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Murad E. Ismayilov: Building Energy Transportation Networks: An Engine for Structural Change and Collective Identity Formation? The Emerging Security Community between Azerbaijan, Turkey and Georgia

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Abstract¹

Drawing on a constructivist approach, the author employs the concept of security community in an effort to find out whether energy transportation politics in the Eastern Europe–Central Asia region have begun to transform these regions' security dynamics from a Lockean culture to a Kantian systemic structure. This paper argues that pipeline politics are playing a key role in effecting the transformation of the CIS part of Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and, in the more remote prospect, Central Asia, into the Kantian world, and, as such, are contributing to the mission that NATO embarked upon in 1994 with its PfP project, and to the European Neighbourhood Policy launched by the EU in 2003.

1. Theoretical Framework

Wendt (1999, pp. 246–312) has described three kinds of macro-level systemic structures, Hobbesian, Lockean and Kantian cultures, in an attempt to explain the deepening of mutual identification between the structural units in terms of the change of the systemic structure (culture) in which they are operating. While the shift from Hobbesian to Lockean culture meant closer mutual identification among the states, reflected in the comparatively stable alliances they engaged in, what we are witnessing today in some regions, especially in the Euro–Atlantic space, according to Wendt, is the *process* of the transformation of Lockean culture into Kantian culture, which is characterised by two main constitutive forms of collective identification: 'pluralistic security community' and 'collective security' (Wendt 1999, p. 299).

Adler and Barnett (1998), building heavily upon Deutsch (1957) and informed by Wendt's study of the three cultures of anarchy, have attempted to explore the ways through which the Kantian culture could be built by conceptualising the pluralistic security communities considered by Wendt to represent one of the two forms of collective identification within the Kantian culture, along with collective security.

Adler and Barnett (1998, pp. 30, 37–48) define a pluralistic security community as a 'transnational region comprised of sovereign states whose people maintain dependable expectations of peaceful changes' and identify three groups of variables that they believe would in succession spur the emergence of security communities:

1. precipitating conditions;
2. structural variables (power and knowledge) and process variables (transactions, organisations and social learning); these are expected to lead to emergence of:
3. mutual trust and collective identity, which in turn are claimed to bring about the emergence of a security community and 'dependable expectation of peaceful change'.

Deductively building on the theoretical framework suggested by the constructivist school in IR for the study of security communities and using inductive analysis of the empirical data and the realities in the region, I will analyse whether the ongoing process of development of the transportation infrastructure in the EECA region has produced the conditions and prospects, that is the three tiers of variables outlined by Adler and Barnett, for the regional security community to take shape. If so, the process could play a key role in completing the transformation of the CIS part of Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and, in the more remote prospect, Central Asia, into the Kantian world. This transition would in turn contribute to the mission that NATO embarked upon in 1994 and that the EU started with its European Neighbourhood Policy in 2003 by engaging the states in those regions in a new set of relationships based and building on mutually beneficial use and transportation of energy resources.

1 This paper reflects the personal views of the author and does not necessarily represent the views of the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

2. Tier 1: Precipitating Conditions

Among the precipitating conditions that initially oriented the regional units towards each other in the late twentieth century and thus laid the foundation for the very possibility of collective identity formation among them are Caspian Sea oil resources, the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, material (economic) interests of regional states and external powers, as well as global rivalry for control over the energy transportation routes and the resulting boom in the energy infrastructural build-up in the region.

The end of the Cold War and dissolution of the Soviet Union are crucial in that they allowed for the massive involvement of western companies in the exploration and exploitation of the region's vast energy resources, first and foremost those of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan.

