## DAs

### energy da

needs much better i/l + impact cards + maybe UQ CP?

#### Close cooperation with Azerbaijan prevents Russian takeover of European energy and deters Russian military expansionism into bordering territories – no alternatives

**Ramani 16** Samuel Ramani [Samuel Ramani is an MPhil Student in Russian and East European Studies at St. Antony’s College, University of Oxford, specializing in post-1991 Russian foreign policy], 1-20-2016, "Three reasons the U.S. won’t break with Azerbaijan over its violations of human rights and democratic freedoms," Washington Post, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/01/20/3-reasons-the-u-s-wont-break-with-azerbaijan-over-its-violations-of-human-rights-and-democratic-freedoms/> // ash

But Smith’s legislation is unlikely to pass. Despite the country’s human rights record, the United States has cooperated closely with Azerbaijan, both economically and on security. The European Stability Initiative argues that the West’s soft stance towards Azerbaijan is the result of President Ilham Aliyev’s “caviar diplomacy.” The ESI reported that Aliyev’s offerings of free travel and lavish gifts entice Western elites into ignoring his government’s repression.

Such patronage might have an impact. But the close U.S.-Azerbaijan partnership can be better explained by three major strategic factors: Azerbaijan’s significance as an energy transit point linking Central Asia to Europe; Aliyev’s resistance to Russian sovereignty violations in Georgia and Ukraine; and Azerbaijan’s solidarity with the United States against both terrorism and Shiite radicalization.

Azerbaijan is important to the energy trade between central Asia and Europe

Azerbaijan has extensive offshore oil reserves on the Caspian Sea and is an important link in the energy trade between central Asia and Europe. Baku, the nation’s capital, is where the region’s second largest oil pipeline starts, transporting Azerbaijan’s oil through Georgia to Turkey.

U.S. companies have invested substantially in developing the oil and natural gas industry in the Caspian Sea. Both the Bush and Obama administrations have treated the stable and expanded flow of energy from this region as vital to America’s geopolitical interests. That’s because a stable Caspian Sea energy trade dilutes Europe’s dependence on Russian gas and restricts Iranian influence, thereby strengthening U.S. allies relative to its long-standing adversaries.

In 2008, the Republican Senator Richard Lugar, then head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee described Azerbaijan as America’s sole friend on the Caspian basin, a friend valuable as an oil supplier to U.S. allies. Lugar said this during an official trip to Baku to strengthen the burgeoning U.S.-Azerbaijan energy partnership. Lugar also expressed the need for the U.S. to appoint a special representative tasked with preserving long-term American interests in the Caspian Sea.

Azerbaijan would become an even more important player in the global energy trade if Turkmenistan manages to build its proposed Trans-Caspian Gas pipeline. This pipeline would link Turkmenistan, which holds the world’s fourth largest natural gas reserves, to the European Union, placing Baku at the center of the energy transit network.

Azerbaijan has also encouraged the Obama administration to invest in a $45 billion pipeline that bypasses Russia by connecting Azerbaijani gas shipments to Italy.

In response to increased Western interest in Azerbaijan, Aliyev has since 2004 rhetorically supported Azerbaijan’s increasing integration with Europe. Azerbaijan has been part of negotiations to forge an association agreement with the European Union, a treaty that would expand political, trade, cultural and security cooperation with Azerbaijan, a non-E.U. member state.

The prospect of Azerbaijan supplying more and more of Europe’s oil is more enticing than those gifts and trips. Azerbaijan’s energy supplies could also help erode Russia’s power over western Europe. That’s one reason the EU and U.S. have been cautious about criticizing the country’s poor human rights record.

Azerbaijan opposes Russian military ventures into its neighbors’ territory

For much of the post-Soviet period, Azerbaijan has carefully balanced its foreign policy between Russia and the West. Despite occasional periods of tension — as when Azerbaijan cut off oil exports to Russia over a Gazprom pricing dispute — Azerbaijan and Russia have increased trade under Putin. The Aliyev regime has emphasized protecting ethnic Russians from discrimination in Azerbaijan and expressed solidarity with Russia’s military activities in Chechnya. In 2011, Russian president Dmitry Medvedev declared that the people of Russia and Azerbaijan are tied together with the “closest friendship and trust links.”

But that’s all on the surface. Historically, Azerbaijan has been skeptical of Russia’s neo-imperial ventures. Animosity increased further after the Soviets used military force against Azerbaijani nationalists in January 1990, to prevent the Communist regime from being overthrown by mass protests and to stop violence against ethnic Armenians.

In addition, Russia has offered military support to Armenia in its conflict with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, an unrecognized land-locked republic on the borders of the two countries. That’s soured relations as well. And while Azerbaijan may be making an effort to protect ethnic Russians, Russian discrimination against its Azerbaijani population remains a significant problem.

All this became prominent during the 2008 war between Russia and Georgia. When Russia annexed the Georgian-held autonomous territory of South Ossetia, Azerbaijan’s elites were alarmed by Russia’s willingness to violate international law and by the West’s tepid response. Within Azerbaijan, public approval of the country’s diplomatic ties with Russia deteriorated sharply from 80 percent in 2007 to 52 percent after the war.

Azerbaijanis had a similar reaction to Russia’s 2014 annexation of Crimea. At first, the Aliyev regime hesitated to support the pro-democracy Maidan revolution in Ukraine, which overthrew Russian-allied president Viktor Yanukovych and led to a pro-EU Ukrainian government. But once Russia moved into Eastern Ukraine, public opinion in Azerbaijan swiftly swung against Putin, seeing the invasion as similar to Armenia’s incursions in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Azerbaijan’s refusal to join the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) in favor of pursuing closer economic ties with the West took its long-standing balancing act between Europe and Russia to a new level.

