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**WEAK STATES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR REGIONAL SECURITY:
A CASE STUDY OF GEORGIAN INSTABILITY
AND CASPIAN REGIONAL INSECURITY**

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Abstract

Purpose:

To demonstrate how Regional Security Complexes have unfolded in a region that contains a number of weak states and to provide an analysis of the security dynamics within the region to make a convincing argument for the prospect of mature anarchy in South Caucasus.

Objectives:

Use of Georgia to exemplify Russian and US overlay to demonstrate that there are strong prospects for future cooperation between the US and Russia visa vis their policies towards Georgia because of the War on Terror.

Contribution:

This paper aims to make an empirical contribution to the analysis of regional security complexes and weak states.

The Concept of Security

Despite the fact that security is a contested concept, there seems to be agreement amongst scholars that at the basic level security implies the absence of threat to the fundamental values at the individual and collective levels. Security studies also must differentiate between individual, national and international security and there is widespread debate as to the level of analysis that should receive the most focus. The term has recently been expanded to encompass the military, environmental, societal, economic and political sectors and it examines how these sectors contribute to security or towards instability. Barry Buzan makes reference to the idea that states must overcome 'excessively self referenced security policies' and to consider the security interests of neighboring states before taking action.

The definition of security is elastic but it is a common misconception that the term implies peace and stability. Following the conclusion of the Cold War, many scholars realized that the term was confined to the analysis of national security and that security studies overemphasized the military dimension. The fall of the Soviet Union called for a re-examination of the ethnocentric term to yield a definition that would be more pertinent to the analysis of a world that became characterized as multi-polar. According to Buzan, "In the case of security, the discussion is about the pursuit of freedom from threat. When this discussion is in the context of the international system, security is about the ability of states and societies to maintain their independent identity and functional integrity." (Baylis, 255) During the Cold War, security studies were preoccupied with the threats posed primarily by the military dimension and how those perceived military threats affected the domestic security of states. The scope of the definition was expanded in the

1980's in recognition of the fact that there are other destabilizing factors at work within the fabric of the state. It was acknowledged that low political issues as well as high political issues were more often than not linked to one another and this development necessitated the re-examination of the concept.

Realist and Idealist Approaches

There is a divergence between the two worldviews on how to approach the development of a universally accepted definition of security. The realist school puts forth the argument that the end of the Cold war did not dramatically alter the organization of the international system and that self-help, anarchy, and interdependence continue to be the guiding principles for states. In this anarchic environment, the independent action of one state can foster insecurity in another state. Realists argue that because there is a fundamental absence of communication and trust among states it encourages states to provide for their own security ie. self-help. The lack of a world government establishes the environment whereby states face continual security dilemmas which encourage the use of pre-emptive force. The realist school takes the position that the attainment and consolidation of power awards the state with a sense of security in the short term. According to this approach, a state whose capabilities outweigh other states can effectively exercise and project its authority on the international level without encountering significant threats. The realist school advocates the idea that security comes as a result of the consolidation of power. However, due to the nature of the anarchic system, maintaining cooperative relationships is not always easy. A lack of transparency regarding the precise ambitions of states sets the tone among actors that competition should take precedence over naïve cooperation. The idea behind the realist approach can be summed up as the power-security dilemma which otherwise known as the prisoners' dilemma. Shortcomings of this approach were revealed as states who sought to attain security through the consolidation of power actually fostered insecurity in other states which then brought them into competition with one another thereby increasing insecurity.

The idealist definition of the term security stands in stark contrast with the realist interpretation. For idealists, the focus was on the correlation between war, peace, and security and in contrast to the realist school there was a limited examination of the correlation between power and security. Therefore, for the idealist school, the elimination

of war was seen as the precursor to security. The idealist approach constructed a definition for security that was premised on the idea that states were predisposed to cooperate with one another if they could be assured that through cooperation, they could achieve security. The idealist school argued that peace must be the antecedent of security and that peace could ultimately be reinforced through the utilization of institutions. The notion of sovereignty has been diluted since its conception and therefore, the rise of non-governmental organizations and international institutions has challenged the idea that the state is the sole security actor. The pre-requisites to security as outlined by the idealists proved to be more coherent than the realist approach as concepts such as collective security and non-offensive defense began to gain popularity.

For many political scientists, the two aforementioned analysis of the term security left much to be desired. There was agreement that security studies were underdeveloped as a consequence of overemphasis on the political-military dimension of security. Consequently, security studies have synthesized certain aspects from each school of thought have arrived at the conclusion that somewhere between the struggle for peace and power lies the essence of security. It is nonetheless an ambiguous term that involves a number of levels of analysis that can range from individual security to state security. Issues are considered threats with reference to the national security of the state and these threats can emanate from all, (or any) of the military, environmental, political, societal, or economic sectors within a state. However, it is important to have a clear idea of what exactly national security means because the preservation and protection of a states national security is the backbone of all domestic and international policies of a state.

National Security

The absence of threat to the core values of a state is the most ambiguous yet generally accepted definition of national security. While the definition of core values may be subjective, there is widespread support for the notion that the principle values of the definition refers to include issues such as sovereignty and territorial integrity. Scholars have faced significant challenges when they have attempted to delineate the line between the security of the nation and the security of the individual. 'Prominent scholars have been at the frontiers expanding the scope of security studies to embrace a wide range of

possible referent objects, ranging from the state to collective identities to the survival of a type of species or a particular habitat.”(Ostrauskaite,3) It should not be underestimated that individual well being is at the heart of most security considerations and that issues that are perceived as threatening the national security are arguably, simply the projections of the perceived insecurities of the individual on the national level. The politicization of an issue is merely the identification and presentation of an issue to a captive audience in a manner that suggests that the nature of the issue is threatening enough to warrant its exploration and moral consideration. “As Buzan rightly points out, securitization is an extreme version of politicization, which consequently allows for and justifies actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure. Successful securitization implies that the move is accepted as legitimate and legitimacy refers to the normative belief by an actor that a rule is to be obeyed.”(Ostrauskaite,4) An issue is considered a threat when the immediacy of a threat necessitates a rapid response that must be elevated above formal political procedure and practice.

Securitization

Traditionally, the security considerations of a state were focused on the military’s capacity to respond to external threats. In other words, it was assumed that the national security of the state was reinforced by weapons acquisition and advancements in military technology. However, the security considerations of states today have become much more complex and Buzan developed the idea of securitization as a response pattern of states that feel there are existential threats to their security. The concept of securitization highlighted how easy it was for states to subjectively interpret the context and conditions that would constitute a threat to their national security. Essentially securitization occurs when a state interprets the action taken by another state something that poses an immediate threat to the integrity of the state and one that if not answered could jeopardize the national security of that state. This development further complicated the definition of security today because, “a question becomes a security issue, not necessarily because a real threat exists but because the issue is presented as a threat. Because different social groups within different states have the power of designating an issue as a security one, security becomes a social construct with different meanings in different societies and states.”(Stivachtis,15) Essentially, any threat to the survival of a valued object can be

interpreted as a threat towards security at both the state and individual level. Threats can come from (but are not limited to) a plethora of sources both state and non-state actors, in the forms of principles, offensive and aggressive actions, and undesirable social trends such as terrorism, and cultural homogenization. Ultimately, the term refers to when a leading actor persuades an audience to believe that something poses an existential threat. The issue under consideration will morph from a political problem into a security problem if the audience is captive, and willing to subscribe to the idea that principles, way of life, institutions or survival are being threatened.

Domestic Security: Five Sectors

Today, the internal threats to the fabric of the state seriously outweigh the number of external threats that must be considered. Moreover, the domestic instability of a state with weak institutions poses greater threats to the external environment than ever before and that is why it is important to consider the domestic dimensions of security. Scholars agree that security is a multidimensional concept that includes internal and external elements. It is also implicit that security is not always a term that is synonymous with peace. In addition to a number of possible external threats, states can face domestic insecurity. If the military, political, economic, societal, and environmental sectors are weak, issues arise that will inevitably invite domestic instability and threaten national security. These sectors impact one another at the national level and they are interdependent. It is rare that developments in one sector do not have repercussions for the other sectors. In addition, threats can occur hierarchically on the local, regional and strategic levels.

According to Buzan, political security is centered upon the system of government, the extent of political cohesion, levels of legitimacy, and the presence of an ideologically orientating force which gives meaning to the idea of a state. There are two dimensions of political security: the internal and external dimension. Internal political insecurity can result from governmental policies that marginalize or discriminate against a group. "Resistance, to the government, efforts to overthrow it, or movements aimed at autonomy or independence may all threaten state stability and enhance state instability." (Stivachtis,177) The extent of development in the socio-political cohesion is the primary determinant in the political security of a state and the regions in which they are located. States that qualify as weak states have low levels of socio-political cohesion and due to

the anarchic organization of states, their insecurity can invite outside intervention that can in turn, generate a number of securitized issues. Ultimately, progressive development can not occur within a country if there is a high level of political insecurity.

In comparison with the definition of political security, the concept of economic security is a much more ambiguous. This is due to the fact that there is always an element of risk when dealing with market forces. The concept of security is premised on the fact that insecurity is created because of the threat to a valued object. It is challenging to identify the objects within the economic sector that can come under threat or pose threats to stability. Economic security pertains to the ability to effectively mobilize resources and provide access to markets in such a way that growth is sufficient enough to support the activities of the state. States can cause economic instability when they attempt to maximize profits through unregulated trade deals. Consequently, economic instability can result from a variety of sources. If the production and output of a country is substantially reduced say by ethnic war, the military will oftentimes be forced to obtain supplies from external providers. Economic decline restricts the availability of monetary resources and military research and development is usually affected by a constricting economy. Not only will the state not be able to afford modernized weapons systems and other forms of technology suitable for defense but they will also become vulnerable to any external fluctuation in the external system which will in turn, affect the stability of supply.

Environmental security is integral to our quality of life. Environmental security is a prerequisite to enjoy the fruits and financial benefits of a vigorous ecosystem. Ultimately, practices that promote sustainable development are of utmost importance to environmental security. With the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, growing environmental degradation, and resource depletion, states' national security is being increasingly threatened by environmental insecurity. Human activity has for the most part, negatively affected the earths ecosystems but according to Richard Ullman, the best qualification for what constitutes as an environmental threat is that there is, "a relatively brief span of time to degrade the quality of life for the inhabitants of a state". (Ostrauskaite, 2) This definition excludes deforestation, ozone depletion and climate change from the list of environmental threats but narrows the scope of issues which can be considered as posing existential threats to the state such as nuclear radiation.

Essentially the idea of environmental security has evolved from low politic issues to high politic issues such as WMD. While it appears that this approach neglects to incorporate important environmental issues, it concentrates the focus on environmental threats that will warrant the same considerations of other high politics issues. Consequently, the chances of securitization for such issues will be substantially increased and that is why the threats of environmental insecurity should not be underestimated.

Another distinction Buzan made in regard to the various security sects is the societal sector of security which pertains to the preservation of traditional practices, norms, customs and the religious orientations of the states' citizens. National and political conflict premised on the concept of ethnicity present major threats to the core values of certain groups. Societal security concerns the ability of a society to preserve the essence of its character during times of change and transformation within the state. Furthermore, societal insecurity may involve the introduction of new threats to the identity of the group. Finally, Buzan argued that while the aforementioned sectors enhance the levels of security that a state may experience, the military sector's overarching influence on the other sectors requires that this particular sector be scrutinized closely if we are to arrive at a concise idea of what exactly constitutes security.

