

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in the context of South Caucasus regional security issues: An Armenian perspective[†]

Sergey Minasyan*

Caucasus Institute, Yerevan, Armenia

(Received 27 September 2015; accepted 28 January 2016)

For more than a quarter-century, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has been one of the most important factors influencing the political map of the South Caucasus. On 12 May 1994, Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenia, and Azerbaijan signed a cease-fire agreement that ended military operations in the conflict zone and has been observed until recently. Negotiations for a peaceful settlement have been underway within the framework of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Minsk Group co-chaired by the USA, Russia, and France since 1992, but society and the elite in Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh, and Azerbaijan remain largely unprepared for compromise. Considering the settlement process a zero-sum game, they have generally accused one another of escalating the conflict and of a lack of willingness to restore peace. Other countries and international organizations involved in the negotiations do not share a vision of the future and frequently pursue their own interests. Accordingly, the Karabakh conflict could remain unresolved for decades more. The aim of the paper is a general assessment of the current stage and dynamic of this conflict and the impact of new trends and old obstacles on the prospects for further settlement.

Keywords: Nagorno-Karabakh; South Caucasus; Armenia; Azerbaijan; deterrence; conflict settlement

Introduction

For more than a quarter-century, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has been one of the most important factors influencing the political map of the South Caucasus. On 12 May 1994, Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenia, and Azerbaijan signed a cease-fire agreement that ended military operations in the conflict zone. Casualties from the conflict reached into the tens of thousands; hundreds of thousands suffered deportation, lost their homes and belongings, and became refugees or internally displaced persons. The cease-fire has been respected until recently. Negotiations for a peaceful settlement have been underway within the framework of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group co-chaired by the USA, Russia, and France (with the assumption that, to a certain extent, the French co-chair also expresses the EU position) since 1992.

Society and the elite in Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh, and Azerbaijan remain largely unprepared for compromise, however. Considering the settlement process a zero-sum game, they have generally accused one another of escalating the conflict and of a lack of

[†]This paper was presented during the ICCEES IX 2015 World Congress in Makuhari, Japan, in August 2015.

*Email: sergey@c-i.am

willingness to restore peace. Other countries and international organizations involved in the negotiations do not share a vision of the future and frequently pursue their own interests. As a result, negotiations over the Karabakh conflict give the impression of a permanent *déjà vu*.

Resolution of the conflict is made more difficult by the fact that Karabakh has become central to the process of nation-building and state legitimacy in both Armenia and Azerbaijan. Notwithstanding its peculiarities, the Karabakh conflict is not a unique case: it is a classic example of an armed ethno-political conflict related to the process of nation-building and ethnic delimitation. And, as a zero-sum game, it could remain unresolved for decades more.

Although the political elites of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Nagorno-Karabakh tend to blame, for instance, Russians, Turks, Americans, Europeans, or other actors, the deadlock in conflict resolution derives from internal reasons. It is natural that Moscow, Washington, Paris, or Brussels have their interests both in peaceful conflict resolution and in their involvement in various aspects of the conflict. However, the continuous state of “no war, no peace” and inability to reach a consensus for almost a quarter of a century are functions of a sensitive political context and regional rivalries between the superpowers, and is fueled by a lack of political will and readiness of the conflicting parties, which are at the last stage of the post-Soviet transformation and are implementing their own nation-building projects.

Current stage and dynamics of the Karabakh conflict

After almost a quarter-century the Karabakh conflict and negotiations are mired in stalemate. The parties remain diametrically opposed, and the greatest concession entertained by either party to the conflict fails to meet even the most modest demands of its rival.

Nor have external efforts been of much help. The Madrid principles of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict settlement, proposed by the OSCE Minsk Group, failed to satisfy the Armenian and the Azerbaijani parties. Each argues that accepting them would require unfair concessions that its public would never countenance (for details on some Azerbaijani approaches to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution, see Valiyev 2012). Armenia, though, has had fewer objections to the Madrid principles than Azerbaijan, because they in fact imply international legitimization of the independent status of Nagorno-Karabakh and the land corridor that connects it with Armenia. However, the main party of the conflict – the self-proclaimed Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh – does not take part directly in the negotiations. Baku refuses to have contacts with Karabakh, preferring bilateral negotiations with Armenia, which by no means contributes to the success of the negotiations.

