

AZERBAJDŽAN IN NOVI SISTEM EVROPSKE VARNOSTI

AZERBAIJAN AND A NEW SYSTEM OF EUROPEAN SECURITY

Professional article

Povzetek Članek obravnava črnomoško varnostno območje in varnostno vizijo Azerbajdžana v okviru Evropske unije.

Črnomoško varnostno območje s številnih vidikov vpliva na različna področja, zato obstaja tudi mnogo okoliščin, ki lahko vplivajo na varnost.

Avtor meni, da ima Azerbajdžan dobre možnosti, da prispeva k večji varnosti. V tem članku primerja Slovenijo in Azerbajdžan z vidika varnostnih vprašanj, in sicer v smislu primerov dobre prakse ter načina, kako se lahko majhna država uveljavi in skupaj z drugimi prispeva svoj delež k varnosti Evropske unije.

Ključne besede *Azerbajdžan, črnomoško varnostno območje, Evropska unija, varnost, Slovenija.*

Abstract Article focuses on Black sea security region and Azerbaijan's security vision in the frame of European Union.

Black sea security region presents an area with broad spectrum of influences on many different fields thus the circumstances having impact on security are also many.

According by the author Azerbaijan has good issues to achieve some benefit in security aspects. The author made the comparison between Slovenia and Azerbaijan since both are an example of good practices and way of small country can find and contribute with others in case of European Union.

Key words *Azerbaijan, Black Sea Security region, European Union, security, Slovenia.*

Introduction Azerbaijan's participation in this process is due to several factors which are of crucial geopolitical, geo-economic, geo-cultural, geo-environmental and military importance. The issue can be considered in two different aspects. The first aspect is the role of Azerbaijan and its contribution as an independent and self-sufficient country

to the creation of the new architecture of European security. The second aspect is Azerbaijan's role as a member of regional geopolitical, geo-economic, geo-cultural, politico-military and other structures. One cannot say that at the present stage of world development, there are absolutely independent countries – they are all interconnected with each other “to such an extent that humanity is perceived as a complex, open and non-linear system”. The components of these systems are interconnected, and the existence of one depends on the existence of others. These “others” can be geographically located in the neighborhood or at a distance of thousands of kilometers. Figuratively speaking, our world has become very “sensitive” in all aspects of life, both at the level of society and humanity. For these reasons, it would be more constructive and effective to analyze the role of Azerbaijan in the creation of new European security architecture in the context of regional integration. By “region” we mean the Black Sea-Caspian basin. Both Western and Russian politicians and analysts see the Black Sea and Caspian basins as a single whole – all models of security focus on a single system of the Black Sea-Caspian basin. Such an approach is due to several factors, above all, energy factors and general characteristics of the globalization process. We are not going to focus on description of these factors – sufficient information could be found in many researches¹ (Adiyev, Ryabtsev).

Let's make two preliminary comments of methodological nature. Firstly, by security system we understand a regulatory mechanism, within the framework of which all conditions leading to emergence of differences, disputes and conflicts between the states would be brought to minimum. Thus, security system – is a dynamic condition of interactions among the states in given geographical area.

It is clear that system of monitoring must be in place for providing security. Essentially this system is a formation of a network of “measurement points” of the situation in all countries of the region with single organizational and conceptual “not”. According to international practice, direct way of achieving this is application of trust-building measures and initiation of multifaceted cooperation between the states. Secondly, in contrast to the approach taken by some experts who see the Black Sea-Caspian region as a buffer zone between Russia and the West, for Azerbaijan the operational definition of the term “Black Sea-Caspian region” is as follows: a region that unites the East and the West. In this regard, it would be appropriate to consider, first of all, Azerbaijan's role in creating the new architecture of European security through a prism of trans-national energy projects. Almost all Russian and Western experts, including experts from NATO, consider the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum projects as the main factors influencing the formation of a new security system in the Black Sea-Caspian basin that unites the east and west of the region. Moreover, almost all leading Western politicians and statesmen are talking about the special role of Azerbaijan in the Nabucco project precisely in the context of ensuring the energy security of Europe. This point is also considered in the context of regional cooperation which covers the entire Black

¹ See more *Black Sea Forum supports the dialogue and cooperation. Monday, Weekly edition of South-Caucasian Institute of regional security. 2006, № 21, (June). P.3-4.*

