

Editor's Note

The current issue of the *Caucasus International* (CI) entitled '25 Years of Independence in the South Caucasus' is dedicated to the past quarter-century-long period of independence of the South Caucasus states. It tries to shed light on the challenges faced, achievements made and milestones passed by these three states since the disintegration of the Soviet Union and restoration of their independence in 1991. In this context, the issue examines the wide range of issues including foreign policy and security dynamics in the region, local alignments and alliances, conflicts and international law, cooperation and competition, the role of the regional and global powers in the region, democracy and state building and etc.

Authors from diverse regions of the world with diverse backgrounds have contributed to the current issue of the *Caucasus International*. The issue starts with two colloquys in which CI discussed the latest developments in US policy towards the South Caucasus and the Russia-Azerbaijan relations respectively with Glen Howard, President of the Jamestown Foundation in the US and Stanislav Chernyavskiy, Director of the Center for Post-Soviet Studies at the MGIMO University in Russia.

The issue continues with six articles. In his article, Dr. Javid Valiyev, Head of the Foreign Policy Analysis Department of the Center for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan (SAM), talks about the foreign policy of Azerbaijan in 25 years of independence, focusing on the priorities, principles, and achievements of this policy. Giorgi Kanashvili, Executive Director of the 'Caucasian House' in Georgia and Revaz Koiava, a Researcher in the same institution jointly authored an article on the struggle to bring democracy to Georgia ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Azad Garibov, Editor-In-Chief of the *Caucasus International*, writes about the security dynamics in the South Caucasus after independence, explaining why and how the major threats faced by the regional countries are interconnected and their security is interdependent. Dr. Araz Aslanli, a lecturer at the Azerbaijan State University of Economics, analyzes the global struggle in and around the South Cau-

causus, participants of which, according to him, are Russia, the US, the EU, China, Turkey, and Iran. Matthias Dornfeldt, an Assistant Professor at the University of Potsdam and Igor Korobov, a Research Fellow at the Free University of Berlin, contributed an article on the Azerbaijan-Germany relations in the past 25 years, which can be called a very good account of this mutually beneficial bilateral cooperation. In the final article, Dr. Najiba Mustafayeva, a Research fellow at SAM elaborated on the role of the UN Security Council with regard to the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, drawing the attention to the policy of double standards and unexecuted UNSC resolutions.

The issue also features three commentaries. Ambassador Giorgi Badridze, who currently serves as a Senior Fellow at the Rondeli Foundation in Georgia, examines the Georgia and Azerbaijan relations, and the way their cooperation transformed from partnership to interdependence. Maxime Gauin, a Ph.D. student at the Middle East Technical University and Scholar-in-residence at AVİM, Turkey, comments on the ideological blockades in Armenia's contemporary politics. The last commentary, authored by SAM's Researcher Fuad Shahbazov, evaluates the role of the EU in the South Caucasus after 25 years of independence, from the perspective of Azerbaijan's place in the geopolitical strategy of the EU.

The current issue also includes a comprehensive review of Michael R. Auslin's new book 'The End of the Asian Century: War, Stagnation, and the Risks to the World's Most Dynamic Region' published by the Yale University Press in 2017. Last but not least, CI presents readers with reviews of recently published books on the South Caucasus and Eurasian regions.

Finally, on behalf of the CI team, we hope this issue provides food for thought and for discussion!

Sincerely,
Azad Garibov
Editor-In-Chief, CI