

**THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT AND THE ARMENIAN
FOREIGN POLICY: 1988-2007**

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis analyses the impact of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on the foreign policy of Armenia. It could be claimed that Armenia's relations with the other countries have been shaped by the Nagorno-Karabakh problem. The thesis demonstrates that because of this conflict, Armenian foreign policy has become more dependent on Russia and the Armenian diaspora in Russia, France and the United States despite its desire to be an independent state. Although Levon Ter-Petrossian and Robert Kocharian have advocated different foreign policies, their actions have been similar due to the impact of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

The thesis has six main chapters. The first chapter is the introduction. The second chapter explores history of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In the third chapter the Armenian foreign policy under Levon Ter-Petrossian is examined. The fourth chapter discusses the foreign policy of Robert Kocharian. In the fifth chapter the foreign policies of the Ter-Petrossian and Kocharian are compared. The sixth chapter is the conclusion.

Keywords: Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenia, Levon Ter-Petrossian, Robert Kocharian, Frozen Conflicts.

ÖZ

DAĞLIK-KARABAĞ SORUNU VE ERMENİSTAN'IN DIŞ POLİTİKASI: 1988-2007

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Bu tez Dağlık-Karabağ sorununun Ermenistan'ın dış politikasına etkisini incelemektedir. Ermenistan'ın diğer ülkelerle ilişkilerinin bu sorun kapsamında şekillendiği söylenebilir. Dağlık-Karabağ sorunu yüzünden Ermenistan'ın dış politikası, bağımsız olmak istemesine rağmen, Rusya'ya, Rusya, Fransa ve ABD'deki diasporaya bağımlı olmuştur. Levon Ter-Petrossian ve Robert Kocharian farklı politikalar izlemelerine rağmen, Dağlık-Karabağ sorunu yüzünden benzer davranışlar içinde olmuşlardır.

Bu tez, altı bölümden oluşmaktadır. İlk bölüm giriş kısmı olup ikinci bölüm, Dağlık Karabağ sorununun tarihçesini incelemektedir. Üçüncü bölümde Levon Ter-Petrossian yönetimindeki Ermenistan dış politikası incelenmiştir. Dördüncü bölüm, Robert Koçaryan'ın dış politikasını incelerken beşinci bölümde ise Ter-Petrossian ve Koçaryan'ın dış politikaları karşılaştırılmaktadır. Altıncı bölüm ise sonuç kısmıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dağlık Karabağ, Ermenistan, Levon Ter-Petrossian, Robert Kocharian , Dondurulmuş Çatışmalar.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis will evaluate the effect of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on the foreign policy of Armenia. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict constitutes one of the most important conflicts in the Caucasus. It is an ongoing dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan since the 19th century and it became a conflict between two independent countries after the independence of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The conflict is important because it delays the political and economical development of Armenia and Azerbaijan. It directly affects the relations of Armenia with the other countries. Because of the conflict, Armenia had failed to have good relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey; she became dependent on Russia. As a result of the conflict, the Armenian diaspora had the chance to be effective in Armenia. Moreover, the conflict is important because it impedes the stability in the region.

According to Kamer Kasım, Armenian foreign policy is affected by Armenian diaspora. He states that Armenian diaspora and the diaspora parties are forces which try to influence Armenian foreign policy.¹ Diaspora is influential in the foreign policy however the main factor that shapes the foreign policy is the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Diaspora is also involved in the conflict, because of the pressure of the diaspora Levon Ter-Petrossian, the first President of Armenia could not make concessions regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Gerard Libaridian, asks the question “has Armenia crossed the road and what direction it travelled?” and states that between 1990-1997 under the leadership of Armenian National Movement (ANM) in the direction of independence and normalcy however in the absence of a solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict had

¹ Kamer Kasım, “Armenia’s Foreign Policy: Basic Parameters of the Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Kocaryan Era”, online at <http://www.turkishweekly.net/articles.php?id=13> (accessed on 20.08.2006)

not reached the other side.² As Libaridian explains, if Armenia wants to be independent in her foreign policy she has to find a solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Because as stated above, Armenia cannot have good relations with its neighbouring countries because of the conflict. Moreover, due to the conflict Russia continues to have military bases in Armenia. Armenia wants to break the dependency on Russia however cannot do so, as there is an ongoing dispute in Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia needs to be militarily strong which makes her dependent on Russia on this sense. This argument shows that Armenia cannot shape its foreign policy towards Russia without putting the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute apart. In Robert Kocharian's presidency, Armenia follows a foreign policy of having good relations with Russia and the USA, on the other hand tries to keep Azerbaijan and Turkey away. Sedat Laçiner explains this policy as "complementary foreign policy".³ It can be stated that Armenia had to follow such kind of a policy because of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict because she needs the support of Russia, the USA and Iran.

The thesis will firstly try to focus on the historical background of the conflict. In the second chapter the history of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is evaluated. The Nagorno-Karabakh region is extremely fertile and thus could also be used to provide for Soviet Armenia as only 9 percent of lands of Soviet Armenia is arable. Therefore the region is important for Armenia. Armenians claim that the region had been populated by Armenians for almost two thousand years and they accuse Azerbaijan for taking the region unjustly. However according to Azerbaijan, modern Armenian inhabitants of Nagorno-Karabakh are not Armenians, they are Armenianized Albanians, thus Azerbaijanis.

The Nagorno-Karabakh became a Russian province in 1822 after the Russo-Iranian war and stayed so until 1917. On 5 August 1918, it became *de facto* independent as proclaimed by the first Congress of the Armenians of Karabakh. After all of the

² Gerard J. Libaridian, *The Challenge of Statehood: Armenian Political Thinking Since Independence*, (Watertown, Mass.: Blue Crane Books, 1999), p. 8

³ Sedat Laçiner, *Türkler ve Ermeniler: Bir Uluslararası İlişkiler Çalışması*, (Ankara: USAK Press, 2005), p.218

Caucasus came under Soviet control, the Mountainous Karabakh Autonomous Oblast was created and attached to Azerbaijan in 1921.

During the Stalin era, occasional demands of Karabakh being attached to Armenia were met with harsh reactions from Moscow. After the death of Stalin, Karabakh applied to Moscow on numerous occasions and demanded that the area to be joined with Azerbaijan without its consent. The reformist activities that started in Gorbachev era in the Soviet Union caused Karabakh Armenians to demand for secession grounding their demands on self-determination. The ideas of *perestroika* and *glasnost* which are brought by Gorbachev made the hopes for re-attaching the Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia arouse again.

In the conflict, both Azerbaijanis and Armenians accuse each other of territorial and ethnic expansion and aggression. They interpret the conflict differently. Armenians claim the right to “self-determination” in the conflict while Azerbaijanis argue that Karabakh is critical to the territorial integrity of their country. Today, Nagorno-Karabakh is a *de facto* independent state and its status is not recognized by any state including Armenia or any international organization.

In the third chapter, the foreign policy of the first President of Armenia, Levon Ter-Petrossian will be evaluated. Levon Ter-Petrossian, first became the leader of the Karabakh Committee which is an anti-communist organization and supports the unification of Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia. He, then became the member and then chairman of The Board of the Armenian Pan-National Movement (ANM). On October 16, 1991, Levon Ter-Petrossian became the first president of Armenia.

The most important factor in shaping his foreign policy is Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. During Levon Ter-Petrossian era, Azerbaijan faced its first important loss in Khojaly in January 1992, which was an important strategic gain for Armenian militias. Khojaly massacre turned the international media’s attention to the conflict. Shusha, which was the last remaining Azeri-inhabited area in the region was occupied by Armenian forces in May 1992. Right after the fall of Shusha, Armenian forces attacked Lachin which is a town situated at the narrowest strip of Azerbaijani

land separating Nagorno-Karabakh from Armenia. The fall of Lachin created a physical link, a corridor between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh and ended the isolation of Karabakh. Armenia continued to occupy Azerbaijani territories and in the spring of 1994, about 12 per cent of Azerbaijani territory came under the control of the Nagorno-Karabakh military forces.⁴

The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), with its current name Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) involved in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as a mediator in 1992, creating the Minsk Group which is dedicated to finding a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Knowing the importance of the effect of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on the foreign policy of Armenia, Levon Ter-Petrossian was moderate to OSCE's proposals regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. However, this brought his end as he was forced by the opposition and the diaspora to resign because he showed the signs of accepting OSCE's proposal and thus accused of making too much concessions on Nagorno-Karabakh dispute.

Levon Ter-Petrossian tried to improve Armenia's relations with its neighbours. He pursued relatively a mild policy towards Turkey because he was aware of the fact that without having good relations with the neighbouring countries it is not possible for Armenia to be flourished. Therefore during Levon Ter-Petrossian era, Armenia did not voice their claims of "so-called genocide" or "lost lands" to have good relations with Turkey. However, it is important to note that in the Declaration of Independence of Republic of Armenia under which Levon Ter-Petrossian has his signature, the East Anatolia region of Turkey is defined as "Western Armenia" and also the declaration stated that Armenia would work for internationally recognition of the so-called genocide.⁵

The relations of Armenia with the other countries like Russia and the USA are also affected by the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Levon Ter-Petrossian wanted to break dependency of Armenia on Russia, however due to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict

⁴ Nikolay Hovhannisyanyan, *The Karabakh Problem, Factors, Criteria, Variants of Solution*, (Yerevan: National Academy of Sciences of Armenia Institute of Oriental Studies, 1999), p.47

⁵ "Declaration of Independence of the Republic of Armenia" online at <http://www.armenica.org/armenia/doi.html> (accessed on 20.11.2006)

he could not do so. Russia was involved in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as she took part in the Minsk group and supported the peaceful solution of the conflict. Relations with the USA is related with the Armenian diaspora living in that country. Levon Ter-Petrossian wanted to lessen the diaspora's effect on the state policies however the diaspora continued to be effective in the state policies. Levon Ter-Petrossian's policy toward the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict did not satisfy the diaspora and brought his end.

After the resignation of Levon Ter-Petrossian, Robert Kocharian became the president in 1998. Robert Kocharian was the President of the so-called Nagorno-Karabakh Defence Committee in 1992 and became the President of self-proclaimed Nagorno-Karabakh in 1996. He was then made the Prime Minister of Armenia on 20 March 1996 by Levon Ter-Petrossian and then became the second President of Armenia on 30 March 1998.

In the fourth chapter, the foreign policy of Robert Kocharian will be examined. Robert Kocharian pursued a harsh policy compared to Levon Ter-Petrossian, he wanted to have good relations with the countries other than Azerbaijan and Turkey. Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is also the determinant factor in shaping his foreign policy. Because of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Armenia continued to be dependent on Russia also under Robert Kocharian's Presidency. Robert Kocharian wanted to use the USA as a balance factor for Russia however could not get the support of the USA as Azerbaijan began to gain importance in the South Caucasus policy of the USA.

Robert Kocharian is a strong supporter of the so-called Nagorno-Karabakh Republic recognizing the right of the people of the Nagorno-Karabakh to self-determination and self-defense. As a result of the conflict, it is impossible for Armenia to ameliorate its relations with Azerbaijan. Moreover, it is not likely for Armenia to have good relations with Turkey if Robert Kocharian continues his uncompromising attitude in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

OSCE's mediatory role in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict continued during Robert Kocharian's presidency however he was not moderate to OSCE's proposals as Levon Ter-Petrossian was. In April 1999, the negotiations over the dispute moved to level of Presidents and in the summer of 1999, Aliyev and Robert Kocharian agreed in principle on a new idea, proposing land swap between Azerbaijan and Armenia. In 2004, the Prague Process started in the conflict and the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan came together in Prague concerning the conflict. The parties had put forward their past views regarding the conflict as self-determination and territorial integrity therefore could not reach to a consensus. The mediatory role of OSCE continues however it does not seem possible for the parties of the conflict to come to an agreement as they both refrain to make concessions.

While the common factor that shapes the foreign policies of Levon Ter-Petrossian and Robert Kocharian is the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, there are differences between the approaches of the two presidents to the conflict. As stated above, Levon Ter-Petrossian follows a relatively moderate policy in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict while Robert Kocharian follows an uncompromising attitude. Although they have different views regarding the conflict, Levon Ter-Petrossian and Robert Kocharian could not help shaping their foreign policies taking the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict into consideration. Also other differences lie in their view of the diaspora, relations with Turkey and their economical policies. These differences will be explained in the fifth chapter.

Finally, I will come to the conclusion that the foreign policy of Armenia is shaped mainly by the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. However, she will try to refrain from forming definite suggestions concerning the future of the conflict as the process is still going on and it can be changed according to new developments. For example, in 2008 there will be presidential elections in Armenia. These elections are important because the result of the elections will determine the future of the conflict. If Serge Sarkisyan, the current Prime Minister of Armenia and the Chairman of the Republican Party of Armenia wins the elections then it is likely that the conflict will continue as in the same way in today. Because Sarkisyan follows similar policy to that of Robert Kocharian. Therefore the foreign policy of Armenia will continue to

be shaped by the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict if Sarkisyan became the third president of Armenia.

Levon Ter-Petrossian also announced his candidacy at the end of October in 2007 to run in the presidential elections to be held in February 2008. Experts doubted that that Levon Ter-Petrossian will not run for presidency unless he knows that he can win.⁶ On the other hand some say that his support in Armenia is not widespread because people blame Levon Ter-Petrossian for weak management of the government and corruption. Levon Ter-Petrossian considers the lack of progress on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as the most serious failure of the current leadership, one which holds Armenia's development back and has the propensity to endanger Armenia's territorial integrity in the future. The return of Levon Ter-Petrossian to Armenia's politics is a promising development in terms of generating a more lively debate on the country's present and future policies. If he wins the elections, then the future of the conflict can differ. However, the conflict will continue to affect the foreign policy of Armenia.

⁶ "First President of Armenia Levon Ter-Petrossian Announces Candidacy", online at <http://www.huliq.com/39676/first-president-of-armenia-levon-ter-petrosian-announces-candidacy> (accessed on 01.11.2007)

CHAPTER 2

HISTORY OF THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT

In this chapter, the historical origins of the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute will be evaluated. In this regard, after explaining the origins and the evolution of the conflict in a chronological order, the importance of the region for Armenia and Azerbaijan will be explained. Then, the Armenian and Azerbaijani perception of the conflict will be examined. Lastly, Self-Proclaimed Nagorno-Karabakh Republic will be evaluated.



Figure 1. Map of Nagorno-Karabakh Region

Source: www.lib.utexas.edu/.../nagorno-karabakh.gif

2.1. Historical Origins of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict

Nagorno-Karabakh has been an ongoing dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan since the late nineteenth century. However the seeds of the conflict can be traced back much more earlier. In order to understand how this conflict affects the foreign policy of Armenia, it would be useful to study the emerging of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Therefore, in the first part the roots of the conflict will be examined.

Kara is Turkish for ‘black’ and *bagh* is Iranian for ‘garden’ and the word *nagorno* derived from the Russian word “nagorny” meaning “mountainous”⁷ The region was administrated by a Turkish speaking Soviet Republic Azerbaijan and it was attached to Azerbaijan in 1921 by Stalin.

Only 9 per cent of lands of Soviet Armenia is arable which is not enough to feed its population. Nagorno-Karabakh on the other hand is an extremely fertile region which could also be used to provide for Soviet Armenia.⁸ Therefore, the region was economically important for Armenia.

Armenia claimed that Nagorno-Karabakh has been a heartland of Armenian civilization for centuries starting from seventh century BC.⁹ According to Armenians, Karabakh had been populated by Armenians for almost 2,000 years and they claim that Karabakh had been unjustly taken from the Armenian motherland and made part of Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh is a missing part of Armenia and that unification was the only way.¹⁰ On the other hand, Azerbaijanis rejected Armenian’s territorial demands on the grounds that under Soviet constitution, a

⁷ Christopher J. Walker, *Armenia and Karabagh, The Struggle for Unity*, (London: Minority Rights Publications, 1991), p. 69

⁸ Haig E. Asenbauer, *On the Right of Self-determination of the Armenian People of Nagorno Karabakh*, (New York: The Armenian Prelacy, 1996), p.77

⁹ Michael P. Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict, Causes and Implications*, (The USA: Praeger Publications, 1998), p.10

¹⁰ Nora Dudwick, “Nagorno-Karabakh and the Politics of Sovereignty” in *Transcaucasia, Nationalism, and Social Change, Essays in the History of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia*, (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1996), p.427

republic's borders could not be altered without its consent. According to Croissant, Azerbaijani scholars claim that modern Armenian inhabitants of Nagorno-Karabakh are not Armenians *per se*, but are Armenianized Albanians and thus Azerbaijanis.¹¹

At the beginning of the 19th century, Russia attacked the Persian Empire in Transcaucasia and in 1805 Russia took over Karabakh as a result of Russo-Iranian war and in 1822 Karabakh was turned into a Russian province, Elisavetpol. The Russians linked the Karabakh region with the plains to the east which were inhabited predominantly by Azerbaijanis. By doing so, Russia brought the economies and transportation networks of both areas closer together with Nagorno-Karabakh becoming integrated gradually but completely into the economic system of Eastern Transcaucasia.¹² Azerbaijan used this link to justify the inclusion of Nagorno-Karabakh within the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic.

