

## **In this Issue**

At the current stage of confrontation, interintegration mechanisms are a relevant topic of research, driven by the continuing academic need for a comprehensive political science study of the specifics of relations between the EU and the EaP countries, taking into account the cases of Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. Long-standing political, economic, cultural, and human ties have always underpinned our understanding of the need to ensure European security and stability as a guarantee of the well-being of the EaP countries.

This understanding is especially important in conflict situations, when the political elite of the EaP countries has consciously and firmly chosen to actively integrate into the European and global community, as repeatedly stated by the political leadership of these countries. Recently, cooperation between the EaP countries, both with European organizations and with individual European countries, has reached a qualitatively new level and is supported by concrete steps in domestic and foreign policy. This is evidenced by the regular holding of important multilateral and bilateral meetings and negotiations in recent years, including at the highest level, within the EU, OSCE, Council of Europe, and other continental forums. The documents and decisions adopted during these meetings have made it possible to begin building a fundamentally new system of collective security both in Europe and in the EaP countries.

Furthermore, cooperation between the EaP countries, the United States, and NATO and EU member states, along with a shared commitment to protecting the world from war, military invasion, and threats, significantly contributed to the improvement of not only bilateral relations but also relations between the EaP countries and the West. Moreover, the very fact of holding negotiations on such key issues as ending war and nuclear deterrence once again demonstrated to the world that the EU and the United States truly strive to become equal strategic partners, recognizing their responsibility for the fate of the world and its security. Therefore, the heads of state, politicians, diplomats, and military personnel who were members of the negotiating delegations sought to ensure maximum and guaranteed security for their countries without infringing on the interests and priorities of their allies and partners, taking into account their opinions, wishes, and proposals. During these negotiations, a new model for the negotiation process itself began to emerge, one that could serve as an example and basis for shaping relations between the EaP countries and other states, primarily European ones. This model is not burdened by narrow-mindedness, mutual mistrust, and outdated approaches, but is aimed exclusively at solving specific problems within established deadlines.

In 'Challenges of the European Union's engagement in strategic conflict resolution in the Eastern Partnership region: The cases of Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine', Liana Grigoryan analyzes the EU's tools for systematizing existing approaches to interregionalism in the EaP countries. She also devotes considerable attention to conceptualizing the phenomenon and identifying its distinct types for the purpose of strategic conflict resolution. She understands this function in terms of finding effective solutions to overcome the internal problems of EaP countries by building cooperation with other regions, concluding joint agreements on mutual assistance, humanitarian

cooperation, and addressing food and environmental issues. Furthermore, in the context of a changing geopolitical landscape and the turbulence of global politics, she highlights the function of consolidating the EU political system, which involves pooling resources and efforts to respond to the war in Ukraine and the emerging unpredictable threats in Armenia, Georgia, and Moldova. This means that, in times of uncertainty, through the use of interregional ties, regions unite to develop unified strategies for a more rapid and successful response to global crises. For the strategic settlement of conflicts in the EaP region and the characteristics of interregional relations, the author identified: 1) the involvement of not only states and regional organizations, but also civil society; 2) an asymmetric nature, namely, the frequent involvement of states with different levels of development; 3) limitations within the framework of low politics, which means a pronounced interest of regional organizations in cooperation on economic and social issues, rather than solving strategic security problems; 4) the desire of international organizations to set global political goals when concluding agreements; however, in reality, these goals are often not achieved.

In his article ‘Regional dimension of geopolitical processes of defense capacity and diplomatic support of the statehoods of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan in 1919: A new look at history’, Gegham Petrosyan analyzes the nature of international relations shaped by the superpower confrontation. Following the end of World War I, the global community entered a period of large-scale and dynamic change, marked by conflicting trends in international security. However, this process cannot be considered fully completed, and it is premature to say that a new system of international relations has emerged. Security uncertainty, which persists despite the end of the confrontation, manifests itself in the resolution of intrastate conflicts in Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. With the end of World War I, the number of conflicts around the world increased significantly, their nature, the composition of the participants, the causes of the conflicts, and the methods of struggle in the South Caucasus changed. These changes necessitated a reconsideration of security strategy and conflict, the development of new concepts and instruments, and the reform of existing state institutions in Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan in 1919. While previously the majority of conflicts were interstate in nature, intrastate conflicts were added to these. Regional conflicts in 1919 were also driven by geopolitical factors, which only complicates their resolution processes. This study examines the defense capability and diplomatic support for the statehood of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan in 1919. This year, the situation in these countries remains extremely dire, and military action is escalating. Here the geopolitical interests of many states intersect, which gives particular relevance to the chosen topic. The regional conflict arose from intractable contradictions (historical, territorial, economic, political, interethnic, etc.) between neighboring states of the South Caucasus, as well as various socio-political groups within these countries. Failure to address regional issues led to an escalation of the situation in the region and the escalation of the regional conflict into a local war. During the defense of the statehood of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, accumulated contradictions between the states were resolved, and a new structure of diplomatic relations was established, corresponding to the prevailing balance of political,