The international community is not happy about the lack of progress, but the very fact of negotiations is a positive factor, for it lends meaning to the years-long existence of the OSCE Minsk Group and helps maintain the fragile truce. At the same time, the mediators have become convinced that in the absence of any willingness to compromise on the part of the antagonists, any attempt to nudge the negotiation process from the outside will fail. Pressing for the adoption of a solution from outside would merely alter the format of the standoff and the existing balance of power (likely making the situation still more volatile and explosive), and not yield any final settlement.

Moreover, coordinating any list of details of “secondary importance” for eliminating the effects of the conflict (for instance, the withdrawal of the armed forces situated in and across the Soviet-era borders of the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region, international security guarantees, humanitarian issues, etc.) would be pointless without an accord over the main problem and the root cause of the conflict – the future status of Nagorno-Karabakh. Given the total lack of trust, there is no common ground on the issue of whom that territory

belongs to – Azerbaijan, Armenia, or the people of Nagorno-Karabakh – and there is likely to be none for the foreseeable future.

The international community is willing and able to support the armistice in Nagorno-Karabakh, but it has no wish to make any dramatic changes, let alone to force the parties into a settlement; so there will be none anytime soon. In any case, the past decade has seen nothing but repeated statements and boilerplate resolutions rubber-stamped by the leaders of the mediator countries. The world community seems less than enthusiastic about getting involved in settlement negotiations, which would require major political resources with slim chances of success. Thus, “status quo” is probably the most frequently used description of the situation, which various parties assess according to their own political interests. Regardless of who wins and who loses, the situation will stay locked in the status quo (some call it “frozen”) because it reflects the complex balance of internal and external military, political, economic, and other factors. Both the international community and the conflicting parties, with all their unwillingness to compromise (and inability to essentially change the balance of power), have nothing better to offer (de Waal 2013).

Whatever the external actors want, the current stalemate seems to suit them well enough, as two decades have demonstrated that the status quo is viable. It is certainly acceptable to Yerevan and Stepanakert, not least because Nagorno-Karabakh has long been under Armenian control. But Azerbaijan remains determined to recapture Nagorno-Karabakh by any means; it is far from reconciling itself with this more-than-two-decades-old political reality.

Therefore, Baku has only one option left – to threaten Armenia with a resumption of fighting, to step up militarization and widen a regional arms race, to publicly demonstrate the constant growth of its military spending based on revenues from the sale of energy, and to initiate repeated attacks and cease-fire violations along the front line. Azerbaijani leaders take every opportunity to mention their multibillion-dollar military budget and large-scale procurement of new weapons and military equipment, threatening to resume hostilities at any time. However, Baku has been unable to follow through on these threats for almost a decade, presumably because of a continuing military-technical balance with Armenia, or the presence of serious foreign policy constraints. A complex combination of military and political factors stops Azerbaijan from launching another military operation.

Foreign policy dimension

The official Armenian approach to the Karabakh conflict acknowledges any solution that is acceptable to the Karabakh Republic and ensures the security and normal development of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh. Armenia puts forward three conditions: (1) no direct subordination of Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijan, (2) determination of a land border between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, and (3) international security guarantees for Nagorno-Karabakh. Armenia rejects the legitimacy of the 5 July 1921 decision of the Caucasus Bureau of the Russian Communist Party’s that placed Nagorno-Karabakh under the jurisdiction of Soviet Azerbaijan, and similarly does not recognize Nagorno-Karabakh as part of independent Azerbaijan, arguing that the borders of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic were abrogated by the Act of Restoration of the Independence of the Azerbaijan Republic in 1991 (Avakian 2013). The Armenian leadership argues that this document nullifies the Soviet-era legal and constitutional bases making Karabakh a territory within Soviet Azerbaijan. They see Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh as sides in the conflict that should participate as equals in any settlement. Under this thinking, Armenia participates in the dispute only as an intermediary and security guarantor.

Armenia also represents the position of the unrecognized Nagorno-Karabakh Republic in the international arena, arguing for its legitimacy and the inevitability of its struggle for independence by using as analogies such cases as Kosovo, Eritrea, and South Sudan. In addition, Nagorno-Karabakh insists that not only the international law principle of the inviolability of borders (championed by Azerbaijan) applies to this conflict, but also those of the right of self-determination and the non-use of force for resolving international disputes and conflicts.