Karabakh stayed as part of the province of Elisavetpol until 1917¹³. On 5 August 1918, Mountainous Karabakh became *de facto* independent as decreed by the first "Congress of the Armenians of Karabakh".¹⁴ On August 22, 1919, the Armenian leaders of Karabakh signed an agreement with the Republic of Azerbaijan, accepting its authority until the final decision on Mountainous Karabakh was made at the Paris Peace Conference. By this agreement, the Armenians of Karabakh were granted cultural autonomy.¹⁵ This agreement established an important precedent concerning the relations of Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan and Armenia declared independence on 28 May 1918. Independent Azerbaijan could only stand for 23 months until Red Army occupation on 27 April 1920. On the next day, on 28 April 1920, Socialist Azerbaijan Republic has been

¹¹ Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict, Causes and Implications*, pp.11-12

¹² Shireen T. Hunter, *The Transcaucasus in Transition: Nation-Building and Conflict*, (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1994), pp.97-98

¹³ Walker, *op.cit.*, p.83

¹⁴ Walker, *op.cit.*, p.91

¹⁵ Gerard Libaridian, "Pre-Soviet History of Karabakh", in *The Karabakh File: Documents and Facts on the Region of Mountainous Karabakh , 1918-1988*, (Zoryan Insitute, 1988), p.3

established.¹⁶ In November 1920, Armenia has been occupied by the Red Army and Socialist Armenian Republic has been proclaimed on 29 November 1920.¹⁷

Nagorno-Karabakh was attached to Azerbaijan by Stalin on March 17, 1921¹⁸. Stalin's decision on the Nagorno-Karabakh's situation was derived from his "divide and rule" policy. By attaching the region to Azerbaijan, the Armenian inhabitants could be used as potential hostages to ensure the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic's cooperation.¹⁹ So Stalin created the Autonomous Oblast of Nagorno-Karabakh (AONK) on 7 July 1923 and drew its borders in order to leave a narrow strip of land separating it physically from Armenia.²⁰

In 1927, a non-partisan coalition was formed which the Armenian Communists, Dashnaks, Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries were represented under the name of "Karabakh to Armenia". The coalition demanded the union of Armenian regions not included in the Nagorno-Karabakh region with it as well as the return of this entire region to Soviet Armenia.²¹

The cause of unification between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh was again taken up during the "thaw" of Khrushchev period.²² On 19 May 1964, a petition signed by 2,500 Karabakh Armenians was sent to Prime Minister Nikita Khrushchev stating that "chauvinist policy of Azerbaijan, designed to ruin the economy of the Armenian

¹⁶ Asker Kartal, "Azerbaycan-Ermenistan Savaşı", in *Avrasya Dosyası* (1995), Volume:2, No:4, p.90

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.90

¹⁸ Rutland Peter, "Ermenistan'da Demokrasi ve Milliyetçilik" in *Avrasya Dosyası* (1995), Volume:2, No:4, p.11

¹⁹ Croissant, *op.cit.*, p.20

²⁰ Walker, *op.cit.*, p.109

²¹ Asenbauer, Haig. E., *op.cit.*, p.73

²² "Khrushchev's thaw" refers to the period during the late 1950s and early 1960s when repressions and censorship reached a low level. In the West, it is known as a thaw in the icy tension between the United States and the USSR during the Cold War. The tension were able to thaw because of Khrushchev's de-Stalinization of the USSR. Khrushchev's Thaw developed largely as a result of Khrushchev's theory of peaceful co-existence which believed the two superpowers (the USA and the USSR) and their ideologies could co-exist together, without war.

population and to force the Armenians to leave”²³. The petition concluded with a demand that Karabakh be attached to either to Armenia or to the Russian Federation.

²⁴ In the petition it was stated as follows:

the Armenians of the Autonomous Region of Nagorno-Karabakh and surroundings have reached such a level of hopelessness as a result of the shattering burden of our living conditions, that we have decided to turn to you in order to obtain your protection and your help... The Armenian population of the Azerbaijan SSR has been subject to chauvinistic Pan-Turkic policy is being pursued which is both unacceptable and hostile to the authorities in Azerbaijan ... Discrimination is everywhere... We have already protested that in fact no autonomous region exists... We therefore desire a speedy decision in favor of the reincorporation of Nagorno-Karabakh and of all neighbouring Armenian regions into the Armenian SSR or that it become part of the RSFSR.”²⁵

But the petition remained unanswered. In June of 1965, another petition was sent to Moscow by 13 prominent Karabakh Armenian forwarding the same demands.²⁶ In 1966, Yerevan send a petition to Moscow demanding the re-attachment of Karabakh to Armenia.²⁷ All these petitions were resultless. The new Constitution of the Soviet Union of 1977, in article 87, once again granted Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijan.²⁸

2.2. Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict in the Gorbachev Era

When Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in Russia as the General Secretary of the Communist Party in 1985, the hopes for re-attaching Karabakh to Armenia aroused again with the effect of the ideas of *perestroika* and *glasnost*. *Perestroika* was Gorbachev’s program of economic restructuring and in tandem with this policy, *glasnost* was a policy of openness in order to allow public debate of formerly taboo issues.²⁹

²³ Walker, *op.cit.* p.118

²⁴ Walker. *op.cit.*, p.118

²⁵ Asenbauer, Haig. E, *op.cit.* p.74

²⁶ Croissant, *op.cit.*, p. 20

²⁷ Walker, *op.cit.*, p.119

²⁸ Asenbauer, Haig. E, *op.cit.* p.75

²⁹ Martin Malia, *The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917-1991*, (New York: Free Press, 1994), p. 409-424 cited in Croissant, *The Armenian-Azerbaijan Conflict*, p.46

The reformist activities that started in Gorbachev era in the Soviet Union caused Karabakh Armenians to demand for secession grounding their demands self-determination starting from 1987-1988.³⁰ In 1987, the Armenians' growing optimism for union with Nagorno-Karabakh was again voiced in a petition signed approximately 75,000 Armenians which was sent to Gorbachev, demanding for the Soviet leader "to re-attach Mountainous Karabakh to Socialist Armenia".³¹

Another development in accordance with these demands took place on 20 February 1988 when the Soviet of People's Deputies of Nagorno-Karabakh passed a resolution by a vote of 110 to 17 requesting the Oblast's transfer to the Armenian SSR:

Expressing the wish of the proletariat of the Autonomous Region of Nagorno-Karabakh, to request the Azerbaijani and Armenian Supreme Soviets to demonstrate understanding towards the demand of the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh and solve the problem of transferring the Autonomous Region of Nagorno-Karabakh from the Azerbaijani SSR to the Armenian SSR. At the same time, to apply to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR for a positive solution of the problem of transferring the Autonomous Region of Nagorno-Karabakh from the Azerbaijani SSR to the Armenian SSR.³²

However the Central Committee of Communist Party of the USSR rejected the union between Armenia and the NKAO :

Having examined the information about the developments in the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) Central Committee holds the actions and demands directed at revising the existing national and territorial structure contradict the interests of the working people in Soviet Azerbaijan and Armenia and damage inter-ethnic relations.³³

³⁰ Rosvshan Ibrahimov, "Dağlık Karabağ Sözde Cumhuriyeti'nin Bağımsızlığının Tanınması Durumunda Uluslararası Ortamda Ortaya Çıkabilecek Sorunlar", *Azerbaycan-Ermeni Araştırmaları*, No.6, Summer 2002, p.2

³¹ Libaridian, *The Karabakh File*, p.88

³² Libaridian, *The Karabakh File*, p.90

³³ Libaridian, *The Karabakh File*, p.98

In protest against the decision of the Central Committee, mass demonstrations were held in Yerevan starting from 23 February, 1988.³⁴

On February 25, 1988, the spiritual leader of the Armenians, Catholicos Vazgen I, sent a letter to Gorbachev, referring to the constitutional “right of self-determination” and the decision of the Soviet of Nagorno-Karabakh on February 20, 1988.³⁵ From the end of February until the beginning of March 1988, according to the official Soviet statements, 26 Armenians and 6 Azerbaijanis were killed in Sumgait and Kirovabad. As a result of these killings many Armenians fled to Armenia and Azerbaijanis to Azerbaijan.³⁶ Soviet troops intervened and imposed martial law. Armenians considered the killings in Sumgait as an assault on people and a warning.³⁷ The European Parliament endorsed a resolution on July 7, 1988 and condemned the death of Armenians in Sumgait.³⁸

On March 9, 1988, Gorbachev declared in a speech to the Central Committee, that border changes would be out of the question.³⁹ The central authorities of the Soviet Union recognized that the self-determination movement in Nagorno-Karabakh had very serious economic, social and cultural background.⁴⁰ On March 24, 1988, the Central Committee of the CPSU together with the Council of Ministers of the USSR approved a 21-point comprehensive program for the social and economic development of the Autonomous Region of Nagorno-Karabakh.⁴¹ The Communist

³⁴ Haig E. Asenbauer, *On the Right of Self-determination of the Armenian People of Nagorno-Karabakh*, (New York: The Armenian Prelacy, 1996), p.81

³⁵ See Asenbauer, *On The Right of Self-determination of the Armenian People of Nagorno-Karabakh*, p. 323 for the letter of Catholicos Vazgen I.

³⁶ Asenbauer, *op. cit.*, p.82

³⁷ Christopher J.Walker, *Armenia the Survival of a Nation*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1990), p. 401

³⁸ Nikolay Hovhannisyan, *The Karabakh Problem, Factors, Criteria, Variants of Solution*, (Yerevan: National Academy of Sciences of Armenia Institute of Oriental Studies, 1999), p.32

³⁹ Asenbauer, *op.cit.*, p.83

⁴⁰ Hovhannisyan, *op.cit.*, p.33

⁴¹ See Asenbauer, *On the Right of Self-determination of the Armenian People of Nagorno-Karabakh*, p. 327 for the Joint Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Council of Ministers of the USSR.

Party Central Committee and the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union decided that continued attention must be given to the economic, social and cultural development of the region, more houses should be constructed, necessary measures should be taken to enable the NKAO to receive Soviet, Armenian and Azerbaijani television programs.⁴² Light engineering, food processing, vehicle-assembly and other plants were established; raw material was imported and finished products exported. Armenia had to import 95 percent of its energy needs.⁴³

On June 15, 1988, the Supreme Soviet of Armenia accepted a resolution in answer to the decision of the Soviet of Nagorno-Karabakh on February 20, 1988. In the resolution the Supreme Soviet Armenia stated that it “agreed to transfer the Autonomous Region of Mountanious Karabakh to the Armenian SSR, based on the 70th article of the Constitution of the USSR concerning the right of self-determination”.⁴⁴ Moreover, it requested the Supreme Soviet of the USSR to find a positive solution to the transfer of the Autonomous Region of Karabakh from the Azerbaijani SSR to the Armenian SSR. By this resolution, Armenian Parliament wanted to show that it was not Armenia which demanded Nagorno-Karabakh but people of Nagorno-Karabakh itself decided to be attached to Armenia. Supreme Soviet of Azerbaijan responded the Resolution in two days rejecting the transfer of the Oblast because such a move would violate the Soviet constitution.⁴⁵

In June 1988 the “Karabakh Committee” also called “Committee of Armenia for the Karabakh Movement” was formed of 11 intellectuals, scientists and writers under the leadership of Levon Ter-Petrossian. The Committee was an anti-communist organization and strong supporter of Nagorno-Karabakh’s unification with Armenia.⁴⁶ On 15 June of 1988, the Armenian Supreme Soviet voted unanimously for the re-

⁴² Hovhannisyan, *op.cit.*, p.34

⁴³ Edgar O’Ballance, *Wars in The Caucasus 1990-1995*, (Great Britain: Macmillan Press, 1997), p.38

⁴⁴ See Asenbauer, *On The Right of Self-determination of the Armenian People of Nagorno-Karabakh*, p. 337 for the “Decision of the Supreme Soviet of the Armenian SSR in response to the February 20, 1988 decision of Soviet Nagorno-Karabakh”.

⁴⁵ Croissant, *op.cit.*, p.30

⁴⁶ Kamer Kasım, *The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict from Its Inception to the Peace Process*,

attachement of Karabakh to Armenia however, it was immediately countered by Supreme Soviet of Azerbaijan whose consent was legally required.⁴⁷ On 12 July of 1988, The Soviet Mountainous Karabakh had adopted a unilateral decision to secede from Baku and Karabakh administration decided to join Armenia on 20 February 1988, and clashes between Armenia and Azerbaijan started.⁴⁸

After several attempts of Armenia to annex Nagorno-Karabakh to itself, Azerbaijani nationalism started to awake in the capital of Baku at the end of the 1988. The week of 17-23 November, Azerbaijanis gathered in the streets of Baku to protest the retention of Azerbaijanis sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh.⁴⁹

At the end of the year 1988, on 7 December an earthquake took place killing approximately 28,000 people. The Karabakh Committee dealt with the victims. At the end of the month on 24 December, the 11 members of the Committee were arrested on charges of fomenting public disorder and set free on 31 May 1989.⁵⁰ However this detainee resulted with the increase of their popularity instead of preventing the nationalist movement.⁵¹

In the year 1989, the hostility between Armenia and Azerbaijan deepened. On 12 January 1989, the USSR Supreme Soviet decided to modify the status of Karabakh and confer on the Autonomous Region, a “special administrative status”. It would remain part of Azerbaijan but be dependent on administration directly from Moscow. However, the top officials of the Communist Party and the Executive Committees of the districts of the Mountainous Karabakh continued to say that the best solution for the Karabakh was the re-unification with Armenia.⁵²

Vol.1, No:2, June-July-August, 2001, pp. 170-185

⁴⁷ Walker, *Armenia and Karabagh, Struggle for Unity*, p.126

⁴⁸ Araz Arslanlı, “Tarihten Günümüze Karabağ Sorunu”, in *Avrasya Dosyası*, Volume 7, No. 1, Spring 2001, p.415

⁴⁹ Croissant, *op.cit.*, p. 32

⁵⁰ Croissant, *op.cit.*, p. 32

⁵¹ Araz Arslanlı, “Tarihten Günümüze Karabağ Sorunu”, p.128

⁵² *Ibid.*, p.129

The Supreme Soviet appointed Arkady Colsky to head a commission for the administration of Nagorno-Karabakh under the title of the “Special Administrator” on 20 January 1989.⁵³ Azerbaijan responded positively to the new status of special administration regarding the decision as a confirmation of Moscow that Karabakh is a part of Azerbaijan. Gorbachev hoped that Armenia would be satisfied by the removal of Karabakh Armenians from Baku and leaving the NKAO in the Azerbaijani borders would satisfy Azerbaijan.⁵⁴ The popular Front Of Azerbaijan opposed the NKAO’s special administration and sponsored mass strikes and demonstrations in Baku and in the other parts of Azerbaijan.⁵⁵

In September 1989, the Azerbaijani government called on Moscow to abolish the NKAO Special Administration Committee. Soviet Union revoked the special administration of Nagorno-Karabakh on October 28, 1989 and on November 28, 1989 returned Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijani administration.⁵⁶ Azerbaijan was required to lift its blockade of Armenia and also Nagorno-Karabakh was given an effective autonomy and any change in the ethnic composition was to be prevented. As a result, Armenia declared reunification claiming the right to self-determination. However neither Azerbaijan nor the Supreme Soviet of the USSR recognized this reunification.⁵⁷ Demonstrations were held in Yerevan and Baku against it. At the end of May 1989, the Soviet People’s Deputies of Nagorno-Karabakh again demanded the reunification of their region with Armenia.⁵⁸ The Armenian Supreme Soviet rejected Moscow’s decision and on December 1, declared Karabakh a part of Armenia. 40. 000 demonstrators were mobilized on December 5 to surround the Supreme Soviet building and demand the end of colonialist practices, the abolition of

⁵³ Asenbauer, *op.cit.*, p.90

⁵⁴ Croissant, *op.cit.*, p.33

⁵⁵ Hovhannisyan, *op.cit.*, p.36

⁵⁶ Asenbauer, *op.cit.*, p.92

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 93

⁵⁸ Asenbauer, *op.cit.*, p. 91

Article 6 of the Soviet Constitution, which gave the Communist Party a leading political role and the renaming of the republic, “ Republic of Armenia”.⁵⁹

On January 2, 1990, Armenians attacked a bus convoy carrying Azerbaijanis in Stepenekart. As a result of the attack, one of the Armenians were dead and three were injured.⁶⁰ On January 9, 1990, Armenian SSR decreed to take Nagorno-Karabakh to its economic plan. Supreme Soviet Presidium annuled the Armenian budgetary act, saying that former Armenian law was valid.⁶¹ Azerbaijan condemned the act as “open interference in the internal affairs of the Azerbaijan SSR, which is a sovereign republic.”⁶²

Another important event that culminate nationalist fervor in both Azerbaijan and Armenia is the occupation of Baku by Soviet troops on 20 January 1990 which is called as “Black January” by the Azerbaijanis. Moscow sent troops to Baku claiming the inability of Azerbaijan to stop the demonstrations in Baku and declared “state of emergency”. The Soviet intervention caused hundreds of death and the Popular Front of Azerbaijan’s (PFA) Office was closed and members were arrested.⁶³ Kremlin changed the leadership of the Azerbaijani Communist Party and Ayaz Mutalibov became the first secretary of the party.⁶⁴ Mutalibov wanted to show the Azerbaijani people that he could solve the conflict in a short time. He imposed martial law and

⁵⁹ Ronald Grigor Suny, *Looking Toward Ararat, Armenia In Modern History*, (USA: Indiana University Press, 1993) , p. 237

⁶⁰ Cemalettin Taşkıran, *Tarihi Akış İçinde Karabağ Meselesi ve Türkiye’nin Karabağ Politikası*, Doctoral Thesis, (Ankara, 1994), p.126

