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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGIES OF ARMENIA IN THE CONTEXT OF POLITICAL REALISM, LIBERALISM, AND MARXISM

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Abstract
The article examines the characteristic features of Armenian national security strategies, actively conducting interdisciplinary research with extensive use of systems analysis. Issues regarding the stability of the political system of Armenia in the interest of national security are considered not only from the standpoint of the general theory of systems but also using the methodological principles of synergetics. An independent section of the research was the study of regional conflicts in the post-Soviet space and their impact on the state of national security in Armenia. In this context, traditional international relations theory provides tools for analyzing the previous actions of states within a broader framework and making decisions on future actions.

The present article seeks to provide simple textual comparisons and analyses of the Republic of Armenia's National Security Strategies of 2007 and 2020. Those elements within the Strategies which have remained, changed, or been added will then be made the subject of contextual analyses with the theoretical traditions of liberalism, realism, and Marxism to draw out the Republic of Armenia's major priorities and assess the capability of its approaches to meeting the foreign policy problems that exist. Each theory of international relations will emphasize those positions in the National Security Strategies that most accurately reflect Armenia's past and current positions, and evaluate them in accordance with global and regional standards.

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Introduction

Following Armenia's independence in 1991, the national security strategy was issued twice: in February 2007, and in July 2020. In the period between the two strategies, the global and regional security environments experienced essential changes that left Armenia's security environment more complex and multifaceted. Several international events had significant impacts that reverberated at the global and regional level during this time, of which, we highlight the following:

1. **Russo-Georgian war, 7-12 August 2008:** Thanks to the land blockade in force to Armenia's east and west, in addition to the disruptions brought by the Russo-Georgian war, the country faced an increased risk of food crisis. As Georgia serves as Armenia's primary window to the outside world, the possible prolongation of the war threatened Armenia with a shortage of essential goods.

2. **The beginning of the Arab Spring, 2011,** led to changes in power in Tunisia, Egypt, and later, most tragically, in Libya and Syria. In Libya, the political crisis that arose after the overthrow of President Muammar Gaddafi still remains unresolved. Likewise, in Syria, the crisis that seemed internal at first sight deepened and transformed into a protracted, multi-year war with the involvement of multiple external actors (the USA, Russia, Türkiye, Iran, etc.). Even today, it has not yet reached its resolution.

3. **The beginning of the Ukrainian crisis in 2014,** opened the most heated flashpoint in the conflict between the West and Russia. The Ukraine crisis deepened on February 24, 2022, following the initiation of what official Moscow calls a "Special Military Operation," (Kremlin.ru 2022) which opened wide the previously low-burning Russo-Ukrainian War to the risk of major continental and even global warfare.

According to experts, the world is currently in the midst of a new Cold War which started perhaps with the emergence of the Ukrainian crisis in 2014, and with Russian military intervention in the Syrian conflict in the fall of 2015 (Breuer 2022). The supposed "End of History" postulated by Francis Fukuyama was reached thanks to the Soviet Union's dissolution and arrived at the climax of the First Cold War but also began a "New History" that is characterized by the intensification of contradictions between geopolitical power centers and different forms of conflict manifestation (Fukuyama 1992).

The South Caucasus, where Armenia is located, is at the intersection of three large regions which, therefore, means it is affected by the events and developments happening in these regions. It borders the post-Soviet region to the north and east; from the west and south, the South Caucasus borders the Middle East; and further to the east, awaits the Caspian basin, and by extension, it borders Central Asia.

All three mentioned regions bordering the South Caucasus are conflict zones and hotbeds of tension where the interests of both regional powers and global superpowers collide. The Ukrainian crisis, which has morphed into the Russian-Ukrainian war, is the best proof of this regarding the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region

(Akhvlediani 2022; Holovko-Havrysheva 2021). In addition, numerous conflicts in the post-Soviet region – Transnistria (Baltag and Bosse 2016; Vacaru 2006), Abkhazia (Auch 2005), South Ossetia – remain unresolved. Despite the military aggression, ethnic cleansing, and occupations carried out by Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh in September 2023, that resulted in the near-total depopulation of a region predominantly inhabited by Armenians, the situation continues to be uncertain.

As the Georgian–Ossetian conflict of August 2008 escalated into the 2008 Russo-Georgian War, and the 2020 44-day war over Nagorno-Karabakh exposed further conflicts brewing in post-Soviet territories which had previously remained unresolved, or "frozen", and from time to time contained a serious risk of outbreak of military operations and wars. The same occurred in 2015, as the Donbas conflict was frozen by the Minsk Agreement. However, the Minsk Agreements, left unimplemented, led to the Russian-Ukrainian war at the end of February 2022.

The Middle East has unfortunately been a constant zone of conflict and civil war since the middle of the 20th century. The Arab-Israeli wars (Cordesman 2021), the unresolved Palestinian issue, the civil war in Lebanon 1975-90, the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-88, Türkiye's 1974 invasion of Cyprus, followed by occupation of its north until the present, the Gulf War of 1990, the Iraq War of 2003 are the proofs of the Middle East's turbulence. During the contemporary period, the Arab Spring could be added to the list (Cordesman 2020; Fahmy and Mohamed 2020), as it led to crises and conflicts in Libya and Syria that still require resolution. Let us also not forget the ongoing international crisis surrounding Iran's nuclear program and the risks associated with it.