economic, and military forces at a given moment. Accordingly, military force was viewed as a crucial component and factor in state power and the maintenance of power by the ruling elites of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan in 1919. The decisive role of armed clashes and, consequently, military force in regional politics was largely explained by the fact that war was a continuation of politics through violent means.

In 'Water insecurity in the South Caucasus: a hydro-strategic assessment of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict', Filippo Verre analyzes the impact of water on the South Caucasus, providing a regional hydrostrategic assessment based on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. According to the author, the water factor has already created new forms of international interaction: technology markets have emerged that allow for the increase or redistribution of water reserves; the concept of trading virtual water, or water-intensive products, has emerged, as it became clear that accounting for the water input into the production of a given commodity is an effective tool for both economic development and enhancing international security. Water instability in the South Caucasus has forced senior leadership and the general public to focus on issues such as water security, effective water resource management, the development of alternative freshwater sources, and the production and trade of water-intensive products. These issues, which have been a focus for many developed countries for the past quarter century, have been extremely poorly integrated into the development of national strategy, foreign policy, and national security in Nagorno-Karabakh. At the same time, freshwater shortages have been growing globally over recent decades. As a result, the efficient use of water resources, initially an economic and environmental issue, has become one of the most important strategic tools for strengthening the power of any state on the international stage. More efficient use of water has begun to enhance the international competitiveness of countries, while geographical features have allowed a number of states to directly restrict neighboring countries' access to water resources or use this opportunity as a lever of political pressure. The water factor in Nagorno-Karabakh has thus come to directly influence the balance of power and the nature of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan. In response to these emerging challenges, politicians, scholars, and journalists have identified a potential new primary cause for war not only in Nagorno-Karabakh but in the 21st century as well: the struggle for fresh water. The most fundamental question in international relations theory, the question of war and peace, seemingly comprehensively studied, has been posed in a sharp and new way.

In the article 'The difficult European path to settling Russian-Georgian relations in post-election Georgia in 2024: a rollback on European integration or the unacceptability of confrontation', Marut Vardazaryan and Erem Vardazaryan discuss the difficult European path to resolving Russian-Georgian relations in post-election Georgia in 2024, taking into account the lack of representation in Georgian public politics of the group of voters who doubt the country's integration into the EU. Since 2024, the post-election Georgian political elite has been unconvinced of the country's ability to achieve Euro-Atlantic integration along the lines of Central and Eastern European and Baltic countries. The South Caucasus, located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, has for centuries been at the intersection of civilizations, world religions, and states. This region, with access to the Caspian and Black Seas, occupies

a key geopolitical position. Currently, amidst the transformation of international relations, the South Caucasus region, thanks to its geostrategic location and the significant energy reserves of the Caspian Basin, has become a focal point for the foreign policy priorities of regional and extra-regional actors. In the context of implementing the South Caucasus vector of their foreign policy, Russia and Türkiye are paying particular attention to Georgia, which remains a key player in the region amid the unresolved conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. An examination of Russia and Türkiye's foreign policy toward Georgia, which occupies a unique position in the South Caucasus, allows us to identify the goals and interests of their foreign policies in this region. The relevance of the topic chosen for this article is also determined by the fact that the implementation of Russian and Turkish policies in the South Caucasus affects their national security interests, as well as the South Caucasus vector of their foreign policy. A thorough analysis of bilateral relations suggests that Russia's foreign policy toward Georgia spans several stages: the 1990s and the first decades of the 21st century. This study attempts to present an approach that divides the current stage of Russia's foreign policy toward Georgia into four periods: 2002-2007, 2008-2011, 2012-2023, and from 2024 onward. An analysis of these stages and periods indicates that Russia is actively expanding relations with Georgia, continuing to seek new avenues for strengthening its leverage in the country and securing tools for advancing its interests. In examining the evolution of Russia's foreign policy toward Georgia, particular attention is paid to the fourth period of the current stage, which remains quite complex, despite the level of strategic approach between the two countries. A number of problems in bilateral relations have become increasingly apparent recently.