The Karabakh authorities note that there is no precedent for a nation, having won a war for independence and built its statehood for more than two decades, renounce the fruit of these hard-won achievements of its own free will. In this vein, any negotiations aimed at a settlement of the conflict should, in their view, be conducted with the official participation of Karabakh, as agreements could be implemented only with Karabakh's approval. In order to persuade the international community that the Karabakh Republic has all the principal attributes of statehood, the Karabakh authorities point to the holding of free democratic elections, monitored by foreign observers (Broers 2005). In 2007, then-Karabakh President Arkadii Gukasyan left the presidential office after two terms; in 2004, an opposition candidate was elected mayor of Stepanakert, the capital. Karabakh leaders also consistently note that the level of democracy in Karabakh is higher than in Azerbaijan, with its authoritarian political system typical of "petro-states" (Ó Beacháin 2015) (Freedom House (2015) rates Nagorno-Karabakh as "partly free," compared with "not free" for Azerbaijan).

Still, the constant threat posed by Azerbaijan's saber-rattling thwarts democratic development in Nagorno-Karabakh. Ordinary people and politicians (including the opposition) have to take security into account during domestic political competition, given that hard-fought elections, for instance, could create the illusion of internal instability in Nagorno-Karabakh and entice Azerbaijani authorities to strike a seemingly vulnerable foe. In this respect, the environment for democratic development in Nagorno-Kharabakh differs significantly from that in, for example, Abkhazia, where the external threat from Georgia is not such an essential restriction (at least after Georgia's August 2008 war with Russia).

From the perspective of Nagorno-Karabakh, the key issue during the negotiations should be the physical security of its population. Against the background of Azerbaijan's military actions and deportations of the Armenian population in the first half of the 1990s, as well as continued militaristic threats from Baku, Karabakh seeks iron-clad security guarantees. The current security guarantee of Karabakh consists of its fortified and relatively easily defended borders, the presence of a transport corridor connecting Karabakh to Armenia, and a buffer zone around the Soviet-era administrative borders of Karabakh. With these borders, the line of potential combat contact between the Karabakh and Azerbaijan armies is truncated by the steep Mrav mountain ridge on the north and the border with Iran on the south, helping the army of Nagorno-Karabakh to withstand any offensive from the much larger army of Azerbaijan.

The position of Nagorno-Karabakh in the conflict stems from the premise that withdrawing its troops even from a single district along the perimeter would weaken the overall line of defense and – lacking a final peace treaty – tempt Baku to launch a military revanche. As it is, the most reliable guarantee that shooting will not resume is the fortified border that can only be breached at the price of heavy losses, combined with the international community's firm rejection of a military settlement of the conflict.

Nagorno-Karabakh officials hold that only Baku's recognition of the territory's independence (or a similar status) plus an agreed-upon political and legal mechanism for achieving this independence (e.g. through a plebiscite monitored by international intermediaries)

and the subsequent recognition by the international community can supersede the current security guarantees.

At the same time, Nagorno-Karabakh has intensified its efforts to break out of its international isolation and to take part in regional projects (Iskandaryan 2015), as it has become clear that isolation only weakens the chances of establishing peaceful relations with Azerbaijan, with its people developing a “besieged fortress” syndrome and feeling even less prepared to compromise.

The burden of the unresolved conflict, the need to maintain a military balance under the threat of renewed warfare, and the economic losses incurred by a blockade have all had their impact on the political, social, and economic development of post-Soviet Armenia. Yerevan says it is ready to conduct its foreign policy and to become engaged in regional and global integration regardless of the conflict’s status. Given that relations with Azerbaijan can hardly be resolved in the short or even medium terms, Armenia must define its relations with other regional countries, international organizations, and leading world powers beyond the basis of the Karabakh factor. Armenia’s strategy proceeds from the assumption that improved conditions for regional integration and the creation of an environment conducive to mutual trust will one day pave the way for rapprochement with Azerbaijan.

The conflict serves as a foreign policy tool in order to focus international attention on Armenia, creating a demand for information about the negotiation process and attracting economic and political assistance. In other words, if the conflict is not to be resolved in the foreseeable future, Yerevan can at least use it to increase Armenia’s profile in the region and farther afield.

Another component of Yerevan’s policy in the Karabakh conflict is “complementarity:” striking a balance among the interests of all external actors. According to Armenia’s National Security Strategy document, its strategic partnership with Russia, adoption of a European model of development, cooperation with Iran and the USA, membership in the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), and its stepped-up cooperation with NATO are all components of this policy.