The fact that there is no world government invites us to assert the fact that anarchy and interdependence have become the disorganizing mechanisms within the international system. The military power of a state is an instrument which has been traditionally used to realize the policies of that state especially in times when the interests of a state do not coincide with the interests of another state. Weakness in the military sector can spread more quickly and have more adverse effects on the other sectors than the reverse. While there is agreement that the health of the military dimension supersedes the other sectors in terms of importance, there is still widespread debate in regard to how to assess the strength of the military sector. When there is an absence of threats, traditionalists argue that the state has attained military security and that the absence of threats provides a sense of security. However, other definitions introduce other considerations which complicate the task of arriving at a universal definition of what constitutes military security. "A condition of military security can also be thought of "as one where the threats exist, but where the countermeasures against them are thought to be

inadequate. If one takes the constructivist view, then military security is about the way in which states or other actors securitize other actors or situations by defining them as existential threats requiring exceptional countermeasures.” (Stivachtis, 17) Furthermore, there is a divergence between how to approach the military security dimensions. Both strategic studies and peace studies have approached and defined the military dimension in two completely different ways but this subject will be explored subsequently.

The lack of consensus on what exactly military security means has allowed states to justify the use of force and aggression based on subjective “reasonable response arguments”. States have also consistently subscribed to the definition of military security that best suits their interests and ambitions and as interests change, so do the orientations of the states. Today, scholars have come to recognize that insecurity is a characteristic of the state and that while the international system may not be strong enough to eradicate it, there are measures in which we can take that will significantly reduce the level of insecurity among states. Insecurity and war have become synonymous terms and historical evidence supports the notion that if we can increase the security of states by discouraging the development, production and or acquisition of offensive weapons the world will be a safer place.

At one time, the national security of the state was defined purely in terms of the production, acquisition and advancement in military technology that could be employed when the state was facing an existential threat. The idea that military superiority automatically enhanced the security of the state was dangerous for a number of reasons. Weapons specialization led to the manufacturing of weapons intended for defensive purposes and weapons produced for offensive purposes. The logic of anarchy presupposes that the states are self-preserving and competitive units and therefore, the ambiguities that surrounded the weapons programs within countries inevitably invited other states to procure more arms to enhance their strike capabilities. Military technology therefore, became the creator of security problems by providing states with a false sense of security. In the 1980’s scholars began to advance the idea that the only way states could experience genuine security was through non-provocative military postures such as denuclearization, and collective cooperation. Many hoped that these new ideas and

developments aimed at promoting security would establish the conditions for cooperation among states and progression towards a mature anarchy.

Regions and Regional Security

Despite the high tensions that ran between the Soviet Union and the United States during the Cold War, the anarchic international environments' bi-polarity provided states with an organizational structure that, albeit dangerously, still provided some level of security. The end of the Cold War accompanied the establishment of a significant number of new states which introduced a number of new regional security complexes. Additionally, the ideological propensity for confrontation was removed from the equation thereby reducing the incentives for global penetration into the domestic affairs of the so called third world states. Finally, the conclusion of the Cold War necessitated the re-examination of the term security. The emergent considerations included the non-military and political sectors such as society, environment, and economic sectors all had the capacity to present issues that could potentially be securitized. The combined processes of decolonization, and the Cold War decentralized the distribution of power and gave rise to the increasing importance of regional security analysis

Background: Regional Security Studies

The process of decolonization created dozens of new states which established fertile ground for regional security complexes to begin to operate. These newly emergent states were often characterized by weak cohesion between the civil society and the government. Simultaneously, the US and the USSR began to realize that these newly independent, post-modern states would be the optimal place to carry out their military and technological rivalry. Once the Cold War ended, there were fewer incentives for powers such as the US to concentrate their resources on such countries. Arguably, the world became a weak uni-polar system and this strengthened the notion that autonomy had been diffused from the system level to the regional level. The US had emerged as the sole superpower of the world and the implosion of the Soviet Union allowed for a substantial redistribution of the power. A new multi-polar world emerged in which organizing ideologies played a much less significant role. During the Cold War, the US and the USSR aggressively penetrated into the domestic affairs states that were emerging from the decolonization movement. Proxy wars were fought between the US and the

USSR via countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. However, the end of the Cold War initiated a process of demobilization from these territories. With the huge decrease in securitized issues that both countries were facing, the powers became introverted and the propensity to intervene in the domestic affairs of states dramatically decreased. States came to be recognized by their regional orientation rather than by their ideological alignment to either the US or the USSR. The perception that regions should be left to their own devices and be the providers of their own security led to increased scrutiny of regional systems and their implications for international security.

Complexity of Regional Definition

A competent analysis of regional systems requires an examination of how the region acts at both the local, and the global level. The most efficient manner in which to approach regional security assessments is to differentiate the security issues from one another at each level of interaction and then examine how the interplay of these security considerations affects the behavior of the respective actors. The term region was initially reduced to the idea that balances of power were predominately the organizing force. Regions served as the microcosm of balance of power politics at a lower level. As with the concept of security, Barry Buzan pointed out that a framework for regional analysis was underdeveloped because of the lack of depth in regard to how a regional system was defined. Power was the sole premise for comparison under the initial definition of a region. ‘Because of their susceptibility to external influences, balances of power are a much less reliable guide to security relations at the regional level than they are at the system level.’(Stivachtis, 210) In response, Michael Brecher formulated a multidimensional definition which identified six pre-requisites for a group of states to qualify as a regional system. Brecher insists that to be a regional system, there is a finite special scope and that the states are geographically situated to one another. Secondly, the region must be comprised of more than two actors. Thirdly, Brecher points out that there must be consensus among the other actors in the global community that the cluster of states under consideration is a distinct and distinguishable component of the international system. In addition, regional definition is dependant on the self-perception of states within the region and if they see themselves belonging to a community of states that is separate and distinguishable from the international community. The fifth consideration

for regional qualification is that the concentration of power among actors in the global system greatly outweighs the concentration of power within the confines of a region. Finally, according to Brecher's definition, it is characteristic of a region to be subordinate to the power structure at work in the global environment and be vulnerable to changes and developments that happen therein. (Stivachtis,210) Once these conditions have been met, Brecher went on to state that an analysis of the structural and textural components of a group of states would serve to be the final litmus test for a group of states to be classified as a region. By structural characteristics Brecher was referring to the distribution of power among the relevant actors, whether or not the actors subscribed to an organization based on geographic proximity (ie GUUAM) and the level of interaction among the states. For Brecher, the textural considerations included things such as the extent of integration in regard to the telecommunications systems. Textural characteristics also include an assessment of the overarching ideologies, systems of governance and political stability within the group of states. The aforementioned factors all continue to be important considerations with reference to a region however, in spite of the seemingly comprehensive nature of the Brecher definition, widespread debate continued to surround the term until Barry Buzan emerged with a more succinct theory that reduced the significance of the power factor with reference to the definition of a region. This theory became known as the security complex theory and coincidentally there are a number of considerations that accompany a region's classification as a security region.

Security Complex Theory and Regional Delineation

Before we can define a regional security complex, we must have a clear idea of what a region is with reference to the concept of security. For Buzan, a region is "a distinct and significant sub-system of security relations that exists among a set of states whose fate is that they have been locked into close geographic proximity with one another." (Buzan,188). Buzan identifies four major characteristics of a security region. He contends that a security region must be comprised of two or more states. Furthermore, the states must be in relative geographic proximity to one another. Thirdly, the security interdependence on within the regional level is more pronounced than at the global level (states are more vulnerable to neighboring instability than global system instability).

Finally according to Buzan's definition, a security region is defined by the patterns found within the security practices. The latter two components of the definition are premised on the fact that the world is composed of weak and strong states. Regions that possess a plethora of weak states become the ideal forum in which sub-state actors can vie for their respective security which consequently can result in the destabilization of other respective regional actors. This is the case with the large number of secessionist movements within the Caspian Region particularly in South Caucasus.

The region is the intermediary between the international system and the state. Issues that are securitized by a region and that affect that regional stability are projected onto both the state and international level and that is why regional analysis is a practical way to understand world events. Regions are frequently defined by a common ad hoc problem which establishes the conditions for an interdependent security environment. Buzan identified that the uniqueness of the ad hoc problem and its specificity to the region is something known as a regional security complex. 'Since security complexes are durable features of overall anarchy, seeing them as sub-systems with their own structures and patterns of interaction provides a useful benchmark against which to identify and assess the changes in regional security.'(Stivachtis,223) (See Appendix A)These processes create the conditions in which threats to the security of the state are more likely to be regional rather than global in scope. Buzan advocates the idea that within a given geographic area, patterns of enmity and amity can delineate regional sub-systems and the resulting product is a security complex. A security complex is, "a group of states whose primary security concerns are linked together sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot realistically be considered apart from one another."(Buzan,189) One strong example of a intense security complex is the Azerbaijan and Armenian conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. Interdependency its cooperative and competitive forms, stresses the uniqueness of security complexes to each region. When regional analysis is approached in such a way, there is less ambiguity as to where the regional security considerations come from be it the local or system level and the tendency for weak powers is that security threats will be local in nature. "Because threats operate more potently over short distances, security interactions with neighbors will tend to have first priority. Seen from the top down, security complexes are generated by the interaction

between anarchy and geography.”(Stivachtis, 218) Security complex theory offers a much more practical approach to developing parameters of a region than Brechers’ definition. This theory also serves to dispel the notion that regions are demarcated strictly on a geographic basis and that threats that are commonly shared by a group of states are a better measure for qualifying a number of states as a region. The synthesis of the definition of a region and security complex brings us to what is otherwise known as the regional security complex. The actors within a region are often unaware of when the driving forces behind security complexes are at work and they are therefore, much more disposed to concentrate on the threats posed by others towards them before they consider the threats they themselves are projecting.

Security complexes can be difficult to identify for a number of reasons. The arrangements of units, the patterns of enmity and amity, and the distribution of power are all levels of consideration in security complex identification. The problem is that many of these things are difficult to measure objectively because they are relative terms. The intensity of a security complex is quantified by the level of security interdependence between the states which can be measured by strong, weak, positive and negative. These interactions among the states within the security complex generate a web of activity. Ultimately, patterns in amicable and aggressive relations emerge between the actors. A complex is the byproduct of intensified levels of fear or trust. Buzan continued on to differentiate between capabilities and power in terms of a lower and higher level security complex. A higher level security complex refers to great power’s ability to easily project their influence and military power over great distances and affect a multitude of places simultaneously. In contrast, lower level complexes make reference to states that are limited in their capability intensity and scope.

Weak Regions and Security Complexes

Security complexes in weak regions are much harder to identify than security complexes that are at work between great powers on the international level. This can be attributed to the fact that a state may be so weak that it cannot project any power at all. In other words, it may not even qualify as a lower level security complex; the immediate security considerations for a weak state are usually projected inwards rather than outwards. According to Buzan, the second condition of why a security complex is

sometimes hard to recognize when it concerns weak states is because of what is known as overlay.

Overlay is when the penetration of great powers into a region in the form of direct presence is powerful enough to retard and distort the security dynamics that would naturally occur among the states. “It normally involves extensive stationing of armed forces in the overlain area by the intervening great powers, and is quite distinct from the normal process of intervention by great powers into the affairs of security complexes.(Stivachtis,222)

Intervention contributes to local security patterns, and overlay obscures the local security complex. Buzan continued on to say that under conditions of overlay, the competition between great powers will subordinate the local security dynamics to the higher level security complex existing between the great powers. The implosion of the Soviet Union brought a plethora of new states into existence and consequently, there was a redistribution of power among these states. Furthermore, this development introduced a number of security complexes to the Caspian Region that generated pro-active responses from the great powers. External powers such as the United States and Russia entered themselves into the regional security complex of the South Caucasus and the residual effect has been the suppression of the local security dynamic. Overlay has also complicated the formulation of a comprehensive security pact that is independent of the influence of external interest. The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was a security arrangement drafted by Russia and its shortcomings have been numerous. Important regional states such as Georgia have withdrawn because certain provisions within the agreement allow Russia to impinge on the states sovereignty under the guise of peacekeeping. A stability pact that is respected by the regional states may be in contrast with Russia’s strategic ambitions in the region and that it will take careful language and diplomatic effort to draft an agreement which is both accepted by external powers and regional states.