The Caspian Sea's vast oil and gas reserves come before all other factors as a permissive variable. Indeed, without this gift of nature, it would be nearly impossible to imagine all of the developments, be they of material or ideational nature, which the region has gone through since the end of the Cold War. The Caspian Sea region's proven oil reserves range between 17 and 49 billion barrels, while its proven natural gas reserves are estimated at 232 trillion cubic feet (Tcf).²

Early in the 1990s both regional states (first and foremost Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan) and 'the West' were driven by mostly *materialist (economic) considerations* while engaging in oil politics in the region. Azerbaijan saw its oil reserves as a God-sent opportunity to solve all of its major national security problems, which were on the top of its post-Soviet agenda (for Azerbaijan, these included economic recovery, resolution of the Garabakh problem, etc.). To be able to benefit from these energy reserves, newly independent Azerbaijan soon realised that it needed large amounts of investments and advanced technologies, both of which it could get from 'the West', primarily the United States (economically devastated post-Soviet Russia was not in a position to provide any of the above). As far as the United States and other Western countries were concerned, it was only the possibility to gain access to the alternative energy resources and diversify their energy supplies (thus decreasing dependence on Persian Gulf oil and Russian gas) that called the US's attention to the region³ that had been of little or no importance to the world during the Soviet times.

The global rivalry for control over energy resources is a *key variable* with respect to the conditions that would enable the emergence of a security community in the EECA region.⁴ In this context, the US and Europe are striving to guarantee their energy security by building up regional energy transportation networks that bypass Russia to insure the free flow of the region's vast oil and gas resources to Western markets. The building of these networks is essential for creating real conditions for a regional security community to emerge in EECA.

East–West energy corridor. The American and European desire to diversify their energy supply sources and energy transportation routes has been in sync with Azerbaijan's vital interest in building up transportation infrastructure to bring its vast oil and gas resources to international markets, to decrease its dependence on the Russian pipeline network system, and to fulfill its desire to serve as a transit hub for Central Asian oil and gas. What has resulted from this harmony of intentions and interests is a sophisticated network of energy transportation infrastructure that bypasses Russia and includes the Baku–Tbilisi–Supsa oil pipeline, the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline, the Baku–Tbilisi–Erzurum (BTE) gas pipeline, and the

2 The EIA report defines the Caspian Sea region as an area including the Sea's littoral states of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan, parts of Russia and Iran, as well as Uzbekistan (EIA 2007).

3 The US interest in the regional security issues became explicit in 1997 with the first official visit paid by the Azerbaijani President Haydar Aliyev to Washington (29 July–1 August 1997) and the speech delivered by the US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott (1997) at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (21 July 1997), where the Caspian region was declared to be of vital importance for the United States.

4 On post-Cold War US–Russia–China competition in Central Asia, see for example Kitspotter (2005).

Odessa–Brody pipeline; the trans-Caspian oil and gas pipelines and the Nabucco gas pipeline project are still in the planning stage.⁵

Altogether, these energy transportation routes are viewed as the *core* of the Russia-bypassing East–West energy transport corridor, inspired by the United States to connect Central Asia, via the Caucasus region, to Western Europe. The objective is to increase the political and economic independence of the regional states, as well as to help Western states lessen their energy dependence on Russia.

In what follows we shall analyse and explore the dynamics of relations established and developed between Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey to find out whether and in which way the realism-driven oil and pipeline politics in the region have generated the variables outlined by Adler and Barnett as the factors leading up to the formation of security communities.

3. Tier 2: Structural Variables

Power. Integration processes in the EECA region have been largely developing around and have been contingent on the US alliance with two main regional players, Azerbaijan and Turkey.

The US–Turkish alliance was particularly crucial at the initial stage of developing energy infrastructure in the region. The energy-induced partnership took explicit shape in December 1997, when the United States and Turkey formalised in Washington a ‘strategic energy alliance’ focused on ‘increasing global energy diversity and security, fostering regional cooperation and transporting oil and gas through Turkey to international markets’ (Hill 2004, p. 218), thereby committing themselves to push forward regional pipeline routes through Turkey in transporting Caspian oil. However, even before the alliance with the United States was established, Ankara, driven by its own national interests, moved forward ‘the Caspian–Mediterranean Oil Pipeline Project’ in 1994. The Turkish government had aggressively been pushing for the pipeline route running to Ceyhan to transport the ‘main’ oil from the Caspian.