Sea-Caspian basin. Thus, on 7 August 2008, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev said while making a joint statement on the results of his bilateral meeting with Romanian President Traian Basescu in Baku: “Our energy policy is aimed at strengthening peace, stability and security in the region. Azerbaijan will continue its efforts towards ensuring the energy security of Europe.” The Azerbaijani president also stressed the need for joint steps aimed at strengthening cooperation between the states of the Caspian and Black Sea basins. During a meeting with Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov on 10 November 2008 (ahead of the Baku Economic Forum), the EU Commissioner for Energy Andris Piebalgs said that “Azerbaijan plays an important role in ensuring Europe’s energy security.”² He called his visit to Ankara, Baku and Ashgabat a “Nabucco journey”. The EU commissioner clearly stated that “my intent is to confirm to the senior leadership of these countries the political commitment of the European Union to the Nabucco project”³. He also spoke about the new EU document “Energy Security and Solidarity Action Plan”. This once again proves that the energy factor plays a significant role in ensuring Europe’s security. It is precisely this moment that takes centre stage in Azerbaijan’s role in establishing a new European security system. But the role of our country does not end here. The situation in the region is very complicated and differs by the presence of some contradictions of a geopolitical nature. NATO experts (who?) are talking about this specifically. Assessing the situation, they come to the conclusion that it is impossible to clearly determine the vector of the development of the situation in the Black Sea-Caspian basin today. According to the experts (who?), although there are significant integration factors that contribute to the unification of the regional countries, we should not forget about the unique characteristics of region. Due to the complexity of the situation, it is a tool in the geopolitical game. Therefore, it requires personal attention to its problems. In other words, the Black Sea-Caspian basin is a site of the conflict of interests of various security systems.

1 AZERBAIJAN AND ITS FOREIGN POLICY

Azerbaijan considers this to be a significant point in its foreign policy. The strategy of Azerbaijan’s participation in the creation of a new security system includes the principle of the balance of geopolitical forces. Today, NATO and the EU have no well-established strategy for the Black Sea-Caspian basin. Moreover, they emphasize that access to the Black Sea is a strategic priority for Russia. On the other hand, the West considers the expansion of relations between regional countries and Euro-Atlantic organizations as promising. Azerbaijan, meanwhile, is pursuing a policy of strengthening and expanding mutually beneficial cooperation between producing countries, transit countries and consumers of energy resources and of creating the necessary enabling environment for the implementation of regional projects. To this end, Baku reinforces its policy of diversifying oil and gas supply routes from the Caspian basin to world and European markets via the Black Sea basin. In this

² See more at <http://kavkaz-uzel>, 11.11.2008.

³ See more at <http://energyland.info>, 09.11.2008.

context, one can mention Azerbaijan's real steps to build the Odessa-Brody pipeline in the Euro-Asian oil transportation corridor for oil supplies to Europe, to establish a new institutional structure for the Sarmatia international pipeline company in order to implement the Odessa-Brody-Plock-Gdansk oil pipeline project and its efforts to implement joint projects on gas transit to Europe via Georgia and Turkey, including the Turkey-Greece-Italy interconnector, Nabucco, etc. At the same time, Azerbaijan is actively involved in programmes such as Partnership for Peace, Stability Pact and Black Sea Initiative, focusing in particular on specific programmes and initiatives. Azerbaijan actively supports initiatives to establish a Caspian-Black Sea-Baltic energy transit area for joint efforts to ensure reliable and safe transportation of energy resources. Admittedly, this is a serious contribution to the creation of a new European security system. Azerbaijan's commitment to this policy is most clearly seen against the background of the many years of struggle between the various security systems of the Black Sea-Caspian basin. It is known that on the initiative of Romania, the debate resumed on security and cooperation in the Black Sea basin in the spring of 2006. This issue was considered in the context of the programme "European Neighborhood Policy." As part of this approach, an international conference on interregional cooperation in the Black Sea was held on 30 March 2006 in the Romanian city of Constanta. On 5 June 2006, the summit "The Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Partnership" was held in Bucharest. The summit was attended by Black Sea heads of state, foreign ministers of EU member states, representatives of the United States, Israel, several international and regional organizations, businesses and experts⁴. The organizers of the event made no secret that the security problem of the Black Sea-Caspian basin is considered "in the context of processes of Euro-Atlantic integration". However, this action was not continued. Perhaps, apart from Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), no other international Black Sea organization functioned effectively. Azerbaijan actively participates in the work of this organization which was initiated by Turkey. One could also note the work of the Danube Commission and the International Black Sea Club, but unlike BSEC, they have not been remembered for their performance. Caucasus as part of Europe In terms of creating a system of regional security in the Caucasus, more has been offered. Several options for establishing a security system have been initiated here. In early June 1996, Russia proposed a Big Caucasus model. But then, things were limited to a purely declaratory document "For interethnic accord, peace, economic and cultural cooperation in the Caucasus". Further events continued according to a different scenario. From 1999, several projects appeared at once: "Troika" (Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan), "Ten" (Russia, the three Transcaucasian states, two trans-Caspian states – Iran and Turkey, the EU and US), Caucasus Cooperation Forum (US project), the OSCE project (1999, Istanbul) and the Stability Pact for the Caucasus (2000, Turkey). Ankara resumed the latter after the August 2008 events between Georgia and Russia. The authors of all these projects gave Azerbaijan a central role in the creation of a Caucasus security system. Baku itself has always taken a balanced position in regard to these projects and in parallel, has carried out specific policies