Azerbaijan refused to impose sanctions against Georgia and Ukraine after Russia annexed their territory, despite Russia’s urgings. For Western countries, that made it more appealing as a strategic partner.

Western countries seeking allies in the post-Soviet region have had few choices. Armenia is a staunch Russian ally. Georgia’s sovereignty has been undermined by Russia’s incursions at its border. And so the United States and NATO have expanded military cooperation with Azerbaijan, especially in the Special Forces and navy, to maintain a foothold in the Caucasus.

#### Russian monopoly on energy greenlights expansion

**Barrasso 18** John Barrasso, 7-27-2018, "Opinion," Washington Post, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/europes-addiction-to-russian-energy-is-dangerous/2018/07/27/80ea0088-9118-11e8-9b0d-749fb254bc3d_story.html?utm_term=.4f1d0d9aa84e> // ash

Putin has proved through his actions that he views everything as a potential tool to gain an advantage economically, politically and militarily. One of his most powerful tools is Russia’s energy resources, and he has used Europe’s reliance on these resources to strengthen his position. Some European leaders have been all too willing to take the bait.

This was the point President Trump was making at a NATO summit this month. He caused a stir for speaking undiplomatically in a room of diplomats. He was also pointing out what everyone in the room already knew: Europe’s reliance on Russian natural gas undermines its security.

Trump also understands, as he demonstrated this week in his talks with European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, that the United States can and should help solve this problem. By supplying our own natural gas reserves to Europe, the United States can loosen Putin’s economic grip on the region.

Europe has a rapidly growing need for natural gas; German consumption alone increased by 22 percent from 2014 to 2017. And Russia is already Europe’s dominant supplier, providing about 40 percent of natural gas imports of European Union countries. Germany gets more than 50 percent of its natural gas imports from Russia. Some E.U. countries get 100 percent.

In fact, Russia is taking advantage of this need by building a new pipeline to send natural gas to Germany via the Baltic Sea. This pipeline, called Nord Stream 2, would significantly increase the capacity to ship Russian natural gas into Germany and the rest of Europe, making the region even more susceptible to coercion and control.

This cannot happen. When an aggressive, opportunistic country such as Russia controls so much of the market in these countries, it has monopolistic powers. We’ve seen Putin use his natural gas to threaten and extort other countries. Russia cut off natural gas supplies to Ukraine in 2006, 2009 and 2014. It invaded Ukraine and annexed Crimea in part to cut off access to the energy resources there.

### russia expansion impx cards

#### Risks miscalc – extinction

**Walker 15** Peter Walker [Peter Walker is a political correspondent for the Guardian. He is the author of Bike Nation: How Cycling Can Save the World], 2-20-2015, "Russian expansionism may pose existential threat, says Nato general," Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/20/russia-existential-threat-british-nato-general> // ash

- this card is shit I need a new one

Russian expansionist ambitions could quickly become “an obvious existential threat to our whole being”, the most senior British military officer in Nato has said in a strongly worded speech.

General Sir Adrian Bradshaw, appointed last year as Nato’s deputy commander of forces in Europe, said the alliance needed to develop both fast-reacting conventional forces and capacities to counter Russian efforts at coercion and propaganda, as seen in Ukraine.

Talking of “an era of constant competition with Russia”, Bradshaw told an audience at the Royal United Services Institute that Nato had to maintain a cohesive system of deterrence on its eastern borders, something that would require help from the EU.

He said Nato was pushing ahead with plans for a very high readiness joint taskforce, “in order to convince Russia, or any other state adversary, that any attack on one Nato member will inevitably lead them into a conflict with the whole alliance”.

David Cameron has warned Vladimir Putin of “more consequences” if a ceasefire in Ukraine does not hold. Speaking on a visit to Govan shipyard in Glasgow on Friday, the prime minister said the responsibility for what had happened in Ukraine “lies absolutely squarely with Vladimir Putin and Russia”, and a strong response was needed.

Cameron said: “In terms of what Britain has done, we were the first country to say that Russia should be thrown out of the G8, and Russia was thrown out of the G8. We have been the strongest adherent that we need strong sanctions in Europe and we’ve pushed for those, achieved those and held on to those at every single occasion.

“What we need to do now is to deliver the strongest possible message to Putin and to Russia that what has happened is unacceptable, that the ceasefires need to hold and if they don’t there will be more consequences, more sanctions, more measures.”

In his speech, Bradshaw described Russia’s tactics as a “hybrid combination”, using fast-generated conventional military forces as well as “subversion by a number of means, both military and non-military”.

His strongest words came during a section of the speech introducing other threats faced by Nato, including that from Islamic State. He said: “While the threat from Russia, together with the risk it brings of a miscalculation resulting in a slide into strategic conflict, however unlikely we see that as being right now, represents an obvious existential threat to our whole being, we of course face threats from Isis and other instabilities to our way of life and the security of our loved ones.”

Bradshaw said the Nato summit in Wales in September 2014 had been dominated by the urgent need for change due to Russian behaviour. The “ambiguity” of Russian actions made a response all the more difficult, he explained.

“These are, firstly, the difficulty of identifying clearly the hand of a hostile state government in the subversive destabilising effects they bring to bear in the early stages of such a strategy,” he said. “Secondly, the danger that Russia might believe that the large-scale conventional forces that she’s shown she can generate at very short notice … could in future be used not just for intimidation and coercion, but potentially to seize Nato territory, after which the threat of escalation might be used to prevent re-establishment of territorial integrity.”