Although it does not share a border with Russia, Armenia receives major Russian investment, particularly in infrastructure, by which Moscow compensates Yerevan for its strategic cooperation in the military-political sphere. Armenia is trying to build an image as a reliable partner implementing a pragmatic and balanced foreign policy, taking into account the interests of the world’s leading actors and the dynamics of regional politics (Minasyan 2012).

Armenian “complementarism,” in order to balance between the interests of influential international actors, resembles the foreign policy approach of Finland during the Cold War. Like Finland, forced to take into account the geopolitical interests of the Soviet Union and the Communist bloc on the one hand and the US-led Western alliance on the other, Armenia is trying to balance the interests of Russia, the USA, the EU, and Iran, who largely oppose one another on other regional issues. During the Cold War, Finland played a special role in European politics precisely because of the close relationships it had both with the Soviet Union and Western countries. In a similar manner, Armenia is also of potential interest to the USA and European countries in the region precisely because of its special relations with Russia and Iran.

For example, in August 2008 Armenia remained neutral in a somewhat similar situation during the war between Russia, its key military-political ally, and Georgia, its historically close neighbor and important communication partner. However, during the current Ukrainian crisis, Armenia has much less room for maneuver, all the more so because the Ukrainian crisis is larger and more protracted than the Russian–Georgian war and is more

damaging to relations between Russia and the West. Many commentators and politicians have even called the Ukrainian crisis a return to the Cold War. The future will show if that is true; at any rate, it is sure to have long-term consequences, and Russia and the West will certainly whip up the struggle for spheres of influence in the former Soviet Union, including the South Caucasus.

The Armenian diaspora is also a specific tool that helps it implement its “complementary” policy, counterbalancing Azerbaijan in the domain of political lobbying and attracting financial resources to Armenia (Giragosian 2005). Armenians and their descendants are scattered all over the world, and they hold influential positions in the economic, social, cultural, and political life of various countries. The three largest and most influential Armenian communities can be found in the three countries co-chairing the OSCE Minsk Group: France, Russia, and the USA. The political resources of the diaspora allow Yerevan and Stepanakert to influence the approaches of external actors to the Karabakh issue and sometimes even manage to reconcile the seemingly incompatible positions of Washington, Moscow, Paris, and Brussels. The USA is the second largest provider of direct financial assistance to Nagorno-Karabakh, after Armenia. Russia is Armenia’s main military and political ally, and France – Armenia’s main lobbyist on the European scene, a country with centuries-old cultural and social ties with Armenia. It’s worth noting, however, that although the Armenian diaspora in the USA has real lobbying clout, the French Armenian community does not. At the same time, the Russian–Armenian diaspora, the biggest in the world, has very limited influence on Moscow’s regional politics in the Caucasus due to specific features of Russian domestic politics.

Military-political dimension

One of the crucial elements of Armenia’s Karabakh strategy (in conditions of an escalating arms race and threats of war by Azerbaijan) is deterrence: the prevention of military and political actions of one side against the other, typically less powerful, side, by threatening to cause irremediable damage in retaliation (Mearsheimer 1983; Snyder 1961).

As a result of combat operations in the 1990s, Nagorno-Karabakh forces secured convenient geographical boundaries with commanding heights, which are much easier to defend (especially equipped with a multilayered line of fortifications); so the Armenian parties have no rational reason to initiate combat.

On the front line along the plains of the former Agdam and Fizule regions, the Armenian forces of Karabakh enjoy defendable positions on the heights about 10–15 kilometers from the Azerbaijani forward positions. Since the threats of resuming hostilities are heard exclusively from Baku, the policy of deterrence is the choice of the Armenian side, which raises the “cost of war.” Obviously, the targets of Armenian deterrence are primarily Azerbaijan’s energy production and processing facilities and their routes of transportation and related infrastructure.