As for Central Asia, in the post-Soviet period, apart from several ethnic conflicts (mainly Tajik-Kyrgyz), the civil war in Tajikistan in the 1990s can be considered as a serious conflict (Akiner and Barnes 2001; Di Maio and Abenstein 2011). The events that took place in Kazakhstan in January 2022 showed that Central Asia is also not free from the risk of destabilization and conflicts. Additionally, Central Asia borders Afghanistan, which remains unstable, from where there remains a risk for conflict, and also threatens regional proliferation of extremism.

In this context, the article aims to carry out a comparative analysis of Armenia's national security strategies via three schools of international relations: political realism, Marxism, and liberalism.

The sources for the preparation of the work were: a) the strategies of the Republic of Armenia in 2007 and 2020 as objects of comparison, b) other official documents, c) academic and analytical works (monographs, articles, etc.) devoted to theories of international relations and global and regional military-political processes, and finally, d) speeches of political leaders.

In general, national security strategies pursue two goals that lead their content to be divided into two parts. The first is to highlight existing and potential challenges, whereas the second seeks to develop and point out effective means to face them.

In this regard, it is worth noting that both strategies adopted in Armenia thus far are not structurally perfect. However, the comparison shows that the 2007 NSS is structurally more consistent with the logic of the aforementioned "problem-solution" scheme. There, in a special section, the threats to Armenia's national security, both external and internal, are pointed out. Although individual sections do not identify

ways or measures designed to face or overcome these challenges, they can be drawn from other sections of the strategy. Meanwhile, the 2020 NSS has a different structural logic. First, the security environment of Armenia is presented. Then, the remainder of the document is dedicated to the country's national interests and means to ensure them.

This analysis is based on a comparative method. As the 2007 NSS corresponds more to the "problem-solution" scheme, from the contents of the 2020 NSS, the sections related to the challenges of Armenia's national security and the ways of facing them for comparison were separated and combined with the relevant provisions of the 2007 NSS. It is clear from the title of the article that this is about external security challenges and the potentialities of facing them.

Thus, in this article, analyzed with the theories of political realism, Marxism, and liberalism, an attempt is made to show the similarities and differences between the two strategies, as well as the dynamics that were recorded in the approaches to ensuring national security from 2007 to 2020. The comparison is carried out in two phases: firstly, the 2007 and 2020 strategies are compared to one another; secondly, both of them are analyzed with realism, liberalism, and Marxist theories of international relations. Content analysis is also used.

Generalities of National Security Strategies of Armenia

From the point of view of addressing the external challenges facing Armenia, strategies in 2007 and 2020 consider the following factors as external threats:

1) Possible military operations against Armenia and Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh). The 2020 NSS, like that of 2007, considers Azerbaijan's policy regarding Nagorno-Karabakh as a threat not only to Armenia, but also to the security of the region[1]. In other words, the Strategy considers Azerbaijani policy to be threatening to the entire region at large. This approach is characteristic of the entire document in general. If the 2007 Strategy considers the openly belligerent statements of official Baku at the highest level as a manifestation of Azerbaijan's ambitions to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict by military means, then the 2020 Strategy emphasizes of the 2016 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict itself: the four-day April war, continuous violations of the ceasefire, regular sabotage, concentration and movement of troops, as well as military exercises on both the contact line and the Armenian-Azerbaijani interstate border. The reason is understandable: while Azerbaijan's belligerent policy in 2007 was manifested only at the level of rhetoric, later, particularly from the beginning of the 2010s, it assumed concrete dimensions.

Both Strategies assign Armenia the role of security guarantor of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh). At the same time, both documents consider the security of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh as a single package, not to be separated from one another. Accordingly, any encroachment on the security of Nagorno-Karabakh is an encroachment on the security of Armenia. Later, the 44-day war in 2020 demonstrated

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[1] The Government of the RA. 2020. "National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia: A Resilient Armenia in a Changing World." Accessed April 20, 2023. https://www.gov.am/en/National-Security-Strategy/; Arlis.am. 2007. "National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia." Accessed April 20, 2023. https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?docID=31189.

the rightness of this provision as Azerbaijan began to encroach on the borders of Armenia after violently assuming control of territories previously held by the Nagorno-Karabakh Defense Army, even invading up to the sovereign territory of Armenia.

Both strategies make an important reference to the settlement of the Artsakh (Karabakh) conflict. The 2007 Strategy considers it in the context of the threat of armed force against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Noting that the mission of supporting the peaceful and fair settlement of the problem was entrusted to the OSCE Minsk Group under the co-chairmanship of Russia, the USA, and France, the Strategy does not consider it appropriate to discuss and accept statements by other structures on the settlement of the problem, as well as the involvement of various international organizations in the settlement process. In other words, Armenia, pursuing the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict exclusively in a peaceful and compromise way, recognizes the unique role of the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group as the only mediating mission in that process. The document considers three principles as key to the settlement of the conflict: a) recognition of the irreversible reality of the actual existence of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, b) uninterrupted land connection between Artsakh and Armenia, and c) fixed security guarantees.