In the article 'The cost of commitment: Understanding the Iran's Intervention in the Israel-Hamas War (2023-2024)', Aso M. Ali reconsiders Iran's intervention in the war between Israel and Hamas from 2023 to 2024, taking into account that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict remains one of the most acute in the Middle East and beyond, despite being overshadowed by more bloody events such as the wars in Syria, Libya, and Yemen, as well as the threat posed by extremist organizations. This conflict is characterized by its asymmetry, as it involves disparate actors and also involves regional and international players in the international relations system. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is a legacy of the bipolar era and has become firmly embedded in the modern system of international relations. Iran's intervention in the war between Israel and Hamas periodically comes under the scrutiny of the international community due to escalating tensions on the ground or the steps taken by global actors in an attempt to resolve the situation. The conflict also remains relevant at the regional level, as it is the main stumbling block to establishing good-neighborly relations between Israel and Arab countries. The process of resolving this complex ethnic conflict is of particular interest to the academic community, as a settlement model that satisfies all parties and takes into account all of its specific features has yet to be developed. Moreover, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has features of ethnopolitical, ethnoconfessional, and ethnoterritorial conflicts. For the Middle East, the conflict has become one of the most protracted and complex issues, often hindering its peaceful and dynamic development. Furthermore, the war between Israel and Hamas and the Palestinian issue often fuel

negative perceptions of the Western world in Arab society and serve as an ideological basis for recruiting young people into terrorist ranks. Stability in the Middle East directly affects the interests of Iran, which has strong ties with the Palestinians. Iran seeks to coordinate its efforts with global and regional actors to promote a just peace and is also taking steps to overcome the inter-Palestinian rift. This paper demonstrates that the obstacles to achieving a just and lasting peace within the constantly changing regional landscape are internal and external processes: the rigid positions of all parties, Israel's lack of interest in a settlement, the inter-Palestinian conflict, the impulsive steps of mediators, as well as the absence of a viable settlement model that takes into account not only the territorial issue, but also the value component, which has become insurmountable in the course of numerous negotiations.

In his article 'Iran's political factors towards Afghan refugees: trends of ethnonational consolidation and changing priorities of regionalism', Armen Israyelyan analyzes the geopolitical significance of Afghanistan for Iran in contemporary international politics, discussing a number of factors related to the armed conflict in Afghanistan. Iran's political factors in relation to Afghan refugees, such as Afghan instability, can be seen as a source of risk for all countries in the region, including China, Pakistan, Iran and the countries of Central Asia. If extremists gain strength and state institutions weaken, Afghanistan will become a potential springboard for terrorist organizations. Furthermore, various Iranian forces are involved in the confrontation with the Afghan armed opposition, so the outcome of the conflict and the Afghan refugees determines the strength of their position in the long term. The failure of Washington's Afghan policy could lead to a loss of credibility for the United States among its allies. The transit factor is also significant, as is Afghanistan's potential role as a transit zone in a number of transport routes linking post-Soviet Central Asia and the countries along the Indian Ocean. These projects could include energy and fuel supplies, as well as consumer goods. Finally, it is necessary to consider Afghanistan's potential role in the Pakistan-India conflict, where the country could act as an ally of one of the parties. This combination of factors makes Afghanistan a region whose situation is of great importance for international political processes. Given this, the author's recourse to the experiences of Afghanistan and Iran is entirely justified, as the historical stages of Afghan and Iranian societies provide striking examples of the achievements of these countries' peoples in terms of national and state development. The study devotes particular attention to the nature of the trends in the subsequent development of these states. Along with the general historical relevance of studying the experiences of Afghanistan and Iran, it is worth emphasizing the general significance of certain aspects of their experiences for the post-Soviet countries, as these countries are neighbors for many of them. Therefore, an analysis of Iran's political factors in relation to Afghan refugees, as well as social and political processes in Afghanistan and Iran, is becoming an important state and public imperative.