The US–Azerbaijan alliance came to the fore in the late 1990s–early 2000s, though signs of an Azerbaijani leadership role were salient earlier in the 1990s. Thus, Azerbaijan was the first to invite foreign oil companies to the region. Baku, despite harsh objections from Russia and Iran, displayed temerity in starting up the development of the oil fields in its own, USSR-established sector of the Caspian Sea without yielding to exhortations to wait until the legal status of the Caspian Sea was agreed upon by all five littoral states, and thereby set a precedent for all of the others to act in a similar way. Most importantly, Azerbaijan was the first to exercise its sovereign right to develop an energy transportation network alternative to the one that transverses Russia.

Azerbaijan, along with the US, has been the major driving force behind Trans-Caspian oil and gas pipeline projects, as well as other projects initiated in the broader EECA region. Not surprisingly, it is Azerbaijan with whom the United States signed a Memorandum of Understanding on energy security cooperation on 22 March 2007, with special emphasis on the realisation of the Turkey–Greece–Italy gas pipeline, as well as the Nabucco and Trans-Caspian pipelines. It is with Azerbaijan that the United States cooperates in conducting a feasibility study on building oil and gas pipelines under the Caspian Sea.⁶

Most importantly, despite the absence of US and European financial and moral support, Azerbaijan took the initiative and lead in the planning of the Kars–Akhalkalaki–Tbilisi–Baku railroad project. Azerbaijan’s leadership played a crucial role in getting Georgia to join this project,⁷ which, if realised, will become the

5 For a very good and detailed analysis of ‘pipeline geopolitics’ in the Caspian region, see Guseinov (2002, pp. 236–337); on US pipeline diplomacy in the region, see Jofi (1999).

6 ‘U.S., Azerbaijan To Study Trans-Caspian Pipelines’, Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), 16 August 2007, available via: <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007/08/ED7E990D-F4BC-41B9-91E0-69C269B7F002.html>, accessed 17 August 2007.

7 Georgia had long nibbled at joining the project, demanding compensation for the potential losses this might cause for its two Black Sea ports, Batumi and Poti. Only after a Russian-imposed transportation blockade against Georgia in 2006 did

first ever materialisation of the EU-initiated TRACECA programme envisaging the creation of a transport corridor to link Europe to the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Knowledge. Analysing cognitive structure, which is to be understood as shared knowledge in the form of shared beliefs, discourse, ideology and certain norms, is crucial for understanding and explaining security dynamics in a given region, as it is through people's beliefs that their interests and behaviours are shaped.

It is in this context that the different NATO- and EU-generated partnership projects targeting the EECA region should be viewed. Arguably, the principal aim and success of NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) and the EU's European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) are that they started up the process of shaping and generating new inter-subjective knowledge among and between the 'partners' (or 'neighbours' in the EU's ENP case) based on the discourse of integration with Euro-Atlantic structures. This process was to eventually bind the regional units not so much to the knowledge-generating and community-building pole itself as indeed to each other. Put differently, these Euro-Atlantic community-building projects should primarily be considered as attempts to push the process of collective identity formation among the 'partners', with Euro-Atlantic integration as the main driving force of the process; this eventually brought about a decrease in the negative dynamics of security relations on the eastern and southern flanks of the Euro-Atlantic community through the creation of a certain level of 'we-ness' among the regional units in question.

However, while these NATO- and EU-generated partnership projects could only provide ideational conditions for a new cognitive structure to emerge in the EECA region, this paper argues that the material basis has been provided by the energy transportation projects that have engulfed the region since the late 1990s.

Though some may justly argue that 'oil' and 'pipelines' have carved out an inalienable place in the post-Soviet national identity of Azerbaijanis, closer discursive analysis reveals that it is only in the context of Euro-Atlantic integration that oil language is used in Azerbaijani domestic and foreign politics, as well as among the elites of the other regional states. It is the discourse of integration that is continuously referred to in the context of every single cooperative effort among the regional states. All other factors, with energy and pipeline politics being the most important, serve as supporting, albeit equally indispensable, variables usually referred and appealed to only in the context of the integration discourse.