#### The impact is World War 3

---entangling alliances

---russian nuclear policy

Fisher 15 (Max, “How World War III became possible,” Vox, June 29, 2015, https://www.vox.com/2015/6/29/8845913/russia-war?utm\_campaign=vox&utm\_content=chorus&utm\_medium=social&utm\_source=twitter)

If you take a walk around Washington or a Western European capital today, there is no feeling of looming catastrophe. The threats are too complex, with many moving pieces and overlapping layers of risk adding up to a larger danger that is less obvious. People can be forgiven for not seeing the cloud hanging over them, for feeling that all is well — even as in Eastern Europe they are digging in for war. But this complacency is itself part of the problem, making the threat more difficult to foresee, to manage, or, potentially, to avert. There is a growing chorus of political analysts, arms control experts, and government officials who are sounding the alarm, trying to call the world's attention to its drift toward disaster. The prospect of a major war, even a nuclear war, in Europe has become thinkable, they warn, even plausible. What they describe is a threat that combines many of the hair-trigger dangers and world-ending stakes of the Cold War with the volatility and false calm that preceded World War I — a comparison I heard with disturbing frequency. They described a number of ways that an unwanted but nonetheless major war, like that of 1914, could break out in the Eastern European borderlands. The stakes, they say, could not be higher: the post–World War II peace in Europe, the lives of thousands or millions of Eastern Europeans, or even, in a worst-case scenario that is remote but real, the nuclear devastation of the planet. I. The warnings: "War is not something that's impossible anymore" Everyone in Moscow tells you that if you want to understand Russia's foreign policy and its view of its place the world, the person you need to talk to is Fyodor Lukyanov. Sober and bespectacled, with an academic's short brown beard, Lukyanov speaks with the precision of a political scientist but the occasional guardedness of someone with far greater access than your average analyst. Widely considered both an influential leader and an unofficial interpreter of Russia's foreign policy establishment, Lukyanov is chief of Russia's most important foreign policy think tank and its most important foreign policy journal, both of which reflect the state and its worldview. He is known to be close to Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. I met Lukyanov around the corner from the looming Foreign Ministry compound (his office is nearby), at a small, bohemian cafe in Moscow that serves French and Israeli food to a room packed with gray suits. He was candid and relaxed. When the discussion turned to the risks of war, he grew dire. "The atmosphere is a feeling that war is not something that’s impossible anymore," Lukyanov told me, describing a growing concern within Moscow's foreign policy elite. "A question that was absolutely impossible a couple of years ago, whether there might be a war, a real war, is back," he said. "People ask it." I asked how this had happened. He said that regular Russian people don't desire war, but rather feared it would become necessary to defend against the implacably hostile United States. "The perception is that somebody would try to undermine Russia as a country that opposes the United States, and then we will need to defend ourselves by military means," he explained. Such fears, vague but existential, are everywhere in Moscow. Even liberal opposition leaders I met with, pro-Western types who oppose Putin, expressed fears that the US posed an imminent threat to Russia's security. I had booked my trip to Moscow in December, hoping to get the Russian perspective on what were, at the time, murmurings among a handful of political and arms control analysts that conflict could come to Europe. By the time I arrived in the city, in late April, concerns of an unintended and potentially catastrophic war had grown unsettlingly common. Lukyanov, pointing to the US and Russian military buildups along Eastern Europe, also worried that an accident or provocation could be misconstrued as a deliberate attack and lead to war. In the Cold War, he pointed out, both sides had understood this risk and installed political and physical infrastructure — think of the "emergency red phone" — to manage tensions and prevent them from spiraling out of control. That infrastructure is now gone. "All those mechanisms were disrupted or eroded," he said. "That [infrastructure] has been degraded since the end of the Cold War because the common perception is that we don’t need it anymore." That the world does not see the risk of war hanging over it, in other words, makes that risk all the likelier. For most Americans, such predictions sound improbable, even silly. But the dangers are growing every week, as are the warnings. "One can hear eerie echoes of the events a century ago that produced the catastrophe known as World War I," Harvard professor and longtime Pentagon adviser Graham Allison — one of the graybeards of American foreign policy — wrote in a May cover story for the National Interest, co-authored with Russia analyst Dimitri Simes. Their article, "Russia and America: Stumbling to War," warned that an unwanted, full-scale conflict between the US and Russia was increasingly plausible. In Washington, the threat feels remote. It does not in Eastern Europe. Baltic nations, fearing war, have already begun preparing for it. So has Sweden: "We see Russian intelligence operations in Sweden — we can't interpret this in any other way — as preparation for military operations against Sweden," a Swedish security official announced in March. In May, Finland's defense ministry sent letters to 900,000 citizens — one-sixth of the population — telling them to prepare for conscription in case of a "crisis situation." Lithuania has reinstituted military conscription. Poland, in June, appointed a general who would take over as military commander in case of war. Though Western publics remain blissfully unaware, and Western leaders divided, many of the people tasked with securing Europe are treating conflict as more likely. In late April, NATO and other Western officials gathered in Estonia, a former Soviet republic and NATO member on Russia's border that Western analysts most worry could become ground zero for a major war with Russia. At the conference, Deputy Secretary General Alexander Vershbow spoke so openly about NATO's efforts to prepare for the possibility of Russia launching a limited nuclear strike in Europe that, according to the journalist Ahmed Rashid, who was in attendance, he had to be repeatedly reminded he was speaking on the record. One of the scenarios Vershbow said NATO was outlining, according to Rashid's paraphrase, was that Russia could "choose to use a tactical weapon with a small blast range on a European city or a Western tank division." A few weeks later, the Guardian reported that NATO is considering plans to "upgrade" its nuclear posture in Europe in response to Russia's own nuclear saber-rattling. One proposal: for NATO's military exercises to include more nuclear weapons use, something Russia already does frequently. II. The gamble: Putin's plan to make Russia great again Should the warnings prove right, and a major war break out in Europe between Russia and the West, then the story of that war, if anyone is still around to tell it, will begin with Russian President Vladimir Putin trying to solve a problem. That problem is this: Putin's Russia is weak. It can no longer stand toe to toe with the US. It no longer has Europe divided in a stalemate; rather, it sees the continent as dominated by an ever-encroaching anti-Russian alliance. In the Russian view, the country's weakness leaves it at imminent risk, vulnerable to a hostile West bent on subjugating or outright destroying Russia as it did to Iraq and Libya. This is made more urgent for Putin by his political problems at home. In 2012, during his reelection, popular protests and accusations of fraud weakened his sense of political legitimacy. The problem worsened with Russia's 2014 economic collapse; Putin's implicit bargain with the Russian people had been that he would deliver economic growth and they would let him erode basic rights. Without the economy, what did he have to offer them? Putin's answer has been to assert Russian power beyond its actual strength — and, in the process, to recast himself as a national hero guarding against foreign enemies. Without a world-power-class military or economy at his disposal, he is instead wielding confusion and uncertainty — which Soviet leaders rightly avoided as existential dangers — as weapons against the West. Unable to overtly control Eastern Europe, he has fomented risks and crises in there, sponsoring separatists in Ukraine and conducting dangerous military activity along NATO airspace and coastal borders, giving Russia more leverage there. Reasserting a Russian sphere of influence over Eastern Europe, he apparently believes, will finally give Russia security from the hostile West — and make Russia a great power once more. Knowing his military is outmatched against the Americans, he is blurring the distinction between war and peace, deploying