In this regard, the 2020 NSS mentions a) Armenia's commitment to the peaceful settlement process under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs, b) the need to create a favorable environment for peace, c) Armenia's support for the realization of the right to self-determination of the people of Artsakh without restrictions and coercion, d) in the conflict settlement process and in the post-settlement phase the primary condition is the security of Artsakh Armenians under which is also understood the existence of a system of safe, secure and diversified interconnection with the outside world, including Armenia, e) the validity of the full participation of the Artsakh population in the decision of its fate at all stages of negotiations through the authorities elected by the latter.

In fact, the 2020 NSS adds two provisions to the 2007 Strategy: the need to create a favorable atmosphere for the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict which first of all means the formation of an environment of mutual trust, and the moral justification of the possible participation of Nagorno-Karabakh in the negotiations.

Viewing the security of Armenia in the regional security system is more characteristic of the school of liberalism because the latter shows a systemic approach to international organization, considering the security of all states in one unified structure (Basu 2012; Cooke 2022; Song 2023; Burchill 2020). Meanwhile, political realism considers international relations to be chaotic and anarchic where each state is guided by its selfish interests and tries to ensure its security at the expense of others. Accordingly, political realism emphasizes raw power in international relations (Pashakhanlou 2017; Kumar H.M. 2023). Therefore, from this perspective of threat assessment, the approach in both strategies is realistic.

In line with political realism is also the emphasis on the important, and almost irreplaceable role of the OSCE Minsk Group in the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict recorded in the two strategies, as it seeks to ensure the balance of forces involved in the settlement of the conflict. And the principle of balance of power is one of the most important principles of political realism from the security

perspective. However, the 2020 Strategy combines realism with liberalism in considering the threat to Armenia as a regional security challenge.

2) Possible instability or turbulence around Armenia. According to the 2007 Strategy, ethnic conflicts, internal clashes, and hostilities in bordering states present various threats: from sabotage against transit infrastructures to cross-border impacts of hostilities in neighboring states.

In this regard, the 2020 NSS focuses more on the Middle East, noting that Armenia's security environment is also affected by the processes taking place in the Middle East. Among the latter, the Strategy specifically mentions not only the displacement of religious and ethnic minorities, but also the consolidation and spread of the potential of religious radicalism, internal clashes, as well as debilitating, non-traditional, and mediated armed conflicts. Such an approach is natural as the situation in the Middle East sharply worsened as a result of the 2011 Arab Spring, and had both direct and indirect impacts on Armenia as well.

From the point of view of threat assessment, both strategies can be considered a combination of liberalism and realism because, on the one hand, possible threats are realistically evaluated (realism), but on the other hand, they are seen again in the context of international common security (liberalism).

3) Weakening of strategic alliances or insufficient involvement in them. The document of 2007 considers that membership in strategic alliances should exclude actions by one member of the alliance against the interests of another member. The strategy, in particular, considers it necessary to clarify the rules for the participation of other member states in case of an armed attack against a member state of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

The 2020 NSS also considers the possible growth of disagreements between the military and political alliances affecting the South Caucasus region and the countries that are part of the latter to be worrying from the perspective of regional security. According to the document, no less alarming is the possible weakening of these alliances and actions of member states that contradict each other's interests, including the interests of Armenia, in particular, arms sales to Azerbaijan further threaten peace and stability in the region.

Although the document does not mention the CSTO in this context, the phrase "weakening of these alliances and actions of member states that contradict each other's interests" means that an organization whose member countries regularly carry out actions that directly or indirectly contradict with the interests of their ally Armenia.

Thus, both documents, emphasizing the role of the CSTO in ensuring the security of Armenia, at the same time see problems in the actions of its members.

From the perspective of assessing this threat, the approach in both strategies corresponds to political realism. Both documents emphasize the fact that Armenia's allies, guided by their selfish interests, carry out and may continue to carry out actions contrary to Armenia's interests. Political realism is also characterized by the fact that the country's security is viewed within the framework of a military and political alliance, in contrast to liberalism which sees the security of states not in the context of military and political alliances, but in the context of general regional and global

security (Castellin 2021). The fact that there are regular problems within that alliance is another issue.

4) Terrorism and cross-border crimes. In this regard, the document of 2007 mentions that international terrorism with all its manifestations, proliferation and transportation of weapons of mass destruction and drugs, money laundering, and human trafficking are direct threats to the Republic of Armenia.

In the 2020 NSS, there is a clause consistent with the above-mentioned, according to which terrorism and transnational organized crime, transportation and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, illegal drug trade, money laundering, illegal immigration and human trafficking are threats to Armenia.

The approach to this threat can also be considered comparative: a combination of realism and liberalism because on the one hand the challenges are evaluated adequately, and, on the other hand they are viewed in the context of international security, that is, the threats that face all states are threats to Armenia as well. Thus, according to the liberal approach, individual states are not isolated from the world, therefore, threats or challenges are common (Pedi and Wivel 2022).

