**(U) Executive Summary**

(U) (U) The Caucasus region has a long history of warfare; ethnic and religious factionalism; and general political, military, and civilian unrest. In addition to these internal regional divisions, outside actors like the US, the European Union (EU), China, and Middle East nations have increasing strategic interests in the region. The Caucasus thus represents a flashpoint where highly localized conflict can spill over into widespread unrest or general war. (U) The U.S. generally favors Atropia due to its strategic location and the counter balance that it provides to Arianan and Donovian influence in the Caspian Sea region. Atropia grants extensive freedom for U.S. forces to use military facilities within in the country for logistics and flight routes. The two dominant reasons for internal conflict in Atropia are nationalism and separatist movements. State and non-state actors have struggled to gain legitimacy and influence over the populace, and sporadic violence over the last decade has targeted government leaders and key entities. (U) Atropia is a neutral, Western-leaning dictatorship controlled by the Ismailov family. Although secularized, Atropia is not a broadly democratic state. The predominant religion in Atropia is Shi?a Islam, but due to government secularization, religion does not have a great influence on politics within the country. (U) The two dominant reasons for internal conflict in Atropia are nationalism and separatist movements. Long standing tensions exist between Atropia and Donovia. Donovia has long viewed the three northern provinces of Hachzi, Erdabil, and Vetlia in Atropia as theirs. The majority population of these provinces are Donovian?s. Atropia?s three northern provinces are rich in oil and gas fields that are currently largely untapped by the Atropian government. Donovia is still recovering from its economic collapse two decades ago. Atropia?s construction of new oil and gas pipelines that avoid Donovia adds to the countries economic struggles. (U) The Bilasuvar Freedom Brigade is an insurgency organization with the goal to create their own nation-state in northern Atropia with the support of Donovia. Donovia?s political party, the United Donovian Party, will likely utilize connections with the BFB to covertly accomplish military objectives in the region. Donovia would also fund the BFB to conduct acts against Atropian governmental facilities and assets, such as oil pipelines and government offices ahead of an invasion force.

**(U) 1945**

(U) United Donovian Republic gains control of Erdabil Province and the oil refineries in the region

**(U) 1983**

(U) Atropia gains control of Erdabil Province as a result of the collapse of the United Donovian Republic

**(U) February 1994**

(U) 100 Bilasuvar killed by Atropian government

**(U) April 1994**

(U) BFB and BNFM founded

**(U) 26 June 2016**

(U) Following Atropian National elections, Atropian President declares higher tax rate on Bilasuvar citizens

**(U) 31 July 2016**

(U) BFB leads Bilasuvar citizens in protests over new tax law.

**(U) 6 September 2016**

(U) BFB protests turn violent; Atropian Government buildings are destroyed in Daska

**(U) 15 October 2016**

(U) Following BFB led protests, Atropian forces attack several Bilasuvar villages, killing over 700 people

**(U) 16 October 2016**

(U) Donovia Threatens Atropia with Military action over unethical treatment of Bilasuvar citizens

**(U) 22 October 2016**

(U) UNSCR 4882: Reaffirming sovereignty of Atropia

**(U) 29 October 2016**

(U) President Obama Presidential Directive on Interagency Efforts Concerning Potential Operations in the Southeastern Caucasus Region

**(U) 8 November 2016**

(U) US Forces arrive in Atropia

**(U) 8 December 2016**

(U) Donovian Forces begin to mass along Atropian border

**(U) 18 December 2016**

(U) Donovian Forces OSC-South conducting Operation Southern Watch

**(U) 28 December 2016**

(U) Donovian demands for Atropia to concede Northern Provinces

**(U) 7 January 2017**

(U) Donovian invades Atropia

**(U) Area Overview**

(U) Over 200,000 square miles comprise the Caucasus, a mountainous region located between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. The Caucasus includes Atropia, Limaria, and Gorgas, as well as parts of Ariana, Donovia, and Kalaria. The Caucasus Mountains, consisting of the Greater and Lesser Caucasus ranges, traditionally form the separation between Europe and Asia. The Caucasus region contains two major parts?the North Caucasus and the South Caucasus?that are divided by the Greater Caucasus Mountains. The North Caucasus region is contained entirely within Donovia, while the South Caucasus contains Gorgas, Limaria, Atropia, and parts of Ariana and Kalaria. The Caspian Sea holds large oil and natural gas reserves, potentially as large as those in Saudi Arabia, which contribute to the region?s geostrategic importance

**(U) Regions Strategic Overview**

(U) (U) Despite some advances in the creation of parliamentary and electoral mechanisms, enactment of limited liberal legislation, and the development of new leaders, the legitimacy of the region?s governments remains limited. Oil and natural gas resources draw outside powers to the Caucasus, but the region?s history of outside interference and ethnic conflict makes its nations wary and prone to vendettas and grudges, whether in the countries? best interests or not. Contributing to the inter-regional strife are the various political ideals and goals espoused by each individual nation: Atropia is a classic dictatorship and uses a dynastic approach to governance. Every national success or failure reflects directly on the ruling family. Donovia is an authoritarian state led by a small, incestuous elite. This group uses state power and resources to enrich itself and secure both domestic and international political support. The Donovian elite wants to return Donovia to a co-equal place with the Great Powers of the world. (U) Atropia?s military forces consist of a small army, navy, and air force that have limited offensive capability, with doctrine and structure that reflect decades of Donovian influence. The Atropian military?s current key mission is to defend its oil and gas infrastructure. Atropia hopes its oil and gas revenues?and the resulting prestige and power?will translate into a more robust military and overall regional power. (U) Donovia maintains a strong military, partially as an inheritance from its pre-1991 strength and partially through economic wealth being used to transform the pre-1991 military remnants into a modern military. Donovian doctrine and tactics are complex, supple, and competent, making Donovia a capable opponent. Donovia?s military capability ranges from irregular forces to nuclear weapons and anti-space capability. This strong military, combined with its assertive political agenda, make Donovia a prime consideration for all nations in the region. \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* (U) Analyst Comment: Several factors threaten security and stability throughout the Caucasus region. For the most part, the region has no functional border guard units, so the borders remain quite porous. Secessionist conflicts, limited political and economic reforms, and increased social problems provide a fertile ground for germination of radical groups, infiltration of foreign Islamic networks, and formation of militant organizations. Overall, unresolved territorial conflicts pose the most dangerous and immediate threat to the region?s security. Since the region?s distancing from Donovian influence, political divisions within the Caucasus have hardened to create deep animosity between some of the countries. A long history of conflict has created borders that are often illogical, with contested boundaries that divide ethnic groups, rupture trade and communication routes, and split previous economic and political interdependencies.