The security dilemma’s emanate from environments that are characterized by high level security complexes. Security dilemmas imply that the action of a state is constrained by a number of interconnected considerations. There are two dominant explanations that explain the character of security dilemmas. The first is that security dilemmas are generated because of the conscious competition between states in the anarchic international system. The second is that security dilemmas arise from the conflict producing behavior.

The Caspian: Organizations Aimed at Promoting Regional Stability

GUAM was formed in 1997 by the Presidents of Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan

after which Moldova, Uzbekistan joined in 1999. The organization later became GUUAM. The form of Russian influence this organization sought counter Russian involvement in the domestic political scene of the member states. “The formulations (est. of GUUAM) reflect opposition to the fact that Russia, in conflicts in Moldova’s Transdnestr, Nagorno-Karabakh, and Abkhazia and potentially in relation to Ukraine, supports solutions that imply either changing borders or a sharing of sovereignty between the (GUUAM) state and its rebelling minority.”(Buzan,413) From Russia’s ‘near abroad’ standpoint, the externalities that could result from regional destabilization would come at too high a price to justify non-intervention and because there are approximately 25 million ethnic Russians who reside in these former Soviet Republics.

GUUAM remains to be highly disorganized with no formal structure. Similar to the CIS, it has had limited success and meetings between member states have been irregular. However, the organization has been successful in consolidating the members’ positions on two main topics: Russian troop levels and arms-control negotiations. The difference with GUUAM is that there is tremendous potential for the organization with increased support to emerge as a counterbalance to Russian dominance in the region. The prospects for the organization are strong. By 2000, member states planned to have bi-annual meetings in an effort to create a free trade zone (one major shortcoming of the CIS) and to devise routes for pipelines. In 2000 the US pledged 45 billion dollars in military aid to GUUAM countries. (Economist, 2) Georgia remains to be the state that receives the highest amount of US aid in the South Caucasus and the Caspian region. The organization has three dominant aims. First, the organization recognizes that increasingly, “Transnational terrorism was to justify cross-border operations by Russian military and intelligence. Reluctantly, other member states accepted this bargain that allowed some of them to securitize ‘separatism and aggressive nationalism.’”(Buzan, 410) Therefore, the organization emphasizes the resolution of crises and conflicts with respect of sovereignty and recognition of the inviolability of international borders. Secondly, it aims to resurrect itself as the corridor from Europe to Asia. Finally, it has been deemed an anti-Russian, anti-CIS organization because of its ambitions to strengthen relations with NATO. The significance of this organization is that

it is the first feeble attempt to formalize an institution whose mandate is to politically challenge Russian dominance in the region rather than resort to violence. The long term ambition of the organization is to move closer to NATO but in the immediate future, the focus of the organization is to make opposition to the Russian ambitions within the CIS less difficult. Member states of GUUAM have proven that they are willing to collaborate on issues pertaining to security. Military information exchange is creating networks that are facilitating member states reactions to terrorist threats and there are talks for a joint peacekeeping unit. Most notably, GUUAM has become a forum in which can facilitate the discussion of regional security issues in an effort to prevent conflict escalation in the Caucasus.

The respective governments in the Caspian region have experienced great difficulties as a result of the diverse demographic composition of their constituencies and many states inherited the authoritarian tendencies of the former Soviet Union. As discussed earlier, many states within the region can be classified as weak because of the respective leaders' inability to forge a cohesive relationship between the state and its citizens. This is particularly evident when one analyzes the domestic security concerns of the governments and how they usually fail to differentiate between the national security of the state and the political survival of the governing authorities. It is common for leaders of weak states to securitize issues that present immediate threats to their own political survival rather than giving consideration to the real issues that affect the socio-political cohesion of the state itself. Consequently, the states within the region are plagued by problems such as ethnic and religious strife, territorial disputes and secessionist movements and the reactions of the state governments in dealing with these issues distinguish these states as weak states. High levels of domestic instability have created a regional security complex that not only has prevented the development of the region, but it has invited external intervention in regional affairs. Governments are awarded power and legitimacy by demonstrating their accountability to their people and their ability to mobilize resources. For these two aims to be met, the leaders must make good use of the states institutions. However, all too often, the institutions in weak states are underdeveloped and may even pose threats to the existent leadership so their growth is frequently restricted. Oftentimes, the fragmented nature of the society is projected upon

the leadership of the state and large amounts of social control may rest with ethnic leaders instead of with the government. In other words, without the ability to distribute state services and provide effective protections to enhance peoples' physical security, the governments of such states will find that there will be few incentives for the public to offer their support. Thus weak states have a plethora of security concerns that affect the governments' policies towards the constituency and the strategic aims and ambitions concerning their foreign policy.

Weak States and Regional Insecurity

The distribution of power amongst the actors in the international system is not equitable and as a consequence, there is a disparity in the extent to which states have developed. The term development in this case is synonymous with the idea of the strength of a state. High levels of development (development as measured by the degree of socio-political cohesion) are usually indicative of a strong state and visa versa. According to Buzan, the degree of domestic socio-political cohesion is the quantifying factor that indicates the relative strength or weakness of a state. The activities of weak states have strong implications for the anarchic structure of the international system and the national security considerations of the other states within the system. The strength of the international system is clearly dependent on the strength of its constituent parts and weak states present stability and security problems which can emerge at the system level. That is the reason why their consideration is integral to our understanding of the origins of the security complexes that destabilize the world today.

Defining Strength and Weakness

Like power, strength and weakness is not something that is easy to measure. To many people, the concept of what each word means is clear but exactly how to quantify the terms is much more ambiguous with regard to statesmanship. We do know that using an absolute scale or relative scale will dispel some confusion in terms of measurement.. Despite the ambiguities associated with its definition, power remains to be how political scientists and historians measure the capabilities of states within the system. Today, the quantification of state power is easy to determine because, according to Buzan, "the quality of 'stateness' can be assessed against the criterion of sovereignty and there are some clear benchmarks against which to judge where a state stands on a contemporary

scale of weak and strong.”(Little,410) A state can be characterized as powerless or weak in absolute terms when there is little or no socio-economic cohesion, high levels of disorganization, and chaos. As a result, it is hard for any one part of the unit to influence the domestic or external environment. In contrast, it is much harder to define power in absolute terms when referring to the opposite end of the spectrum and it raises questions as to if there are logistical limitations on power (omnipotence). However, for the aforementioned reasons, we will use the relative approach to determining power and from that we will deduce what characteristics qualify a state as strong or weak. Ultimately, scales of power, and the terms weak and strong are best understood in relative terms. In order to determine the strength or weakness of a state it is necessary that we assess the best and worse current performance of states within the international system and then attribute the classifications to states accordingly.

The classification of a state as either a strong or weak unit is dependent on a multitude of factors that when compared amongst the units will reveal that there are gross disparities in the capability and cohesion of states. Determining the strength or weakness of a state is less problematic than assessing the strength or weakness at the system level. This is due to the fact that there is still widespread debate as to what levels of interaction must be achieved between units in order to qualify as a system. Any disproportionate collection of weak or strong states will undoubtedly have implications for the strength of the system. The level of penetration by a unit into the international system is often relational to the units classification units as either a weak or a strong state; strong states being classified by high levels of penetration, weak states by low levels of penetration. In addition, in the case of a weak state, external penetration into the domestic affairs of that state is highly probable. As a result of internal incompetence, weak states will face constraints and threats within the system level and therefore, their direct involvement at the system level will be restricted. Compared with strong states, weak states undoubtedly confront more political, military, and economic threats to their sovereignty. Alternatively, strong states will project their domestic interests and agendas on states and they will be more resistant to outside influence. Strong states have a much greater chance of maintaining autonomy and they also have the capacity to interact and intervene on the system level without compromising their sovereignty and this is not true for weak states.

Weak or strong states are defined in terms of the degree of socio-political cohesion. At the unit level socio-political cohesion refers to “the degree of consensual integration between the civil society and the government. It is a measure of the extent to which coercion has been removed from the relation between a citizenry and its governing institutions.”(Little,410) The semantics of these classifications (weak or strong) pose a number of problems for political scientists and historians alike. The main problem with determining the strength or weakness of an international system is that unlike states, there are no actor qualities that we can attribute to the entire system. Also, we can assess the relative strength or weakness of states using sovereignty and the degrees of interaction and (or intervention) to determine where the state falls on the spectrum in terms of its capabilities. It is crucial to understand the internal dynamics of weak states because as long as they exist, high levels of instability and insecurity on both the regional and the system level will be unavoidable.

Characteristics of Weak States

There are four characteristics common to a state that has been defined as a weak state. First, weak states will be particularly vulnerable to secessionist, and independence movements because of their low degree of socio-political cohesion. The lack of intense levels of cooperation between the government and the institutions of weak states leads to the inefficient mobilization of resources. Without sufficient control over their access to the population, political and economic programs of the governments of weak states oftentimes do not have the levels of impact that the reformers had hoped for. Consequently, poverty, physical insecurity, corruption and inequality all come to dominate the individual. As a result, the internal political climate of weak states usually involves violence because there are no entrenched, established channels through which the population can express their dissent. Among weak states, dissent that is expressed through violent behavior is not typically confined to its place of origin. Violent movements within one state can spill over into neighboring states. Opportunistic neighbors and states may be invited by such instability to compete for the advantages that can be obtained as a result of intervention (to get their piece in the division of the spoils).In a weak state the governments’ inability to mobilize resources and address the

needs of its constituents makes it very difficult for a state to consolidate power and to strengthen and legitimize the institutions while making strides towards development.

Strong states are classified as having high levels of internal socio-political cohesion and therefore the threats to security are predominately from outside their borders. In a strong state is that there is a low degree of coercion between actors. Strong states are capable of institutionalizing norms and projecting their influence over great distances. Weak states by contrast, have less internal cohesion and therefore their claims to stateness are taken less seriously at both the regional and system levels This process can initiate overlay. “Given the large power differentials between the lower and higher levels, one expects unequal intervention from higher to lower complexes to be a normal feature of the system. The question then, is not about a dispute about the boundaries of a security complex, but about the relative weight of local security dynamics in relation to those pressing on the region from outside.” (Stivachtis,220) The political instability of weak states makes them especially vulnerable to penetration from external forces. If a state is unable to contain its instability, the threat posed by a spillover of violence into another state may have dire implications for not only regional stability, but international stability as well. For other actors within the international system, the threat that violence may not be contained within the states’ borders is ample justification to securitize issues that concern the weak state. If a state cannot exercise control over its borders, the outcome will be that external actors’ interest in the conflict will be heightened substantially and potentially to the point of intervention.

It was initially believed with the conclusion of the Cold War that competitive intervention in weak states by great powers would be significantly decreased. While the intensity of the competition between the Soviet Union and the United States has been significantly reduced, it has by no means been eradicated. Today, the great power rivalry between the two powers is much more subtle than it was during the Cold War. However, because competition is an attribute of statehood, the powers continue to create the conditions in which overlay occurs. This is especially true with regard to United States and Russian involvement within Georgia in the Caucasus region.