⁶¹ Mark Sorayan, *Problems of Communism The Karabakh Syndrome and Azerbaijani Politics*, (September-October 1990), pp. 14-29 cited in Cemalettin Taşkıran, *Tarihi Akış İçinde Karabağ Meselesi ve Türkiye’nin Karabağ Politikası*, Doctoral Thesis, (Ankara, 1994) , p.127

⁶² Baku Domestic Service, 10 January 1990 in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, #90-008 (11 January 1990), p.97 cited in Michael P. Croissant, *The Armenia and Azerbaijan Conflict Causes and Implications*, (USA: Praeger Publishers, 1998), p.36

⁶³ Kasım, Kamer, “The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict From Its Inception To The Peace Process”, *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Vol.1, No.2, June-July-August 2001, pp.170-185

⁶⁴ Croissant, *op.cit.*, p.38

tried to normalize the situation in Baku. In the summer of 1991, Soviet troops in Azerbaijan helped Azerbaijani troops to fight against Armenian groups.⁶⁵

Azerbaijan declared independence in August 1991. Mutalibov created cease-fire between Azerbaijanis and Armenians in and around Nagorno-Karabakh and lifted the Autonomous status of Nagorno-Karabakh and connected the region directly to Baku.⁶⁶ On 13 January, Nagorno-Karabakh declared independence again and Armenian troops occupied Chodscholy on 26 February. On 6 March 1992, Mutalibov was forced to resign by the parliament blaming him because of the occupations and Yakup Memedov became the president.⁶⁷

Armenian troops attacked and occupied Shusha on 9 May. Protests against Memedov took place in Baku in favor of former president Mutalibov and after the occupation of the parliament Mutalibov became the president again.⁶⁸ This caused a bloody uprising and the People's Front occupied the Parliament, the Presidential Palace, and the television center, declaring that they had taken over the power.⁶⁹ Abulfeyz Elchibey, the candidate of the People's Front won the presidential elections held on June 7, 1992 in Azerbaijan.⁷⁰

The first non-Communist Armenian government in 70 years came into power on 5 August 1990. Levon Ter-Petrossian, founding member of the Karabakh Committee and the leader of the Armenian National Movement (ANM) was elected to the chairman of the Armenian Supreme Soviet. Levon Ter-Petrossian saw that it was not easy to make the militias to give up their arms. Therefore, the Armenian Supreme

⁶⁵ Kartal, *op.cit.*, p.96

⁶⁶ Kartal, *op.cit.*, p. 97

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.97

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.97

⁶⁹ Der Standard, May 16/17, 1992, p.1,4 cited in Asenbauer, *On the Right of Self-Determination of the Armenian People of Nagorno-Karabakh*, p.107

⁷⁰ Asenbauer, *op.cit.*, p.101

Soviet declared a state of emergency on 29 August 1990 and called all unauthorized armed forces to hand over their arms.⁷¹

While trying to disband the militias, Armenian officials began to prepare for the republic's separation from the USSR. After Levon Ter-Petrossian's becoming the chairman of the Supreme Soviet, Armenia declared on 23 August 1990 its intention to become a sovereign and independent state. In order to hold the USSR together, Gorbachev declared a draft of a new Union Treaty which offered greater autonomy to the republics. Azerbaijani government headed by Mutalibov defended this Gorbachev's attempts while Armenia boycotted the all-Union action.⁷²

The violence between Azerbaijan and Armenia escalated in the year 1991. Mutalibov made effort to stop the Armenian militias who attacked to Azerbaijanis in order to gain the lost prestige of the Communist Party and supported the Soviet Army forces conducting military operation which was called "Operation Ring" against Armenian militias.⁷³ The "Operation Ring" started on 30 April 1991. Azerbaijani units and Soviet Army forces attacked the Armenian inhabited villages of Getashan and Martunashen that are 20 kilometers North of Nagorno-Karabakh.⁷⁴ Operation Ring was a major turning point in the Armenian-Azerbaijan clash, as for the first time Soviet forces took part on the side of Azerbaijan.⁷⁵ Operation Ring failed to stop the Armenian militias and Karabakh's secessionist claim however, it turned to a full-scale war between the two republics by mid 1991 before the collapse of the Soviet Union.⁷⁶

⁷¹ Croissant, *op.cit.*, p.39

⁷² Croissant, *op.cit.*, p.40

⁷³ Croissant, *op.cit.*, p.38

⁷⁴ See David E. Murphy, "Operation Ring", *Journal of Soviet Military Studies*, Vol. 5, No.1, March 1992, pp. 80-96 for "Operation Ring".

⁷⁵ Croissant, *op.cit.*, p. 42

⁷⁶ Kasım, Kamer, "The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict From Its Inception To The Peace Process", *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Vol.1, No.2, June-July-August 2001, pp.170-185

An attempted coup d'état in Moscow failed however, the process of collapse of the USSR accelerated and the union republics began to declare their independence. Azerbaijan declared its independence from the Soviet Union on August 30, 1991.⁷⁷ After the August Coup of 1991 in the Soviet Union, Gorbachev was forced on September 6, 1991 to recognize the independence of the three Baltic republics. On September 22, 1991, the Armenian Parliament unanimously proclaimed the independence of the Republic of Armenia.⁷⁸ The first elections for the president was held on October 16, 1991 and Levon Ter-Petrossian, the President of the Parliament, won the elections. The United States recognized Armenia and opened the way for it to enter into international community. Karabakh National Council also declared the independent republic of Nagorno-Karabakh and the conflict was turned from inter state conflict to the one between states.⁷⁹

Boris Yeltsin started an initiative with the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev to mediate the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Talks were held between Armenia and Azerbaijan from September 21 to 23 1991, in the North Caucasian town of Selisnovodsk. On the last day of the talks a communique was signed according to which “the region was to be militarily neutralized and all the unconstitutional decision of Armenia and Azerbaijan were to be declared null and void.”⁸⁰ Levon Ter-Petrossian considered the communique “not a solution but a first step in the way of finding a solution”. On the other hand, Boris Yeltsin declared it as a “historical step” and stated that Russia and Kazakhstan will control the implementation of the communique as controllers.⁸¹ However, the measures in the communique were never implemented and tensions increased because of the accidental crash or the shooting down of an Azerbaijani helicopter in Nagorno-

⁷⁷ Hovhannisyan, *op.cit.*, p. 43

⁷⁸ Asenbauer, *op.cit.*, p.96

⁷⁹ Kamer Kasım, “Armenia’s Foreign Policy: Basic Parameters of the Levon Ter-Petrossian and Kocaryan Era”, online at <http://www.turkishweekly.net/articles.php?id=13> (accessed on 20.08.2006)

⁸⁰ Haig E. Asenbauer, *On the Right of Self-Determination of the Armenian People of Nagorno-Karabakh*, (New York: Armenian Prelacy, 1996), p.98

⁸¹ Taşkıran, *op.cit.*, p.133

Karabakh on November 26, 1991. 20 people were killed including Azerbaijani government members, two generals, two Soviet deputies, Azerbaijani journalists.⁸²

As a result, the Supreme Soviet of Azerbaijan lifted the autonomy of Nagorno-Karabakh and place the region under its administration.⁸³ However, the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh decided to secede from Azerbaijan⁸⁴ and held a referendum on the status of Nagorno-Karabakh on December 10, 1991. 95 percent of the participants approved the independence of NKR and the first Parliament of NKR was elected on December 28, 1991 and officially declared its independence on January 6, 1992.⁸⁵ Azerbaijan declared the referendum illegal and started massive military operations against Nagorno-Karabakh.⁸⁶

2.3. Armenian and Azeri Perceptions of the Conflict

The Karabakh conflict is essentially an ethnic and territorial conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia based on land claims of both parties. Both Azerbaijanians and Armenians accuse each other of territorial and ethnic expansion and aggression.

The decision of the local authority in 1988 about transference of NKAO to Armenia is perceived by Armenians as constitutional right to “self-determination”. According to Armenia, Azerbaijan operated a policy of socio-economical and cultural discrimination in order to expel Armenian people from Nagorno-Karabakh. Armenians accused Azerbaijani authorities to put financial resources to the villages that Azerbaijanis live dominantly and they believe that few books in Armenian language were published, there was no Armenian language TV in the region. In other words, complaints about “suppressing of Armenians demand to have Nagorno-

⁸² *Ibid.*, p.134

⁸³ Asenbauer, *op.cit.*, p.98

⁸⁴ Hovhannisyan, *op.cit.*, p.44

⁸⁵ Hovhannisyan, *op.cit.*, p.45

⁸⁶ Asenbauer, *op.cit.*, p.98

Karabakh as distinctively Armenian region.”⁸⁷ Armenians believe that an ethnic cleansing was made by the Azerbaijan. On the contrary, Azerbaijanis see the events of 1988 as a manipulation of the diaspora.

Armenians think that incorporation of Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijan was injustice claiming that the population of Karabakh had been overwhelmingly Armenian in 1920 and the Mountainous Karabakh was a natural geographic extension of the Armenian plateau therefore there was no good reason to place contiguous Armenian-populated regions in separate republics.⁸⁸

Armenia argues the right to self-determination for the Karabakh Armenian community. Armenians refer to Article 70 of the Soviet Constitution which gives the right to self-determination. On the other hand Azerbaijan refers to Article 78 which proposes that the borders cannot be changed without the consent of the two states concerned.⁸⁹ However, the question of self-determination is not applicable to this conflict because Armenian people has already exercised its right to self-determination by establishing the Armenian Republic and ethnic minority of Azerbaijan living in Mountainous Karabakh is not a distinct people to be eligible to external self-determination. Moreover, when claiming directly unification and to achieve these ends they claim forceful secession from the sovereign state, which is broadly recognized as illegitimate action in modern international law and international relations and is on the contrary to such fundamental principle as that of territorial integrity.

2.4. The Self-Proclaimed Nagorno-Karabakh Republic

Today, Nagorno-Karabakh is a *de facto* independent state, calling itself the *Nagorno-Karabakh Republic*. The sovereign status of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic is not

⁸⁷ Thomas De Waal, *Blackgarden: Armenia & Azerbaijan through Peace And War*, (New York: New York University Press, 2003) , p.133

⁸⁸ Ronald Gregor Suny, *Transcaucasia, Nationalism and Social Change, Essays in the History of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia*, (USA: The University of Michigan Press, 1999), p. 434

⁸⁹ Rutland, *op.cit.* p.17

recognized by any state, including Armenia or international organization. The European Union declared that "The European Union confirms its support for the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, and recalls that it does not recognize the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh. The European Union cannot consider legitimate the presidential elections that were scheduled to take place on 11 August 2002 in Nagorno-Karabakh."⁹⁰

Self-Proclaimed Nagorno-Karabakh Republic has its own armed forces, police force, president and parliament. It is ruled by a military regime so every man who leaves Karabakh and does not return in over three months without reporting to a competent military office is considered a deserter and criminal charges are launched against him. Moreover, it is common for Armenian soldiers to perform their military service in Karabakh.⁹¹

From September 2, 1997 to 2007, its president has been Arkadiy Gukasyan who replaced Robert Kocharian. Gukasyan survived an assassination attempt in 2000. Samuel Babayan, whom he had recently sacked as Defence Minister, was convicted of organising the attack and sentenced to 14 years in prison. Although Gukasyan expressed the desire for a peaceful solution to the dispute over the republic's status, he pledged never to compromise on Nagorno-Karabakh's independence. He insists that the unrecognised republic must have full representation at any future negotiations on the way forward. Gukasyan was constitutionally barred from seeking a third term. Presidential elections were held in July 2007. National Security Service Chief Bako Sahakian, who has the backing of the governing Democratic Party, was declared winner.⁹² Many states Turkey and Azerbaijan in the first place and international organisations reacted the Presidential elections as it is against the international law. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey considered the elections

⁹⁰ "Bulletin EU 7/8-2002: Common Foreign and Security Policy (5/39), European Commission", online at <http://europa.eu/bulletin/en/200207/p106005.htm> (accessed on 05.05.2007)

⁹¹ "Armed Conflicts in the Post-Soviet Region, Present Situation, Prospects for Settlement, Consequences, Centre for Eastern Studies, *Eurojournal.org*, September 2004 , p.28 online at <http://www.ceeol.com/asp/getdocument.aspx?logid=5&id=9FA468B1-9EF0-4609-914F-809F76B0EA70> (accessed on 03.10.2007)

⁹² "Nagorno-Karabakh" available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nagorno-Karabakh#_note-55 (accessed on 01.09.2007)

a challenging act against the peaceful solution of the conflict, since the Minsk Group search for the solution has been still going on.⁹³ Therefore, the Presidential elections was an attempt distorting the peace process.

Azerbaijan has not recognize the self-proclaimed Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. Armenia tried to prove that she is actually not part to the conflict that she has not participated in the military operations in Karabakh however it should not be forgotten that Armenia has her own ambitions with regard to Nagorno-Karabakh. Moreover, there is substantial proof to assert that Armenia involved in military operations in Karabakh. Armenians financially sponsors Nagorno-Karabakh Armenian Authorities.

Commonwealth Treaty which was signed by 11 former Soviet republics, guaranteed territorial integrity of each member state.⁹⁴ Thus Karabakh's secession from Azerbaijan is contrary to the Treaty. Armenians use of force to change recognized border of Azerbaijan was also violation of the Helsinki Final Act, the UN Charter, Charter of Paris⁹⁵ and the CSCE.

In this chapter, the historical origins of the Nagorno-Karabakh has been tried to be explained. It's important to understand why this region is important for Armenia and Azerbaijan because it affects not only the relations between the two countries but also the foreign policy of Armenia. Although there is a cease-fire, the conflict is not ended yet. Unless the conflict is concluded, Armenia cannot become an independent state as the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict impedes her to be so. Therefore, it can be stated that the foreign policy of Armenia is related to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The proof of this argument is going to be explained in the next chapters.

⁹³ "Yukarı Karabağ Seçimi Tanınmayacak", CNNTurk, 16 July 2007, online at www.cnnturk.com.tr

⁹⁴ Jeyhun Mollazade, "Legal Aspects of Karabakh Conflict", *Azerbaijan International*, Winter 1993 online at http://azer.com/aiweb/categories/karabakh/karabakh_dussions/karabakh_mollazade.html (accessed on 01.09.2007)

⁹⁵ See http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1990/11/4045_en.pdf for "Charter of Paris" (accessed on 01.09.2007)

CHAPTER 3

ARMENIAN FOREIGN POLICY UNDER LEVON TER- PETROSSIAN AND THE NAGORNO- KARABAKH CONFLICT

In this chapter, the foreign policy of Armenia under Levon Ter-Petrosian era will be examined. Nagorno-Karabakh dispute is the main factor that affects Petrossian 's foreign policy. In order to support this argument, Armenia's relations with Russia, Azerbaijan, the United States, Iran and Turkey will be discussed. Moreover the relations with the diaspora which is also related with the conflict will be explained. Also the mediatory role of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Minsk Group, a coalition of several states that came together for the peaceful solution of the conflict will be discussed. The proposals that OSCE made for the conflict and Levon Ter-Petrosian's perception of these proposal will also be explained as they can be considered to cause Levon Ter-Petrosian's resignation.

Levon Ter-Petrosian became well-known in Armenian politics with his leadership of Karabakh Committee, which aimed to put Nagorno-Karabakh under the jurisdiction of Armenia. He was arrested together with other members of the Committee on 10th of December 1988.⁹⁶ In 1989 Armenian Pan-National Movement has been established including Armenian groups in Karabakh and he was elected member of the Board of the Armenian Pan-National Movement (ANM). ANM has founded government of Soviet Armenia and Petrossian became the Chairman.⁹⁷ On the 16th October of 1991, he was elected as the first President of the Republic of Armenia.

During his presidency, he tried to normalize Armenia's relations with the neighbouring countries including Turkey. However, this was not easy as there were

⁹⁶ Kamer Kasım, "Armenia's Foreign Policy: Basic Parameters of The Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Kocaryan Era", online at <http://www.turkishweekly.net/articles.php?id=13> (accessed on 20.08.2006)

⁹⁷ Mürteza Hasanoğlu , Elnur Cemilli, *Güney Kafkasya'da ABD Politikası*, (İstanbul: Kilim Matbaası, 2006), p.135

many factors affecting the foreign policy of Armenia, such as diaspora and in particular the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. It can be said that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was the major issue in shaping Armenian foreign policy not only during Levon Ter-Petrossian presidency but also in Robert Kocharian's presidency which is to be explained in the next chapter.

Levon Ter-Petrossian was aware of the fact that Armenia has to be in good relations with its neighbours for economic recovery and political stability. He described the aim of his policy as "*normalization of Armenia's foreign policy*".⁹⁸ To reach this aim Armenia needs to improve her diplomatic relations with Turkey and has to establish good relations with Azerbaijan to some extent.

With the independence of Armenia and Azerbaijan, Karabakh became a conflict between two sovereign states, an international conflict. The war with Azerbaijan intensified in 1992 and came to a halt in 1994. Armenian forces had not only kept Azerbaijanis out of most of Karabakh but had also occupied seven regions of that country surrounding Karabakh proper.⁹⁹ Armenia was facing an economic crisis after the dissolution of the USSR. The economic blockades of Azerbaijan made the crises worse in early 1991. Azerbaijan wanted Armenia to give up its support of Karabakh claims.¹⁰⁰ Levon Ter-Petrossian shaped the foreign policy of Armenia considering all of these conditions during his presidency.