5) Isolation of the country from regional programs. The document of 2007 emphasizes Armenia's participation in regional infrastructure programs, especially the European Union's TRASSECA and INOGATE programs. The document considers Azerbaijan's efforts to push Armenia out of them as a direct threat.

In this regard, the 2020 NSS has a corresponding paragraph according to which the fragmented and non-comprehensive development of transport, energy and communication infrastructures in the region deepens the formation of dividing lines in the region and contributes to the further growth of instability.

The evaluation of this threat can be considered fully consistent with the liberal theory as both documents view Armenia's security in the context of close international integration, and consider integration systems as an important security component. Consequently, the exclusion of Armenia from the integration projects is seen as a security threat. Unlike political realism, according to which states must rely mainly on their forces, liberalism sees the security of states in close integration and interdependence.

6) Diaspora problems. The document of 2007 considers the weakening of the ethnic and cultural identity of the Diaspora as a threat to Armenia's national security. The strategy attaches great importance to the issue of the preservation of Armenian identity in the Diaspora, emphasizing the existence of the Diaspora that is well-organized and effectively involved in the countries of residence for increasing the level of international involvement of Armenia. Accordingly, the weakening of the Homeland-Diaspora connection and the lack of mutually enriching contact can endanger the fundamental values of Armenia's national security.

The document considers the complex of problems related to the Diaspora in the sphere of Panarmeniancy. According to the document, Armenia's efforts to strengthen the Homeland-Diaspora relations are aimed at resisting the assimilation of the Diaspora and at preventing the loss of linguistic and cultural identity, and ensuring the systematic participation of the Diaspora in solving vital problems for Armenia and Artsakh.

The document also addresses the problems of the Diaspora in the context of one of the fundamental values of Armenia's national security, i.e. the preservation of Armenian identity. The essence of the latter is the state's pursuit of the preservation and development of the national identity of the Armenian people in the Homeland and in the Diaspora.

The 2020 NSS does not address the problems of Armenian identity in the Diaspora as a national security challenge but sees the realization of the long-term goal of ensuring the perpetuity of Armenian statehood through the integration of all-Armenian efforts and capabilities. According to the Strategy, Armenian statehood, as the realization of the centuries-old aspirations of the Armenian people, belongs to the citizens of Armenia and the entire Armenian people who are the bearers and defenders of that statehood. The document focuses more on the physical security problems of the Diaspora, stating that Armenia will embark on organized repatriation in order to ensure the security of Armenians living in different regions in the face of the escalation of geopolitical confrontation.

Thus, both strategies give an important place to the problems of the Diaspora. However, if the 2007 NSS emphasizes the spiritual component of the issue, considering the retreat of national identity in the Diaspora as a threat, then the document 2020 deals mainly with the physical side of the issue.

The evaluation of this threat can also be considered comparative or parallel. On the one hand, the potential of the Diaspora is emphasized from the perspective of consolidation and development of the common national potential in order to effectively face common challenges (realism), on the other hand, the Diaspora factor is emphasized from the perspective of cooperation, dialogue, and international political, economic, military and cultural integration with other states (liberalism).

The Differences of National Security Strategies of Armenia

The 2007 NSS summarizes a number of external challenges that are not reflected in the document 2020. Thus, the 2007 NSS sees the disruption of the transit routes of the bordering states as an external threat. The document mentions that Armenia is already experiencing the negative consequences of the non-operation of the Abkhaz railway and Russia-Georgia highways. At the same time, the possible application of large-scale economic sanctions against the southern neighbor Iran may become an immediate threat to Armenia's national security. The mention of this challenge is also related to the school of liberalism because it sees the security of Armenia as interconnected with the security of neighboring states. The 2020 NSS makes no mention of this threat.

The 2007 NSS sees Armenia's energy dependence due to limited natural resources, as well as epidemics and natural and man-made disasters as external challenges. Since there are no additional comments in the strategy regarding the mentioned challenges, we can consider the mere mention of these challenges as a manifestation of political realism in terms of their realistic and adequate assessment. Although from the very beginning of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic broke out in the world, the new national security strategy adopted that same year does not address epidemics, or natural and man-made disasters as a threat to national security.

From the 2020 Strategy, we can extract some challenges to Armenia's national security that are not reflected or are briefly reflected in the 2007 NSS. The reason is the above-mentioned global and regional changes that occurred between the adoption of these two strategies.

As the first such threat, one can point out the uncertainty created around the fundamental principles of the modern world in the conditions of extensive and rapid geopolitical changes. According to the document of 2020, power realignments are taking place, international multilateral platforms are weakening, and mutual trust between states is decreasing. As a result, unpredictable threats are added to traditional predictable threats.

The 2020 strategy notes that rapid and unpredictable changes in the modern world order and security architecture, along with existing threats, create new challenges for Armenia. In international relations, there are tendencies to weaken international security systems which are manifested, in particular, by the increase in competition between states that play a major role in strengthening of arms races, the weakening of multilateral platforms, as well as the deepening desires to resolve conflicts by force. At the same time, trends in the formation of new power centers further intensify international competition, favoring the use of force.