tactics that exist in, and thus widen, the gray between: militia violence, propaganda, cyberattacks, under a new rubric the Russian military sometimes calls "hybrid war." Unable to cross America's red lines, Putin is doing his best to muddy them — and, to deter the Americans, muddying his own. Turning otherwise routine diplomatic and military incidents into games of high-stakes chicken favors Russia, he believes, as the West will ultimately yield to his superior will. To solve the problem of Russia's conventional military weakness, he has dramatically lowered the threshold for when he would use nuclear weapons, hoping to terrify the West such that it will bend to avoid conflict. In public speeches, over and over, he references those weapons and his willingness to use them. He has enshrined, in Russia's official nuclear doctrine, a dangerous idea no Soviet leader ever adopted: that a nuclear war could be winnable. Putin, having recast himself at home as a national hero standing up to foreign enemies, is more popular than ever. Russia has once more become a shadow hanging over Eastern Europe, feared and only rarely bowed to, but always taken seriously. Many Western Europeans, asked in a poll whether they would defend their own Eastern European allies from a Russian invasion, said no. Russia's aggression, born of both a desire to reengineer a European order that it views as hostile and a sense of existential weakness that justifies drastic measures, makes it far more willing to accept the dangers of war. As RAND's F. Stephen Larrabee wrote in one of the increasingly urgent warnings that some analysts are issuing, "The Russia that the United States faces today is more assertive and more unpredictable — and thus, in many ways, more dangerous — than the Russia that the United States confronted during the latter part of the Cold War." Joseph Nye, the dean of Harvard University's school of government and one of America's most respected international relations scholars, pointed out that Russia's weakness-masking aggression was yet another disturbing parallel to the buildup to World War I. "Russia seems doomed to continue its decline — an outcome that should be no cause for celebration in the West," Nye wrote in a recent column. "States in decline — think of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1914 — tend to become less risk-averse and thus much more dangerous." III. The drift: How the unthinkable became possible The Cold War was a dangerous game, but it was a game in which everyone knew and agreed upon the stakes and the rules. That is not the case today. The Western side believes it is playing a game where the rules are clear enough, the stakes relatively modest, and the competition easily winnable. The Russian side, however, sees a game where the rules can be rewritten on the fly, even the definition of war itself altered. For Russia, fearing a threat from the West it sees as imminent and existential, the stakes are unimaginably high, justifying virtually any action or gamble if it could deter defeat and, perhaps, lead to victory. Separately, the ever-paranoid Kremlin believes that the West is playing the same game in Ukraine. Western support for Ukraine's government and efforts to broker a ceasefire to the war there, Moscow believes, are really a plot to encircle Russia with hostile puppet states and to rob Russia of its rightful sphere of influence. Repeated Russian warnings that it would go to war to defend its perceived interests in Ukraine, potentially even nuclear war, are dismissed in most Western capitals as bluffing, mere rhetoric. Western leaders view these threats through Western eyes, in which impoverished Ukraine would never be worth risking a major war. In Russian eyes, Ukraine looks much more important: an extension of Russian heritage that is sacrosanct and, as the final remaining component of the empire, a strategic loss that would unacceptably weaken Russian strength and thus Russian security. Both side are gambling and guessing in the absence of a clear understanding of what the other side truly intends, how it will act, what will and will not trigger the invisible triplines that would send us careening into war. During the Cold War, the comparably matched Western and Soviet blocs prepared for war but also made sure that war never came. They locked Europe in a tense but stable balance of power; that balance is gone. They set clear red lines and vowed to defend them at all costs. Today, those red lines are murky and ill-defined. Neither side is sure where they lie or what really happens if they are crossed. No one can say for sure what would trigger war. That is why, analysts will tell you, today's tensions bear far more similarity to the period before World War I: an unstable power balance, belligerence over peripheral conflicts, entangling military commitments, disputes over the future of the European order, and dangerous uncertainty about what actions will and will not force the other party into conflict. Today's Russia, once more the strongest nation in Europe and yet weaker than its collective enemies, calls to mind the turn-of-the-century German Empire, which Henry Kissinger described as "too big for Europe, but too small for the world." Now, as then, a rising power, propelled by nationalism, is seeking to revise the European order. Now, as then, it believes that through superior cunning, and perhaps even by proving its might, it can force a larger role for itself. Now, as then, the drift toward war is gradual and easy to miss — which is exactly what makes it so dangerous. But there is one way in which today's dangers are less like those before World War I, and more similar to those of the Cold War: the apocalyptic logic of nuclear weapons. Mutual suspicion, fear of an existential threat, armies parked across borders from one another, and hair-trigger nuclear weapons all make any small skirmish a potential armageddon. In some ways, that logic has grown even more dangerous. Russia, hoping to compensate for its conventional military forces' relative weakness, has dramatically relaxed its rules for using nuclear weapons. Whereas Soviet leaders saw their nuclear weapons as pure deterrents, something that existed precisely so they would never be used, Putin's view appears to be radically different. Russia's official nuclear doctrine calls on the country to launch a battlefield nuclear strike in case of a conventional war that could pose an existential threat. These are more than just words: Moscow has repeatedly signaled its willingness and preparations to use nuclear weapons even in a more limited war. This is a terrifyingly low bar for nuclear weapons use, particularly given that any war would likely occur along Russia's borders and thus not far from Moscow. And it suggests Putin has adopted an idea that Cold War leaders considered unthinkable: that a "limited" nuclear war, of small warheads dropped on the battlefield, could be not only survivable but winnable. "It’s not just a difference in rhetoric. It’s a whole different world," Bruce G. Blair, a nuclear weapons scholar at Princeton, told the Wall Street Journal. He called Putin's decisions more dangerous than those of any Soviet leader since 1962. "There’s a low nuclear threshold now that didn’t exist during the Cold War." Nuclear theory is complex and disputable; maybe Putin is right. But many theorists would say he is wrong, that the logic of nuclear warfare means a "limited" nuclear strike is in fact likely to trigger a larger nuclear war — a doomsday scenario in which major American, Russian, and European cities would be targets for attacks many times more powerful than the bombs that leveled Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Even if a nuclear war did somehow remain limited and contained, recent studies suggest that environmental and atmospheric damage would cause a "decade of winter" and mass crop die-outs that could kill up to 1 billion people in a global famine. IV. How it would happen: The Baltics scenario In September of last year, President Obama traveled to Estonia, a nation of 1.3 million people that most Americans have never heard of, and pledged that the United States would if necessary go to war with Russia to defend it. Estonia, along with Latvia and Lithuania — together known as the Baltic states — are at the far edge of Eastern Europe, along Russia's border. They were formerly part of the Soviet Union. And they are where many Western analysts fear World War III is likeliest to start. These small countries are "the most likely front line of any future crisis," according to Stephen Saideman, an international relations professor at Carleton University. Allison and Simes, in their essay warning of war, called the Baltics "the Achilles’ heel of the NATO alliance." A full quarter of Estonia's population is ethnically Russian. Clustered on the border with Russia, this minority is served by the same Russian state media that helped stir up separatist violence among Russian speakers in eastern Ukraine. But unlike Ukraine, the Baltic states are all members of NATO, whose charter states that an attack on one member is an attack on them all. Whereas a Russian invasion of Ukraine prompted Western sanctions, a Russian invasion of Estonia would legally obligate the US and most of Europe to declare war on Moscow.