Despite its richer arsenal of long-range missiles, Azerbaijan remains vulnerable militarily and technologically because it is open to retaliatory attack on key power and industrial facilities, and politically, with its options for retaliation limited by the involvement of Russia and the CSTO in maintaining Armenia’s security. Formally, Moscow’s mutual security and defense obligations within the CSTO apply only to the internationally recognized borders of Armenia, not to the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh. However, given the region’s extreme militarization and the radicalism of the conflicting parties’ positions, combat would likely not be confined to the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, but may escalate along the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Despite the fact that Azerbaijani attacks against internationally recognized Armenian borders could trigger a Russian response, both under the CSTO and under agreements with Yerevan, Baku could calculate it's a risk worth taking. If Russia and the CSTO were to fail to come to Armenia's aid, for instance, it would cost Russia its reputation as a reliable partner, discredit the CSTO as a military-political organization, and trigger the loss of Russia's only military and political ally in the South Caucasus. Therefore, for example, Azerbaijan opened fire on populated areas in far northeastern Armenia in August–September 2015 in the most serious escalation of hostilities since the May 1994 signing of the cease-fire. The lack of a coherent response from the CSTO and Moscow provoked a very negative reaction among Armenians and their political class (President of Armenia 2015). Azerbaijani attacks force the Armenian army to disperse its resources, and maintain higher levels of deployed forces.

Armenian armed forces are capable of devastating industrial and communications centers and infrastructure deep within Azerbaijan, creating long-term drags on its economic and political development. The Armenian army has large-caliber multiple-launch rocket systems (MLRS), as well as tactical-operational missile systems.

Consequently, the Azerbaijani military and political leadership is faced with a stark choice. Azerbaijan may opt to launch full-scale attacks, which will result in the use of heavy artillery, MLRS, and tactical and operational-tactical missiles by all the conflicting parties. This would cause enormous casualties and material losses and ruin Azerbaijan's energy and communications infrastructure with no guarantee of a quick victory.

Azerbaijan's other option may be to refrain from using large-caliber MLRS and tactical missiles in the hope that Armenia will do the same in the event of renewed fighting, but that seems improbable. And even if that happened, Azerbaijan would have to confine itself to frontal attacks against the fortification lines, which have been strengthened for the past two decades with a heavy emphasis on the commanding heights, mainly controlled by Nagorno-Karabakh forces. In that case, the fortification lines per se appear a no-less-effective deterrent against Azerbaijan: attempting to break these fortifications in a Battle-of-Stalingrad-style would entail heavy losses to the Azerbaijani army (numbering not thousands, but tens of thousands of lives).

These are difficult options for Azerbaijan. Moreover, the results of the recent fighting in Ukraine in 2014–2015 demonstrated that even though large-caliber MLRS and tactical missiles were widely used by all sides, they were not decisive factors. In the battles in the Donbas, these types of long-range “distant warfare” weapons did not become *Wunderwaffe* that would allow either side to reach a quick and easy victory. That is significant for the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, as the leadership of Azerbaijan preferred to have large-caliber MLRS and tactical missiles as an ace in the hole in case of large-scale military hostilities. But with the price of war too high and its prospects uncertain, Azerbaijan's only option appears to be accelerating the regional arms race, hoping to bleed Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh economically and politically.

But unlike Azerbaijan, Armenia can maintain some parity in the arms race with the help of free and discounted supplies of arms from Russia, as well as through the benefits of its CSTO membership. The equipment that Azerbaijan has to buy Armenia often gets nearly for free.

Therefore, the arms race in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone raises the stakes and reduces the likelihood of an outbreak of hostilities. Of course this is no guarantee against the resumption of war – as long as one party to the conflict is not satisfied with its outcome, the threat of another war and revenge will remain – but it creates serious constraints.

For the last several years the situation on the line of contact has become more tense, and the Azerbaijani side has significantly escalated hostilities. In several cases, Azerbaijan has

even flown military aircraft along the line of contact and moved its troops closer to the front line. A serious escalation of hostilities and shootings happened in August 2015, resulting in the deaths of dozens of soldiers (mainly on the front line in Nagorno-Karabakh). In November 2014, an Armenian helicopter was shot down in the neutral zone, and there were mutual shootings throughout 2015 (de Waal 2015). The Azerbaijani side began to actively use MLRS brought in from Turkey to fire on Armenian and Karabakh positions, and in late September 2015 Azerbaijan for the first time used field artillery on the northeastern border of Nagorno-Karabakh. In all cases, the Armenian side retaliated, which only increased the number of victims.