3.1. Levon Ter-Petrossian Era and the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict

Nagorno-Karabakh conflict did not only affect the domestic politics but also and mostly the foreign policy of Armenia. Because of Karabakh conflict, stability in

⁹⁸ Kamer Kasım, "Armenia's Foreign Policy: Basic Parameters of The Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Kocaryan Era", online at <http://www.turkishweekly.net/articles.php?id=13> (accessed on 20.08.2006)

⁹⁹ Gerard J. Libaridian, *The Challenge of Statehood: Armenian Political Thinking Since Independence*, (Watertown, Mass.: Blue Crane Books, 1999), p. 8

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p.9

Armenia has been delayed, there has been an ongoing feeling of “war” and effect of extremists over the policies of the country increased. ¹⁰¹

Levon Ter-Petrossian had known that Armenia cannot become economically powerful without the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. He has voiced this statement in a closed meeting with the Cabinet before resigning from his post in 1998: “No matter who rules Armenia, he will fail to ensure normal economic development of the country as long as the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict remains unresolved. It will be impossible to solve the existing public and economic problems without solving the conflict. The closed borders with Azerbaijan and Turkey, no railway access to the environment leads to increasing transport expenses, reduces Armenian’s export opportunities and loses interest in foreign investors to invest capital in our country”¹⁰²

Levon Ter-Petrossian also said that during the active military operations, the volume of Armenia’s economy decreased twice, and if the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is not resolved, the economic development tempo might fall even stop once and for all. In the emergency meeting, he also stressed that Armenians won the battle not the war, and the international community will not tolerate the long-term status quo in Nagorno- Karabakh. ¹⁰³

The dissolution of the USSR had a negative effect on Karabakh issue. The USSR was able to decide by whom and how this region should be ruled legally. Indeed she undertook this duty for a while and the conflict decreased. On the other hand, the USSR had the authority to send military powers to this region. But when the dissolution of the USSR was about to begin, Soviet troops had started to withdraw

¹⁰¹ Sedat Laçiner, *Türkler ve Ermeniler: Bir Uluslararası İlişkiler Çalışması*, (Ankara: USAK Press, 2005), p.205

¹⁰² “Levon Ter-Petrosyan :Armenia Cannot Become Economically Powerful without the Resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict , *Turkish Weekly*, 22.08.2006, online at <http://www.turkishweekly.net/news.php?id=37061> (accessed 17.11. 2006)

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

from Karabakh and its surroundings and as a result the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia increased.¹⁰⁴

The conflict in Karabakh has become more intense in February 1992. Armenian troops had occupied Khojaly, a town with strategic and symbolic value several kilometers north of Stepanekart. Khojaly was the only town in Nagorno-Karabakh with an airport suitable for large-winged aircraft.¹⁰⁵ Some sources said that six hundred civilian were killed, while others saying one thousand of Azerbaijani were slayed in Khojaly on 25 January.¹⁰⁶ The fall of Khojaly was the first important loss for Azerbaijan and it was an important strategic gain for the Armenians militias.¹⁰⁷ The Khojaly massacre turned the international media's attention to the conflict. On November 29, 1993, *Newsweek* quoted a senior US government official as saying: "What we see now is a systematic destruction of every village in their way. It's vandalism".¹⁰⁸

Iran entered the arena as a mediator. From Iranian prespective it was a good chance to gain power in the region at the expense of Turkey.¹⁰⁹ However, Iran failed. Then Armenia took the city of Shusha on May 1992 which was the last remaining Azeri-inhabitated area in the region. Right after the fall of Shusha, Armenian forces launched an assult of Lachin which is a town situated at the narrowest strip of Azerbaijani land seperating Nagarno-Karabakh from Armenia. The fall of Lachin in May 1992 created a phsychical link, a corridor between Armenia and Nagorno-

¹⁰⁴ Ömer E. Lütem, "Karabağ Sorunu" online at www.iksaren.org/bilgibankasi/tr/ErmeniSorunuBilgiBelgelerCD/dosyalar/3/Tr/OMER_LUTEM_KARABAG_SORUNU.doc, (accessed on 02.11.2007)

¹⁰⁵ Kasım, Kamer, "The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict from its Inception to the Peace Process", *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Vol.1, No.2, June-July-August 2001, pp.170-185.

¹⁰⁶ Araz Aslanlı, "Tarihten Günümüze Karabağ Sorunu", in *Avrasya Dosyası*, Volume 7, No 1, (Spring 2001), p.404; and Michael P. Croissant, *The Armenia and Azerbaijan Conflict Causes and Implications*, (USA: Praeger Publishers, 1998), p.78

¹⁰⁷ Croissant, *op.cit.*, p.78

¹⁰⁸ Fatma Abdullazeh, *Karabakh*, (Baku:YNE, 1999), p.91

¹⁰⁹ Croissant, *op.cit.* p.79

Karabakh and therefore ended the isolation of Karabakh.¹¹⁰ By the end of May, Armenia had the control of nearly all of Nagorno-Karabakh.

In May 1992, Armenian forces attacked Nakhchivan, the Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan. Turkey has declared that she would not let the occupation of Nakhichevan and ready for a possible military assault.¹¹¹ In 1993, Marshal Shapashnikov of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Joint Armed Forces warned Turkey that “third party intervention in the dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan could trigger a Third World War”.¹¹² Situation in Nakchivan calmed down after Turkish government’s warning to Armenia. As many cease-fire attempts had failed, the war continued and the Nagorno-Karabakh forces entered the Azerbaijan territory and occupied the Kelbajar, Koutbaly, Aghdam, Fizouli, Gebrail and Zengelan regions. In the spring of 1994, about 12 percent of Azerbaijani territory came under control of the Nagorno-Karabakh military forces.¹¹³

3.2. OSCE’s Involvement in the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict

The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), with its current name Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), started to play a mediatory role in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in 1992. That year, the CSCE created the Minsk Group, a coalition of several member states dedicated to facilitating a peaceful resolution of the conflict. These states were Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Finland, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.80

¹¹¹ “Ayın Tarihi: Mayıs 1992”, Başbakanlık Basın Yayın ve Enformasyon Genel Müdürlüğü Web Sitesi, 18 Mayıs 1992, online at <http://www.byegm.gov.tr/YAYINLARIMIZ/AyinTarihi/1992/mayis1992.htm>, (accessed on 24.12..2006)

¹¹² Mustafa Aydın, “Kafkasya ve Orta Asya’yla İlişkiler” in *Türk Dış Politikası*, Volume:II 1980-2001, (İstanbul: İletişim Press, 2001) , p.410 and Michael P. Croissant, *The Armenia and Azerbaijan Conflict Causes and Implications*, (USA: Prager Publishers, 1998), p.81

¹¹³ Nikolay Hovhannisyan, *The Karabakh Problem, Factors, Criteria, Variants of Solution*, (Yerevan:National Academy of Sciences of Armenia, 1999), p.47

Turkey.¹¹⁴ Russia, France and the US as the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group serve as mediators, working in close and effective cooperation with the parties.

Following many unsuccessful attempts, a Russian-mediated cease fire was finally reached in 1994. On 18 February 1994, Russia proposed “Moscow Protocol” which provides for a cease-fire, the separation of the warring parties and the establishment of safe havens with international observers. According to the “Moscow Protocol” the conflict can only be settled by stages:

entry into force of a cease-fire and deployment of intervention forces; withdrawal of troops from occupied territories, restoration of lines of communication, return of refugees; negotiations on the status of Nagorno-Karabakh.¹¹⁵

The Azeri Parliament rejected the proposal as it is unacceptable for Azerbaijani interests. Then Russia arranged a meeting in the capital of Kyrgyzstan-Bishkek and succeeded to prepare protocol on a cease-fire. All parties accepted the protocol which became the basis for the May 12, 1994 cease-fire agreement.¹¹⁶ Although the conflict has not been solved to this day, the cease fire agreement can be considered a big step toward the solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

In 1996, peace process in the Nagorno-Karabakh problem entered a new stage. Peace process was conducted under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group. At the OSCE Lisbon Summit in December 1996, a set of principles was accepted which recognized the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Article 20 of Lisbon Document which covers the issue of “respecting the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan” has been published as the “Presidential Statement”.¹¹⁷ This part has been adopted by 53 countries except Armenia. In the meeting of the UN General Assembly held on December 12, 1996, a

¹¹⁴ “Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly Report of the Conflict in Nagorno Karabakh”, Doc. 7182, 17 October 1994, online at <http://assembly.coe.int/documents/workingdocs/doc94/edoc7182.htm> (accessed on 03.12.2006)

¹¹⁵ “Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly Report of the Conflict in Nagorno Karabakh”, Doc. 7182, 17 October 1994, online at <http://assembly.coe.int/documents/workingdocs/doc94/edoc7182.htm> (accessed on 03.12.2006)

¹¹⁶ Hovhannisyan, *op.cit.* p. 57

¹¹⁷ Detailed information for Lisbon Summit can be found at online at http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1996/12/4049_en.pdf (accessed on 10.11.2006)

decision was adopted for cooperation between the UN and the OSCE. Armenia opposed the efforts however it was affirmed once again that “Nagorno-Karabakh is Azerbaijani territory”.¹¹⁸

Following the Lisbon Summit, Minsk Group co-chairman initiated a peace proposal, which called the withdrawal of all occupying Armenian armed forces from Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding areas of Azerbaijan and the return of all refugees to their homes. This solution was known as the “package deal”¹¹⁹ Lisbon Summit was considered as a failure of Levon Ter-Petrosian’s foreign policy by the Armenian opposition.¹²⁰ In May and July of 1997 the OSCE Minsk group failed to bring the parties to negotiate “package deal” proposal.

OSCE Minsk Group made a new peace proposal in September 1997, known as “step by step” approach for the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.¹²¹ According to this proposal Armenian forces first would withdraw one of the territories that they occupied outside the Nagorno-Karabakh region and then the process enter the new phase.¹²² This proposal was accepted by Azerbaijan and Armenia however refused by Karabakh leaders, Robert Kocharian.¹²³ Levon Ter-Petrosian’s tendency to agree the OSCE’s proposal caused his resignation and the election of Robert Kocharian as the new president of Armenia. After that, diaspora based parties put pressure on Levon Ter-Petrosian and he resigned in 1998.

¹¹⁸ Abdullah Uluysurt, *When Will The Peace Region Alight On Armenia*, (Ankara: Social Development Association, 2006), p. 31

¹¹⁹ Gerard J. Libaridian, *Modern Armenia People, Nation, State* (USA: Transaction Publishers, 2004), p.235

¹²⁰ Kamer Kasim, “Armenia’s Foreign Policy: Basic Parameters of the Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Kocaryan Era”, online at <http://www.turkishweekly.net/articles.php?id=13> (accessed on 20.08.2006)

¹²¹ Libaridian, *Modern Armenia*, p.237

¹²² Kamer Kasim, “Armenia’s Foreign Policy: Basic Parameters of the Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Kocaryan Era”, online at <http://www.turkishweekly.net/articles.php?id=13> (accessed on 20.08.2006)

¹²³ Libaridian, *Modern Armenia*, p.237

3.3. Armenia's Relations with Azerbaijan

Armenia's relations with Azerbaijan is directly related with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Because of the conflict, Armenia and Azerbaijan could not establish good relations. After the independence, Armenia has been administrated by Levon Ter-Petrossian while three leaders have been changed in Azerbaijan. There have been internal conflicts in Azerbaijan which sometimes put the Karabakh conflict in the second place. Mutalibov became the first president of Azerbaijan getting 98 percent of the votes in the elections held in September 1991.¹²⁴ He followed a policy in favor of Russia and his policy did not help the solution of the conflict, and Azerbaijan lost the control of the the Karabakh region in Mutalibov era.¹²⁵ The political and military failure in Karabakh raised new opponent voices in Azerbaijan and Mutalibov abolished the parliament in the beginning of 1992 because of the pressure of the people. He established a National Council of 50 members, consisting of the communists and the members of the Azerbaijan People's Front.¹²⁶ However the problems couldn't be solved by including the opposition. Mutalibov had to resign and run to Russia because of the protests against his administration after the massacre in Khojaly.¹²⁷

Elchibey became the president on the elections on 7 June 1992 having 60 per cent of the votes. His election programme included saving Karabakh within 6 months.¹²⁸ On the contrary to Mutalibov, Elchibey pursued a policy disregarding Moscow. He suspected that Russia was using the conflict to manipulate Azerbaijan, viewed Russia as favoring and aiding Armenia and blamed his predecessor claiming that he was

¹²⁴ M. Vedat Gürbüz, "Dağlık Karabağ Sorunu ve Azerbaycan Politikaları 1988-1994, *Ermeni Araştırmaları Dergisi*, No.10, Summer 2003, p.5

¹²⁵ Ömer Lütem, "Karabağ Sorunu" online at www.iksaren.org/bilgibankasi/tr/ErmeniSorunu/BilgiBelgelerCD/dosyalar/3/Tr/OMER_LUTEM_KARABAG_SORUNU.doc, (accessed on 02.11.2007)

¹²⁶ Gürbüz, *op.cit.*, p.6

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.6

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.6

weak in defense of Karabakh.¹²⁹ His nationalistic policies made Russia and Iran decrease the volume of petroleum that they buy from Azerbaijan. On the other hand he could not get the support he waited from the West and Turkey. Thus, Elchibey was not able to keep his promise regarding Karabakh, on the contrary more regions were lost. Agdam where 50. 000 Azerbaijanis live, was lost on 23 July 1993 and the villages nearby were looted by the Armenians. Fizuli captured by Armenians on 20 August 1993. According to the report of the International Committee of the Red Cross, approximately 60. 000 Azerbaijanis were flooding to the safe the regions where there were no collision.¹³⁰ The presidency of Elchibey lasted 1 year in Azerbaijan, as a result of a coup d'etat, he lost his chair and Haydar Aliyev became the new President in 30 June 1993 getting 99 per cent of the votes.¹³¹ Aliyev brought former communists in charge in the Parliament.

Aliyev supported the CSCE plan, brought Azerbaijan into Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and warmed ties to Moscow somewhat, by giving it a stake in Azeri oil while trying to avoid Russian troops presence. He would give Karabakh a status guaranteeing more rights, not independence. In December 1993, Azerbaijan started an assault against the Armenian occupation and forced Armenians to retreat for the first time since June 1992. Azeri powers captured strategic hills near Agdam and Mardakert.¹³² However, this success lasted short and Armenia and Karabakh retook the regions that Azerbaijan saved. The cease-fire with Armenia is signed in his term. He implemented an active foreign policy after the cease-fire.

Azerbaijan from the beginning of the conflict did not recognize the right of Nagorno-Karabakh to self-determination and insisted on the preservation of its territorial integrity. The official demands of Azerbaijan were as follows:

¹²⁹ Carol Migdalovitz, "Armenia –Azerbaijan Conflict", CRS Issue Brief Congressional Research Service, 2001, p. 12, online at www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/crs/IB92109_011226.pdf (accessed on 09.09.2007)

¹³⁰ Human Rights Watch, *Azerbaijan, Seven Years of Conflict In Nagorno-Karabakh*, (USA: Human Rights Watch, 1994) , p.30

¹³¹ Gürbüz, *op.cit.* p.12

¹³² *Ibid.*, p.46

- The territorial integrity of Azerbaijan is not negotiable and it rejects the secession of NKR and its declaration as an independent state;
- The full withdrawal of the Karabakh Army from all captured territories,
- The denouncement of the December 1, 1989 decision on the unification of Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia;
- The disarming and dissolution of the Karabakh Army;
- Full submission of the Karabakh people to the laws and jurisdiction of Azerbaijan.¹³³

Azerbaijan will be willing to discuss the future status of Nagorno-Karabakh only after these demands will be met. Therefore, no further relations can be set between the two countries unless the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is solved.

3.4. Armenia's Relations with Russia

Levon Ter-Petrossian wanted to break dependency on Russia in his foreign policy. In fact, the ANM's ideology was also against the dependency on Russia. However, Russia played an important role in Armenian foreign policy and instability in the region which was created by the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict made Armenia more dependent on Russia. On May 15, 1992 Russia, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan signed a Treaty on Collective Security providing that "in case of an act of aggression against any state, all others will give necessary, including military assistance."¹³⁴ Russia condemned the May 1992 Armenian seizure of Lachin and attack on Nakhichevan however Levon Ter-Petrossian declared that aggression had been committed against Armenia and invoked the Treaty. But Moscow responded that the Treaty does not intent quick intervention.¹³⁵ Armenia became a state where Russia could keep its military bases without any problem. With the agreement signed between Russia and Armenia on the 30th of September 1992, Russian soldiers came to the Armenia's border with Turkey.¹³⁶ Armenia is the only

¹³³ Hovhannisyan, *op.cit.*, p.64

¹³⁴ Migdalovitz, *op.cit.*, p.12

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.12

¹³⁶ Kamer Kasim, "Armenia's Foreign Policy: Basic Parameters of The Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Kocaryan Era", online at <http://www.turkishweekly.net/articles.php?id=13> (accessed on 20.08.2006)

country that Russia has its troops.¹³⁷ On June 9, 1994, Armenia agreed Russian military bases in Armenia.¹³⁸

Russia is related to Armenia with security issues on the other hand is interested in Azeri oils. On July 4, 1997 Azerbaijan and Russia signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation which condemns “seperatism” and promotes settlements according to the principle of territorial integrity. On August 29, 1997, Armenia and Russia signed a treaty of Friendship which describes the parties’ coincidence of military and strategic views.¹³⁹

Having interest in both countries, Russia was involved in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. She took part in CSCE and its Minsk Group. This can be explained with Russia’s policy in Transcaucasia. Russia does not support the secession of Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijan but support the peaceful negotiations and that Karabakh has the right to broad autonomy and guarantee of security for the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh. Russia does not recognize Nagorno-Karabakh as an independent state.¹⁴⁰ Russia states that there should be no territorial changes.