### terror

#### Link

**Ramani 16** Samuel Ramani [Samuel Ramani is an MPhil Student in Russian and East European Studies at St. Antony’s College, University of Oxford, specializing in post-1991 Russian foreign policy], 1-20-2016, "Three reasons the U.S. won’t break with Azerbaijan over its violations of human rights and democratic freedoms," Washington Post, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/01/20/3-reasons-the-u-s-wont-break-with-azerbaijan-over-its-violations-of-human-rights-and-democratic-freedoms/> // ash

Azerbaijan works with the West against terrorism. The West approves.

Since 9/11, Azerbaijan has cooperated with the United States on counterterrorism efforts. Many U.S. allies in Europe and the Middle East opposed the 2003 Iraq War — but Azerbaijan opened its airspace for U.S. planes working to topple Saddam Hussein’s regime. And Azerbaijan was a transit hub for more than one-third of the fuel, food and clothing used by U.S. military personnel in Afghanistan.

Azerbaijan has also helped preempt a major terrorist attack against the U.S. and Israeli embassies in Baku in 2012 by arresting 22 Azerbaijanis for alleged cooperation with Sepah, an Iranian terror group. Azerbaijan is a Shia majority state ruled by a secular regime. Aliyev helps out against terrorism in part because he wants to weaken Islamist movements that could undermine his power.

In particular, the Aliyev regime has targeted pro-Iranian Shiites, who have opposed the Azerbaijan’s increasingly cordial ties with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait- making it a natural partner for the U.S.’s efforts along the same lines.