Importantly, it is owing to these material forces that promotion of the ideational-variable-based discourse became possible, or at least intensified. Remarkable in this regard is an opinion of a Romanian official and academic who is convinced that long-standing efforts to construct a Black Sea region only started to yield fruit after the energy issues became politicised and securitised, which he dates to the commissioning of the BTC pipeline in 2005.⁸

4. Tier 2: Process Variables

Social Learning. Close discursive analysis of political statements made by the leaders of Azerbaijan, Turkey and Georgia throughout the process of pipeline-related negotiations and after decisions on the pipelines through Georgia and Turkey were made clearly reveals that the discourse of strategic friendship between the three countries has been carefully constructed by the pertinent political elites to back up and 'sell' the decision to lay the pipeline through Georgia and Turkey – a decision fraught with many risks at the time,

Tbilisi venture to join the project. However, the railway project is at the same time very profitable for Tbilisi inasmuch as it holds the promise of boosting economic development in Georgia's largely Armenian-populated Javaketi region, whose main town is Akhalkalaki, as well as having the Armenian population of the region integrated with the rest of Georgia through closer cooperation with Tbilisi. See, for example, Puppo, L., 'The Baku–Akhalkalaki–Kars Railway Line: Cement for a Strategic Alliance?', 1 March 2007, available at: http://www.caucaz.com/home_eng/breve_contenu.php?id=303#, accessed 21 August 2007; Ismayilov (2007).

8 Personal conversation in Istanbul, March 2007.

both political (lack of stability in Georgia, Kurdish-dominated Turkish regions through which the BTC was to pass), economic and geopolitical (Russian and Iranian resistance). Illustrative in this regard is the way Heydar Aliyev tried in 1999 to present the nexus between the Baku–Supsa pipeline and the evolution of Azerbaijani–Georgian relations: ‘[The] Baku–Supsa oil pipeline is a striking example of [the] friendship and cooperation existing between Georgia and Azerbaijan. Our peoples have always cooperated successfully on [a] mutually beneficial basis. Centuries-old friendship of Georgian and Azerbaijani people is our invaluable property. We protect, develop and expand further this friendship in new conditions’.⁹ As seen from the statement, the Baku–Supsa pipeline was presented as being ‘caused’ by the historically-rooted strategic partnership between Azerbaijan and Georgia. Whatever path the real causal chain actually took, these continuous discourse-building efforts gradually shaped public opinion in the respective countries towards perceiving these pipeline projects as a natural choice between ‘friends’, which they (the pipelines) definitely were not. Indeed, there were many other choices, better than this and with far fewer risks; besides, there were intensive deliberations on which choice Azerbaijan should opt for, with the Baku–Supsa being only one of several alternatives.

The change in the discourse is all the more apparent when one compares the above-mentioned 1999 speech with the one delivered by the Azerbaijani leader just one year earlier. Then, speaking on the occasion of the signing of the Ankara Declaration (29 October 1998), Heydar Aliyev referred to it in a purely realist fashion as ‘corresponding to the national interests of our countries, our nations’. It is worth noting that when concluding his speech, Aliyev expressed his belief ‘that construction of this [BTC] pipeline and its use in the future will improve relations of friendship, cooperation and brotherhood among our countries even more’,¹⁰ thereby implying that the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan pipeline would bring about intensified cooperation between the two nations, not vice versa, which was virtually the reverse of what he would say a year later in Supsa. A dramatic shift in the discourse, indeed!

Institutionalisation. While a number of organisations and regional initiatives have emerged in the region since the early 1990s, this paper will focus on GUAM as a potential candidate for the role of the institutional framework for the security community currently under formation in the EECA region.

GUAM was initiated on 10 October 1997 on the sidelines of the Council of Europe’s summit in Strasbourg, where the leaders of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine drafted a joint communiqué stressing the importance of ‘strengthening quadrilateral cooperation for the sake of a stable and secure Europe...’.¹¹ GUAM has gone through a vigorous process of institutional development ever since, eventually becoming established as the International Organisation for Democracy and Economic Development on 23 May 2006, when the four members adopted the organisation’s statute.