⁴ See more at *Black Sea Forum supports the dialogue and cooperation // Monday, Weekly edition of South-Caucasian Institute of regional security. 2006, № 21, (June). P.3-4.*

for regional integration with a strategy of integration into the Euro-Atlantic area. Finally, Iran made two proposals to establish a security system, but none of them was crowned with success. Attempts were made by Russia and the United States. They are all still valid. But Azerbaijan continues to react to these initiatives with restraint (Ryabtsev, 2003; Zaslavskiy, 2005; Matveyev).

2 AZERBAIJAN AND SLOVENIA AS AN EXAMPLE FOR EUROPEAN UNION AND BLACK SEA REGION

Thus, despite rivalry between different security models in the Black Sea-Caspian basin, Azerbaijan has consistently maintained its policy of participation in the creation of a new European security system. Of course, Baku does not neglect proposals by its closest neighbors - for example, the same project by Russian President Dmitriy Medvedev to establish a new model of the European security system, of which the West is wary, and Turkey's Caucasus Stability Pact. But Baku considers them in the context of more meaningful participation in the new architecture of the European security system. In the new concept of its security, the West prefers multi-polar world models, which implies closer cooperation between all major geopolitical forces of the planet, including joint action by major military blocs - NATO and the CSTO. In this approach, the Black Sea-Caspian basin is seen as a geopolitical area that unites the West and the East. The most acute problem in this way is, perhaps, the unresolved conflicts. The "frozen conflicts" seriously hinder the process of establishing a security system in Europe. As a country that has suffered from such a problem, Azerbaijan is extremely interested in their prompt resolution. In this context, we can say that Azerbaijan's role will become more meaningful and productive after the settlement of the Nagorny Karabakh problem.

Successful creation of the Black Sea/Caspian Region Security System is impossible without considering geopolitical and military factors of neighboring regions. From this aspect the Balkan Peninsula is of primary importance by two reasons. First, this region was a field of fierce political and military struggle between the West and Russia until recently. Secondly, today the Balkan Peninsula states have different levels of economic, political and military development. But at the same time they are members of NATO and EC: Greece, Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria are the members of the European Union and Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia are the members of NATO. The Balkan Peninsula is washed by the Mediterranean Sea, Adriatic Sea, Ionian Sea, Aegean Sea and Black Sea in the southwest, south and south-east. Thus, the Black Sea/Caspian Basin security is ultimately interconnected with the whole European security. And some countries of the Balkan Peninsula are in fact interlinks in this process.

Certain parallels can be drawn and comparative analysis of prospects of creation of the Black Sea/Caspian basin security system can be made by the example of Slovenia. We could also conduct comparative analysis of the role of Slovenia and Azerbaijan in creation of security system, bearing in mind that these two small

countries have common history of gaining independent statehood and commonality of geopolitical interests.