Azerbaijan is also working against the Islamic State. After hundreds of Azerbaijani jihadists defected to Iraq and Syria to fight for ISIS, Aliyev vigorously repressed Salafist movements, which have criticized the Azerbaijan regime for its secularism and corruption.

Azerbaijan is the U.S.’s only partner against ISIS in the Caspian Sea basin, which due to its close proximity to Iran is a potential hotbed for terrorism. That too, makes the U.S. reluctant to alienate Aliyev.

#### Another link

**Dooley 18** Joanna Dooley, 8-20-2018, "How the U.S. Benefits from Foreign Aid to Azerbaijan," Borgen Project, <https://borgenproject.org/how-the-u-s-benefits-from-foreign-aid-to-azerbaijan/> // ash

Azerbaijan: Useful Ally in Combating Terrorism

Azerbaijan has a confirmed commitment to combating terrorism. The country is a member of several international organizations such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the Organization for Islamic Cooperation. The collaborative work of Azerbaijan’s State Security Forces and the Foreign Intelligence Service have made sizeable contributions to the international community’s efforts to combat terrorism.

Furthermore, as a member of the Council of Europe’s Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL), Azerbaijan has also taken steps to deter money laundering schemes that could finance terrorism.

Given this commitment, positive relations with Azerbaijan could help advance U.S. security goals in the region.

## CPs

### Integrate

#### CP text: The United States should endorse Azerbaijan’s integration into Europe’s political and economic order.

#### Encourages internal reform while maintaining US leverage – past precedent

Tamara **Kotoyan**, 7-22-**17**, [third year student of Commerce/Arts at the University of Sydney, majoring in Government and International Relations and Commercial Law.] "Rethinking U.S. Foreign Aid Toward Azerbaijan," International Policy Digest, <https://intpolicydigest.org/2017/07/22/rethinking-u-s-foreign-aid-toward-azerbaijan/> RE.ash

3. Multilateral Enforcement: The third option would involve the US endorsement of Azerbaijan’s integration into Europe’s political and economic order. Through multilateral enforcement from European institutions such as the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe, issues concerning democracy, human rights and economic reform can be addressed, while also enforcing responsibilities concerning counter-terrorism objectives.

Advantages

Policy option three allows the US to promote interests of democratic reform without engaging in direct coercive action that may undermine the bilateral relationship. Azerbaijan has been a key actor that has allowed for the reduction of Europe’s dependence on oil, and further ‘Europeanization’ of Azerbaijan could further objectives in this region. Azerbaijan demonstrated willingness to cooperate with EU democracy demands in 2008 at the Joint Program election project, which succeeded in implementing legislation on election conduct. This will limit US direct action against Azerbaijan while allowing for multilateral enforcement of democratization requirements, subsequently safeguarding the US-Azeri relationship. Moreover, while Europe is reliant on the Caspian for oil, in 2015 statistics showed that $6.37 billion out of $11.1 billion worth of imports to Azerbaijan were from Europe. This indicates that Europe has sufficient leverage over Azerbaijan to engage in a multilateral effort to work towards democratization.

### adv cp?

#### Involve parties

**Ohanyan 3/20**. Anna Ohanyan [Anna Ohanyan is Richard B. Finnegan Distinguished Professor of Political Science and International Relations at Stonehill College, editor of “Russia Abroad: Driving Regional Fracture in Post-Communist Eurasia and Beyond” (Georgetown University Press, 2018), and author of “Networked Regionalism as Conflict Management” (Stanford University Press, 2015)]. "At long last, peace might be possible between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Here's what's needed." Washington Post. March 20, 2019. https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/03/20/long-last-peace-might-be-possible-between-armenia-azerbaijan-heres-whats-needed/?utm\_term=.569eebb253ff // ash

After decades of ethnic conflict, the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan are preparing to meet to try to resolve their long-term clash over the disputed enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh. Observers have many reasons to be skeptical that yet another one-off meeting will lead to a thaw at long last.

However, something significant has changed since the last such push. A year ago, Armenian protesters brought down a prime minister, leading to free elections last December. Some evidence suggests that democratic societies are more likely to seek peace with their neighbors — and are most likely to achieve it if civil society groups are allowed to reach out and form contacts across borders before the formal negotiations.

Here’s what you need to know about what has happened, and what comes next.

1. A brief history of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict

Between Armenia and Azerbaijan lies a contested territory controlled by an unrecognized state called the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (NKR), which is supported, but not recognized, by the Armenian government — and is claimed by Azerbaijan.

In 1921, the Soviet Union joined this Armenian-majority highland enclave with Soviet-controlled Azerbaijan, separating the Armenians as part of Stalin’s divide-and-conquer strategies. In the late 1980s, as Moscow loosened its controls over the Soviet empire under perestroika, ethnic Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh began campaigning to rejoin Armenia, agitating for democracy, human rights and self-rule — one of the early cracks that brought down the Soviet Union.

When the Soviet Union collapsed, the people of Nagorno-Karabakh formally voted to secede from Azerbaijan — prompting armed conflict between Armenia and the Armenian-majority population on one hand and Azerbaijan on the other. In 1994, after 30,000 people on both sides had died and more than 1 million refugees fled the violence, the two countries signed a shaky cease-fire agreement. Observers consider the standoff to be neither war nor peace, and it simmers with low but persistent levels of violence at the border.

