

# **Dialectics of the Ethnic Conflicts and Oil Projects in the Caucasus**

**by Vicken Cheterian**

This paper studies the impact of ethno-territorial conflicts and oil projects in the Caucasus. If the conflicts were a series of struggles to reshape the political map by changing the boundaries between the nations of the Caucasus, oil projects and the pipeline routes will be - next to military might - a major leverage factor in reformulating and redistributing political roles and the new geopolitical balance.

Simultaneously, as oil projects become a weapon in the ongoing struggle, they could be paralyzed by prolonged and unfruitful negotiations or, in the worst case, suffer from resumption of military operations.

This study reviews the Caucasian conflicts in the light of the following questions:

- What are the roots of the Caucasian wars? What are the reasons behind the current cease-fires?
- Are the cease-fires the first step toward peace, or an interval before the resumption of hostilities?
- Will the increasing activities of Western oil companies contribute to sustaining regional stability, or will they lead to new Great Power competitions and regional polarization?
- Will the Caucasus become a region divided by the economic predomination of Western (mainly American) oil companies and the Russian military, on which its security depends?

To receive the publication, please contact: Program for Strategic and International Security Studies (PSIS), Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva  
Email: [pesi@hei.unige.ch](mailto:pesi@hei.unige.ch)