As GUAM’s newly assumed name suggests, it has embraced the European-knowledge-based democratic cognitive structure built upon liberal values and a market economy. The protocol on the creation of a free trade zone between the four GUAM countries was signed on 23 May 2006 in Kiev,¹² and now the states are actively working on the full realisation of the liberalisation of trade policies in the GUAM region. Joint development of a common energy infrastructure is at the centre of GUAM’s efforts and objectives and is, at the same time, a crucial element to provide the organisation with long-term viability and substance.

9 Speech by Heydar Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, at the ceremony held on the occasion of the commissioning of the Baku–Supsa oil pipeline (Supsa, Georgia), ‘Heydar Aliyev’s Heritage’ International On-line Library, 17 April 1999, available via: <http://aliyevheritage.org/cgi-bin/e-cms/vis/vis.pl?s=001&p=0750&n=000004&g=>, accessed 5 August 2007.

10 Speech of the President of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev at the Grand National Assembly of Turkey at the signing ceremony for Ankara Declaration (Ankara), ‘Heydar Aliyev’s Heritage’ International On-line Library, 29 October 1998, available via: <http://aliyevheritage.org/cgi-bin/e-cms/vis/vis.pl?s=001&p=2285&n=000002&g=>, accessed 6 August 2007.

11 Joint Communiqué on the Meeting of the Presidents of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine; Strasbourg, 10 October 1997, available at: <http://www.guam.org.ua/226.469.0.0.1.0.phtml>, accessed 13 September 2007.

12 The first agreement on a free trade zone between the GUAM countries was signed back in 2002, but had long been deferred. Thus, the mentioned protocol of 2006 was meant to re-vitalise the 2002 agreement.

Importantly, GUAM's agenda involves addressing security issues as well; the organisation therefore seeks to develop appropriate security and military institutions. Already back in 2003, the GUAM Virtual Center for combating terrorism, organised crime, drug trafficking and other serious kinds of crimes was established.¹³ Even more remarkably, there are currently active discussions between GUAM members, most ardently supported by Georgia and Ukraine, on the creation of GUAM peacekeeping forces, presumably to be composed of 530 soldiers.¹⁴ These forces would, among other things, take charge of peacekeeping missions in these countries' conflict spots in the event that the conflicts are resolved.

Given that it is still in the formation phase, GUAM has a historic opportunity to adjust its newly and to-be created institutions and structures to the needs of the emerging regional security community. The open-door policy GUAM pursues would gradually allow other states to join in the near future. GUAM could well play a role of a socialising tool for the new members, help them to internalise the ideals and norms embedded in the emerging regional collective identity.

Transactions. This pipeline-politics-induced growing feeling of regional cohesion has in turn gradually intensified the interactions between and among the regional units and generated new forms of regional cooperation whose scope now transcends the energy sector. This deepening of regional cooperation is first and foremost manifest in the Baku–Tbilisi–Akhalkalaki–Kars railway project, which had been deferred for over a decade for lack of funding¹⁵ but was recently revived thanks to Azerbaijan's oil-money-fueled readiness and capacity to finance the project's Georgian section.

The other non-fossil-fuel sector gaining importance in the currently emerging regional cooperation between Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey is the field of electric power. An agreement was signed on 7 February 2007.

Importantly, not only did joint development of regional energy infrastructure bring about intensified cooperation among the regional states at the trilateral framework, but it also served as a very strong catalyst for boosting bilateral relations between these states to a completely new level. If one compares the indices for the trade turnover between the countries for the period 2003–2006, the dramatic increase in the level of bilateral trade during 2005–2006 is striking (see Table 1 on p. 10). Also, not only did the quantity of transactions intensify between the three states within the last two or three years, but so did the quality of interactions, with the content and substance of the resulting bilateral activities and projects now going far beyond the energy sector.

13 For more on the GUAM Virtual Center, see The GUAM Virtual Center for combating terrorism, organised crime, drug trafficking and other serious kinds of crime, available at: <http://www.guam.org.ua/221.0.0.1.0.0.phtml>, accessed 13 September 2007.

14 'Mirotvorcheskie sily GUAM budut sostoyat' iz 530 chelovek', 20 June 2007, available at: <http://www.day.az/news/politics/83498.html>, accessed 13 September 2007.