2. The democratic wave in Armenia

Last April, Armenia’s parliamentary opposition leader Nikol Pashinyan led a mass nonviolent civil disobedience campaign that forced the prime minister to resign. For decades, Armenia had been “a soft authoritarian state in which the ruling elite ... closely controlled political and economic opportunities,” as political scientists Mariam Matevosyan and Graeme Robertson explained here at TMC a year ago. By December, the protesters had forced free elections that put Pashinyan and his pro-democracy party in power. As I’ll explain below, that gave observers some hope that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict could be resolved.

In recent months, the OSCE Minsk Group, co-chaired by the United States, Russia and France, has mediated diplomatic efforts between the two sides. Armenia and Azerbaijan had been accusing each other of frequently violating the cease-fire with shootings, mortar attacks and use of other heavy weaponry that kills and wounds soldiers and civilians alike. Such attacks have ceased since Armenia’s democratic transition last year.

The global track record of this type of single-shot peace agreement sought by the OSCE Minsk Group has been mixed, as has the efficacy of external peace negotiators. Russia, one of the mediating parties, has continued to sell weapons to both Armenia and Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan has continued to threaten war and economic isolation to try to force negotiating concessions. And Armenia has continued to insist that it will not withdraw from the seven disputed districts it controls around Nagorno-Karabakh.

Past diplomatic rounds were followed by only temporary thaws. Many analysts and peace advocates remain skeptical about this most recent diplomatic opening, too.

3. Here’s what may now be different

Armenia’s democratic breakthrough may have shifted leaders’ incentives on both sides. Now two countries in the region, Armenia and Georgia, its neighbor to the north, embrace democracy.

Recent studies suggest that when a region has more democracies, the probability of conflict and aggression tends to go down. Democratic societies favor peaceful interactions with their neighbors. They tend to advance cooperation and compromise in their regions. And democratic societies are more likely to support one another’s shared goals of human rights and economic interests in bigger markets. That weakens support for military “solutions” to conflicts.

But that’s not enough by itself. Research also suggests that peace agreements are more likely to be implemented if all parties involved in a conflict are included in the peace process. What’s needed now are ways to engage the groups most affected by the conflict: rural communities near the conflict lines, women, refugees and Nagorno-Karabakh itself, all of which have been left out of negotiations over the years. Studies have shown that single-shot, top-down peace deals often fail — unless the parties simultaneously build broad-based connections among societies.

Of course, calling for contacts between people while militaries continue patrolling the borders, and without regionwide security guarantees, is unrealistic. All affected parties in the region — including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Nagorno-Karabakh itself, nongovernmental organizations, civil-society groups and others need to be involved in crafting broader regional security agreements and institutions. Regional security structures that incorporate all such interests are necessary to support and enable a sustainable peace agreement. Otherwise, connections across conflict lines will remain shallow and limited, and formal peace agreements between governments short-lived.

Such regional security can take the form of regionwide rules, treaties, pacts or issue-focused organizations. They can enable community leaders to work together on shared problems — such as drug trafficking, rural poverty, distorted trade routes, water cooperation or preserving cultural heritage sites — across conflict lines.

Building such connections in the region can help shift diplomacy away from short-term concessions and focus it instead on longer-term, regionwide issues of bread-and-butter governance. Such multilateral forums can dilute the rivalry between Armenia and Azerbaijan, helping various social groups build trust and connections across conflict lines — before international mediators and governing elites ask their people for concessions. Regionwide security guarantees can clarify and affirm nonviolence as a foundational principle for the region, and create the political stability needed to enable deeper diplomacy around the conflict itself.

## Case

### topshelf

#### Lobbyists circumvent

**Sassounian 18** Harut Sassounian, June 5, 2018, "Azerbaijan’s Secret ‘Laundromat’ Scheme Pays $1.5 Million to US Lobbying Firm," Asbarez, <http://asbarez.com/172538/azerbaijans-secret-laundromat-scheme-pays-1-5-million-to-us-lobbying-firm/> // ash

Last week, OCCRP revealed that two shell companies established by Azerbaijan “funneled over a million and a half dollars to a mysterious Baku-based organization called Renaissance Associates” which in turn hired “a US lobbying firm to orchestrate praise for Azerbaijan and had its representatives make thousands of dollars in campaign donations, including to Senators and Representatives who sat on committees that determine foreign aid budgets.”

At the center of this scheme is Elkhan Suleymanov who “runs a pro-regime organization in Baku which appears to work hand-in-hand with Renaissance, even using the same office space…. Other payments were made to an influential oil and gas consultant with close ties to President Aliyev who presents himself as an immigration success story and lives in Dayton Ohio — even as he also lobbies the US government on his homeland’s behalf.”

According to OCCRP, two offshore shell companies — Metastar Invest and Hilux Services — made 18 payments totaling $1.7 million to Renaissance Associates S.A. from September 2012 to December 2014 through two separate bank accounts at Volksbank AG in Liechtenstein and Privatbank IHAG Zurich AG in Switzerland. US Justice Department reports filed by Bob Lawrence & Associates (BL&A), a lobbying firm in Alexandria, Virginia, showed that it received $1.5 million from Renaissance — which almost equals the amount transferred by the Azeri shell companies to Renaissance, BL&A’s sole international client.

Since 2004, BL&A has handled the visit of Pres. Ilham Aliyev to the White House and three years later arranged for Pres. Obama’s former campaign manager, David Plouffe, to visit Baku and meet with Azeri officials. BL&A has also lobbied for US Defense appropriations to Azerbaijan, against Karabagh (Artsakh), and for the oil pipeline from Azerbaijan to Turkey. Between 2008 and 2016, BL&A president Bob Lawrence has testified before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Matters, recommending foreign aid to Azerbaijan. In his testimony, Lawrence called Armenia “a rogue nation… clearly protecting criminals” and that it commits human rights violations.