In his second term of presidency Levon Ter-Petrossian increased his efforts to lessen dependency on Russia, however the Parliament was acting opposite and putting pressure on Levon Ter-Petrossian. While Armenia was getting closer with the US, Prime Minister Robert Kocharian, Defence Minister Vazgen Sargsian and Interior and Security Minister Serge Sargsian wanted Russia to be given the priority in the foreign policy.¹⁴¹ The pressure on Levon Ter-Petrossian caused his resignation which is going to be explained below.

¹³⁷ http://www.ng.ru/printed/cis/2001-01-12/5_party.html , cited in Mürteza Hasanoğlu , Elnur Cemilli, Güney Kafkasya’da ABD Politikası, (İstanbul:Kilim Matbaası, 2006), p.138

¹³⁸ Migdalovitz, *op.cit.*, p.12

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.13

¹⁴⁰ Hovnassiyani, *op.cit.*, p.51

¹⁴¹ Hasanoğlu, Cemilli, *op.cit.*, p.148

3.5. Armenia's Relations with the USA

There are many Armenian people living in the USA, so it can be said that there is a strong Armenian diaspora in the United States. So the USA cannot be aloof to Armenia and its problems. Moreover, the region around the Caspian Sea is known to be rich in oil and gas therefore this region cannot be disregarded by the USA.

The role of the United States in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is important. The United States has the power to influence the outcome of the problem directly, through CSCE or by backing Turkey.¹⁴² The USA was an important stabilizer in decreasing the Russian effect and providing economic aid. There were 4 factors in Armenia's policy towards the USA: having the USA's political support, integrating with the world by benefiting American economical and technical aid; to guaranteeing independence by stabilizing Russia by the West and the USA; to avoid the will of American Armenian diaspora to rule Armenia while receiving economical aid from them.¹⁴³

There were differences between the Congress and the State Department concerning the Karabakh policy. In the early 1990, the United States Congress developed the "Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets Support Act" also known as the FREEDOM Support Act. The objective of this act was "to help promote and stabilize democratic forms of government and to foster economic growth in the suddenly independent former Soviet republics".¹⁴⁴ Armenian Americans convinced the Congress to punish Azerbaijan alleging that Azerbaijan acts aggressively against Armenians in the Nagorno-Karabakh region so Azerbaijan is excluded from the FREEDOM Support Act. The document omitting Azerbaijan from the US aid to the newly independent government was known as Section 907. The document stated that Azerbaijan was utilizing offensive force against both Armenia

¹⁴² Hovhannisyan, *op.cit.*, p.56

¹⁴³ Laçiner, *Türkler ve Ermeniler: Bir Uluslararası İlişkiler Çalışması*, p.209

¹⁴⁴ O'Lear Shannon, "Armenia, Azerbaijan and the United States: Power Shift in the Caucasus or Business as Usual?", online at http://www.acdis.uiuc.edu/Research/S&Ps/2002-Su/S&P-Su2002/arm_azer_and_US.html (accessed on 09.09.2007)

and Karabakh.¹⁴⁵ Section 907 bans aid to Azerbaijan until it ceases blockades and use of force against Armenia and Karabakh.¹⁴⁶ For nearly a decade these sanctions have excluded Azerbaijani government from several aids from the United States. Attempts to abolish Section 907 have been made by international nongovernmental organizations and Azerbaijani sympathizers as these sanctions were a serious blow to Azerbaijan's sovereignty, whose nearly 20 percent of territory is occupied by Armenians.

The Clinton Administration tried to lift the Freedom Support Act's restriction to Azerbaijan and proposed a bill to lift the act in 1994. The bill faced strong opposition from pro-Armenian representatives who demanded the continuation of the restrictions until the Azerbaijani forces ceased their occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh.¹⁴⁷

The policy of the Congress contradicted the USA interests concerning the Caspian oil. Therefore in 1998, the Congress approved some exceptions to the Section 907 including democracy building programs, the activities of Export-Import Bank, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, the Trade and Development Agency and the Foreign Commercial Service.¹⁴⁸

After September 11 terrorist attacks the relations between the USA and Azerbaijan changed. Azerbaijan's government quickly condemned the attacks on the United States and voiced its support for the effort in Afghanistan. As a result, on 16 October 2001, the US Secretary of State Colin Powell urged the Senate to lift the sanctions of Section 907 in recognition of Azerbaijan's support of the US military effort in Afghanistan. On 25 January 2002, President Bush signed a waiver of Section 907 and lifted the sanctions on Azerbaijan temporarily.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ Carol Migdalovitz, "Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict", p.14

¹⁴⁷ Kasim, Kamer, "The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict from Its Inception to the Peace Process", *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Vol.1, No.2, June-July-August 2001, pp.170-185

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ O'Lear, *op. cit.*, p.3

The US policy towards the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was that she stands in the position of preserving territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Continued armed conflict or a larger regional war would not be in the US interest, and this is why she has joined in numerous internationally sponsored peace initiatives.¹⁵⁰ The US believed that the problem can be solved by only political means, without using force.¹⁵¹

Armenia has a very strong presidential system in terms of foreign policy making. President appears to be the most powerful figure and shapes Armenia's foreign policy. However there are forces that might restrict President's movement regarding foreign policy matters. Armenian diaspora and the diaspora parties are forces which try to influence Armenian foreign policy and they were in conflict with Levon Ter-Petrossian during his presidency. Besides organized diaspora groups, individual diaspora members played an important role in Armenia's foreign policy.¹⁵²

Diasporan members were also influential in the foreign policy making process. Gerard Libaridian, the senior presidential adviser of Ter-Petrossian, has been the key architect of Armenian foreign policy during the negotiations for the solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem. He was born in Beirut and was a US citizen. Raffi Hovannisian who was the first Foreign Minister of the Republic of Armenia and Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian were also diaspora members.¹⁵³

Levon Ter-Petrossian's policy toward the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict did not satisfy the diaspora and the diaspora based parties either. Armenian foreign policy during Levon Ter-Petrossian era was heavily criticized by the diaspora parties and Armenian

¹⁵⁰ Levon Chorbajian, Patrick Donabedian, Claude Mutafian, *The Caucasian Knot The History and Geopolitics of Nagorno-Karabakh*, (United Kingdom: Zed Books, 1994) , p.31

¹⁵¹ Hovhannisyan, *op.cit.*, p.56

¹⁵² Kamer Kasım, "Armenia's Foreign Policy: Basic Parameters of the Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Kocaryan Era", online at <http://www.turkishweekly.net/articles.php?id=13> (accessed on 20.08.2006)

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

diaspora. Diaspora involved the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict through their efforts in the US.¹⁵⁴

Levon Ter-Petrosian was afraid of the involvement of radical Armenian diaspora in the policies, however he was aware of the fact that the moral and material for a stable and developing Armenia. In order to lessen the diaspora's effect on the state policies, prohibition to dual citizenship had been put into effect in 1995 Constitution. Levon Ter-Petrosian administration created a special passport for the diaspora Armenians giving them all rights and privileges of a citizen except the rights to vote and to be elected to Office and the duty to serve in the armed forces. Libaridian explains this as "milking cow" argument that Armenian government looked at the diaspora strictly as a source of cash and did not want any of its participation or advice.¹⁵⁵

3.6. Armenia's Relations with Turkey

The normalization of relations with Turkey was one of the aims of Armenian foreign policy during Levon Ter-Petrosian era. However, Armenia's occupation of the territory of Azerbaijan made impossible to normalize Turkey's relations with Armenia. Levon Ter-Petrosian's aim to improve relations with Turkey contradicted his foreign policy towards the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. He argued that Turkey did not pose any threat to Armenia and the normalization of Armenia's relations with Turkey will be beneficial for Armenia.¹⁵⁶

In Levon Ter-Petrosian era, Armenia did not voice their claims of "genocide" allegations or "lost lands" in order to have good relations with Turkey.¹⁵⁷ He argued against including a clause about the genocide because doing so would be wrong from a political point and a diplomatic viewpoint. A majority of deputies did not agree

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ Gerard J. Libaridian, *The Challenge of Statehood: Armenian Political Thinking Since Independence*, (Watertown, Mass. : Blue Crane Books, 1999), p.103

¹⁵⁶ Kamer Kasım, "Armenia's Foreign Policy: Basic Parameters of the Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Kocaryan Era", online at <http://www.turkishweekly.net/articles.php?id=13> (accessed on 20.08.2006)

¹⁵⁷ Laçiner, *Türkler ve Ermeniler: Bir Uluslararası İlişkiler Çalışması*, p.194

with him and it has been stated in Article 11 of the Declaration of Independence of Republic of Armenia, which is signed by Levon Ter-Petrossian in 1990 that “*The Republic of Armenia stands in support of the task of achieving international recognition of the 1915 Genocide in Ottoman Turkey and Western Armenia*”.¹⁵⁸ This article is important for the relations with Turkey as it declares that Armenia would work for international recognition of the so-called genocide and also it defines the East Anatolia Region of Turkey as Western Armenia. This article shows that Armenia does not recognize the territorial integrity of Turkey. The declaration of independence created conflict with Azerbaijan because of the Karabakh issue, also with Turkey because of genocide allegations and the territorial integrity.¹⁵⁹ Also in February 1991 Armenian Parliament declared that it does not recognize the borders drawn by Kars Agreement.¹⁶⁰ Thus Turkey had to cut off the diplomatic relations with Yerevan and only Turkey has been deemed responsible for this.

Turkey recognized the independence of Armenia on 24 December of 1991. Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel sent a message to Levon Ter-Petrossian stating that Armenia should respect the territorial integrity and inviolability of the borders.¹⁶¹ However, as stated above, the article 11 of the Declaration of Independence was in contrary with Demirel’s statement, as there was no change in the article, Turkey did not establish any diplomatic relations with Armenia. But Turkey tries to have good relations with Armenia, to this respect she helped Armenia economically in several aspects such as Turkey provided electricity to Armenia when she was facing economic distress. Turkey also let the European donate 100,000 tones of wheat to reach Armenia using Turkish ports and Turkish rail in 1992.¹⁶² Turkey’s help to

¹⁵⁸ “Declaration of Independence of the Republic of Armenia” online at <http://www.armenica.org/armenia/doi.html> (accessed on 20.11.2006)

¹⁵⁹ Ömer Lütem, “Karabağ Sorunu”, online at www.iksaren.org/bilgibankasi/tr/ErmeniSorunuBilgiBelgelerCD/dosyalar/3/Tr/OMER_LUTEM_KARABAG_SORUNU.doc, (accessed on 02.11.2007)

¹⁶⁰ Laçiner, *Türkler ve Ermeniler: Bir Uluslararası İlişkiler Çalışması*, p. 214

¹⁶¹ “Aydın Tarihi: Mart 1992”, Başbakanlık Basın Yayın ve Enformasyon Genel Müdürlüğü Web Sitesi, 19 Mart 1992, online at <http://www.byegm.gov.tr/YAYINLARIMIZ/AyinTarihi/1992/mart1992.htm>, (accessed on 24.11.2006)

¹⁶² Mustafa Aydın, “Kafkasya ve Orta Asya’yla İlişkiler” in *Türk Dış Politikası* Volume :II 1980-2001, (İstanbul: İletişim Press, 2001), p.410

Armenia considered as an attempt to support Levon Ter-Petrossian and make Foreign Minister of Armenia Hovhannisian to resign.¹⁶³ Prime Minister Demirel, stated in an interview with *Washington Post* that government's policy towards Karabakh was to avoid conflict and use diplomatic means to stop the conflict however added that Turkey cannot establish normal relations with Armenia at that time.¹⁶⁴ Although not having any borders with the Black Sea, Armenia was invited to the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization which was established by the initiative of Turkey. This attempt was welcomed in view of perspectives for cooperation in the region.¹⁶⁵

When Armenia started to occupy Nagorno-Karabakh, the United States and European countries were in favor of Armenia by the effect of the Armenian diaspora. Turkey started to help to Azerbaijan and also wanted the USA not to be a party in the conflict and not to create another Israel in Causasia.¹⁶⁶ Turkey is the only state or actor that completely supports Azerbaijan during the conflict. Prime Minister Demirel was following a mild policy towards Armenia which was criticized by the leaders of opposition parties, Mesut Yılmaz and Bülent Ecevit. Khojaly massacre in 1992, had a sound effect in Turkey. President Turgut Özal had stated in an interview given to *Financial Times* that Turkey can impose a blockade to Armenia in order to make Armenia deter from the Karabakh conflict.¹⁶⁷ However, Prime Minister Demirel and the government tried to get the support of Russian Federation, the USA

¹⁶³ Cumhuriyet, "Petrossian Darbesi", 17 September 1992

¹⁶⁴ "Ayın Tarihi: Mart 1992", Başbakanlık Basın Yayın ve Enformasyon Genel Müdürlüğü Web Sitesi, 19 Mart 1992, online at <http://www.byegm.gov.tr/YAYINLARIMIZ/AyinTarihi/1992/mart1992.htm>, (accessed on 24.11.2006)

¹⁶⁵ Uluyurt, *op.cit.*, p. 12

¹⁶⁶ "Ayın Tarihi: Şubat 1992", Başbakanlık Basın Yayın ve Enformasyon Genel Müdürlüğü Web Sitesi, 12 Şubat 1992 online at <http://www.byegm.gov.tr/YAYINLARIMIZ/AyinTarihi/1992/subat1992.htm> (accessed on 24.11.2006)

¹⁶⁷ "Ayın Tarihi: Mart 1992", Başbakanlık Basın Yayın ve Enformasyon Genel Müdürlüğü Web Sitesi, 7 Mart 1992, online at <http://www.byegm.gov.tr/YAYINLARIMIZ/AyinTarihi/1992/mart1992.htm>, (accessed on 24.11.2006)

and France for the cease-fire and no planes other than carrying food and medicine were permitted to Armenia.¹⁶⁸

Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Hikmet Çetin had prepared three-step solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In the first step, both parties would declare cease-fire, secondly, all foreign military powers in and around Karabakh would withdraw; and in the third step all access roads to Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nakhcivan would be opened.¹⁶⁹ But the occupation of Kelbajar by Armenian forces in the spring of 1993, made this proposal impossible to come into life. Turkey stopped all flights to and from Armenia and closed the borders with Armenia and since then the borders are closed.¹⁷⁰

In 12 March 1993, an important meeting took place in Paris between Nationalist Movement Party leader Alparslan Türkeş and Levon Ter-Petrossian. Gerard Libaridian¹⁷¹ considered this meeting as a milestone in the relations of the two countries. He said that the support of Türkeş is important for Armenia when his political position has been taken into account.¹⁷² Türkeş proposed an immediate cease-fire between Armenia and Azerbaijan and to leave the solution of the conflict to a broader time after the cease-fire.¹⁷³ This meeting can be regarded as an important step for the relations between Turkey and Armenia, as the nationalists are aloof to Armenia because of its allegations of the so-called genocide. Türkeş died on 2nd April 1997 when Levon Ter-Petrossian was planning to continue the meetings with him in order to find ways of normalizing relations. It is a question mark whether

¹⁶⁸ Ömer Lütem, “Karabağ Sorunu”, online at www.iksaren.org/bilgibankasi/tr/ErmeniSorunuBilgiBelgelerCD/dosyalar/3/Tr/OMER_LUTEM_KARABAG_SORUNU.doc, (accessed on 02.11.2007)

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid*

¹⁷⁰ Gerard J. Libaridian, *The Challenge of Statehood: Armenian Political Thinking Since Independence*, (Watertown, Mass. : Blue Crane Books, 1999), p.88

¹⁷¹ Gerard Libaridian has been the presidential adviser of Levon Ter-Petrossian until 1994. He has been an important name in the negotiations with Turkey and in Karabakh negotiations, therefore his appointment as an adviser can be considered as an important step for the relations with Turkey. He has been more effective in the foreign policy between March 1993 and September 1994.

¹⁷² Can Dündar, *Milliyet*, “Son Buluşmadan Önceki Gece Öldü”, 27 April 2005.

¹⁷³ *Ibid*.

it could be successful if the negotiations continued, but if so, the relations today will be different.

On 12 May of 1994, the ceasefire has been established between Armenia and Azerbaijan, but the conflict could not come to an end since that time. Therefore Turkey did not establish diplomatic relations with Armenia however, because of the ceasefire relations were softened. Levon Ter-Petrossian had banned ARF in December 1994 on national security grounds that party was responsible for criminal acts and was engaged in illegal activities.¹⁷⁴ ARF was against having good relations with Turkey and voiced so-called genocide on all occasions. Levon Ter-Petrossian also had forced the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Raffi Hovanissian who highlighted the genocide allegations in his visit to Turkey, to resign.¹⁷⁵ These two developments showed that Levon Ter-Petrossian wanted to normalize relations with Turkey. Libaridian states that according to Petrossian, Turkey's recognition of the so-called genocide was not a precondition for the development of normal relations, he considered the so-called genocide historical and moral, not a political issue and it was not a principle especially one on which foreign policy could be based.¹⁷⁶

3.7. The United Nations' Involvement in the Conflict

Armenia joined the UN on 2nd March 1992. The United Nations also involved in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. During 1993, the United Nations Security Council adopted four resolutions on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict reaffirming the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Azerbaijani Republic and of all other states in the region:

In the Resolution 822 of 30 April 1993 the Security Council called for the immediate cessation of hostilities and the immediate withdrawal of all occupying forces. It also

¹⁷⁴ Libaridian, *The Challenge of Statehood*, p.43

¹⁷⁵ Mustafa Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya'yla İlişkiler" in *Türk Dış Politikası* Volume :II 1980-2001, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2001), p.412

¹⁷⁶ Libaridian, *The Challenge of Statehood*, p. 87

made an urgent appeal to the parties concerned to resume the peace talks under the aegis of the CSCE Minsk Group without delay.¹⁷⁷

In the Resolution 853¹⁷⁸ of 29 July 1993, the Security Council condemned the taking of Agdam and other recently occupied areas of Azerbaijan. It also made an urgent appeal to the parties concerned to refrain from any action which might hinder the peaceful settlement of the conflict, and to pursue talks within the framework of the CSCE Minsk Conference or in the form of direct contacts with a view to finding a definitive solution. Resolution 874 of 14 October 1993, urges the parties to the conflict to accept the peace plan drawn up by the CSCE on 28 September 1993¹⁷⁹.