Weak states not only have problems with the socio-political stability; they also have problems with relational stability. The internal environment in weak states is often

characterized by a lack of structure and general disorder. Therefore, there is a fundamental lack of policy consistency which can, and oftentimes does complicate relations with neighboring states. The majority of weak states have difficulty enforcing their borders because a large number of weak states have unsettled territorial disputes. Breakaway regions that have claimed autonomy can also lie on borders which can invite refugees, terrorists and guerillas into the weak states which will inevitably undermine an already fragile security environment. In an effort to consolidate their power, elites that control these areas will often incite nationalistic sentiments to challenge the legitimacy of the government. When it becomes known that a government cannot adequately respond to these threats, external actors reasoning behind intervention becomes increasingly justified. Growing instability and weakness in central governance can be disguised for only a short period of time before the government loses its legitimacy and its ability to impose order. Ultimately, it is difficult for a weak state to confine domestic instability to their borders and the quality of relationships with neighboring states is a function of containment. If the measures to ensure the containment of the conflict are not sufficient, the chances of the good relations between states in the region are significantly diminished. Instability coupled with the lack of ability to contain the conflict potentially, and frequently destabilize whole regions.

Relations among states today are reflective of the institutionalization of a variety of norms, most of which pertain to the use of aggression. State aggression has become less about territorial expansion and acquisition than in previous times. Furthermore, the development of cooperative security arrangements has in some scenarios', curbed the aggressive ambitions of a state. Generally speaking, we have seen an increase in states constraint on the use of force. However, the exception to this trend is weak states. Weak states have low levels of constraint when it comes to force because of the underdevelopment of the institutions that are supposed to diffuse and confront threats to their national security. Weak states will resort to using the military disproportionately faster than strong states because oftentimes it is the immediate, but only solution. Frequently, in such a state, the government is so weak that the military mobilization takes precedence over the process of fostering political consensus that can support and legitimate the response undertaken by the government. A proliferation of perceived

threats within weak states is often more a projection of the governments' internal political vulnerability rather than a reality. The nature of the political threats experienced by weak states does not generally challenge the sovereignty of that state. Instead, the threats target the main political factions within the state and serve to further divide a place already desperately in need of political consensus. Political intervention occurs at a number of levels ranging from ,”support to legal parties in a relatively stable electoral system, to encouragement of, and military assistance to armed struggle within the target state.”(Stivachtis, 228) Weak governance will be accompanied by a high level of securitized issues. Border and territorial disputes, and independence and secessionist movements often plague weak states and increase the propensity of these states to resort to the use of force. The case of Russian involvement in the North and South Caucasus is a prime example of political intervention. Russia continues to support breakaway regions in the Caspian particularly within Georgia.

There are a number of preconditions that must exist within the domestic environment of a state to qualify a state as being a weak state. For example, if there is no overarching political ideology that is shared by the population the chances for instability and conflict are greatly increased. Weak governments in weak states usually respond to dissidence through the use of the military because it is oftentimes the only institution that can impose order. Many of the states that can be characterized as weak states are usually post- modern states such as the states that formerly belonged to the Soviet Union. The predominant complication for these states is that their borders encompass a multitude of nations. Such states were granted their independence less than two decades ago and the majority gained independence with the onset of decolonization. Due to their relatively recent independence and newly gained autonomy, these states have not had the luxury of time and consequently, development has been a trial and error process. ‘Generally speaking, the existence of weak states has been the result of a boundary definition process that has not taken account of existing cultural, ethnic, boundaries and did not create states to fit into them in. It, thus, left arbitrarily defined populations occupying states possessing weak political foundations.’ (Stivachtis,227) For example, governments that rule by force and intimidation rather than consensus, produce weak states because the governing authorities can not separate threats to national security from threats that

challenge the governing power. In such cases, national security loses all socio-political value and security becomes defined in solely military terms. This political posture sets the stage for authoritarianism. The consolidation of a democratic culture within an authoritarian system is nearly impossible and consequently, governments ostracize populations while clinging to power (oftentimes with the use of force). This generates sentiments among civil society within the state that the government is unaccountable and therefore illegitimate. Therefore, there is consensus among the governing bodies of weak states that secessionist movements, terrorist activity, and religious or political fanaticism are all clearly defined threats to national security. Weak states such as Georgia often have contested and porous borders that facilitate illegal movement and trade. Within such states, the institutional capabilities are often underdeveloped and the government has difficulty in mobilizing resources. All of those factors combined substantially increase the prospects of domestic instability. As a result, these high levels of domestic insecurity can generate high levels of regional instability. A problem for one state in such circumstances, a problem that is eventually shared by the other states in the region.

Security Complexes and Weak States

States are constantly seeking to secure themselves in a system that is characterized by anarchy. There is an undeniable correlation between events that occur at the system level and the events that are initiated as a byproduct of the processes and operations of weak states. Security complexes are more easily identified and dealt with when there are clear patterns in the fragmentation among states. However, with reference to weak states, the patterns of fragmentation are obscured and the basis for relations and interactions among states are much more ambiguous. This pattern in itself is sufficient enough to generate security complexes among a whole range of states and that is why it is in the interest of all states to strengthen the socio-political structure in weak states.

Because of their lack of socio-political cohesion, and commonly accepted political ideology, weak states do not have a strongly defined orientation with regard to the international system and this presents a number of problems. The most obvious from the viewpoint of a unit within the international system is that the foreign policy of weak states, and the foreign policy towards weak states, is difficult to determine and difficult to interpret. In weak states it is difficult to differentiate threats to the government from

threats to the national security of the state. Difficulties that arise from the definition of national security complicate the states' external orientation with regard to the international system. The lack of a definitive foreign policy or posture can actually invite more threats to the domestic security of a weak state.

The domestic levels of insecurity for weak states is typically very high and such forms of insecurity will undoubtedly spread outside of the a weak states borders and in turn, have a negative impact on regional stability. Weak states are predisposed to resort quickly to the use of force. Violence in a weak state can erupt quickly and unexpectedly and the contending factions can rapidly destabilize a country. Typically it is just a matter of time before the violence loses its specificity to one state and engulfs a number of neighboring states. The domestic instability of a state that belongs to a distinctive collection of states can quickly lead to regional instability and this is especially true of the Caucasus where a security complex is generated by a number of factors but mostly by pipelines that carry oil. "Another ethnic conflict outside of Georgia, between Azerbaijan and Armenia, spilled over into Georgia in the form of sabotage of the pipelines carrying Azeri oil to Georgia and the transportation links providing supplies to Armenia. Political unrest coupled with ethnic conflict was used as the justification for not proceeding to implement economic reforms." (Dawisha,191) Ultimately, the security considerations of weak states will be substantially more intense and numerous than the security considerations of strong states. The socio-political structures within weak states will be much more vulnerable to threats in times of transition and therefore, weak states will generally confront more complex security problems than strong states.

A weak state may not be able to penetrate the system to the degree that a strong state can but the impact of instability generated by a weak state should not be underestimated. The pursuit of national security in the anarchic international arena substantially increases the importance of weak and failing states via the national security of strong states. Zbigniew Brzezinski remarked that "regional conflict, the fragmentation of wobbly social and political structures in societies incapable of absorbing the political awakening of so many more people is the second greatest threat to the United States after Soviet power."(Stivachtis,226) Powers recognize that increasingly, they cannot enjoy absolute security if there are other areas in the world that are disproportionately unstable.

The United States is acutely aware that unlike Russia, they are a net importer of oil. Furthermore, oil rich countries have the tendency to qualify as weak states because of the low levels of socio political cohesion. The US is keen on supplier diversification and the stabilization of the potentially oil rich countries of the Caspian Basin and the South Caucasus is of paramount importance to strong states such as the United States.

Caspian Region and the Caucasus

Prior to the breakup of the Soviet Union, the Caspian Sea was encompassed by only two states, Iran and the USSR. After the Soviet Union collapsed, the number of littoral states that surrounded the sea increased. The proliferation of regional states in the post-Cold war environment meant that a number of territorial rights and border disputes emerged and prevented the region from capitalizing on its potential. The five littoral states of the Caspian Sea include Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan.

Post Cold War Caspian Development and Soviet Political Legacy

The imposition of a common military, political, and security system during Soviet rule suppressed the local security dynamics in an effort to Russify or assimilate large non-Russian populations into the Soviet empire. The Russian attempt to culturally homogenize the whole region was not completely successful but the Soviets successfully suppressed a multitude of ethnicities and nationalities from developing an identity that was too individualistic. The Soviets retarded the security dynamics that naturally would have permitted the natural development and evolution of security dynamics between the regional actors. The high level of penetration by the Soviet Union into the Caspian basin caused what is more commonly known as overlay. The Soviet Union was a very strong state that had consolidated power to the extent that they were able to put a lid on historic animosities and were able to unite the region under one common security system. The conditions for overlay in the Caspian were ripe before the collapse of the Soviet Union. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the federation was no longer strong enough to project their influence on the region with such intensity and overlay disappeared temporarily from the region. However, the dissolution of the Soviet Union had a number of implications for Caspian states which made them much more sensitive to issues that even just slightly threatened their security.

With the loss of a common security system, and the rules for its implementation, the political leaders of the freshly independent states had no idea how to develop a new security regime. The degree of consensus among the new states in how to approach the threats to security within the region was substantially underdeveloped. This meant that issues that posed a threat that would have typically been diffused under the old cooperative security regime now were issues that became rapidly securitized. The efforts of state building in the region were thwarted by religious and ethnic conflict, the rise of nationalistic sentiments, and the division of ethnic groups over the borders of numerous countries. Relations between regional states have been degraded because a number of ethnic conflicts continually evade solutions. The Soviet Union also made a distinction between the satellite states and listed them as either an Autonomous Region or a Autonomous Republic. The status of these areas in the post-Cold War environment would serve as another point of contention between the states that received their independence from the Soviet Union following 1991. “The highly hierarchical structure put “Autonomous” political entities, which often had an ethnic and religious population different from the population of their Union Republic, under the clear subordination of a particular “titular nation” of the Union Republic. Often the borders of Union Republics or Autonomous Republics were drawn in a way that divided ethnic groups between different Union republics” (Begoyan,²) Following the Soviet withdrawal from the region, the South Caucasus was comprised of the three ex- Soviet Republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Much of the instability that is experienced in the region today stems from the areas which under Soviet rule were considered as Autonomous Republics. These ex-Soviet Autonomous Republics included Abkhazia and Adjara both areas today fall within the Georgian Republic and contribute a great deal to the domestic instability of Georgia. Nakhichevan was the formerly Autonomous Republic within Azerbaijan. Finally, the last level of classification of under Soviet rule was known as the Autonomous Region. Once again, the Georgian Republic encompassed South Ossetia and Javakhetia which were classified under the Soviet system not strong enough to be considered a Autonomous Republic, but strong enough to be considered as a distinct entity within the domestic realm of Georgia. Another Autonomous Region according to the Soviet classification schemes was Nagorno-Karabakh region within Azerbaijan. Today the

immediate threat to regional stability is the regions propensity towards ethnic conflict and secessionist movements. The countries who possessed a number of areas that were classified as Autonomous Republics or Autonomous Regions are countries that today are afflicted by ethnic war and independence movements. These classification schemes of the Soviets have had the richest contribution to instability with reference to Georgia. The domestic stability of Georgia continues to be undermined by secessionist movements in South Ossetia, Adjara, and Abkhazia. As you can see there is a direct correlation the level of stability the Caucasian states have experiences and the number of their domestic territories that were classified under the Soviet system as either Autonomous Regions or Autonomous Republics.