15 The European Commission has long refused to provide funding and opposed the project on the grounds that it is unnecessary and inefficient due to the already existing Kars (Turkey)–Gyumri (Armenia)–Tbilisi railroad connection – the line that was closed down by Turkey back in 1993 following the Armenian occupation of Azerbaijani territories. On this account, the Baku–Tbilisi–Kars railway project is not included in the TRACECA programme, nor was it included by the EU in the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) Action Plans with Azerbaijan and Georgia. See EU / Azerbaijan Action Plan, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/action_plans/azerbaijan_enp_ap_final_en.pdf, accessed 21 August 2007; and EU / Georgia Action Plan, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/action_plans/georgia_enp_ap_final_en.pdf, accessed 21 August 2007. Similarly, succumbing to pressures from the Armenian lobby, on 14 June 2006 the US House of Representatives Financial Services Committee supported a bill, signed in December 2006 by George Bush into law, which prevents US companies from financing the construction of the railroad on the grounds that it isolates Armenia. However, Azerbaijan, refusing to use the existing Kars–Gyumri–Tbilisi railroad unless Armenia frees the occupied Azerbaijani land, took the initiative to finance the Georgian and Azerbaijani sections of the railroad (see for example Ismayilov 2007). On the background and possible implications of the Baku–Tbilisi–Kars railway project, see also Socor (2007c); Ziyadov (2006).

5. Tier 3: Towards Dependable Expectations of Peaceful Change

Mutual Trust. While the intertwined process variables discussed above in detail are essential as *efficient* causes of collective identity formation among the regional units, things would hardly proceed were there no mutual trust among the units allowing them to 'overcome their fear of being engulfed, physically or psychically, by those with whom they would identify' (Wendt 1999, p. 357).

This trust has evolved along different lines. While ethnic closeness between Azerbaijan and Turkey, as well as the political, economic and diplomatic support that Turkey rendered to Azerbaijan in its war with Armenia¹⁶ have facilitated Azerbaijani-Turkish rapprochement, the self-restraint that Turkish leadership has demonstrated in the post-Cold War period towards Georgia has played a momentous role in blunting the anti-Turkish discourse that Georgia had cherished for ages. Ankara's self-imposed restraint in dealing with its neighbour was most powerfully manifested in the case of the Georgian–Adjarian tension in 2004, when, despite its being a 'guarantor state' of Adjarian autonomy per the 1921 Kars Treaty, and against Adjarian leader Abashidze's appeals to Ankara to invoke the Treaty, Turkey took a neutral stance in the conflict and demonstrated full respect for Georgia's territorial integrity (see for example Gorvett 2004). Afterwards, Saakashvili repeatedly expressed his gratitude towards Ankara's neutrality, claiming that it had played a key role in resolving the problem.¹⁷ Furthermore, Turkey's finesse not only contributed to the resolution of the crisis in Ajaria, but also enabled Georgia to start seeing Ankara as a strategic partner without fear of being engulfed by this powerful, once imperial, nation. Interestingly, it was after this demonstration of self-restraint by Ankara that the dynamics of Turkish–Georgian bilateral relations became strongly intensified, thus confirming Wendt's (1999, pp. 357–363) choice of self-restraint as the crucial *permissive* variable enabling collective identity formation.

Collective Identity. Though too little time has passed since the regional states attained independence and actively engaged in pipeline politics, one can already notice signs of the emerging collective identity among them.

One way to track the emerging collective identity in the region is to sift through the official speeches delivered by the leaders of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey for statements that would attest to the fact that the sides have started to identify with each other. In doing so, one quite frequently comes across statements like, 'To be in Georgia is to be in Azerbaijan' (Heydar Aliyev, 1999),¹⁸ 'security of our neighbor and partner is our security' (Ilham Aliyev about Georgia, 2007),¹⁹ 'Success of Georgia is our success and success of Azerbaijan is success of Georgia' (Ilham Aliyev, 2005),²⁰ 'We, as a brotherly country, are ready to stand

16 If nothing else, Turkey closed its borders with Armenia in April 1993 in response to Yerevan's occupation of a number of Azerbaijani regions, thereby putting Armenia in a quasi-blockade situation.