In the Resolution 884 of 12 November 1993, the Security Council;

strongly urges the parties concerned to resume promptly and to make effective and permanent the cease-fire established as a result of the direct contacts undertaken with the assistance of the Government of the Russian Federation in support of the CSCE Minsk Group, and to continue to seek a negotiated settlement of the conflict within the context of the CSCE Minsk process and the "adjusted timetable" as amended by the CSCE Minsk Group meeting in Vienna of 2 to 8 November 1993.¹⁸⁰

These resolutions were emphasizing the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and that Armenia should leave the occupied territories immediately and unconditionally. However, Armenia was not declared as an aggressive state and the sanctions if Armenia does not withdraw from the territories were not mentioned. Therefore, the resolutions could not stop Armenia and as a result Azerbaijan lost approximately 20 per cent of its lands.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ See "1993 UN Security Council Resolutions on Nagorno-Karabakh Resolution 822" online at <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/or/13508.htm#822> (accessed on 10.01.2007)

¹⁷⁸ See "1993 UN Security Council Resolutions on Nagorno-Karabakh Resolution 853 online at <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/or/13508.htm#853> (accessed on 10.01.2007)

¹⁷⁹ See "1993 UN Security Council Resolutions on Nagorno-Karabakh Resolution 874 online at <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/or/13508.htm#874> (accessed on 10.01.2007)

¹⁸⁰ See "1993 UN Security Council Resolutions on Nagorno-Karabakh Resolution 884 online at <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/or/13508.htm#884> (accessed on 10.01.2007)

¹⁸¹ Aslanlı, *op.cit.*, p.418

The government of self-declared Nagorno-Karabakh Republic sees the international mediation effort as problematic as it insists that the territory belongs to Azerbaijan. In the early summer of 1993, the 3+1 Initiative was presented by Russia, Turkey and the USA and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and its nine members in the Minsk group.¹⁸² The 3+1 Initiative called for the withdrawal of Karabakh Armenian troops from the Kelbajar region and a 60-day cease-fire followed by negotiations. Azerbaijan accepted these terms immediately and Armenia followed. However the Karabakh Armenians turned the proposal down because it made no provision for their security.¹⁸³

3. 8. Resignation of Levon Ter-Petrossian

Levon Ter-Petrossian was accused of making too much concession in the Karabakh problem.¹⁸⁴ However, Libarian argues that Levon Ter-Petrossian's policy of normalization relations with all neighbours, integration in regional and international organizations had the support of most people and political forces in the country to the chagrin of Communists and ARF.¹⁸⁵ Libaridian explains that Levon Ter-Petrossian resigned under the pressure from powerful members of his own cabinet, the Prime Minister Robert Kocharian, Defence Minister Vazgen Sargsian and Interior and Security Minister Serge Sargsian. They opposed the 1997 draft proposal for the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict proposed by OSCE Minsk Group which Levon Ter-Petrossian accepted.¹⁸⁶ His resignation is considered by some of the parliamentarians as "velvet coup"¹⁸⁷

¹⁸² Chorbajian, *et al.*, *op.cit.*, p. 36

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 36

¹⁸⁴ Laçiner, *op.cit.*, p.193

¹⁸⁵ Libaridian, *Modern Armenia People, Nation, State*, p.212

¹⁸⁶ Libaridian, *The Challenge of Statehood*, p. 87

¹⁸⁷ "...And Presidents Go", *Economist*, Vol.346, Issue 8054, 07.02.98, p.54

By accepting the OSCE's proposal Levon Ter-Petrossian hoped to end Armenia's economic isolation. Turkey and Azerbaijan have closed the borders with Armenia, while the only railroad to North cannot reach Russia or beyond as it is blocked by an ethnic dispute between Georgia and Abkhazia.¹⁸⁸ He was aware of the fact that Armenia cannot be powerful without solving economical problems and this cannot be done without establishing good relations with neighbouring countries. His appointment of Robert Kocharian as a Prime Minister in March 1997 can be considered as a mistake. Robert Kocharian proposed that with "better management, more discipline, a strong anticorruption policy, a forceful effort to achieve unity, and the coordination of the resources of the state of Armenia and Diaspora, the Armenian side could both improve its economic performance sufficiently to lift the majority of its population out of poverty and give it time wait for a more propitious moment to deal with the Nagorno-Karabakh problem."¹⁸⁹ Libaridian believes that Levon Ter-Petrossian invited Robert Kocharian to prove his point but after six months with his new Prime Minister, he was more convinced that he was right.

The events leading to Levon Ter-Petrossian's resignation can be rooted to 1996 Presidency elections. Corruption and poverty kept him unelectable. But also he couldn't lose.¹⁹⁰ Also his relations with the diaspora brought his end. Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was at the base of all policies and without solving the conflict relations couldn't be normalized but his efforts to increase relations contradicted with the views of diaspora and some members of the parliament who strictly opposed any concession in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Because of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Ter Petrossian couldn't succeeded in his policy of "*normalization of Armenia's foreign policy*". Libaridian explains it by answering the question "Has Armenia crossed the road and in what direction has it travelled?" He states that between 1990-1997 under the leadership of the ANM, Armenia moved in the direction of independence and normalcy but in the absence of

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.55

¹⁸⁹ Libaridian, *The Challenge Of Statehood*, p.65

¹⁹⁰ Ian Bremmer, "Help Wanted For Armenia", *Christian Science Monitor*, 1998, Vol.90 , Issue 62, p.20

a resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict had not reached the other side.¹⁹¹ Levon Ter-Petrossian's resignation has halted the normalization of the relations of Armenia with other countries which in turn deferred the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, or vice versa.

It can be concluded that the foreign policy of Armenia under Levon Ter-Petrossian era, is shaped by Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Similarly, the relations with the other countries are determined by the conflict. Armenia could not make decisions disregarding the conflict. In this regard, she became more dependent on Russia as well as Iran which supported Armenia. On the other hand, Armenia's relations became worse with Azerbaijan and Turkey because of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Levon Ter-Petrossian wanted to change this situation by trying to follow relatively mild policy to solve the conflict, however prevented by the opposition and diaspora.

¹⁹¹ Libaridian, *The Challenge Of Statehood*, p. 16

CHAPTER 4

ARMENIAN FOREIGN POLICY UNDER ROBERT KOCHARIAN AND THE NAGORNO- KARABAKH CONFLICT

In this chapter, the foreign policy of second president of Armenia, Robert Kocharian will be examined. Like, Levon Ter-Petrossian, Robert Kocharian also is affected by the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict when shaping the foreign policy of the country. The relations with other countries like Russia, Iran, the United States were all linked with the conflict. Moreover, the relations of Armenia with Azerbaijan and Turkey became worse because of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the policy that Robert Kocharian follows regarding the conflict. To this aim, after explaining the relations with the other countries, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will be evaluated. OSCE's mediatory role in the conflict will be explained until to date and then the referendum and the constitution of self-declared Nagorno-Karabakh Republic which are not accepted in international arena will be evaluated. Also relations of Armenia with Turkey under the Robert Kocharian era which are also affected by the conflict will be analyzed. Lastly, parliamentary elections and its effects to Nagorno-Karabakh dispute will be studied.

Robert Kocharian has become President of so-called Nagorno-Karabakh Defence Committee in 1992 and become the President of the self-proclaimed Nagorno-Karabakh republic on 24 December 1992. Levon Ter-Petrossian made him the Prime Minister of Armenia in March of 1997 and he began to criticize Levon Ter-Petrossian's Nagorno-Karabakh policy. After Levon Ter-Petrossian's resignation, Robert Kocharian began to use the authorization of the presidency and became the President of Armenia in the elections of 30 March, 1998.¹⁹²

¹⁹² Hasanoglu, et al., p.150

In Robert Kocharian era, Armenia wants to be ally of the countries other than Azerbaijan and Turkey. Armenia wants to be good allies with both Russia and the USA, the EU and Iran, on the other hand wants to keep Turkey and Azerbaijan away. This policy can be considered as “complementary foreign policy”¹⁹³ However it is not possible to follow this policy as the interests of the above mentioned countries in Caucasia differs.

Also in the Robert Kocharian era, Armenia tried to participate in almost every international organization. To this regard, Armenia became a member of Council of Europe in 2001. Robert Kocharian regarded joining to the Council of Europe an important milestone in the foreign policy of Armenia.¹⁹⁴ He stated that “ becoming a member of the Council of Europe means that democracy and human rights processes have become part of Armenia’s international obligations and are subject to constant monitoring on the part of the international community.”¹⁹⁵

Armenia became a member of the World Trade Organization in 5 September, 2003.¹⁹⁶ One of the reasons for Armenia to be a member of WTO is to make a pressure on Azerbaijan and Turkey and to lift their economic sanctions on Armenia.¹⁹⁷

4.1. Robert Kocharian and the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict

The most important factor shaping the foreign policy of Robert Kocharian was the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Robert Kocharian administration has tried to leave the Nagorno-Karabakh problem resultless, taking the principle of “non-resolution is also

¹⁹³ Laçiner, *Türkler ve Ermeniler: Bir Uluslararası İlişkiler Çalışması*, p. 218

¹⁹⁴ “Speech by Mr. Robert Kocharian, President of the Republic of Armenia at the Austrian Economic Chamber” in Igor S.Oleynik et al. *Armenia Foreign Policy & Government Guide*, p. 198

¹⁹⁵ Igor S. Oleynik et al. , “President Robert Kocharian’s speech at the second Armenia-Diaspora Conference”, (USA: International Business Publications, 2002) p. 189

¹⁹⁶ “Republic of Armenia and the WTO” online at http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/countries_e/armenia_e.htm (accessed on 26.02.2007)

¹⁹⁷ Laçiner, *Türkler ve Ermeniler: Bir Uluslararası İlişkiler Çalışması*, p.220

a resolution” into consideration.¹⁹⁸ Robert Kocharian set some negotiation principles towards Nagorno-Karabakh: “1. the right of Karabakh people to self-determination, 2. guarantees of Karabakh’s security, widely interpreted to include a role for Armenia, 3. a permanent geographic link between Armenia and Karabakh, for example Armenian retention of Lachin corridor.”¹⁹⁹

According to Robert Kocharian the legal basis for the creation of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh is faultless and he recognizes the right of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh to self-determination and self-defence. He does not see this as a violation of Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity alleging that Nagorno-Karabakh has never been a part of an independent Azerbaijani state.²⁰⁰ He thinks that the resolution of the conflict can only be materialized on the basis of the legal equality of the parties of the conflict.²⁰¹ Likewise, Vartan Oskanian, Minister of Foreign Affairs asserts that the main impediment to the resolution is Azerbaijan’s fixation on the notion of autonomy or self-rule saying that Nagorno-Karabakh’s autonomous status during the Soviet period was exclusively Stalin’s creation as part of his divide and rule policy.²⁰²

According to Robert Kocharian, Levon Ter-Petrossian has failed because he was peaceful in making concessions in foreign policy. Therefore, he thinks that the foreign policy of Armenia should be harsh.²⁰³ However, in international platforms, Robert Kocharian seems to be ready for compromises while blaming Azerbaijan for the conflict. In the Millenium Summit of the United Nations, in September 2000, Robert Kocharian stated that,

¹⁹⁸ Hasanoglu et al., p. 150

¹⁹⁹ Tiffany G. Petros, “Evolution of Armenia’s Foreign Policy”, *Armenian International Policy Research* (January 2003), p.3

²⁰⁰ “Speech by H.E. Mr. Robert Kocharian, President of the Republic of Armenia at the Argentinean Council of International Relations”, in Oleynik et al., p.196

²⁰¹ “Statement By H. E. Robert Kocharian President of Republic of Armenia at the Millenium Summit of the United Nations “, in Oleynik et al., p. 205

²⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 218

²⁰³ Laçiner, *Türkler ve Ermeniler: Bir Uluslararası İlişkiler Çalışması*, p.218

We are ready to maintain direct contacts with Azerbaijan in order to search compromises, although we think that direct negotiation between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh would be more productive, especially taking into account the fact that Nagorno-Karabakh is a *de facto* established and open for a dialogue state.²⁰⁴

On the 27th April of 1999, there was an attack on Armenian Parliament which resulted with the killing of 8 Parliament members including Prime Minister Vazgen Sarkisyan and Speaker of the Parliament Karen Demirjiyan.²⁰⁵ The assassination of Sarkisyan and Demirjian is important because the two hold the highest offices in the Republic as well as they were the leaders of two parties opposing the president; Republican Party of Armenia (RPA) and People's Party of Armenia, respectively. Sarkisyan was the second Prime Minister in the Kocharyan Presidency. In the Parliamentary elections of mid 1999, the Sarkisyan-Demirjian coalition won majority and became the opposition to President Robert Kocharian.²⁰⁶ President Robert Kocharian had been accused of being involved in their assassination.²⁰⁷ Sarkisyan was against Levon Ter-Petrosian's Karabakh policy, however he gave the impression that he was ready for a compromise in the problem. But his assassination made this chance impossible.²⁰⁸

4.2. OSCE's Mediatory Role in the Conflict

In 1998, the Minsk Group represented a new proposal according to Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, called as the "common state" proposal which proposes "to keep Nagorno-Karabakh as part of Azerbaijan but to do so on the basis of 'horizontal' relations between Stepanakert and Baku."²⁰⁹ Azerbaijan did not accept the proposal

²⁰⁴ "Statement By HE Robert Kocharian President of Republic Of Armenia At the Millenium Summit of The United Nations", in Oleynik et al., p.205

²⁰⁵ Kamer Kasım, "Armenia's Foreign Policy: Basic Parameters of the Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Kocaryan Era", online at <http://www.turkishweekly.net/articles.php?id=13> (accessed on 20.08.2006)

²⁰⁶ Libaridian, *Modern Armenia*, p. 251

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.* p.252

²⁰⁸ Kamer Kasım, "Armenia's Foreign Policy: Basic Parameters of the Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Kocaryan Era", online at <http://www.turkishweekly.net/articles.php?id=13> (accessed on 20.08.2006)

²⁰⁹ Libaridian , *Modern Armenia* , p.261

saying that the term “common state” which has no basis in international law, implies that Nagorno-Karabakh is an independent state and territorial entity and grants it, equally with Azerbaijan, the status of the subject of the "common state". According to Azerbaijan the proposal fully contradicts the norms and principles of international law, deprives Azerbaijan of a part of its own territory and actually legitimizes Armenian aggression against Azerbaijan.²¹⁰

Beginning in April 1999, the negotiations moved to the level of presidents. In the summer of 1999, Aliyev and Robert Kocharian agreed, in principle, on a new formula which proposes a land swap between Azerbaijan and Armenia. According to this formula, Azerbaijan would concede Nagorno-Karabakh, which would become an integral part of Armenia and Armenia would relinquish the Meghri district in the south of Armenia. Armenia would have the best possible solution to the status problem however loose its border with Iran, while Azerbaijan would establish a land connection with Nakhichevan as well as allow direct access for its oil pipeline to Turkey.²¹¹ This formula began to unravel as Robert Kocharian has changed his position. The loss of the border with Iran did not welcomed by Robert Kocharian describing the route southwards as a “road of life”.²¹² He then offered passage away rights to Azerbaijan through or over Meghri in return for full sovereignty over the disputed territory. Aliyev did not accept the revised formula.