In the article 'The Impact of Armed Conflicts on Climate Change: Perceptions of Environmental Security and the Search for Ways to Overcome These Risks', Nubia Nieto analyzes the impact of armed conflict on environmental security, as the planet's environmental problems have come to the forefront among other global issues. Climate change is one of the most pressing issues facing the Earth's ecosystem, and the global

community has recognized the problem of anthropogenic impact on climate change. The article notes that climate change is a result of armed conflicts and increased greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere. Therefore, the topic of the article is relevant, firstly, due to the need to further improve existing legal regulation mechanisms for preserving the Earth's climate, both at the international and domestic levels. Secondly, the relevance of this topic is determined by the need to ensure the progressive implementation of international norms aimed at resolving climate change within national legal systems. Environmental security and climate change are a global problem of our time, the resolution of which requires the joint efforts of all states. However, certain difficulties in the process of its international legal regulation exist, predetermined by the complexity of the problem and its asymmetric nature. Firstly, since climate is a common good, all countries benefit from efforts to preserve the Earth's climate, regardless of the scale of measures taken, which, in turn, influences the motivation of states. Secondly, differences in countries' socioeconomic and geographic conditions, their contributions to the climate change problem, and their adaptive capacities have created difficulties in achieving consensus among states on resolving this problem. Thirdly, the financial component of emission reduction measures, as well as the long-term nature of the results, have predetermined difficulties in finding solutions that satisfy the interests of all states. The Paris Agreement, for the first time, outlined the parties' commitments to adapt to the impacts of climate change. The establishment of the Adaptation Committee and the Least Developed Countries Expert Group was a significant step in assisting countries in developing domestic adaptation measures. The Paris Agreement is notable for its clear financial mechanisms for climate change adaptation. However, these provisions are characterized by their rather loose commitments. For example, one such provision merely requests the Green Climate Fund to expedite support for developing countries to facilitate their development and implementation of national adaptation plans. Furthermore, a significant shortcoming in the implementation of this international legal instrument is the fact that some countries, among the largest greenhouse gas emitters, are not party to it or have withdrawn their participation.

In the article 'Gender Dimensions of Verbal Aggression in Modern Media and Political Discourse: Cult of Violence or Playing with Aggressive Content?', Anna Knyazyan, Hasmik Shapaghatyan, and Viktorya Melkonyan discuss the gender dimensions of election debates, considering that they are an important part of the political campaign leading up to parliamentary or presidential elections. These debates involve the leaders of political parties represented in parliament or with a chance of winning the election. Debates are a form of public communication that can significantly influence voter decisions. The structure, content, results, and methods of election debates are of great interest in both the theoretical and practical aspects of the cult of violence and the game with aggressive content. The heightened interest of researchers in this phenomenon stems from the fact that communication is moving from the interpersonal to the social level. Communication strategies implemented by political actors to achieve specific goals become instruments for influencing public consciousness. Politicians' communication strategies are directly subject to political analysis. Linguists study political communication from a technical perspective,

focusing on the techniques used to influence the lexical, semantic, and pragmatic levels, paying particular attention to the implementation of speech tactics aimed at managing and manipulating public opinion. The authors believe that political discourse is a sphere where communication occurs in the context of political struggle, which involves various forms of counterargumentation and even verbal aggression toward a political or ideological opponent, harsh direct or hidden negative expressions toward the opponent, and anything that hinders the realization and achievement of political goals. Political discourse is viewed as a set of speech productions that arise within the context of political activity. This approach by the authors involves analyzing linguistic material taking into account the political, cultural, and temporal conditions of its actualization, as well as the social and individual characteristics of the participants in the interaction. Gender studies in the United States are at a peak in popularity, and gender linguistics is undergoing a qualitative transition from interdisciplinary research to the realm of discursive practices. This study bridges media, political, and gender discourses and examines gender asymmetry in the media's portrayal of female politicians in the United States.

This volume of the Journal presents a review of books on Resilience and the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood Countries, focusing on the crisis and transformation of the EU's political system. This book analyzes the problems of regional, interregional, and transregional cooperation within the EU, which are acquiring a special resonance and attracting the attention of an increasing number of researchers. In the context of military confrontation, the main challenge for the EU may be developing a more flexible policy of rapprochement with the EaP countries, as the EU confirms the use of soft and normative power toward member countries of regional associations. It is assumed that the development of a loyal and compromising approach may be a key factor in strengthening interregional relations in various regional areas.

***Editorial Board***