In fact, the 2020 Strategy of the National Security of Armenia considers the process of changing the world order: the weakening and disintegration of the existing world order and the formation of a new world order as a threat to national security which we can conventionally call the stage of world order transition. And more precisely, as a threat or challenge to the security of each state, there are the following: the manifestations of turbulence, chaos, uncertainty and the consequences arising from them which are characteristic of any geopolitical transition.

Thus, as a manifestation of the turbulence arising from the world order transition, the 2020 NSS of the national security points in particular to the disintegration of international security institutions and guarantees which creates the temptation to resolve conflicts by force, increasing the likelihood of such occurrences. Following the adoption of the strategy, the 44-day Nagorno-Karabakh war, in 2020, Türkiye's military operations in Syria three times by invading its territory, and the Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict are likewise examples.

In this context, according to the 2020 NSS, tension between global and regional power centers and structures has a negative impact on Armenia's cooperation with these states and structures. At the same time, the ambitions of some regional states to play a more active role threaten to change the balance of power and question the stability in the South Caucasus.

Here, although it is not explicitly stated, Türkiye's desire to increase its regional role is taken into account. Turkish expert community and statesmen base the country's foreign policy strategy on its geography. According to this approach, Türkiye is located in the center of three major regions: the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Middle East (Özlü 2022, 217). The latter are conflict-prone regions where the ongoing processes affect Türkiye. Therefore, in order to effectively face the challenges arising from these regions, Ankara should conduct a more active policy in them.

In one way or another, the Caucasus is also included in the list of regions that are neighboring Türkiye and from where Türkiye feels pressure on its national interests. This means that Ankara will consistently try to increase its influence in the region where Armenia is located. And since Türkiye uses the diverse means to achieve its foreign policy goals, up to the point of force and further threats of force, on the other hand, there are no diplomatic relations between Ankara and Yerevan, and the land border is closed, as such activity of Türkiye also contains certain threats for the national security of Armenia.

Perhaps based on Türkiye's ambitions to increase its regional role, the 2020 NSS sees Türkiye's unneighborly policy towards Armenia as a separate challenge for Armenia's national security. As manifestations of this, the document mentions the blockade of Armenia, the refusal to establish diplomatic relations without preconditions, the denial of the Armenian Genocide, and in some cases, the latter's justification. In this context, it is necessary to mention that since 1991, Armenia has never made Türkiye's recognition of the Armenian Genocide a precondition for the normalization of bilateral relations and the establishment of diplomatic relations under any government.

At the same time, the 2020 NSS considers Ankara's policy regarding Nagorno-Karabakh as a threat to Armenia's national security: its military and political support to Baku, considering it as a strengthening factor for Baku's ambitions to resolve the conflict militarily. Türkiye's willingness to overtly or covertly intervene in case of Azerbaijan unleashes military operations is considered particularly problematic.

Türkiye's use of illegal force against neighboring countries and peoples is also, according to the 2020 NSS, endangering the stability of the wider region, and makes its possible actions towards Armenia even more unpredictable.

Although not explicitly stated, it is not difficult to guess that by 'the wider region,' the Strategy refers to the Near and Middle East. Logically, the South Caucasus is seen as a part of that region. And the use of illegal force by Ankara refers to the actions of the Turkish army in Iraq, Syria, and Libya. According to the logic of the document, the increase in the level of chaos in the Middle Eastern region generally which Türkiye promotes with its illegal actions, also increases the risk of threats to Armenia's security, primarily in the context of Ankara's unpredictable actions.

So, the 2020 NSS considers Türkiye's actions or policies as a threat to Armenia's national security in three categories: a) Türkiye's regional policy in the Middle East, b) Türkiye's policy towards Armenia itself, c) Ankara's unconditional military and political support to Baku on Nagorno-Karabakh issue. Clearly, the second and third points or categories are interrelated, or figuratively speaking, they are two sides of the same coin.

Thus, both strategies consider Türkiye's foreign and military policy as a threat to Armenia's national security. However, if the 2007 NSS considers the problem in the context of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, taking into account Türkiye's unconditional support to Azerbaijan, then the 2020 NSS considers the problem in a broader context, viewing Ankara's policy on the Karabakh issue as a component of the problem.

Nevertheless, considering the chaos from the world order transition as a threat can have either a liberal or a realist interpretation. It is liberal in the sense that Armenia's

security is considered a part of the global security system. Hence, the disintegration of the international security system is perceived as a direct threat to Armenia's national security. At the same time, this threat also has a realistic perception, in the sense that chaos and uncontrollability in international relations lead to the increase of egoistic policies of states where force or diplomacy based on force are in the foreground.

As a threat reflected in the 2020 NSS we can mention hybrid wars. According to the document, security threats in the modern world are more often manifested in the form of hybrid wars which, in addition to military components, include complex tools of economic, cyber, fake news and disinformation. It can be seen as a continuation or privatization of this threat that according to the 2020 NSS, some of the threats to Armenia's national security derive from the increasing level of information and communication technologies (ICT) entry into the lives of society and individuals. New opportunities in all areas of life and activity, yet it has also led to new security challenges. Along with the development of the ICT sector, the security of the individual, society and the state has become vulnerable and needs protection in the information and cyber domains as well.