The pervasive conflict in South Ossetia, Nagorno-Karabakh, and Abkhazia has considerably complicated the security dynamic in the Caspian Region. Relationships between the Caucasus countries especially the relations between the Southern countries which comprise the South Caucasus (Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia) have been considerably complicated by enduring conflicts. Armenia is predominately concerned with the self-determination of Nagorno-Karabakh as a guarantee for the cultural and ethnic survival of the Armenian nation. In contrast, Georgia's and Azerbaijan's claims to territorial integrity continue to be understood by both states as the most essential element of state building. A loss of territorial control, or official recognition of one of the breakaway regions is viewed by Georgia and Azerbaijan as a development that would poses substantial threats to the future stability. This can be attributed to the fact that the countries fear that the successful secession of one area would encourage patterns of weak fragmentation among the multitude of ethnicities who reside within the countries borders. Furthermore, the maturation of some of these conflicts has substantially decreased the domestic levels of societal security as the result of the proliferation of new societies. These societies have given rise to a whole range of new security considerations and they have formulated their own security dynamics to enhance their sense of security. Therefore, a logical analysis of the Caspian Regions regional security complex will cannot be limited exclusively to states such as Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia, but it also must consider the regional societies and their impact on the security concerns of the states within the region.

Strategic Importance of the Region

The region is comprised predominately of weak states because of the region's high occurrence of border disputes, ethnic war, and secessionist movements. Competitive intervention in the Caucasus has been generated between the United States and Russia because of the fact that the Caspian Sea is rich in petroleum and natural gas. In an era of high levels of resource dependency, the perceived value of the North and South Caucasus has substantially increased. In the future, global energy security will be highly dependant on an economic and political stability in the Caucasus so the Caspian Sea Region can be developed. While some may argue the states are experiencing slow but promising economic growth and democratic transition, unresolved territorial disputes continue to generate many intra and inter state tensions.

The domestic security environment and the region's potential to become a counterweight to the Middle East in terms of energy has caused a number of external powers to become increasingly involved in the domestic affairs of the weak regional states. For example, the Freedom Support Act was drafted by the US legislature to promote democracy and economic growth in states in the former states of the USSR. Interestingly, because of the large Armenian population in the US and the allegations of genocide, the US passed an amendment in 1992 prohibiting aid to Azerbaijan thus making it the only post-soviet Republic that does not directly receive US aid. In an effort to prevent regional instability, external powers have become increasingly interested in creating their own spheres of influence among states especially in the Southern Caucasus. With the turn of the century, there is a looming new certainty that has impressed itself upon all leaders of the world and that is that oil supply is not unlimited. The harsh reality is that oil is the lifeblood that sustains today's state. The major power players in the international community are developing an insatiable thirst for the commodity while net exports from oil rich countries have decreased in the last few years. This trend is due in part to ethnic conflict, lack of investment, decreasing sub-surface pressure and depletion of formerly bountiful reserves. It is not surprising then that a number of administrations' have used military muscle to stabilize and secure strategically important oil areas.

To understand why the Caspian Basin is of such strategic importance to the world, it is necessary to look at some of the regions compositional factors. To begin

with, in terms of the regions resources and physical characteristics, the Russian Federation and the Caspian Sea States possess 77.1 billion barrels of proven reserves or 7.4% of the worlds' total reserves (Klare,19). The appeal of the region also lies in the fact that the Caspian offers the opportunity for foreign investment in the oil industry. The strategic importance of the Black Sea Region remains to be its strategic positioning and high transit value for the transportation of petroleum and natural gas. Middle Eastern states and their respective oil economies are controlled by the governments and there are strict restrictions on foreign investment. Furthermore, investment opportunity in the Caspian appears to be a much safer venture for international oil companies when compared to the Persian Gulf.

Although the legal systems in Central Asia are flawed, the oil deals are on fairly firm ground. In Azerbaijan each production-sharing arrangement individually becomes law, rubber-stamped by the country's parliament. The terms of the contracts are such that renegotiation, let alone nationalization, seems out of the question. Individual demarcation disputes may slow the exploitation of one or two oil fields, but they will not hold up the region's overall development. (Economist,4) Consequently, states such as the United States, Russia and China are all bidding for exploration and exploitation rights if drilling proves to be successful. The region resources remain largely untapped because of the lack of extractive infrastructure. In addition, the Caspian states have smaller populations when compared to other oil rich countries. This means that once extraction becomes efficient, the Caspian Basin will be able to offer a greater percentage of the extracted energy for export because the domestic demand will be lower. The increasing need of the US on imported oil, and the diminishing availability of proven reserves, has led Washington to place increasing importance on their relations with non-OPEC producing countries, particularly within the Caspian Basin. These emergent relationships have increased Russian skepticism of US intentions within the region. The major difference between Russia and the US is that in the age of diminishing oil supplies, Russia is a net oil exporter while the US is becoming increasingly dependant on imported petroleum. Russia is also pro-actively trying to maintain its sphere of influence in the Caucasus. The Caspian Basin appears to be the next geographic area where powerful states such as Russia, the United States, and China will struggle for primacy.

The Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea Basin feature characteristics which distinguish them from each other as oil producing regions. In terms of proven reserves, and production capacity, the Persian Gulf remains to be the uncontested heartland of the world's petroleum supply. The Middle East has long been considered to house the most abundant proven oil reserves in the world. However, importers are growing weary of the region's instability, the resistance to outside foreign investment, and growing anti-western sentiments among the region's many peoples. The war on terror, the region's notoriety for radical Islamist interpretations, and internal political corruption have all raised questions about the security of foreign oil in places such as Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Kuwait. The Caspian Basin (including Russia) offers a geo-strategic counterbalance to the Middle East by containing the greatest amount of untapped petroleum and natural gas among non-OPEC producers. In the past three decades, Kazakhstan's Kashagan field produced close to 5 billion barrels of oil one of the largest yields ever produced by a non-OPEC country. (Roberts, 57) These yields pale in comparison with the proven reserves of the Middle Eastern states but to date, there is still ample opportunity for foreign companies to explore territory that was inaccessible until the fall of the Soviet Union. Ultimately, technologic advancements favor the exploitation of previously inaccessible fields which could considerably increase the already substantial reserve estimates in the Caspian.

Delineation of Caucasus

Beginning with the dissolution of the Soviet Union until today, the Caspian region has undergone a series of transformations in the security dynamics that have come to define the region. The various levels of security dynamics (domestic, regional, interregional and global) within the region have in large part been influenced by the expansion and contraction of the Russia Empire and by the degree of involvement among other regions of the world. Within the Caspian there are four major sub-regions: the Baltic States, the Western Group of states, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The major security considerations within the aforementioned collection of states concern Russia and other states in the region. This section will pay particular attention to defining the boundaries of the RSC with specific concentration on the South Caucasus sub-system.

The Caucasus is composed of two parts: North Caucasus which includes

Dagestan, Chechnya, five other ethnic groups and the Russian Federation, and South Caucasus which is comprised of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. In addition to Russia, external powers such as Iran, Turkey and the US have strategic interests in the developments that occur within the sub-complex. The two areas intersect in North Ossetia which lies in Russia and South Ossetia which is a disputed territory that lies within Georgia. From the RSC perspective it is essential that Central Asia and the Caucasus are treated as two separate sub-complexes. Buzan attributed this distinction between the two to the fact the Caspian Sea serves as a natural buffer despite the fact that the two areas have a common political history. "The Caspian Sea unifies in relations to fish and hydrocarbons, but geo-politically it divides and not much securitization happens across it." (Buzan,419) For the purpose of this paper suffice it to say that the Northern Caucasus is ethnically diverse and there is the propensity to lean towards religious fanaticism. The security complex in North Caucasus is characterized by the potential for Chechnya conflict spillover into Georgia which could in turn, interrupt the flow of oil lead to the destabilization of the entire North Caucasus.

Currently, the biggest threat to the stability of the whole region is the danger of the spread of war in Chechnya to neighboring Georgia and Daghestan. If Georgia were attacked by Russian troops under the pretext of fighting Chechens in the Georgian mountains, the West ie the USA will come under heavy pressure to act accordingly." (Motika, 296).

Russia has securitized the Chechen territory under the pretext that Chechnya could become a haven for terrorists. In the 1994 and 1995, Chechen attempts at secession from Russia resulted in flagrant human rights violations, and an intentionally ambiguous resolution. Of the four sub-systems that comprise the greater regional security complex, it is the Caucasus that is the most pertinent to the discussion because the majority of threats toward regional security emanate from this area.

The South Caucasus is plagued by inter-and intra state conflicts that involve a large number of non-state and state actors. The interplay between these actors has generated threats and issues that extend far beyond traditional security concerns. The region is a classical example of a distinct system of states whose geographic proximity to

one another has established the grounds for an interdependent security dynamic also known as a sub-complex. This section will draw from Barry Buzan's regional security complex theory to demonstrate that there are strong inter-linkages between the security concerns of regional countries. Additionally it will provide a framework to delineate the boundaries of the security complex in the South Caucasus. The rivalries within the region have deep historic roots and there are patterns of amity and enmity between the regional actors and these historic hatreds between states continue to corrode relations even today. Therefore, a comprehensive analysis of the region must extend beyond the examination of traditional balance of power politics.

The borders of the South Caucasus or Trans-Caucasus are defined by internal factors such as the secessionist conflicts in Georgia and the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict. (Refer to Appendix B) The external orientations of the great powers within the region also define the sub-complex (Russia involvement in Georgia, Azerbaijan – Armenian support from Turkey, Russia, USA.) These orientations have played a crucial role in the manufacturing of pipelines and the determination of what pipeline routes will be the most desirable. The interplay, and common origin of these security dilemmas facilitate in the delineation of South Caucasus region from the rest of the Caspian. This examination reveals that the instability in the South Caucasus is most likely to be initiated in Georgia because of its high number of secessionist movements and proximity to Chechnya.

Essentially, in the South Caucasus the regional security complex is defined by the pipeline systems that carry Caspian petroleum and natural gas to western ports. The BTC pipeline involves Baku, Azerbaijan, Suspa, Georgia and Ceyhan, Turkey. (Refer to Appendix B) The BTC pipelines are particularly vulnerable to threats because they pass the territory of a number of countries, the majority of which are weak states. The Caspian Sea is separated by Azerbaijan and Georgia from the Black Sea. Any pipeline crossing this landmass could potentially circumvent the need for oil to travel through Russian territory by allowing oil to be transported past Turkey and into the Mediterranean via the Black Sea. Developments such as the BTC pipeline (Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline) could increase Washington's grip on energy in the region which would reduce U.S. anxiety over the current Russian monopoly on energy transport. The BTC is

essentially the factor that delineates the South Caucasus as a subcomponent of the greater Caspian Sea region because of the security complex that it has generated between the states that harbor the pipeline. What makes this sub-complex unique is that because of the geo-political importance of the region, the patterns in alignment are dynamic. The exception to this is the Armenia-Russo alliance which has persevered with the most consistency and this could be attributed to the fact that Armenia is a Christian state that is surrounded by states that are predominately Muslim.

Historically, the North and South Caucasus have acted as insulators between Europe and Asia and the area continues to serve this purpose even today. However, Russia remains to be a formidable force within the area and the CIS is the overarching political forum. With these in mind, Buzan has argued that the region is a sub-complex within the post-Soviet RSC and he identified that there are four dynamics which form the Caucasus complex. These four defining characteristics are all premised on the fact that there is undeniably a strong Russian component. According to Buzan, the sub-complex among the three states in the South Caucasus is defined by, "secessionists in Georgia, the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Karabakh, spillover between the North and South Caucasus through the micro-coalition patterns of small ethnic groups and the energy and pipelines." (Buzan, 423). Ultimately, in order to enhance the security of the region, the four aforementioned factors must be addressed in a comprehensive stability pact. Regional stabilization will only be realized when the institutions of weak regional states are strengthened. In addition to geographic proximity to one another, these states share similar security concerns and experience similar challenges in defining, and addressing their domestic problems.