Owing to its membership in NATO for example Slovenia carries out one of the most important objectives of foreign policy it has set after declaration of independence. These objectives were determined at an intersection of three factors: adherence to NATO values, adherence to strategic interests in the field of security of Slovenia and action within national interests of Slovenia. Development of the policy of collective defense, military transformation and strategic partnership relations focuses on adherence to these three factors. This also determines common spirit of foreign policy of Slovenia in the field of security and partnership relations with other states. By example of this country it is possible to find out the dynamics of development of cooperation of the European countries with the countries of the Black Sea-Caspian basin in the field of safety. Dynamics of development of cooperation of Slovenia and Azerbaijan on this side draws attention of experts. Azerbaijan stresses the close cooperation with Slovenia both on a bilateral basis, and within the international and regional organizations, including the European Union, OSCE and NATO. Slovenia was one of the first European countries recognized the independence of Azerbaijan. Histories of independence of Slovenia and Azerbaijan also are similar. Both countries over a long period of time were the parts of other countries and achieved the state independence almost simultaneously.

The efforts of Azerbaijan and Slovenia in a direction of maintenance of energy assurance of Europe influence the dynamics of development of inter-regional integration. During the first visit to Azerbaijan, the president of Slovenia Danilo Turk has some times paid attention to this question. In the light of development of cooperation of the European Union with Azerbaijan Slovenia looks at the prospects of development of cooperation with Azerbaijan. Slovenia and Azerbaijan make every endeavor for strengthening of good neighborhood communications, safety, cooperation and mutual respect between the countries of the Black Sea-Caspian basin and Balkan States. In this aspect stable and successful Azerbaijan playing a key role in the region, has exclusive value for Europe and all world. By means of creative and open dialogue, Azerbaijan and Slovenia with the same persistence which they showed till now will continue to bring the contribution to creation of new system of the European security.

Ivo H. Daalder, US Ambassador to NATO, giving a speech titled "NATO's Partnership" in Vilnius on January 15, 2010 said: "History has taught the United States that security risks in the Western Balkans, the Caucasus – even Central Asia – cannot be ignored by America or NATO, and that the security of all of Europe is integral to the national security of both the United States and NATO." Further, the Ambassador noted the following: "NATO partnerships have never been a threat to Russia, which should understand that it can benefit from democracy, stability, and prosperity in its neighborhood." From this aspect the USA – Europe (including the Western Balkans) – Black Sea Basin – Caucasus – Central Asia is integral parts of

a uniform system of global security. All this indicates that at the present historical stage the security issue has global character and here dialogue diplomacy must play a key role in order that all countries of the world could take advantages of democracy, stability and prosperity in their neighborhood.

The initiative of the European Union “East partnership” offers new challenges for our cooperation. The efforts of Azerbaijan in a direction of maintenance of energy assurance of Europe influence the dynamics of development of inter-regional integration. The European Union tend to more active cooperation with the neighbors on Caucasus. To that end we should make active encouragement of this cooperation which will provide the steady peace, stability, safety and well-being on our continent. Azerbaijan makes every endeavor for strengthening of good neighborhood communications, safety, cooperation and mutual respect between the countries of the Black Sea-Caspian basin. In this aspect stable and successful Azerbaijan playing a key role in the region, has exclusive value for Europe and all world. By means of creative and open dialogue, Azerbaijan with the same persistence which they showed till now will continue to bring the contribution to creation of new system of the European security.

Conclusion Thus, the question of formation of architecture of the European safety is very difficult, and assumes to consider set of factors. In this context, actual mechanisms of a combination of systems of safety of the Black Sea-Caspian basin and the countries of the Central and Southeast Europe are represented (Balkan Peninsula). Geographical countries of the Central and Southeast Europe are connecting link between EU and the Black Sea-Caspian region. Collective defense, military transformation and development of strategic partnership – are highlights of this integration. Harmonization and realization of these purposes in many respects depends on dialogue diplomacy being effective. It is an essential moment. Mutual understanding of military blocs directly depends on this factor. Also, skilled diplomats, analysts, politicians (for example, Z.Bzejnsky) and experts during last times often speak about necessity of dialogue between the NATO and CSTO. Dialogue diplomacy in this process is unique civilized and democratic way of dialogue. This problem has difficult structure of itself and in its solution all parties should show a high sense of responsibility, mutual respect, justice and professionalism. Doubtless the Management of public diplomacy created in the structure of NATO, will play a key role in the formation of the general mechanism of dialogue diplomacy in the process of creation of new system of the European safety. We are firmly convinced that Azerbaijan’s role in creation of a European security system will largely depend on prospects of dialog diplomacy.

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