

narrative in globalizing Islamophobia is explained (Hasimi), and the special historical circumstances of Islamophobia in Russia (Tlostanova), Turkey (Aktay), and China (Yi) are provided.

The collection will be appreciated by a wide and varied audience. Reading the complete text will leave students and scholars of minority/majority group relations feeling as if they had attended the conference that provided the book's origins. The papers are fresh and appear to have been developed in a stimulating and collaborative environment. General readers searching for useful vantage points

from which to evaluate public policies relating to Muslims' life chances in contrast to those of their non-Muslim neighbors will find guidance here. Political leaders willing to reconsider the securitization of policies related to immigration and religious practice will come away from this text with a greater awareness of the talent lost to states where suspicion and distrust of Islam make it difficult for Muslims to fully engage in the societies in which they make their home.

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Global Security Watch: The Caucasus States

By Houman A. Sadri

Santa Barbara, California: Praeger, 2010, 270 pages, ISBN 9780313379802.

Global Security Watch: The Caucasus States by Professor Houman A. Sadri of the University of Central Florida is an important addition to the Praeger series that has produced insightful studies on countries such as Iran, Russia and Turkey. Professor Sadri, an active participant in the International Studies Association's (ISA) Post Communist States in International Relations group, is a committed scholar of the region. In the past few years he has published papers and book chapters on energy politics and on the regional relations of the states of the Caucasus and Caspian Sea basin. In the present work, Professor Sadri focuses attention on the states of the South Caucasus region (Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia, the newly independent states of the former USSR), examining the domestic milieu of each actor, as

well as their regional relations and the role of major powers, which, in the context of this work are defined as the European Union, Russia and the United States. The primary argument of *The Caucasus States* is that neither the "clash of civilizations" thesis (propounded in the early 1990s by the late Samuel Huntington), nor arguments saying there is a New Cold War (or new "Great Game") fits with contemporary regional realities. On the contrary, in Professor Sadri's view, it is a confluence of factors (notably, historical, geopolitical, resource, demographic and religious) and actor interests that best explains the situation of the South Caucasus.

The Caucasus States, like other entries in the Global Security Watch series, is designed to survey important security issues of the region, principally from a 'widen-

er' perspective, that is, a perspective that goes beyond the traditional emphasis on military and political dynamics to include dimensions such as the economic and societal (this perspective is seen in the work of scholars like Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver). In the first chapter, Professor Sadri introduces the framework for the study (separatism, internal instability, and international rivalry) and his major arguments. Next, he provides an overview of the security context of the region, accurately identifying the conflicts involving Abkhazia and South Ossetia (in contemporary Georgia), and Nagorno-Karabakh (between Armenia and Azerbaijan) as the "most salient" problems for regional security.

The next set of chapters gives an overview of the security situation of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia. In these chapters, Professor Sadri discusses the pre-Soviet and Soviet-era political history of each country, important contemporary political, economic, socio-cultural, resource, military-security factors, and, foreign relations, which include not only the interrelationship of the three South Caucasus states but relations with other key regional actors like Iran and Turkey as well as with the global powers. Professor Sadri follows with a brief concluding chapter that summarizes the major security issues of the region. Next, the reader is reintroduced to aspects of the "clash of civilizations" thesis as applied to the South Caucasus. Several appendices follow, which include chronologies of the three principal states, leaders' biographies, and other important political and legal documents. The book includes several charts, maps and photo reproductions, which are well placed and not overdone.

I find *The Caucasus States* to be very well organized, and lucidly written with up-to-date information on the three countries of the region. Professor Sadri incorporates the works of important authors, and utilizes them well. For a number of reasons, the Caucasus region, along with Central Asia, is arguably one of the most challenging areas for study. Professor Sadri provides much insight to readers as he skillfully navigates the maze of actors, factors and interests that, at once, make the South Caucasus region unique, but at the same time an inseparable component of major power relations. Professor Sadri provides a thoughtful, balanced treatment of the three countries, and demonstrates care in his treatment of volatile conflicts like Abkhazia/South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as the longstanding Armenian genocide issue.

Professor Sadri's examination of various key actors is one of the strongest contributions of the book. In each of the case studies, the important role of individual and national actors historically and contemporarily is clearly illustrated (from Levon Ter-Petrossian in Armenia to Mikheil Saakashvili in Georgia). In addition, Professor Sadri pays attention to the important and increasing role of military alliances and international organizations like the CIS, GUAM, NATO, OSCE and the SCO. Iran and Turkey, which Professor Sadri notes are actors that "represent two different models for political development" for the region, are necessarily featured in *The Caucasus States*. Any serious study of the regional relations of the Caucasus states *must* include these two important players. Moreover, this means that given the interests and foreign partnerships that Iran and Turkey maintain,

it is necessary to include Russia and the United States in any serious study of the region as well.

Speaking of (national) interests, it is this factor that best explains the affairs of the Caucasus, and is the strongest argument against the relevance of the “clash of civilizations” thesis for the region. Using the context of relations between Armenia and Iran, Professor Sadri notes on page 88: “[these ties reflect] a pragmatic consideration of shared history and geopolitical realities”. This applies to the region as a whole—from the lasting implications of the period of Soviet rule, and Russia’s heavy influence in the region’s energy security environment two decades after the collapse of the USSR, to conflicts within Caucasian states over borders and differences in perspective regarding relations with Russia (e.g., Western versus Eastern Armenians, pg. 83), and the web of “opposing triangular alliances” that, at times, has set Armenia, Iran and Russia against Azerbaijan, Turkey and the United States (p. 57). Professor Sadri discusses all these issues, and he pays attention to the dynamic of potential NATO membership for former Soviet republics. In addition, he examines the impact of the ongoing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq on the South Caucasus region.

I would offer two minor critical observations, and these have no bearing on Professor Sadri’s sound framework. First, I believe the study would have been

well served by offering more discussion on the potential role of China in the region. Not only is China on a global hunt for energy resources (this is well known), but the country is connected to Russia and the region through its association with organizations such as SCO. Moreover, China, like Russia, is very wary of the growing US/Western military presence in the Caucasus and Central Asia. What do these developments mean for the future of China’s relations with the Caucasus and Central Asia? Second, I believe the book would have benefited by offering more discussion on the interests of the United States (President Obama’s Administration) in Georgia in contemporary times (circa early 2010).

In conclusion, *The Caucasus States* is an informative and effective survey of the South Caucasus security environment after the Cold War. Professor Sadri has derived a framework for studying the region that is appropriate for navigating and understanding the maze of actors, interests and issues that make up this vital area of the world. *The Caucasus States* is an ambitious work about a region that boasts very complex problems and relationships. Professor Sadri has done well in pulling together these elements in this readable volume. I enthusiastically recommend this book.

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