From the viewpoint of the world major powers, establishing the grounds for cooperative relations in the Caspian Basin has a number of advantages. Firstly, anti-western sentiments are not as pronounced in the Caspian as in the Persian Gulf states. Secondly, it is important to consider that leaders in Washington have listed supplier diversification as their guiding policy initiative. This development will ultimately shift attention from the Persian Gulf towards the undeveloped, but potentially lucrative

Caspian Basin.

For the majority of trans-Caucasian republics national security is the highest priority amongst all of the various levels of security. This could be attributed to the fact that the majority of states are weak and the likelihood of external penetration into the domestic affairs of the state is much higher than their ability to penetrate the international system. “Competing elites struggling for political power are willing to trade national autonomy for external support, and the state order is so weak that threats to the security of the regime can trigger a general crisis of political order and in some cases, civil war. (Buzan,403) Personalistic policies and non-merit appointments, unfair elections, controlled press and strong suppression of dissidence has become commonplace in many states within the region. Ultimately, it is important to recognize the domestic level and national security considerations of Russia because any insecurity that Caspian states experience on the domestic level is often rooted in Russian foreign policy. Russian foreign policy also coined the term ‘near abroad’ which has been the defining idea behind Russian-Caspian state relations. Despite the grim environment, and the inherited political legacy of the Soviet Union, the democratic structures within some regional states are beginning to show signs of consolidation. Georgia’s Rose Revolution stands in stark contrast to the famously falsified elections and suppression of popular dissent which characterized the region during the early to mid-90’s. Ukraine is also a GUUAM country which has been host to a peaceful revolution. The nature of such revolutions is demonstrative of the ripening democratic culture within a number of formerly soviet states.

Within this region, very few threats at this level emanate from the traditional sources. Traditional sources would include state action based on conscious competition and the behavior of states that generates competition (state vs state). The two strongest threats to Caucasian stability are the Chechen conflict and Nagorno- Karabakh. The strongest incidence of state to state threat pertains to the Armenian Azeri conflict. The perception of the Chechen conflict is debatable; for one side, the conflict is classified as interstate. In Georgia, Abkhazia serves as a good example of the unconventional nature of the securitization pattern among regional actors. Buzan identifies a triangle of factors that lead to high levels of securitization which refer to the secessionist minority, state,

and Russia.

An example is Abkhazia, where a breakaway minority threatened the territorial integrity of Georgia which at the time was (92-94) was defiant against Russian strengthening of CIS structures. Russia first supported the rebels and then eventually assisted Georgia. The price was Georgian re-entry into the CIS and acceptance of military cooperation with Russia. When Russia enters the solution it is often accused of freezing the problem rather than solving it. (Buzan, 408)

Many of the states perceive Russia as a threat but do not dare to challenge the status quo. Other states such as Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Moldova established GUUAM which is an organization whose aim was to counter the CIS and Russian influence in the Caspian.

Overlay and Caspian Region

The most significant peculiarity about the Caspian Basin region would have to be the area's unlocked potential as seen by major power players in the region: the United States, Turkey and Russia. (China has strategic aims that concern the Central Asia Republics). Three of the five permanent members of the Security Council have national security concerns about the development of the region and for good reason. "The last three times oil production dropped off a cliff- the Arab oil embargo of 1974, the Iranian revolution in 1979, and the Persian Gulf War- the resulting price strikes pushed the world into a recession. And these disruptions were temporary." (Roberts, 13) It is ultimately in the interest of all parties concerned to formulate coherent and cohesive strategy to simultaneously attack poverty issues while stimulating investment in the energy extraction industry. The interests of both Russia and the United States are closely connected in terms of the exploitation of Caspian energy sources. Consequently, there is a strong prospect for the development of mature anarchy within the region.

The impact and influence of great powers within the region should not be underestimated. "Changes in leadership in all three Caucasian states has been connected to shifts in orientation towards the surrounding powers." (Buzan, 421) Russia, the United States and the EU have all become important players within the South Caucasus. For Russia, there is an increasing recognition that there are constraints on their power in

terms of what they can do with the post-soviet and now sovereign states. The United States has a large Armenian population and for a while they showed little support for Azerbaijan (the only Muslim country that initially denounced the CIS agreement and joined GUUAM) but with the war on terror, the US-Azerbaijani relationship may be changing. The Freedom Support Act was passed by congress in 1992 and it prohibits and US aid from going to Azerbaijan making it the only post soviet state that does not receive financial assistance from the US. Since 2002, Congress approved a 64 million dollar aid package to go to Georgia. The aid was accompanied by special ops units who were responsible for training Georgian authorities. The objective of the aid package was to facilitate in the administration of the Pankisi Gorge area; a place where Russia suspects that Chechen rebels reside. The orientation of great powers with Azerbaijan is particularly interesting: the US and Turkey support Georgia and Azerbaijan. Russia and Iran lend their assistance to Armenia (and the secessionist republics within Georgia). The EU on the other and, is not to date, as deeply entrenched in the sub-complex as Russia and the US are. However, the prospects of EU expansion eastwards increases the importance of stability so that there will be increasing interest in supporting opportunities for development. It can be expected that the role of the EU will expand in the near future because there are a growing number of opportunities for stability pacts. The proximity of the Balkans to Europe made their stabilization of paramount importance to the EU. While it can be argued that the incentives for their involvement in the South Caucasus are considerably less, the emergent energy crisis will make it in their interest to apply the lessons from the Balkans so that the provisions for a stability pact within the sub-complex can be agreed upon. The US foreign policy in relation to the South Caucasus remains to be the most dynamic. The attainment of a wide range of strategic objectives has been hindered by the previously sour relations between the US, Iran, Russia and Azerbaijan. With so many vested interests, the impetus for cooperation among Russia and the US with regard to the Caspian is strong. The unique characteristics of the Caspian basin present the possibility that the power players have the chance to apply the lessons learned from the Balkans to this region.

Georgia as a Weak State

The dynamics within the sub-complex have been radically transformed since September 11th and Georgia serves as a microcosm of the Russian and United States distinctive approaches to the war on terror. The line between peacekeeping and conquest is becoming increasingly blurred especially with regard to Russia's slow withdrawal of troops from Georgia. Both the US and Russia have justified significant amounts of military activity in Georgia by citing the war on terror.

Post Soviet Security Environment in the South Caucasus

The states of the Caspian region at the onset of independence from the Soviet Union were extremely weak when the Commonwealth of Independent States in 1991-1993. A plethora of issues ranging from territory, populations and status (for formerly autonomous regions and republics) were securitized by the newly independent states. However, despite the relative weakness among the newly independent state institutions, the RSC concentrated the efforts of states towards fighting intra- and inter state wars rather than focusing on domestic development. The majority of post-Soviet states faced security threats at all levels and because of this, it was difficult for states within the region to exercise control over territory, civil society, state ideology and identity, and the legitimacy of the state institutions; Georgia is no exception to this rule. The weakness of the post Soviet states provided Russia with ample justification to maintain its military presence in the territories of almost all of the newly sovereign states. The CIS security system attempted to create a common military space that would be under unified command. States were resistant to the prospects of relinquishing their sovereignty to Russia. One of the major problems with the adoption and respect towards treaties by Caucasian states is that most often the organizations and treaties that were developed to enhance regional cooperation were often dominated by the interests of one member such as Iran, Russia or Turkey and this contributed to their malfunction. The leaders of six states – Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan signed the Collective Security Treaty in 1992. Georgia signed onto the agreement in 1993 because of the growing fear that Russia was supporting Abkhazian separatists. The Collective

Security Pact followed in 1995 and the provisions thereof pertained to technical military co-operation throughout the region. The pact stipulated that Russian forces would be situated at the borders of the CIS external borders. However, again, Georgia was the exceptional state and they refused to allow Russian troops on their borders stating they had the right according to the Georgian Constitution, and the UN Frontier Convention to defend their own borders. Georgia paid a heavy price for their rejection of the security arrangement and further aggravated Russia when they took part in the development of GUUAM in 1997.

With the intensification of the war in Chechnya, Russia asked that its troops be allowed to pass through Georgian territory to protect the Chechen area next to the Georgian-Russian border. Georgia rejected the proposal and instead they went to the OSCE and the UN to administer international observers at the Georgian Chechen border. Unfortunately, skepticism has increased among Caspian states with regard to regional cooperative organizations whose mandates are aimed at increasing the security among its member states. This development can be attributed to the many shortcomings of the CIS. Since its conception, the CIS has failed to develop and implement effective arms controls which could have helped the CIS states avoid the threats that are generated by the illegal arms trade.

Trouble in Transition

Of all of the former Soviet Republics in the Caspian Region, Georgia has undergone one of the most difficult transition periods. The country can be characterized as a weak state because of its high levels of violence, ethnic conflict and economic stagnation. Furthermore, its provocative policy postures towards Russia have also generated dissent within Russian orientated secessionist regions which has resulted in violence. The Georgian national dissident Zviad Gamsakhuria was elected president of the country in October 1990 and he aimed to pursue policies that would permanently sever ties with Russia and Georgia has been pro-western since its independence. The Soviet Union responded to the post independence developments by exploiting the potential of ethnic rivalries within the country to encourage domestic destabilization so that there would be a justification for Russian military bases within the country. The initial Russian policy towards Georgia sought to establish a sort of structural dependency

on Russia so that it would not leave the Russian orbit. For Georgia, the Soviet legacy has undoubtedly affected the democratization process in post-Soviet times. Despite the fact that Georgia recently had a bloodless coup in which the country overthrew Eduard Shevarnadze, violent conflict continues to threaten to split the country apart in regions such as Abkhazia, Adjara and South Ossetia.

Some economic reasons may underlie the reluctance of South Ossetia to move further on the issue of a political settlement. South Ossetia has become an important marketplace and point of transit goods from Georgia towards Russia. The goods transiting to Russia via South Ossetia are submitted to a 3% tax while customs duties elsewhere in Georgia are much higher (around 25%). It is often claimed that this trade, or part of it, is under control of the criminal structures connected to the rest of Georgia and Russia. (Parliamentary Assembly,6)

Georgian authorities can not dismantle the criminal networks in their country without assistance. Aid packages such as the Freedom Support Act are designed to eliminate such networks through democratic development initiatives but even this approach will take time.

The coup followed a parliamentary election which was clearly fraudulent and the initial uprising was met by Shevarnadze's declaration of a state of emergency. Surprisingly, after three weeks of protest, the armed guards and members of the government began to desert him. He submitted his resignation shortly thereafter. During his eleven years as president, Shevarnadze fought hard to project control over the plethora of secessionist movements that brought violence to the country. Russia kept a close eye on Georgian military activities and the ability of Georgia to prevent Chechen rebels from seeking refuge in the Pansiki Gorge. Any shortcomings of the Georgian military operations served as further justification for Russian penetration into the state. Georgia is also a state that has a diverse ethnic composition and the strongmen of the secessionist regions exploited their heritage to further widen the gap between the government and the breakaway regions.