The 2007 Strategy refers to a private episode of the mentioned threat. The incomplete state of moral and psychological and patriotic education is mentioned as an internal challenge that makes Armenia vulnerable to external challenges, weakening its resistance. Pointing out this cluster of threats can be considered a manifestation of political realism from the perspective of their realistic and adequate assessment.

The 2020 NSS gives a much greater place to democracy in the context of national security. The 2007 NSS also refers to democracy but mainly as a value or goal. Meanwhile, the 2020 NSS considers the importance of democracy as the axis or pillar of national security in three dimensions.

First, democracy is perceived as a prerequisite and guarantee for the consolidation of national potential and comprehensive development. Therefore, according to the document of 2020, the core of Armenia's security policy is the democratic system of governance which creates a solid foundation for strengthening the country's economic, political, intellectual, and therefore also military potential.

Second, democracy is seen as a basis for receiving the support of the international community on security issues, particularly in the settlement of the Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) issue. Therefore, according to the document of 2020, Armenia will make consistent efforts so that the Artsakh national population to the full extent recognize the universal rights of people to manage their destiny, freely determine the state structure, the forms, and methods of economic development, as well as democratically elect a government, the 2020 NSS also emphasizes that the Republic of Armenia will continue to support the further strengthening of human rights and democratic institutions, as well as economic and environmental security in Artsakh. And most importantly, in this context, the document stresses that human rights, including political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights, are absolute values, and promoting and supporting their full realization should be a collective goal for the international community as well.

Third, democracy is seen as a guarantee of both regional and international security, and its retreat as a threat to regional and international security. Accordingly, the retreat

from democracy in the neighboring countries of Armenia and the backsliding in the field of human rights are seen as a threat in Armenia's 2020 NSS.

Thus, according to the document, Armenia views democracy and the protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms as vital components of peace and stability in the region and will continue to support that these values are firmly established. With that, Armenia is concerned about the decline in democracy and human rights in the region and in the world. In particular, the backsliding in the fields of democracy and human rights protection in Türkiye and Azerbaijan has a negative impact on the fulfillment of international obligations by these countries and increases the latter's unpredictability for Armenia.

Focusing attention on the role of democracy in the context of national security is fully consistent with the liberal theory of international relations. According to that school, if all the states of the world build democratic regimes, that is, if all the countries of the world are democratic, democracy will move from the domestic sphere to the sphere of international relations (Lieber 2022). In this way, the spirit of peace and cooperation will prevail in the world ensuring the security of each state.

Marxist Conceptions of the Armenian 2007 and 2020 Strategies

Marxism's organized engagement of international relations has arrived in waves to match the increasing formalization of the field. Marxist theorizations have often tailed other professionalized theories' (e.g., liberalism and realism) agendas, especially in their attempts carve up the observable, to understand the totality of international life. Consequently, Marxism's vistas for engagements with mainstream theories of international relations – such as this review of Armenia's foreign policy and National Security Strategy – nonetheless retain their own expansive set of terms for debate and criticism of received wisdom. In this regard, several basic givens from the Marxist critique of political economy find their way to analysis of international conditions.

The Marxist school and critique approach many subjects, broadly speaking, mainly by way of two different methods: historicization and the materialist dialectic. In the case of the former, historicization entails a subject's concretization and contextualization within the social relations of a given class society, those most related to the subject at hand, and the re-explication of how events reached the present. Marxist historicization is relatively limited in its scopes in that its subject, either now passed fixedly into history or into a definite phase during the (near) present, is interrogated by the definite events which culminated in the emergence of the circumstance. As this subject is definite, but changing during study, the subject's qualities are subject to a relatively closed analysis. The historical materialist dialectic meanwhile seeks to register the ongoing transformation of subjects under conflictual tension so as to assess and note qualitative transformations in kind that alter material relations and contribute to the evolutionary transformation of historical structures (Colburn 2021). Consequently, the materialist dialectic is well adapted to environments facing complex change (Kunz 2022; Davidson 2016; Cox 1983; Cox 1993; Cox and Sinclair 1996).

Notably, a medley of theorists has produced overlapping but significantly distinct literature in international relations theory. Many have applied and connected Antonio Gramsci's terms and schema to global events to theorize the actions of singular states within world capitalism. Typically, this involves applications of the Gramscian conception of hegemony, which differs from the realist application whereby explicit, forceful domination of another sovereign's power forms the goal. Instead, cooperation and degrees of consent, rather than coercion, in a state or cluster of states and between a society's classes and between its state and civil society, is understood to execute and order the practical reality of daily class society (Aleksanyan 2020). Subordinate classes assent, find homes within, and link into larger regimes of accumulation in which ruling classes' ideological claims to rule and modus operandi for administration, exploitation, and self-reproduction (Cox 1993; Williams 2020). By extension, 'historic blocs' come to be formed by distinctly powerful 'dominant classes' whose peculiar constellations of property and force reproduce capital at scale while in competition with other states' capitalist administration and historical ideologies (Lenin 1974; Magdoff 2003). Therefore, states, weak, middling, and great, all share complicity with their accession to policies acquiescent to world capitalist production as its global status quo supporters (Lehti and Pennanen 2020; Sinkkonen and Vogt 2020; Gindin and Panitch 2012; Pratt 1990; Jordaan 2003).