The peace process stalled until Russian president Vladimir Putin’s visit to Baku in January 2001. Together with French President Jacques Chirac, he organized Paris meetings in February and March 2001.²¹³ To push for the Paris talks, the US made an attempt to make the parties accept the formula and gather the two presidents in

²¹⁰ Haydar Aliyev’s speech at Little White House , Key West Florida, April 3, 2001 in Azerbaijan International Spring 2001, online at http://www.azer.com/aiweb/categories/magazine/91_folder/91_articles/91_keywest.html (accessed on 16.02.2007)

²¹¹ Libaradian, *Modern Armenia*, p. 262

²¹² “Is a Settlement Possible?”, *Economist*, , Vol .355 Issue 8176, 24.06.2000, p.58

²¹³ Elkhan Mehtiyev, “Armenia-Azerbaijan Prague Process:Road Map to Peace or Stalemate for Uncertainty?”, *Conflict Studies Research Centre, Caucasus Series*, (May 2005), p. 2

Key West Florida in April.²¹⁴ Before the Key West talks, the US prepared an official report on the history of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and there were statements concerning that Azerbaijan lands were occupied by Armenia. These statements put pressure on Armenia according to the observers.²¹⁵ The formulas agreed in Paris and Key West were as following:

Karabakh will legally belong to Azerbaijan but will enjoy a very broad autonomy. Armenia will be connected to Karabakh via a corridor and Azerbaijan will be connected to Nachichevan with a similar corridor. It appeared that these corridors would be Lachin and Meghri.²¹⁶ Armenian forces will pull out of the areas they had occupied and the railroad would resume its operations.²¹⁷

This formula failed to reach any result. Robert Kocharian accused Azerbaijan for the deadlock in the settlement in Paris and Key West meetings saying that “We are strongly committed to a comprehensive peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict...Had Azerbaijan accepted the proposed settlement, we would have already been halfway through the implementation of the peace agreement.”²¹⁸

Ilham Aliyev became the President of Azerbaijan on October 15, 2003. Just two months later, Aliyev-Robert Kocharian meeting was held on 11 December 2003. Armenian side wanted to continue the negotiations in accordance with the Paris and Key West talks, claiming that a settlement was laid out and agreed by Haydar Aliyev in Key West for the further negotiations.²¹⁹ However, Azerbaijan was surprised stating that there was no agreement achieved in Paris or Key West.²²⁰ Azerbaijan’s

²¹² Gerard J. Libaridian , “The elusive ‘right formula’ at the ‘right time’: a historical analysis of the official peace process” (2005), online at <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/nagorny-karabakh/elusive-right-formula.php> (accessed on 24.02.2007)

²¹⁵ Arslanlı, “Tarihten Günümüze Karabağ Sorunu”, p. 426

²¹⁶ Ömer E. Lütem, “Facts and Comments”, in *Ermeni Araştırmaları/Armenian Studies*, Number 2, ASAM, Ankara, 2001, p. 211

²¹⁷ Ömer E. Lütem, “The Karabakh Problem in Basic Knowledge and Documentation on the Armenian Question”, Center For Eurasian Studies Research Institute for Armenian Research, 2006 online at <http://www.eraren.org/bilgibankasi/en/introduction.htm> (accessed on 25.02.2007)

²¹⁸ “President Robert Kocharian’s Speech At the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council Summit”, in Oleynik et al. , p. 184

²¹⁹ Mehtiyev, “Armenia-Azerbaijan Prague Process:Road Map to Peace or Stalemate for Uncertainty?”,p. 3

²²⁰ *Ibid*, p.3

Presidential Chief of Staff, Novruz Mammadov, said during a video link between Baku and Yerevan that “there is no Key West agreement and there cannot be any such document”.²²¹ Ilham Aliyev said that the previous options did not yield a basis for the further negotiations and declared that they were not in favor of making compromises. He declared that his regime is not in a hurry for a settlement.²²² On the other hand, Robert Kocharian said that he did not intend to start over the settlement process from the very beginning as Ilham Aliyev proposed.²²³

On April 2004, the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan came together in Prague which started the “Prague Process” in the conflict. Before the meetings start, Azerbaijan side expresses its position as that Azerbaijan will not agree neither to the independent status of Nagorno-Karabakh or to Nagorno-Karabakh being a part of Armenia.²²⁴ Ilham Aliyev proposed Armenia in an interview at Hurriyet Daily that “we are ready to give the highest status to Nagorno-Karabakh other than sovereignty. We are ready to grant the highest status of autonomy to Nagorno-Karabakh as national minorities have in various part of the world.”²²⁵ Armenian side again stated that Nagorno-Karabakh problem can only be solved by the self-determination of Nagorno-Karabakh people and therefore Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh should be united and the world should recognize Nagorno-Karabakh.²²⁶ However, Ilham Aliyev does not regard “self-determination” principle applicable to Nagorno-Karabakh case, stating that “they have an independent Armenia. But if you talk about self-

²²¹ Emil Danielyan, “Hopes Fading In Yerevan for Rapid Progress on Karabakh Settlement”, (February 2004) p. 2, online at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav022704.shtml> (accessed on 16.03.2007)

²²² *Ibid.*, p.2

²²³ Mehtiyev, “Armenia-Azerbaijan Prague Process: Road Map to Peace or Stalemate for Uncertainty?”, p.3

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.4

²²⁵ “Beş Yerden Çekilsinler Kapıyı Hemen Açalım”, *Hürriyet*, Interview with Ilham Aliyev by Ertuğrul Özkök , 9 April 2004

²²⁶ Mehtiyev, “Armenia-Azerbaijan Prague Process:Road Map to Peace or Stalemate for Uncertainty?”, p. 4

determination principle in every place where there is an Armenian, then they can declare the places they live in France, Georgia and the United States as Armenia.”²²⁷

Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry wanted Armenia to withdraw seven occupied areas beyond Nagorno-Karabakh and proposed to restore communication routes and relations with Armenia. However, Armenian Foreign Ministry did not accept the withdrawal.²²⁸ Meanwhile the European Union prepared a report demanding as a first step withdrawal of Armenian troops from the five occupied regions next to Nagorno-Karabakh in return for opening communications and cooperation. But Armenia rejected this initiative stating that Armenia does not accept separate initiatives other than that proposed by OSCE.²²⁹

On 28 June 2004, a trilateral meeting of foreign ministers of Turkey, Azerbaijan and Armenia took part in Turkey. Turkish Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül said that if Armenia does not work for the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the borders will not be opened. Armenian Foreign Minister considered the meeting fruitful.²³⁰ After the meeting of the three foreign ministers, the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen formulated a new proposal which is a synthesis of a “step-by step” solution which Azerbaijan supports and “package plan” which Armenia demands. However, this proposal also did not accepted by both parties.²³¹

On 15 September 2004, the leaders of Azerbaijan and Armenia met in Astana, Kazakhstan to negotiate the main points of the disagreement. Aliyev saw this meeting as a chance to determine the road map for an agreement while Robert

²²⁷ “Beş Yerden Çekilsinler Kapıyı Hemen Açalım”, *Hürriyet*, Interview with Ilham Aliyev by Ertuğrul Özkök, 9 April 2004

²²⁸ Mehtiyev, “Armenia-Azerbaijan Prague Process: Road Map to Peace or Stalemate for Uncertainty?”, p.5

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.5

²³⁰ “İstanbul’da Üçlü Barış Zirvesi”, *Akşam*, 29 June 2004

²³¹ Mehtiyev, “Armenia-Azerbaijan Prague Process: Road Map to Peace or Stalemate for Uncertainty?”, p.6

Kocharian stating that “there is need for time out to assess the existing ideas and to make decisions for the next steps”.²³²

Armenia was reluctant in proceeding in the Prague process. In the UN’s General Assembly’s 59th session a draft resolution called “Situation in the Occupied Territories of Azerbaijan” has been introduced. However, Armenia did not wanted to take the conflict to the United Nations as it can cause international condemnation and weaken Armenian arguments. On the other hand, Aliyev stated that Azerbaijan wants the international recognition of the occupation of Azerbaijani territories by Armenia, by the UN; the EU and the Council of Europe.²³³

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) approved a controversial resolution on the Nagorno-Karabakh on 25 January 2005. The Resolution 1416 criticizes ethnic Armenian forces for occupying considerable parts of Azerbaijan's territory years after the end of the separatist conflict. The document also states that the 1988-94 war led to large-scale ethnic expulsions and the creation of mono-ethnic areas that "resemble the terrible concept of ethnic cleansing"²³⁴ Armenia criticized the draft resolution and its appending report as biased in Azerbaijan's favor. It has been mentioned in the Resolution that “independence and the cessation a regional territory from a state may only be achieved through a lawful and peaceful process based on democratic support by the inhabitants of such territory and not in the wake of an armed conflict leading to ethic expulsion and the *de facto* annexation of such a territory to another state”.²³⁵ Therefore, the Nagorno-Karabakh cannot have an independent status since a lawful and peaceful process based on democratic support of the inhabitants of this territory and Azerbaijanis were expelled from their homes.

²³² *Ibid.*, p.7

²³³ “Azerbaijan Rejects Armenian Warning Over Karabakh Files”, *RFE/RL*, 10 November 2004

²³⁴ Ömer E. Lütem, *The Karabakh Problem*, p. 10

²³⁵ “Resolution 1416 (2005): The conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh region dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference” online at <http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/AdoptedText/TA05/ERES1416.htm> (accessed on 23.03.2007)

The year 2006 was seen by the Minsk Group as a “key year” as there were no elections scheduled for Armenia and Azerbaijan. On February 2006, Aliyev and Robert Kocharian came together in Rambouillet Castle, near Paris. During the meetings Ilham Aliyev demanded that Armenian troops withdraw quickly from all of the seven districts, while Robert Kocharian stated that the fate of Kelbadjar which is important in terms of security should only be decided after the vote on self-determination by the people of Nagorno-Karabakh.²³⁶

However, the negotiations lasting over the two did not result with success. The US mediator Steven Mann declared that “there was no agreement” after several hours of meetings.²³⁷ International mediators insisted the failure of the Ramboillet Summit did not mean that the peace process was at a dead lock, however Russian Minsk-Group co-chairman Yury Merziyakov said that the clock was ticking for the sides to strike a compromise.²³⁸

After Paris meetings Robert Kocharian and Aliyev met in Bucharest, Romania, at the Blacksea Forum for the Partnership and Dialogue in June 2006. News agencies reported that they have come together before the forum at the Poland Embassy together with OSCE representatives²³⁹ and also President of Romania Basescu invited them to talk over the Nagorno-Karabakh issue.²⁴⁰ However, the results of these meetings were not announced.

The two leaders met again in Minsk on November 2006. This meeting was regarded as a last chance to a preliminary agreement in 2007 there was going to be parliamentary elections in Armenia, and in 2008 presidential elections will be held in

²³⁶ Anne Marie Mouradian, “OSCE Still hopeful for an Agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2006”, March 2006, online at www.caucaz.com/home_eng/breve_contenu.php?id=231 (accessed on 23.03.2007)

²³⁷ “Little progress for Armenia, Azerbaijan”, *RFE/RL*, 11 February 2006

²³⁸ “Nagorno-Karabakh: Russia Calls for Mutually Acceptable Solution”, *RFE/RL*, 6 April 2006

²³⁹ “Aliyev-Koçaryan Görüşmesi Sonuçsuz”, *CNN*, 05 June 2006

²⁴⁰ “Aliyev, Kocharian Again Make No Headway in Nagorno-Karabakh Dispute”, *New Anatolian*, 06 June 2006

the both countries. Two presidents did not issue any official statements but RFE/RL reported Aliyev saying that “talks were held in a constructive way however divergences remain on crucial points.”²⁴¹ Armenian side was more pessimistic about the results of the meeting, Foreign Minister of Armenia Oskanian stated that “no agreement has been reached.”²⁴²

Although 2007 was an election year in Armenia, the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Goran Lennmarker, was optimistic about the solution of the problem after the completion of the parliamentary election in Armenia held on May 12. He said at the meeting of the PACE Permanent Commission that, a peaceful agreement may be signed between Armenia and Azerbaijan, stressing that the sides have discussed the proposals of the OSCE Minsk Group and an agreement was reached on several aspects.²⁴³

It is a big question mark whether the two leaders can come to an agreement on the long-lasting conflict, however it does not seem possible unless the two leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan make mutual compromises.

4.3 Referendum and the Constitution of the Self-Declared Nagorno-Karabakh Republic

Nagorno-Karabakh voted for its first constitution in a referendum. More than 100 international observers and journalists from Russia, France, the United States, Italy, Israel, Serbia and other countries monitored the referendum.²⁴⁴ As a result of the referendum, it gained a constitution on 10 December 2006. According to Panarmenian News Agency, 77.279 people voted for the adoption of the

²⁴¹ “Caucasus: Azerbaijani, Armenian, Karabakh Officials Assess Talks”, *RFE/RL*, 1 December 2006

²⁴² *Ibid*

²⁴³ “Yerevan and Baku May Sign Peaceful Agreement on Karabakh In Summer”, *Panarmenian*, 20 March 2007 online at www.panarmenian.net/news/eng/?nid=21527&date=2007-03-19 - 31k – (accessed on 27.03.2007)

²⁴⁴ “Azerbaijan’s Breakaway Karabakh Adopts Its First Constitution”, *Russian News Agency*, 11 December 2006

Constitution, 554 voted against it.²⁴⁵ Robert Kocharian said in a congratulatory message to Stepanakert that “this referendum, which met the highest democratic standards, was another milestone in the establishment of Nagorno-Karabakh’s independence.”²⁴⁶

Azerbaijan, the European Union, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, GUAM (a regional association including Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova) have all refused to recognize the referendum as valid. The Co-chairs of the Minsk Group stated that “a reason not to recognize this referendum is that no member of the international community recognizes the so-called Nagorno-Karabakh republic as an independent state.”²⁴⁷ OSCE Chairman-in Office and Belgium Foreign Minister Karel de Gucht commented that the vote could undermine progress made in talks mediated by OSCE between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the disputed territory.²⁴⁸ European Union declared that it recognizes neither the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh, nor the results of the referendum²⁴⁹ and considered the referendum as a non-progressive step in the settlement of the conflict as it may hamper the process of the settlement of the conflict.²⁵⁰ The Council of Europe Secretary General Terry Davis considered the referendum as illegal and said that international community would not recognize its results.²⁵¹ GUAM also stated that the referendum would destroy the overall situation in the region and that it had no legal basis and constitutes a breach under Azerbaijan’s constitution and international law.²⁵²

²⁴⁵ “Final Outcomes of Karabakh Referendums Announced”, *Panarmenian*, 13 December 2006 online at www.panarmenian.net/news/eng/mail/?nid=20380 (accessed on 01.08.2007)

²⁴⁶ “Voters Approve New Karabakh Constitution”, *RFE/RE*, 12 December 2006

²⁴⁷ “Statement by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs on the 10 December Referendum in Nagorno-Karabakh, OSCE Press Release”, 11 December 2006, online at <http://www.osce.org/item/22640.html> (accessed on 01.08.2007)

²⁴⁸ “Nagorno-Karabakh Gains A Constitution, But Little Clarity For Future”, *Eurasia Net*, 13 December 2006

²⁴⁹ “AB: Yukarı Karabağ’daki Referandumunu Tanımıyoruz”, *Hürriyet*, 11 December 2006

²⁵⁰ “Denis Bribosia: “Nagorno-Karabakh Referendum is Non-Progressive Step in the Settlement of Conflict”, *Today Az*, 13 December 2006

²⁵¹ “Karabağ Referandumunu Geçersiz”, *NTV-MSNBC*, 11 December 2006

²⁵² “Armenians in the Occupied Nagorno-Karabakh Adopt Pro-Independence Constitution”, *Turkish Weekly*, 11 December 2006

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey declared that she did not recognize the referendum and wanted the international community not to recognize it.²⁵³

Despite all these reactions to the referendum, Vartan Oskanyan, the Foreign Minister of Armenia, alleged that the referendum would have a positive effect on the negotiations with Baku.²⁵⁴ However, Azeri Foreign Minister Elmar Mehmedyarov called the referendum a disappointing move for the attempts to maintain peace in the region.²⁵⁵

The Constitution defines Nagorno-Karabakh as an independent, sovereign, democratic, juristic and social state. By means of the Constitution, Armenia wanted the international community to recognize the Nagorno-Karabakh as an “independent state”. However, the international community reacted the referendum opposite and did not recognize the independency of “Nagorno-Karabakh”. Therefore, the attempts of Armenia did not go further away rather than distorting the relations with Azerbaijan and deferring the resolution of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh.

4. 4. Relations with Russia

Russia became an important partner in Robert Kocharian’s foreign policy. Armenia and Russia has historical ties starting from 19th century. Russia defended non-Muslim groups against Ottoman Empire. However, Russia’s support to Armenia continued if it has not contradicted with Russian national interests.²⁵⁶ Because of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Armenia became more dependent on Russia. Like Levon Ter-Petrossian, Robert Kocharian wanted to reduce Armenia’s dependency on Russia but could not succeed. Russian’s influence on Armenia continued and even increased after Putin’s presidency in Russia. The main reason was the Nagorno-

²⁵³ “Dışışlerinden Ermenistan’a Kınama”, *Hürriyet*, 12 December 2006

²⁵⁴ “Karabağ’da Tanınma”, *Radikal*, 11 December 2006

²⁵⁵ “Karabağ’da Barışa Referandum Darbesi”, *Zaman*, 11 December 2006

²⁵⁶ Laçiner, *Türkler ve Ermeniler: Bir Uluslararası İlişkiler Çalışması*, p. 223

Karabakh conflict as well as Russia's new security doctrine.²⁵⁷ Armenia gave Russia the power to keep troops in the bases near the Turkish-Armenian and Iran-Armenian border. Russian troops stationed in Armenia seemed as a guarantee for Russian political support and a backbone for military activities.²⁵⁸

Putin visited Armenia on 14-15 September 2001 and agreements indicating the special relations between two countries signed during his visit. Before Putin's Armenia visit, it's important to mention that he visited Baku on 8 January 2001. During his visit 8 agreements concerning different fields were signed and moreover Putin proposed to mediate in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and stated that Russia would be the guarantor of any agreement that the parties sign.²⁵⁹

Armenia has survived by the help of the loan received from Russia in the early years of the independence however, after a few years it had been difficult to pay it back. After long negotiations between parties, an agreement is signed on July 17, 2002 and in accordance with the proposal of Robert Kocharian, Russia has accepted to take 5 big industrial plants of Armenia including, Nairit, the big military industrial plant and Hrazdan hydroelectric plant which produces 40 percent of the electricity need of Armenia.²⁶⁰ By 2004, Russia has gained the 80 percent of the energy producing capacity of Armenia.²⁶¹

Robert Kocharian gave importance to the relations with Russia because first of all, he thinks that Russia is responsible of Levon Ter-Petrosian's resignation. Secondly, he wanted to put pressure on Turkey by using Russia and the sees Russian military power as a trump towards Turkey and Azerbaijan.²⁶² On the other hand, Russia sees

²⁵⁷ Kamer Kasım, "Armenia's Foreign Policy: Basic Parameters of the Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Kocaryan Era", online at <http://www.turkishweekly.net/articles.php?id=13> (accessed on 20.08.2006)

²⁵⁸ Elhan Mehtiyev, "Azerbaijan&Armenia:Political Development, Policy Priorities, Options for Peace", *Insight Turkey* ,Volume 6 Number 2 (April-June 2004), p.84

²⁵⁹ Aslanlı, *op.cit.*, p.427

²⁶⁰ Hasanolu *et al.*, p.151

²⁶¹ Laçiner, *Türkler ve Ermeniler: Bir Uluslararası İlişkiler Çalışması*, p. 225

²⁶² *Ibid.*, p.228

Armenia as a last fortress. Russia wants to strengthen Armenia against attacks coming from the West.