The most extreme hyper-nationalists on each side always have the incentive to escalate the conflict in order to gain power for themselves at the expense of relative moderates. In these circumstances, is easy to denounce as likely to reduce community

security or as actually traitorous. In 1992 Georgian Parliament chairman Eduard Shevardnadze's pursuit of peace talks with Ossetian rebels and agreement to joint Russia-Ossetian- and Georgian peacekeeping earned him denunciation as a tool of Russia., and forced him to take a much harder line approach towards against Abkhazian secessionism in 1992 and 1993.(Kaufman, 401)

The Georgian government since its independence attempted to align itself with the west and this fostered resentment in Moscow. Furthermore, the threats to the integrity of the state were numerous and the governments' reaction to the various independence movements were always undermined by Russian involvement in the breakaway regions. Needless to say, with so many domestic and external securitized issues, the development of institutions designed to promote stability and development has been unsurprisingly slow.

Why Georgia Qualifies as a Weak State

Barry Buzan identified four characteristics of weak states which were discussed in a previous section. Georgia is a state that would have to be considered a weak state because is the embodiment of these four characteristics. First, Soviet rule sought to suppress the nationalist sentiments that were raging between the ethnic groups within Georgia. It comes as no surprise then that in the post independence era, Georgian development has been hampered by not one, but a plethora of ethnic conflicts. Secondly, a regional security complex exists in the Caucasus and it the degree of intensity is very high between Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia which makes stable neighborly relations very hard to develop. The high levels of domestic instability within each state continually threaten to spill over and involve other actors in what could become a conflict that consumes the entire region. Thirdly, Buzan sights a low level of constraint with regard to the use of force another qualifying factor for a weak state. The recent bloodless coup in Georgia was an exception to the rule when it comes to Georgian politics. As early as 1990, the levels of political violence within Georgia were shockingly higher than in most other post-Soviet states. "The rapid political change that engulfed Georgia beginning in 1990 threatened a loss of power for these organizations (clans and criminal mafia) that were interconnected with political leaders and administrators at various levels."(Dawisha,165) These groups tried to maintain power through intimidation tactics

and ultimately violence. By 1992, human rights abuses and crime was on the rise in Georgia and none of the contending factions had enough discipline for disarmament and demobilization and the country was therefore in disarray. Furthermore, as the domestic security environment continued to erode away, there was an assassination attempt on the life of the President Eduard Shevarnadze in August of 1995 while he was en route to sign the new Georgian constitution. The assassination attempt did not mark the conclusion of political violence in Georgia. Finally, weak states such as Georgia have little control over their capacity to integrate themselves into the world economy. Georgia is a state whose progress and stability is continually undermined by endemic poverty, unemployment and poor economic growth. The country's transition towards democracy has taken place under deteriorating economic conditions. Georgia has experienced huge decreases in productivity, shortages of fuel and electricity, hyperinflation, and one of the lowest per capita incomes in the former Soviet Republics. In Georgia, ethnic conflict and economic crises go hand in hand. Russia has severed its communication and transportation links with Georgia when violence erupted in the regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Furthermore, the governments' commitment to the transition towards market institutions is low in terms of priority. Within the domestic realm of Georgia, there are a great number of threats to the economic security of the country. Therefore, the level of intensity at which Georgia can involve itself at the system level is very limited by the number of securitizing agents that are at work on the domestic level.

Georgia is bordered on the east by Russia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, in the south by Turkey and its western border directly accesses the Black Sea. Azerbaijan is rich in oil and Georgia can offer its territory to be used as a quick transit line to bring Caspian oil to Western markets. However, the geographic location of Georgia has its disadvantages. Georgia borders the breakaway region of the Russian republic known as Chechnya. Georgia's unfortunate proximity to Chechnya has made the states lesser inhabited regions of particular interest for terrorists, Chechen guerillas in particular. Russia claims that Georgia's Pankisi Gorge harbors numerous Chechen terrorists. In addition, Pankisi is the homeland of ethnic Chechens. Chechens and other refugees continue to trickle over the mountain and into Georgian territory. As early as 2001, Georgian security forces struggled to respond to the threats and had the same problems targeting terrorists that

stronger states such as the US have encountered. The main hideout for rebels is in the Pankisi Gorge which lies in eastern Georgia and Pres. Putin threatened Georgia with military invasion by invoking the same “self-defense” principles invoked by George W. Bush in the war against terror. The Pres. of Georgia at that time Edward Shevardnaze responded by sending troops into the gorge. It was shortly after the military exercise that he announced that the area had been secured in a measure to pacify the Russian administration. The Georgian military response was very carefully scrutinized because of the Russia’s contempt for Chechen guerillas and the United States commitment to fighting terrorism around the world. Another major problem for Georgian leadership is that the borders remain very permeable and smuggling activity and organized crime have increased considerably in the past decade.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation was keen to preserve their sphere of influence. The Russian government was taken aback by the fact that Edward Shevardnaze, a man who served Mikhail Gorbachev as Foreign Minister was so pro-western. Initially, his close connection with the Soviet Union reassured many Russian leaders that Georgia would look eastwards towards the Russian Federation rather than westwards. Shevardnaze was ambiguous in his policies; steps were taken toward to show that Georgia was embracing a more democratic culture but rampant corruption, and economic stagnation caused the administration to loose all credibility with the populace. In 2001, Shevardnaze responded by sacking his whole government in response to the resignation of Mikheil Saakashvili who was elected to parliament on an anti-corruption ticket. The people of Georgia became increasingly weary with the ambiguity of Shevardnaze’s policies and his unacceptable results in the fight against corruption and their dissatisfaction led a bloodless coup in 2003 that replaced Shevardnaze with Mikheil Saakashvili. Military responses to terrorist threats could be characterized at best as disorganized and inefficient. Oftentimes, during conflict, independent media was suppressed and the state of Georgia found that Russia did not condemn such actions. In essence Russia began to feel that these measures were reassuring evidence that Georgia was in fact moving closer to Russia.

In weak states, the distribution of power between the state agencies and the government rests disproportionately in the hands of the government. The high

concentrations of power within the state leadership are demonstrative of the governments own insecurity in terms of their legitimacy and popular support. The appointment and removal of state officials in strategic positions is calculated so as to not allow state agencies to become too powerful or too politically influential. Correspondingly, dissident voices within state agencies are granted very early retirements or they are simply demoted out of positions where they can instill oppositional sentiments. Institutional stability in weak states is further undermined by the fact that there is often a group of elites and positions of influence and prestige are often limited to individuals belonging to such a group. These elites can become known for appointing government positions based on familial ties, and ethnic backgrounds. This continual circulation of elites habitually excludes individuals who could represent the interests of the lower and middle classes at the state level which would serve to stabilize and legitimize the state and the government in a number of ways. “The overall effect of such political recruitment has been to limit severely the potential pool of appointees. Only those with proper credentials- similar class affinity, regional backgrounds and the like- have been eligible for selection; these sorts of standards have taken precedence over technical competence.”(Migdal, 219) As mentioned earlier, in weak states, there is often a disjuncture between the state leadership and its constituency and the institutional stability could be reinforced by doing away with patronage and nepotistic practices. Unfortunately, lower and middle class elements are excluded and as a result, the channels through which the populace can express dissent and express their concerns are considerably underdeveloped. “Party leaders were also involved in commercial dealings, and a number of its members had received patronage posts as customs officials- an activity notorious for its opportunities to extort bribes. Thus, as it is with so much of the political violence in Georgia, it is nearly impossible to separate political violence from the struggle for economic power.”(Dawisha,168) In Georgia, patronistic practices continue to reinforce the weakness of the institutions.

Future Challenges

There are a number of encumbrances that Georgian leadership must overcome to strengthen the status of their weak state. As mentioned earlier, secessionist movements demonstrate the lack of social integration and low levels of political organization which can in turn generate a lack of public support for the state leaders. Abkhazia and South

Ossetia are two parts of the country are managed by breakaway regimes that are supported by Moscow. Chechen rebels have also made moves away from areas such as Paniski and into the breakaway region of Abkhazia. Peace talks between Georgia and Abkhazia have been hampered by such developments. In these regions, strongmen have been able to tightly control of local resources which compounds the problems of state mobilization of the populace. Many Georgians continue to suspect that Russia is promoting destabilization in regions such as Abkhazia and South Ossetia. There is substantial evidence that this is in fact an accurate interpretation. Historically the Georgian military has faced complications in response to these threats and as a result, the US had increased military aid to the country and Russia has in turn refused to withdraw its troops. Furthermore, in the UN, Russia continues to be the state that is thwarting international attempts at mediation.

The United States foreign policy under the Bush administration has asserted that terrorism is the greatest threat to the national security of the United States. The idea that weak states are often the breeding grounds for terrorist activity has been the principle behind the United States foreign policy under the Bush administration. The Freedom Support Act (1992) is demonstrative of the United States commitment to facilitating weak states in their efforts to consolidate their young democracies by supplying aid and formal training. This could explain why the major challenge to US supremacy will not come so much from foreign powers as it will from weak states and the current and previous administrations have taken proactive measures to counter this threat. The current administrations foreign policy has proactively sought to bring stability to states within the Caspian region in terms of military and economic assistance. It is important to identify the military, political, social and domestic environmental challenges that threaten progress and security within the region and how they have in essence, invited external intervention. Great powers are realizing that it is much easier to tackle terrorism at the root of the cause and that is why there is increasingly more aid (military and economic) that is flowing into the country. If there is spillover of domestic violence coming from Georgia, the flow of Azeri oil to the west could be interrupted and the implications for international security would no doubt be severe.

There is good argument that supports the idea that Georgia is the strongest state within the Caspian region. However, because the assignment of the value as either strong or weak is based on comparative performance of the all units within the international system, Georgia still qualifies as a weak state in comparison to other units that are involved at the system level. It is true that Georgia is an atypical state within the Caspian and it is significant and unique for a number of reasons. Although Georgia does not produce oil, it is strategically positioned between the Caspian oil fields and the Black Sea. In the years to come companies will begin to exploit the huge resource potential of the region and Georgia can be expected to play a huge role in energy transport by allowing pipelines to run from the petroleum and natural gas producing sections of the Caspian to western ports via the Black Sea. Of all of the former Soviet states, it appears that the citizens of this Georgia have the strongest democratic aspirations of all of the states within the region. However, while the bloodless overthrow of President Edward Shevardnaze a former foreign minister to the Soviet Union and president of the country for 11 years marked a great step forward for the democratic processes within the country, there are still many destabilizing forces at work that continue to subordinate Georgia to the status of a weak state.

The effects that the stabilization of Georgia would have on the South Caucasus and the greater Caspian region are greatly underestimated. Yet, states such as US are increasingly realizing that the resolution of longstanding territorial disputes may increase the security of supply of petroleum that is being pumped through the country and so there are huge financial incentives to develop new approaches towards establishing functional and realistic peace agreements and security arrangements. "A stable and democratic Georgia is the linchpin of US foreign policy in the Caucasus, and the Caucasus in turn, is a critical part of the strategic future of Eurasia and the Middle East."(King,4) The prospects for the development of Georgia are strong because if the country can be stabilized, there are billions of dollars to be made by serving as a transport region. This foreign investment in the pipeline is however, contingent on the strengthening of the countries very weak institutions.

Caspian Insecurity and Georgian Instability

It has been demonstrated that Georgia is part of the South Caucasus Regional security complex, not because of its geographic location, but because it is a transit route for Azeri oil to the western ports. The economic leverage that the country gained as a result of its strategic position has been overshadowed by the fact that the pipeline has generated a number of threats that have complicated the stabilization efforts. The threats are aggravated by the insecurities of the Russian and US administrations in regard to the war on terror. The increasing level of cooperation between these two states on this issue has demonstrated that a relationship that has been historically characterized by high levels of enmity is shifting towards one based on cooperation and collaboration towards the attainment of a common goal. States are increasingly realizing that the benefits of cooperation, especially in regard to bilateral development assistance and multilateral security agreements can greatly outweigh competitive policies. The war on terror has greatly increased the prospects for mature anarchy between the US and Russia with regard to the South Caucasus.