Others, operating specifically within the Trotskyist theoretical realm and critique, have built upon older Marxist theories of capitalist imperialism and competition to arrive at original and sometimes different ends than posed by the Gramscians (Callinicos 2007; Neufeld 1995; Rosenberg 1996; Rosenberg 2005; Brenner 2006). Individual nation-states exist within both an international system and world capitalism; individual states respectively compete for market share and capital growth and illumine their work with national(ist) ideals. Consequently, states have compulsions to both competition and cooperation on market and strategic levels, as befitting their method of accumulation, their struggle to occupy high-return industries, possess the relevant (raw) materials to continue, and association with other actors invested in its survival. That is, the internal and external politics of a state are unified and driven by the same material compulsion to expand and exploit limited resources to generate surplus value (Davidson 2016; Jordaan 2003). On a per state basis, growth and competition between states and economies can also be enflamed by what is known as uneven and combined development. In practice, states with real deficits and differences compete with one another to successfully combine some of the latest developments in economic and social organizations to leapfrog to the forefront of an industry and its manifold related social forms: those which do so fastest can experience internal revolt where others experience strategic transformations (Aleksanyan 2021; Davidson 2018).

Review of Armenia's Strategies thus means to capture and concretely historicize them in context and to further observe their trajectory in mid-air. Marxist analyses frequently strive to demonstrate National Security Strategies as statements of a local ruling class's desired relationship with its surroundings and its planned means for managing its dominance – that is, as documents which unify internal with external priorities (Shoup 2021). Thus, the 2007 and 2020 Strategies will be examined as statements deriving from the Armenian and Yerevan ruling classes under particular

circumstances of (sharpening) relative inter-state capitalist competition that desire a consistent theorization and approach to their own goals and managing their relations to competing regional and global hegemonies. Further, as these documents are statements of the respectively solidified and new political economic regimes of former and current administrations, it is argued that the NSS's changes reflect evolving distinct ties to the basic accumulation regimes that produced them. Consequently, the 'civil society' movements that conquered the Armenian state, as during the Velvet Revolution, are taken to possess and represent intrinsic differences in ruling class strategies for the country's internal and external politics with those of its other post-Soviet predecessors.

In the Armenian context, bourgeoisie mainly flows from the politically connected, exclusive manner of post-Soviet neoliberal development. This reality, captured in some literature as political capitalism, locked early republican Armenian into a developmental and strategic path reflective of the post-Stalinist elites' interests (Mihályi and Szelényi 2019; Levitsky and Way 2010; Yue 2018; Mladenov 2021). Deriving from the 1990s, such interests necessitated particular inclusion of military and administrative regard for the self-proclaimed Republic of Artsakh's independence or autonomy, risks of largescale aggression from Azerbaijan and Türkiye, in addition to completing wholesale internal state capture and privatization of the former Soviet commons (King 2008; Solnick 1998).

Timely as such concerns remained, the growth of a layer of transnationalizing middle classes during the next two decades injected 'democracy promotion' politics above and beyond the Republic's own self-proclaimed commitments to republicanism. Their activation and leadership during 2018, in aspirant civil society and state reformers, small business leaders, and NGO actors, found strong purchase within Yerevan for their social justice sloganeering. Such successes within the Velvet Revolution provided implicit filial links to foreign color revolutions, affinity for their foreign inspirations, and the direct substitution of Americanized 'civil society' over the former leadership (Ohanyan 2020; Pee 2015; Way 2008; Rosenberg 1994; Mirzoyan 2010, 53).

The 2007 and 2020 NSS's primary differences must be expressed by the increasing ratchets of context: external developments surrounding each National Security Strategy make the oft-similar language contained within each to be read in highly differing manners. However, this difference lay primarily in appearance for the Republic of Armenia: elsewhere, even in the most consolidated 'democratic states,' such as the United States, government reflects class power and material wealth, and has further been demonstrated to be an oligarchy that biases massively against working and poor in its own right (Gilens 2012; Ferguson 1995; Miliband 1969). The problems in economy and social sector during the governance of the former authorities still weigh mightily upon Armenia even after the coronation of the Velvet leadership. But post-Soviet neoliberalism evidently faced disruptions which would shake the Republic and the region at large, bringing diverse consequences for Armenia's own platforms, as well as those of its partners (Lane 2013).

Therefore, particular issues within the Strategies come to the fore for their consistency and for their divergences. Defense of Artsakh and Armenia's responsibility for the entire diaspora feature prominently. Specifically, where each NSS frequently

spoke to the urgency of defending Artsakh and resolving its independence or recognized sovereignty peacefully and quickly, it referred to the task as one fundamental to assuring the Republic's population and that of the world diaspora of the Republic's capacity to protect the nation at large[2]. However, the manner in which this goal was to be attained could only stretch as far as Armenia's own practical leverage in the region – a matter referred to at length within the Strategies' discussion of military preparedness and modernization[3]. For Artsakh Armenians, this defense depended upon Yerevan's consistent acknowledgement of the region's appeals for sovereignty, Yerevan's ongoing advocacy for such positions against Azerbaijani and Turkish negotiators, and reliance upon the OSCE Minsk Group to function as mediators. In 2020, shifts on this question had not yet occurred, and continuity remained on the Artsakh question[4].

