly questionable if Euro-Atlantic allies want to risk to be implicated into a significant confrontation with Russia.

It can be concluded that NATO enlargement in the southern Caucasus is far away from being realized. The military alliance should address the need for more efforts to enhance democratic reforms, security cooperation and regional peace building by the three Caucasus nations. It is advisable for Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan to use the actions within IPAP or ANP as strong instruments to solve interior and regional conflicts and to enhance reform efforts. Regardless of political ambitions towards NATO, a high commitment to the partnership framework is essential for an improved security environment in the South Caucasus.

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