Two of the five major pipeline routes run through Georgian territory: the BTC pipeline which runs from Ceyhan, Turkey to Tbilisi and then connects with the Baku-Supsa pipeline which runs west from the Caspian Sea to the Black Sea. Caspian oil was discovered at a perfect time for Americans and the imperative to diversify suppliers has led the US to greatly appreciate the fact that Caspian oil poses an alternative to the Persian Gulf . For the US, the pipelines that run through Georgia significantly reduce the insecurity of supply. The majority of the world's supply of oil comes from the Middle East and the supply is contingent on the stability of a region that historically, has been anything but stable. Furthermore, the only other alternative oil transit routes for Caspian Oil aside from Georgia would be to transport the oil through Iran or through Russia. 'The beauty of the BTC scheme was that it bypasses Russia and Iran altogether. Unfortunately, it also skirted several conflict zones- including Chechnya, Abkhazia, Adzharia, and Nagorno Karabakh. '(Klare,133) In addition, amongst all of the former Soviet States that comprise the Caspian, Georgia is the most pro-western state but has secessionist regions that align themselves with Russia and receive Russian military backing. The shortcomings of both GUUAM and the CIS to provide the region with some level of

security is mostly due to the fact that the fragmentation and alignment pattern within the country is weak as opposed to being clearly defined.

Mature Anarchy

The future of the South Caucasus regional security complex is uncertain. The gap is widening between the pro-western and pro-Russo- Iranian orientation in the region. The condition of overlay as created by the Russian and US presence in Georgia has substantially suppressed the natural security dynamics within and amongst the states. However, the case of Georgia's velvet revolution provides an interesting example of the transformation and maturation of Georgian domestic politics and the US and Russian relationship since the Cold war. Relations between the two countries appear to be improving. "In spite of their jostling for influence in Georgia, America and Russia forged a pragmatic alliance to help bring about a bloodless resolution to the crisis." (Economist,2) Instead of pressuring states to align themselves one way or another, cooperation rather than competition between the United States and Russia has the potential to ameliorate the existent regional security complex of the region as defined by the pipeline routes. The prospect for the development of mature anarchy within the region is quite high.

The concept of mature anarchy is premised on the idea that competitive, antagonistic practices are more dangerous now than ever before due to the fact that the number of nuclear powers in the world today is steadily increasing. Barry Buzan argues that states continue to adopt self-referenced security policies, and that there is a growing tendency among the more 'mature' states to adopt policies that are not as shortsighted as they have been in the past. Buzan continues to say that certain states are becoming more empathetic with reference to their neighbor states when drafting new policies. "States, he suggests, are increasingly internalizing 'the understanding that national securities are interdependent and that excessively self-referenced security policies, whatever their jingoistic attractions, are self-defeating.'"(Baylis,260) Buzan cites the example of the Nordic countries as having "moved through a maturing process, from fierce military rivalry to a security community"(Baylis,261) The incentives for war in the Caspian are growing instead of shrinking but this trend can be reversed through the collaborative efforts of Russia and the USA. There is not substantial evidence to support the argument

that is against the development of such as security community in the Caspian between Russia and the United States. Developments such as the European Union support the idea that security considerations at the international level are taking precedence over the national security agenda which traditionally defined states postures towards the international system. Europe experience over the past 60 years embodies the concept of mature anarchy. The Treaty of Rome established a cooperative community among some states which were traditionally and recently hostile to one another. Enemies became allies and today Europe is moving towards a constitution that will officially recognize them as a distinctive collection of states that are defined by common policies. Disagreements within this community still occur but the incentives to recourse to violence for dispute resolution have been greatly diminished. There is no evidence that shows that increasing sophistication in relations among states will be confined to Europe. It is not inconceivable to imagine that mature states such as Russia and the United States (meaning they are not post-modern states) are also capable of civilizing their relations such as France and Germany did to achieve greater stability.

Experience has demonstrated that through collaborative and concentrated efforts stability can be born out of conflict. The idea for a stability pact for the South Caucasus region has no immediate prospects. However, the idea is gaining momentum particularly because of Europe's experience in South Eastern Europe. In addition to Russian and American interests in the Caspian, the European Union is also entertaining the thought of undertaking security projects within the region. In 1999 the EU created a Stability Pact for the countries of South Eastern Europe which was implemented by the OSCE. The objective of the South Eastern Europe Stability Pact was to stabilize a crisis affected region by strengthening and enhancing regional cooperation among the countries of that region. In South Eastern Europe, the OSCE applied comprehensive approaches to security and established field missions that will play an integral part in the stabilization process of the Balkans in the years to come. One major incentive for European involvement in the Caspian is that as the EU expands eastwards, the prospect of EU membership for the Caucasus countries cannot be seriously considered until there is an element of stability. Both the stability of the Balkans and the Caspian is contingent on the stability of the South Caucasus Region. Unlike the Balkans, the South Caucasus region is

not in the immediate geographic vicinity of Europe and therefore, it can be expected that the EU will take a more conservative approach towards the stabilization of the region. With the EU still focused predominately on the Balkans, it will be up to US and Russia as the mature states (because of the post-modern status of CIS states) within the region to initiate the process of stabilization. The South Caucasus presents the unique opportunity for the international community to get involved in the stabilization of a region based on the previous experience in the Balkans.

There are a number of new incentives for cooperation in the South Caucasus sub-complex. To date, the treaty systems and organizations that are in place in the larger Caspian region have fallen short of their initial objectives. Many people continue to live in highly insecure and destitute environments. Many of the existent multilateral treaties in the Caspian are exclusive by nature and therefore there is no overarching security arrangement that exists among the states within the region to date. For example the ECO is a treaty that implies close economic cooperation between countries in the region whose state religion is Islam. The economic advantages and protections that come with a treaty such as ECO are not therefore enjoyed by states such as Georgia and Armenia that do not have a majority Muslim population. A second major development is the emergence and increasing importance of non-state actors in the regional security complex. Political entities such as Nagorno-Karabakh, Chechnya, South Ossetia, and Abkhazia cannot be considered nation states and so they fall outside of the provisions of treaties and organizations such as the CIS or Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization. Ironically, it is the aforementioned political entities whose lack of engagement has undermined stability in the region. It goes without saying that if economic development and integration of Caspian states into the global economy is to be realized, the foreign policy priorities of a state such as the United States and Russia must develop new methods for cooperation.

US and Russia: Prospects for Cooperation

The stability of the Caspian and any future prospects for a security arrangement among the regional states is contingent on the development of a forum specifically tailored to address the security considerations of regional states in an environment that will be designed to anticipate and diffuse inter state tensions to avoid conflict escalation.

Russian cooperation in conjunction with the United States in the war against terror supports the prospect that the two states can make collaborative arrangements to stabilize their relations. The forum could take inspiration from the Balkan Conference. The failure of previous arrangements has provided a series of lessons that can be applied to develop new and more comprehensive approaches towards a regional stability pact.

Since the downfall of communism, the prevalence of corruption among state agencies, falsified elections, secessionist movements, non-merit appointments among officials, poverty, and the underdevelopment of state institutions, within the Caspian states suggests that the legacy of Soviet authoritarianism has not been erased. Nepotism and patronage continue to be destabilizing forces among all weak and failing states. The way in which many former Soviet officials came to power in a number of CIS states is a good example of such processes at work in the Caucasus. Georgia has fallen prey to some of these societal ills but of all of the states within the region, it is Georgia that seems to be making the greatest strides towards democracy. It is a weak state but it is the strongest state in terms of the degree of socio-political cohesion when compared to Azerbaijan and Armenia. A comprehensive resolution to Georgia's many secessionist movements would tremendously increase the stability of the Caucasus and of the greater Caspian Basin. The formulation of such resolutions are however contingent on the cooperation on a number of levels. On the system level, Russia and the United States must develop confidence building measures with regard to their respective military involvement within the region. The platform for such negotiations in regard to military bases and armaments transfer will be the war on terror because both states have strong interests in combating these non-state actors.

Already there are developments in terms of peace agreements pertaining to one of the most pervasive conflicts of the region: the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. "The biggest military conflict, the Nagorno-Karabakh, might finally be on a constructive development including plans for Armenia and Azerbaijan to swap territories to allow for access to contested enclaves, constitutional creativity for the status of the enclave, and possibly a larger sub-regional stability pact."(Buzan,414) The OSCE has put forth numerous solutions with regard to the Karabakh conflict. The "step by step" proposal and the "common state" proposal were drafted by the Minsk group which was established

by the OSCE and is comprised of US, Russia, and France. The step by step proposal is an incremented approach that aims to provide a solution to the conflict in several stages. The stages were to include; the return of occupied land to Azerbaijan, repatriation of Armenian refugees and the eventual determination of the status of Karabakh. This proposal was accepted by 53 out of 54 countries (Armenia being the country that declined to accept). The second proposal drafted by the group in 1999 suggested that Karabakh and Azerbaijan should form a common state. This proposal which was drafted predominately by the Russian Foreign Ministry was considerably weaker than the step by step proposal because it could not guarantee territorial integrity for Azerbaijan. In principle, this proposal did win support from the UN, the OSCE and the US government but Azerbaijan declined to accept the “common state” arrangement. The South Caucasus is characterized by high levels of penetration and therefore, the purpose of security will be better served if negotiations work from the top down.

Once there is collaboration among the two great powers in the region and increased transparency and information exchange, the domestic level stabilization of Georgia will soon follow. The political implications will be huge if the two great powers that penetrate the political scene in Georgia can dispel the existent insecurities in regard to their respective strategic ambitions. Regional security must first start with the powers that dominant the region. The incentives for US –Russian cooperation have substantially increased since September 11th. Progressive politics must assert the prospect that mutual gain is no longer doomed in a setting of anarchy.

CONCLUSION

The mutual gain that can be obtained by Russia and the United States through cooperative and collaborative policies towards the Caucasus (specifically towards Georgia) will greatly outweigh the incentives for competition between the two states. The Caucasus Region presents strong prospects for the establishment of mature anarchy between two states whose historic relationship was one characterized by enmity. A forum for discussion about regional security issues will bring stability to South Caucasus thereby minimizing the terrorist threat which has served as the platform for US- Russian involvement.

The main issue for both Russia and the US will be to collaborate on the establishment of a forum that is politically neutral and that falls somewhere in between GUUAM and the CIS. This forum will allow Russia, Turkey and the US to be observers. However, the role of the great regional powers in this forum will be marginal because the objective of the organization will be to serve as a platform for discussion of the securitizing issues between the Caucasus states themselves. This has been the predominant shortcoming of the aforementioned regional security arrangements and the roles of these powers as observers rather than main actors in the security discussions will allow the actual local security dynamics to be addressed rather than suppressed by the forces of overlay.

Confidence building measures between Russia and the US are dispelling anxiety about the states respective policies towards Georgia and the Caucasus Region. The proliferation of such measures can be attributed to the increased levels of transparency between the two states because of the war on terror. This increased transparency between the US and Russia has already proven fruitful and it will serve as the foundation for an environment which will eventually come to be characterized by mature anarchy. The marginalized role of the great regional powers will be acceptable to the powers because of the decrease in the number of securitized issues as a result of mature anarchy. The regional stabilization of the Caucasus and the greater Caspian through mature anarchy will increase the security of supply in terms of energy and greatly contribute to the stabilization at the international system level.

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