US Justice Department reports indicate that BL&A paid $250,000 in 2015 to hire the Crane Group to lobby on behalf of Azerbaijan. At the same time, BL&A contracted former Cong. Solomon Ortiz (D-TX) and his firm, Solomon P. Ortiz Holdings LLC, to lobby for the interests of Azerbaijan.

OCCRP also reported that “between 2012 and 2015, individuals registered as lobbyists acting directly or indirectly on behalf of Renaissance made thousands of dollars in donations to political candidates, including to Senators and Representatives who were sitting on, or chaired, appropriations subcommittees at the time.”

Surprisingly, and possibly illegally, BL&A has not registered with the US Justice Department as a lobbyist for Azerbaijan. On its website, BL&A states that it “does not work for, report to, or take directions from the Azerbaijani government or any member of the Azerbaijani government.” OCCRP stated that “in 2005 — a year after BL&A first began working with Renaissance — Azerbaijan’s independent Turan News Agency reported that it had received a letter identifying Renaissance as a lobbying firm representing the Azerbaijan government in Washington.”

Furthermore, “between at least 2006 and 2008, BL&A’s website listed the country of Azerbaijan, rather than Renaissance, as its client. In May 2012, BL&A agreed to represent the Embassy of Azerbaijan and disclosed this under FARA [Foreign Agents Registration Act] before quickly annulling the registration, claiming that no services had actually been performed and no payments received.”

BL&A acknowledges on its website that it collaborates with the Association for Civil Society Development in Azerbaijan (ACSDA), a pro-regime non-profit organization based in Baku and controlled by Elkhan Suleymanov, a member of Azerbaijan’s parliament. According to BL&A’s website, Renaissance “supports and nurtures ACSDA. The two organizations share the same Baku apartment.” OCCRP also reported that “when in April 2016, ACSDA signed a three-month contract with US lobbying firm Greenberg Traurig, the firm’s FARA filing shows that the $25,000 per month fees had been paid by Renaissance.”

OCCRP’s extensive report revealed many other lobbying activities funded by this secret slush fund. All these efforts should be reported to the US Congress asking for a thorough investigation. A lawsuit should also be filed against BL&A to block its unregistered lobbying campaigns!

Azeri-American Adil Baguirov Receives $250,000 to Lobby for Azerbaijan

Above, I referred to the payment made to “an influential oil and gas consultant with close ties to President Aliyev who presents himself as an immigration success story and lives in Dayton Ohio — even as he also lobbies the US government on his homeland’s behalf.”

Jonny Wrate, in his article, “Baku’s Man in America,” on the OCCRP.org website (Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project), provided extensive details of Adil Baguirov’s activities and the large payment he had received from Azeri sources to lobby on behalf of Azerbaijan in the United States.

Wrate reported that Baguirov, “a vocal member of the Azerbaijani diaspora, received the $253,150 transfer just months after a non-profit organization he runs, the Houston-based US Azeris Network, helped host a conference in Baku, Azerbaijan’s capital, that was attended by 10 members of Congress. The junket was widely criticized, and investigated by the House Ethics Committee, for being secretly funded by Azerbaijan’s state oil company…. The precise origins of the money Baguirov received are unknown, hidden behind secretive shell companies. But there is ample evidence that the authoritarian country’s ruling elite is behind it.”

Baguirov, who “also helped organize other US-Azeri conferences in Washington, repeatedly testified before the House [of Representatives] in favor of US military aid to Azerbaijan, served as the coordinator of the Congressional Azerbaijan Caucus, and worked prominently in a Houston-based company that claims to have organized a trip by the country’s president, Ilham Aliyev, to the White House,” wrote Wrate.

### HR

#### Russia fill-in – turns HR

**Kotoyan 17** Tamara Kotoyan, 7-22-17, [third year student of Commerce/Arts at the University of Sydney, majoring in Government and International Relations and Commercial Law.] "Rethinking U.S. Foreign Aid Toward Azerbaijan," International Policy Digest, <https://intpolicydigest.org/2017/07/22/rethinking-u-s-foreign-aid-toward-azerbaijan/> RE.ash

Disadvantages

The main disadvantage of suspending military aid to Azerbaijan is the risk of Azerbaijan falling into Russia’s orbit. This risk was evident through the domestic outcry in Azerbaijan that occurred in the Zurich protocols (that aimed to open border between Armenia and Turkey), as a string of anti-Turkish, pro-Russian sentiment emerged from the public and opposition parties. Moreover, this option may be unfavorable domestically, as Congress would prefer not to cease giving military aid to a strategic partner. Ultimately, economically coercive diplomacy will only encourage further democratic back sliding by motivating the government to undertake further repressive activities against civilians to consolidate its power.

### NKR

#### Needs further cooperation

**Ohanyan 3/20** Anna Ohanyan, 3-20-2019, "Analysis," Washington Post, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/03/20/long-last-peace-might-be-possible-between-armenia-azerbaijan-heres-whats-needed/> // ash

Of course, calling for contacts between people while militaries continue patrolling the borders, and without regionwide security guarantees, is unrealistic. All affected parties in the region — including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Nagorno-Karabakh itself, nongovernmental organizations, civil-society groups and others need to be involved in crafting broader regional security agreements and institutions. Regional security structures that incorporate all such interests are necessary to support and enable a sustainable peace agreement. Otherwise, connections across conflict lines will remain shallow and limited, and formal peace agreements between governments short-lived.