This nearly constant shooting, however, has not led to the resumption of all-out war or to an “accidental war,” despite some calls for one. That is because Nagorno-Karabakh is one of the most militarized regions in the world, and in such a place wars do not occur by accident given the costs for the side that initiates it, especially if not backed up by external actors. And despite a two-decade arms race, the military balance between Armenia and Azerbaijan in the conflict zone has not changed qualitatively since the mid-1990s. What has changed is the number of tanks and personnel carriers, artillery and missile systems, airplanes and helicopters, from dozens to hundreds and even thousands since then.

At this stage of the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan can hardly make a rational political decision to resume the full-scale war, which would likely drag on to an uncertain outcome. Every new step in the arms race increases the costs of the war, preventing the parties from inducing an accidental escalation. Therefore, a resumption of fighting in the conflict zone is possible for now only if the decision is made at the top level by one of the conflicting parties. Tens of thousands of soldiers have stood on full-combat alert along the contact line for about two decades; the two armies have huge military and technical power and are positioned to target industrial areas, infrastructure, and cities, including capitals. With such high costs, warnings of an “accidental war” in the region do not derive from the fundamental principles of military strategy and deterrence theory, but are often linked to political maneuvers or propaganda.

As a result, stability in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone will be maintained by a “balance of threat” – which makes the potential enemies preserve the fragile and unstable peace as long as possible. Furthermore, deterrence policies, if effectively implemented, may in the future also create conditions for lasting peace.

Conclusion

As of today, the Karabakh conflict continues to serve as the core element of foreign, military, and even domestic politics of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. It has affected the entire post-Soviet development of the modern Armenian state and the destiny of the people of the unrecognized Nagorno-Karabakh Republic since the early 1990s.

The conflict is also one of the crucial challenges for regional security and development in the South Caucasus. The interests of the parties to the conflict remain intertwined and contrary, making prospects for settling the conflict seem remote. The current status quo of a stable military-political balance and negotiations in the framework of the OSCE’s Minsk Group may yet produce, at some later date, long-lasting peace and stable regional security in the South Caucasus.

References

- Avakian, Shahan. 2013. *Nagorno Karabakh: Legal Aspects*. 4th ed. Yerevan: Tigran Mets.
- Broers, Laurence. 2005. “The Politics of Non-recognition and Democratization.” *Accord 17*: 71–73.

- Freedom House. 2015. *Nations in Transit*. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/nations-transit-2015#.Vqdk0shxf7E>.
- Giragosian, Richard. 2005. "Toward a New Concept of Armenian National Security." Paper prepared for the third annual AIPRG international conference, The World Bank, Washington, January 15–16.
- Iskandaryan, Alexander. 2015. "In Quest of the State in Unrecognized States." In *The Unrecognised Politics of De Facto States in the Post-Soviet Space*, edited by Laurence Broers, Alexander Iskandaryan, and Sergey Minasyan, 17–34. Yerevan: Caucasus Institute and International Association for the Study of the Caucasus.
- Mearsheimer, John. 1983. *Conventional Deterrence*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Minasyan, Sergey. 2012. "Evaluating Multi-vectorism in the Foreign Policy of Post-Soviet Eurasian States." *Demokratizatsiya* 20 (3): 268–273.
- Ó Beacháin, Donnacha. 2015. "Elections Without Recognition: Presidential and Parliamentary Contests in Abkhazia and Nagorny Karabakh." In *The Unrecognised Politics of De Facto States in the Post-Soviet Space*, edited by Laurence Broers, Alexander Iskandaryan, and Sergey Minasyan, 86–116. Yerevan: Caucasus Institute and International Association for the Study of the Caucasus.
- President of the Republic of Armenia. 2015. "Working Visit of President Serzh Sargsyan to Russian Federation." Accessed December 21. <http://www.president.am/en/foreign-visits/item/2015/12/21/Working-visit-of-President-Serzh-Sargsyan-to-Russia-December-21/>.
- Snyder, Glenn H. 1961. *Deterrence and Defense: Toward a Theory of National Security*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Valiyev, Anar. 2012. "Nagorno-Karabakh: Twenty Years under Damocles' Sword." *Demokratizatsiya* 20 (2): 197–202.
- de Waal, Thomas. 2013. *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan Through Peace and War. 10 Year Anniversary Edition*. New York: New York University Press.
- de Waal, Thomas. 2015. "Losing Control in the Caucasus." *Politico*, November 10. <http://www.politico.eu/article/losing-control-in-the-caucasus-armenia-azerbaijan-russia-nagorno-karabakh/>.