17 See, for example, President Saakashvili opens Georgian section of BTC pipeline, Georgia, 12 October 2005, available at: <http://www.president.gov.ge/?1=E&m=0&sm=3&st=80&id=844>, accessed 12 August 2007; President Saakashvili's welcoming address to the Turkish President, Georgia, 14 March 2006, available at: <http://www.president.gov.ge/?1=E&m=0&sm=3&st=50&id=1606>, accessed 12 August 2007.

18 Speech by Heydar Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, at the ceremony held on the occasion of the commissioning of the Baku–Supsa oil pipeline (Supsa, Georgia), 'Heydar Aliyev's Heritage' *International On-line Library*, 17 April 1999, available via: <http://aliyevheritage.org/cgi-bin/e-cms/vis/vis.pl?s=001&p=0750&n=000004&g=>, accessed 5 August 2007.

19 Speech of the Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, Tenth Annual Conference 'East Meets West: New Frontiers of Energy Security', Istanbul, 26 June 2007, available at: http://www.president.az/index_en.jsp?mod=article&article=0&catalog=134, accessed 10 August 2007.

20 Speech of the Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, Solemn Ceremony dedicated to the opening of the Georgian part of the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan Main Export Pipeline, Georgia, 12 October 2005, available at: http://www.president.az/index_en.jsp?mod=article&article=0&catalog=134, accessed 11 August 2007.

by Azerbaijan in any situation' (Micheil Saakashvili, 2005).²¹ Expressions like 'My dear friend and brother' have long become commonplace among the regional leaders.²²

Apart from this all-round friendly rhetoric, the emergence of collective identity among the regional states may be discerned in their deeds as well. Within a short period of time, the countries have taken actions not explicable from a purely realist perspective, but rather demonstrative of the emergence of emotional attachment between nations that are starting to identify with each other in terms going beyond pure strategic thinking. Thus, in January 2006 and January 2007, when Russia cut off gas and electricity supplies to Tbilisi, Azerbaijan decided to supply Georgia with gas at the expense of limiting its gas supplies for its own population and against Russian retaliatory cuts in gas and electricity supplies to Azerbaijan; the case was frequently referred to thereafter by Saakashvili as a sign of the friendship existing between the countries.²³ Ilham Aliyev gave a sweeping explanation for his actions: 'We could not behave [any] other way.... We are friends and partners; we should help and support each other'.²⁴ Turkey likewise came to the rescue during the January 2006 energy crisis in Georgia by increasing the export of electricity to its neighbour to the maximum extent it could afford, and 'this was decided in several hours without any red ties';²⁵ the gesture was also subsequently lauded by Saakashvili a number of times. The other friendly move on the Turkish side was the agreement, after rather long negotiations, to give some 800 million cubic meters from its Shah Deniz gas share to Georgia (see, for example, Ismayilov 2007).

One could point out many other similar examples, all of which explicitly attest to a considerable degree of 'we-feeling' that the regional states have managed to develop within a remarkably short time span. 'We are a single region, a single economy, we are a single, interconnected complex',²⁶ is how Saakashvili depicted what we have referred to here as an emerging security community.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

Following the discussion above, the extent to which the development of pipeline infrastructure has changed the whole geopolitical landscape of the region is indeed striking. The rapidly developing relations between Azerbaijan, Turkey and Georgia are a vivid manifestation of the collective-identity-building role that the pipeline networks have played in the region. Given the Georgians' historically rooted mistrust towards the Turks, it seems highly unlikely that relations between Turkey and Georgia could have bloomed to such an extent through the 1990s–early 2000s had there been no oil at stake (even though Russia, with its neo-imperial ambitions towards its former 'vassal' Georgia, also inadvertently contributed to the Turkish–Georgian rapprochement). Likewise, though common ethnic roots played a role in bringing Ankara and Baku closer together, it was primarily oil that bound the two countries.

21 President Saakashvili opens Georgian section of BTC pipeline, Georgia, 12 October 2005, available at: <http://www.president.gov.ge/?1=E&m=0&sm=3&st=80&id=844>, accessed 12 August 2007.