Aspects of this picture would quickly change. In such a vein, the 2020 NSS's initial declaration of faith in democratic principles – a feature it shares with the 2007 NSS–are announced to proclaim the Armenian leadership's concerns about weakening commitment to democracy around the world[5]. Likewise, the 2020 NSS further states Yerevan officialdom's worry about the creeping influence of online 'misinformation' upon domestic politics. Perhaps tangentially, international actors that work with regional actors that create problems for Yerevan (such as via arms sales to Azerbaijan) provided sufficient ire and concern for Prime Minister Pashinyan's direct comment within the 2020 NSS that 'foreign (subversive) interests were a cause for concern'[6].

The quality and number of Armenia's international relationships, too, also shifted between the two NSS's. Most notably, references to complementarism – a viable policy enacted during high globalization so to overlap Armenia's foreign relations with diverse strategic blocs for strategic gains following 'multi-alignment' principles – was entirely dropped from the document (Pogosyan 2011; Minasyan 2012; Giragosian 2020). Instead, "Peace and International Cooperation" filled the breach, and here limited to a listicle of national security partners in Russia, the CSTO, the US, NATO, EU, and OSCE. However, the Pashinyan administration's predecessors had managed such relations and had also even expanded its international portfolio via multi-alignment to actors far afield from the Caucasus and Euroamerican and Russian actors (Minasyan 2012).

War has been a factor of Caucasian history, but it is nowhere its defining or its final, climactic feature. Instead, motifs and notes concerning explicit and implicit rivals in 2007 and 2020 indicate sharp changes in the Armenian bourgeois society. The Velvet vanguard's advanced, changed position on prior, long-term political economic strategic partners, and their historic hegemonic blocs, paces far ahead of their public. With opening shots fired against the official relationships of Yerevan and Moscow

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[2] Arlis.am. 2007. "National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia." Accessed April 20, 2023. https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?docID=31189.
[3] Ibid.
[4] The Government of the RA. 2020. "National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia: A Resilient Armenia in a Changing World." Accessed April 20, 2023. https://www.gov.am/en/National-Security-Strategy/.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.

capitals, the fundamental patron of Armenian military wherewithal and its longstanding strategy of awaiting a formal peace deal for Artsakh is in question, and Armenia's regional position jeopardized.

Concurrently, the 2007 and 2020 strategies indicate the sharpening competitions of capitalist rivalry flaring in the region, producing changes and fractures in the Yerevan capitalist class's strategic capacity and regional reserve alongside its wide new gambles. With the Turkish and Azerbaijani rivalry with Armenia a constant problem for its national leadership, their prior interest in foreign dealmaking in the previously unending era of globalization has dissipated as pressing national concerns have rushed forward thanks primarily to their internal logic – not contingency. Wider strategic changes, alongside an apparently transformed, revolutionized hegemony of prior concerns, are to be understood at once as the new presiding interests of the state and region, and thereby of the new hegemony surviving in the country, reproducing, and evolving its upper leadership, as well as their decisions.

Conclusion and discussion

Thus, there are elements characteristic of political realism and liberalism in both national security strategies adopted by Armenia after 1991, but both strategies can be considered a combination of political realism and liberalism. The liberal approach in the 2020 NSS is more expanded and has a greater specific weight than in the 2007 Strategy. It has mostly two manifestations: first, Armenia's national security is viewed in the context of regional and international security, and relevant organizations, and therefore, on the one hand, inter-state security threats are considered detrimental to Armenia's security, while on the other hand, attacks on Armenia are seen more broadly as challenges to international and regional security orders. Secondly, the document assigns a significant role to democracy, considering it almost as a key for both international and Armenian national security. Therefore, in the world and, in particular, in Armenia's neighboring countries, the retreat from democracy, as well as human rights violations are seen as challenges to Armenia's security. However, the presentation of creeping autocracy favored within the 2020 Strategy belies both the lack of substantive internal changes since 2018 and the specific kind of freedom offered by liberalism. Rather than producing a highly democratic society with rigorous involvement of the mass working public, participation instead remains meted out and most favorable to those with ample pre-existing wealth, connections to industry, or connections to specific sectors of the state bureaucracy. The bourgeoisie in Armenia supposedly displaced from political power in fact never disappeared, which renders its factoring in foreign policy statements more indicative of vector preferences or than substantive qualitative changes to Armenia's surroundings. Nonetheless, the military and political processes of 2020-2023 exacerbated the existing security problems in Armenia and caused new threats. Addressing these developments requires honesty and clarity to alter course toward the desired target openly. The created situation requires a review of Armenia's security strategy and an upgrade with new approaches and tools.

Supplementary material

The supplementary material for this article can be found at https://doi.org/10.46991/JOPS/2023.2.6.011

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The authors declare no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.

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The authors affirm this research did not involve human subjects.

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