

NATO and the South Caucasus: Closer to war than peace?

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NATO's new frontier in the South Caucasus

The South Caucasus (consisting of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) are fast becoming a new frontier for NATO. While most attention has focused on Georgia's aspirations to become a NATO member and Russian opposition to alliance enlargement in Eurasia, NATO's role and interests in the region are much broader and growing. The region's new role as a transport and energy corridor is fueling this interest, but the alliance will need to tread carefully. There are several unresolved ethnic and political conflicts, as well as three bordering Eurasian states (Russia, Turkey and Iran) with ambitious regional agendas of their own.

NATO's activities in the region have been cautious and low-key, and although alliance membership is still proposed for Georgia, there are no specific deadlines. NATO's current interests are mainly dictated by operations in Afghanistan (to which all three South Caucasian republics contribute). This, then, was the backdrop to NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen's three-day visit to the region (on 5-7 September 2012).

This briefing examines the NATO Secretary General's visit and explores the nature and scope of the alliance's deepening dialogue and cooperation with Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Read more in the attached pdf.

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