22 See, for example, Speech of the Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, Solemn Ceremony dedicated to the opening of the Georgian part of the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan Main Export Pipeline, Georgia, 12 October 2005, available at: http://www.president.az/index_en.jsp?mod=article&article=0&catalog=134, accessed 11 August 2007.

23 See, for example, Speech by the President of Georgia Mikhail Saakashvili at the ceremony for signature of an agreement on the construction of the Baku–Akhalkalaki–Kars railway, Tbilisi, 8 February 2007, available at: <http://www.president.gov.ge/?1=E&m=0&sm=1&st=80&id=2130>, accessed 8 September 2007.

24 Speech of the Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, Tenth Annual Conference 'East Meets West: New Frontiers of Energy Security', Istanbul, 26 June 2007, available at: http://www.president.az/index_en.jsp?mod=article&article=0&catalog=134, accessed 10 August 2007.

25 President Saakashvili's welcoming address to the Turkish President, Georgia, 14 March 2006, available at: <http://www.president.gov.ge/?1=E&m=0&sm=3&st=50&id=1606>, accessed 12 August 2007.

26 President Saakashvili opens Georgian section of BTC pipeline, Georgia, 12 October 2005, available at: <http://www.president.gov.ge/?1=E&m=0&sm=3&st=80&id=844>, accessed 12 August 2007.

It is equally crucial to understand that what we refer to as an emerging security community between Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey will serve as the core for the emerging collective identity – with a much broader geographical span – that will soon take shape on the Eurasian continent.

Inasmuch as GUAM is ideally suited to provide an institutional framework for the emerging security community in the region, it is imperative for GUAM member states, as well as for the United States and other interested parties, to rigorously promote the idea of open-door policy for GUAM and to actively seek GUAM membership for the potential and actual members of the evolving security community, first and foremost Turkey, Kazakhstan and Israel.

That said, pipeline politics in the EECA region are indeed a key component in the process of completing the transformation of the CIS part of Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and, in the more remote prospect, Central Asia and Mediterranean region, into the Kantian world, thereby finalising the mission that NATO and EU embarked upon in the aftermath of the Cold War. In this regard, the case of the oil- and pipeline-generated security community emerging between Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey may serve as a paragon of how the development of energy transportation infrastructure in a given region can spur collective identity formation among the regional units and lead to the transformation of regional security dynamics from Lockean culture to the Kantian macro-systemic structure.

Table 1: Bilateral Trade Azerbaijan–Turkey, Azerbaijan–Georgia, Georgia–Turkey 2003–2006 (mln. USD)

Country	Activity	Year			
		2003	2004	2005	2006
Azerbaijan–Turkey*	Azerbaijani import	195.25	225.00	313.00	385.04
	Azerbaijani export	107.04	182.62	275.96	388.14
	Trade turnover	302.29	407.62	588.96	773.19
Azerbaijan–Georgia**	Azerbaijani import	10.23	14.49	45.50	49.20
	Azerbaijani export	110.06	188.78	208.44	285.23
	Trade turnover	120.29	203.28	253.93	334.44
Georgia–Turkey***	Georgian import	112.10	202.10	283.00	453.50
	Georgian export	82.50	118.60	121.80	309.30
	Trade turnover	194.60	320.70	404.80	762.80

* The information on the dynamics of bilateral trade relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey is retrieved from *Ministry of Economic Development of Azerbaijan Republic*. Foreign trade: Turkey. URL: <http://economy.gov.az/index.html> (Last accessed: August 13, 2007).

** The information on the dynamics of bilateral trade relations between Azerbaijan and Georgia is retrieved from *Ministry of Economic Development of Azerbaijan Republic*. Foreign trade: Turkey. URL: <http://economy.gov.az/index.html> (Last accessed: August 13, 2007).

*** The information on the dynamics of bilateral trade relations between Georgia and Turkey is retrieved from Asian Development Bank (2007: 221). *Key Indicators 2007: Inequality in Asia*. URL: http://www.adb.org/Documents/Books/Key_Indicators/2007/pdf/GEO.pdf (Last accessed: August 19, 2007).

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