4.5. Relations with the USA

Since its independence, Armenia has pursued a balance policy between Russia and the United States by getting both the military and political support of Russia and economical support of the USA.²⁶³ The USA was one of the first countries that recognize Armenia on 25 December 1991 and opened an embassy in Yerevan in February of 1992.²⁶⁴

The Armenian diaspora is influential in the USA, therefore it is an important factor regarding the relations of Armenia and the USA. Knowing the importance of the diaspora, Robert Kocharian convened several Armenia-Diaspora conferences. However the relations between Armenia and the USA cannot be minimized to Armenian diaspora. The two countries also have economic relations. The USA gave economical support to Armenia in order to help Armenia to build a market economy.²⁶⁵

During Robert Kocharian era, Armenia wanted to use the US as a balance factor to Russia as it wanted to break dependency on Russia. However, Armenia couldn't get the support of the US like it gets before since Azerbaijan began to gain importance in the South Caucasus policy of the US. Azerbaijan is important for the US because of its petroleum sources and after September 11 this importance increased. The US lifted the restrictions it applied to Azerbaijan by Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act in 2001.²⁶⁶ Although Azerbaijan started to gain importance for the USA,

²⁶³ Hasanoglu *et al.*, p.157

²⁶⁴ Laçiner, *Türkler ve Ermeniler: Bir Uluslararası İlişkiler Çalışması*, p. 231

²⁶⁵ "Armenia Fund USA: 2005 in Retrospect", online at <http://armeniafundusa.org/news/20051230-retrospect-2005.htm> (accessed on 02.08.2007)

²⁶⁶ Araz Arslanlı, "ABD'da Adaletsizliğe Verilen Ara: 907 Sayılı Ek Madde'nin Uygulamasının Durdurulması", *Stratejik Analiz* (January 2002), Volume 2, No. 21, pp. 55-62

Armenia is indispensable for the USA. Armenia continues to be an important country for the USA because of its interests in the Caucasus.

4.6. Relations with Turkey

When he became the president of Armenia, Robert Kocharian reconfirmed the policy of Ter-Petrosian administration to establish diplomatic relations and normalize relations with Turkey without preconditions.²⁶⁷ However, different from his predecessor, Robert Kocharian have put the so-called genocide in the first place in the relations with Turkey and made international recognition of the so-called genocide part of foreign policy of Armenia. He said that “as long as Turkey continues to deny the past, our reconciliation remains hostage to mistrust.”²⁶⁸ By raising the so-called genocide allegations, he believed that Turkey would stop insisting on the resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.²⁶⁹ However, Turkey’s stance became rougher when Armenia put forward the so-called genocide allegations.

Robert Kocharian developed Armenia’s relations with the countries who may be regarded as rivals of Turkey, like Greece, Iran, Syria. In this regard, Iran, Greece and Armenia started to come together several times in Tehran, Yerevan and Athens. On September 1999, the foreign ministers of the three countries met in Yerevan and they all state that these meetings does not cover any military subject and does not target any third country including Turkey.²⁷⁰ However, these remarks do not seem logical.

Robert Kocharian attended the OSCE Summit which was held in Istanbul, Turkey on 19 November 1999. In his speech he called for the creation of a security pact in the South Caucasus.²⁷¹ This kind of an agreement would mean the withdrawal of Russian

²⁶⁷ Libaridian, *Modern Armenia*, p.274

²⁶⁸ “Speech by H.E. Mr. Robert Kocharian, President of the Republic of Armenia at the Argentinean Council of International Relations”, in Oleynik et al. , p. 197

²⁶⁹ Libaridian, *Modern Armenia*, p. 275

²⁷⁰ Laçiner, *Türkler ve Ermeniler*, p. 258

²⁷¹ “ Speech by H.E. Mr. Robert Kocharian, at the OSCE Summit in İstanbul, in Oleynik et al., p.208

troops from Armenia, undermining a longtime alliance. This may be regarded as a change in the foreign policy of Robert Kocharian. Moreover, he also stated at the OSCE summit that the evolution of regional stability and cooperation in the South Caucasus is not possible without having the Armenian-Turkish relations enter a phase.²⁷²

However, Robert Kocharian did not attend the NATO summit on 29 June 2004 which was also held in Istanbul. Just before the summit, he stated that “Armenia could improve without Turkey”²⁷³ and he wanted Turkey to apologize for the so-called genocide.²⁷⁴ His statements show that Robert Kocharian was not sincere in his previous statements regarding Turkey. In NATO Summit, Armenian Foreign Minister Oskanyan represented Armenia instead of Robert Kocharian. During his visit to Turkey, Oskanyan met with Abdullah Gul, the Foreign Minister of Turkey and the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Oskanyan wanted the borders to be opened between Turkey and Armenia and declared the will of Armenia to normalize relations with Turkey without preconditions. Armenia, by saying to normalize relations without preconditions, is trying to make the world believe that it is following a mild policy. However, these words do not mean anything to Turkey, because Turkey is the one who does not start relations with Armenia without the solution of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and unless Armenia leaves the occupied areas in Azerbaijan and quit its so-called genocide allegations. To this regard, Turkey reiterated its demand from Armenia to withdraw its allegations on the so-called genocide and territorial claims in the meetings with Oskanyan.²⁷⁵

On April 13, 2005 Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan proposed “the establishment on a research commission with the participation of historians and other experts from both countries with the purpose of carrying out research on the 1915

²⁷² *Ibid.*, p.207

²⁷³ “Zirve Çerçevesinde Vartan Oskanyan Abdullah Gül ve Daha Sonra Türkiye ve Azerbaycan Dışişleri Bakanlarıyla Üçlü Görüşmede Bulundu”, *Azg*, 29 June 2004

²⁷⁴ “Koçaryan:Gelin Görüşelim”, *Radikal*, 24 June 2004

²⁷⁵ Ömer E. Lütem, “Olaylar ve Yorumlar”, *Ermeni Araştırmaları* (2004) No. 14-15, p.5

incidents”.²⁷⁶ Vaha Hovanesyan, Vice President of Armenian Dashnaksutyun Party responded Erdoğan’s proposal on April 22, 2005 stating that before it could be possible for Turkey to establish bilateral relations with Armenia, Turkey had to stop putting forward the conditions that Armenia had to withdraw from Northern Karabakh, give up claims of genocide and accept the historical borders. Moreover, he said that accepting these conditions would mean that Armenia had lost its political and national conscience.²⁷⁷

Armenia, by using its diaspora in the world, has made the world believe the so-called genocide. Turkey was late to understand the power of diaspora in explaining itself to the international community. To this regard, on 8-9 March 2007, a Turkish Diaspora Summit was held in Baku. Prime Minister of Turkey, Tayyip Erdogan, President of Azerbaijan İlham Aliyev, President of North Cyprus Mehmet Ali Talat and representatives of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan have attended this summit.²⁷⁸ The summit is important as it took place at a time that Turkey combats with Armenian allegations of so-called genocide. A common strategy paper was accepted in the summit and the parties decided to explain the world that the terrorist acts and the reality of the so-called genocide to the world by means of the diaspora.²⁷⁹

In 2007, many important events took place between Turkey and Armenia. The death of Prime Minister of Armenia Andranik Margarian of heart failure on 26 March is one of them.²⁸⁰ He was supporting starting the diplomatic relations with Turkey and that the normalization of the relations with Turkey would help the peaceful settlement of the conflicts in the South Caucasus.²⁸¹ Turkey send condolences to

²⁷⁶ Ulyurt, *op.cit.*, p.20

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p.20

²⁷⁸ “Türk Diasporasında Hareketlilik”, *Cumhuriyet*, 28 March 2007

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁰ “Andranik Margaryan Öldü”, *Hürriyet*, 26 March 2007

²⁸¹ “Başbakanın Kalbi Dayanmadı”, *Bugün*, 26 March 2007

Armenia via Turkish Embassy in Tbilisi²⁸², and the Turkish ambassador of Tbilisi went to Margarian's funeral representing Turkey.

Another important event was the "Hrant Dink Resolution" at the US Senate which will directly affect the relations with the US because of its Armenian policy. The US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations adopted a draft resolution condemning the murder of Hrant Dink on 19 January 2007 and requesting the abolition of Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code as well as the establishment of relations between Turkey and Armenia. The first draft of this resolution was stating that "Hrant Dink was prosecuted on the basis of Article 301 for having spoken upon the Armenian genocide".²⁸³ This statement in the resolution changed after the pressure of Turkey as "he was prosecuted due having referred to Armenian massacre as genocide". This amendment in the resolution should be regarded as an important victory for Turkey, because if the draft had been accepted as such, this would have meant that the US recognized the Armenian "genocide". Moreover in the first draft, Turkey is demanded to normalize relations with Armenia but in the amended draft, the same call has been done to Armenia too. However, it is important to mention that this resolution is not binding.

The above mentioned resolution is not the only document supporting Armenian will. Moreover, the so-called "Armenian genocide resolution" is approved in the House Committee of the Foreign Affairs in the US Congress on 11 October 2007.²⁸⁴ The adoption of this resolution will harm the bilateral relations of Turkey and the US. It is a positive sign that the US high ranking officials are aware of that. US Air Force Major General Robertus Remkes stated that "approval of the resolution could sour the relations between the US and Turkey to revoke permission to its air space and US military bases in the country."²⁸⁵ Also, the US ambassador to Turkey, Ross Wilson

²⁸² "Ankara Send Messege of Condolences to Armenia", *Turkish Daily News*, 28 March 2007

²⁸³ "Dink Tasarısı Soykırım Denmeden Kabul Edildi", *Zaman*, 29 March 2007

²⁸⁴ "Ermeni Tasarısı Kabul Edildi", *Radikal*, 11 October 2007

²⁸⁵ "US General Warns House Resolution on Armenian 'genocide' Could Pose Problems", *Jurist*, 20 March 2007

stated that the official policy of the US would not be changed despite the non-binding resolution.²⁸⁶

It seems that relations with Armenia and Turkey will not normalize unless Armenia gives up its claims on the so-called genocide. But it seems almost impossible for Armenia to do that as it's an important part of its foreign policy. Turkey asked several times to Armenia to make an historians commission to research the genocide allegations however Armenia stays aloof to this proposal saying that it is a political matter, not historical. Foreign Minister Gül said in an article he wrote for Washington Times that Turkey is keen to set up a joint committee with Armenia to investigate the circumstances surrounding the so-called Armenian genocide and called for any third country, including the US to contribute this commission by appointing scholars to shed light on the allegations.²⁸⁷

The restoration and inauguration of Akdamar Church in Turkey in March 2007 can be regarded as an important step in the relations between the two countries. Although recognizing this inauguration as a positive step, Armenia consider it as a policy of Turkey to affect the world when there are resolutions regarding so-called genocide.²⁸⁸

The normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia also depends on the solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. However, in the near future, it does not seem possible to find a solution on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as there are elections in Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2008.

²⁸⁶ “Wilson: Türk-Ermeni İlişkileri Düzelmeli”, *Milliyet*, 28 March 2007

²⁸⁷ “Dink Tasarısı ABD Senatosu’nda Onaylandı”, *NTV*, 29 March 2007

²⁸⁸ Ömer E. Lütem, “Akdamar Kilisesi’nin Açılışına Tepkiler”, 30 Mart 2007, online at <http://www.eraren.org/index.php?Page=GBultenDetay&BultenNo=8632> (accessed on 01.04.2007)

4.7. 2007 Parliamentary Elections and Its Impact on the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict

Parliamentary elections were held in Armenia on 12 May 2007. The election was reported to be generally free and fair by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Critics and opposition politicians had announced their fears that the polls would not be democratic, despite officials' reassurances that the changes to the voting laws will ensure a more democratic election than the greatly criticized 2003 one, despite the OSCE's certification, opposition groups plan to stage rallies to overturn the results of the election.²⁸⁹

The new government was established on 8 June 2007. This period lasted long as none of the parties got enough vote rate to make the government alone and making the coalition took some time.²⁹⁰ The winner of the elections was the Republican Party of Serge Sarkisyan, the largest party of the previous governing coalition, taking 33 per cent of the votes and 49 per cent of the seats at the Parliament. The second-best result was achieved by the Prosperous Armenia Party of Gagik Tsarukyan, a rich businessman in Armenia. This party took 15 per cent of the votes and 8 per cent of the seats. The nationalist pro-presidential party Dashnaksutiun (Armenian Revolutionary Federation) came third with 13.1% of the votes and 8 percent of the seats.²⁹¹

Armenian Revolutionary Federation did not join the coalition agreement, however, got seats of 3 ministers (Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Labour and Social Works and Ministry of Agriculture), vice president of the parliament and two important commission presidents and a mayor.²⁹² By signing a cooperation agreement. Thus, it still has the power in the parliament despite it did not take part in

²⁸⁹ For the results of the elections http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenian_parliamentary_election,_2007#_note-0 (accessed on 01.07.2007)

²⁹⁰ Oya Eren, "Yeni Ermenistan Hükümetinin Önceliği Ekonomik Kalkınma", *Stratejik Analiz*, No. 87, July 2007, p.12

²⁹¹ For the results of the elections http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenian_parliamentary_election,_2007#_note-0 (accessed on 01.07.2007)

²⁹² Eren, *op.cit.*, p.13

the coalition. Serge Sarkisyan again became the Prime Minister and Republican Party made the coalition with the Prosperous Armenia Party.

Sarkisyan declared the priority of the new government : “There are seven priorities of the government “building a strong army, creating new job opportunities, sustaining regional development, doubling the retirement pensions, providing better health conditions to everyone, developing education services and creating a more competitive science and technology sector.”²⁹³

“Creating a strong army” which Sarkisyan listed as one of the priorities can be regarded as that new government considers military invention in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Therefore, it seems that there would be no eminent change in the foreign policy of the Armenia regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Any reorientation of Armenian foreign policy seems unrealistic in the nearest future.

Since the death of Andranik Makaryan because of a heart attack in March 2007, who had for many years been the Prime Minister of Armenia, the party has been led by Serge Sarkisyan, a veteran of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and a former leader of that enclave. He was the Armenian Defence Minister for many years and he is currently the Prime Minister.

The consequences of the May elections were the first held following the amendments to the Armenian constitution in 2005, which provided for changing the constitutional system from that of a presidential republic into a parliamentary republic. For this reason, and considering the fact that the presidential election in which President Robert Kocharian would not be able to run for presidency had been scheduled for April 2008, the latest elections were treated by all political factions and the public as the first stage of the struggle for Robert Kocharian's legacy. The election result has clearly strengthened the position of Serge Sarkisyan, who currently seems to be the most likely successor to this post. The traditional opposition parties have been marginalised in the new composition of forces.

²⁹³ *Ibid.* p.13

The election results makes the prospect of a quick peaceful settlement of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh ever less likely. Serge Sarkisyan is believed to be a politician who is even less ready to make concessions to Azerbaijan than Robert Kocharian, a stance which has earned him support from the electorate. Considering the expected lack of progress in peace negotiations, a future escalation of the conflict cannot be ruled out.

Just like the relations with Turkey, no change is expected to be happened in Sarkisyan's foreign policy as he was known by his negative attitude towards Turkey. Sarkisyan stated in his visit to Russia that Yerevan was ready to establish diplomatic relations with Turkey without pre-conditions, adding that "Turkey is the one who makes the rules. However, it waits to be a part of the European family and has a long way to go. European cooperation rules do not let unacceptable foreign policy means. Therefore, Turkey loses although we were ready to cooperate without preconditions."²⁹⁴

To sum up, it can be said that the foreign policy of Robert Kocharian, like his predecessor Levon Ter-Petrossian is determined by the Nagorno-Karabakh policy. Robert Kocharian is ardent supporter to the self-declared Nagorno-Karabakh Republic and he makes no concessions regarding the conflict, thus in his term, Armenia could not have good relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey. As explained above because of the conflict he gave importance to the relations with Russia and Iran. Also he followed a balance policy between Russia and the USA. All of these indicators prove the point that it is the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute that lies under the foreign policy of Armenia.

²⁹⁴ "Sarkisyan:Türkiye İle Önkoşulsuz İlişkiye Hazırız", *Anatolian News Agency*, 26.09.2007

CHAPTER 5

COMPARISON OF ARMENIAN FOREIGN POLICY UNDER LEVON TER-PETROSSIAN AND ROBERT KOCHARIAN

The two presidents of Armenia, Levon Ter Petrossian and Robert Kocharian have different approaches to the resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, therefore their perception of foreign policy differs. In this chapter, the differences between the policies of Levon Ter-Petrossian and Robert Kocharian of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will be examined. Firstly, a quick look to the background of the presidents will be useful to understand what factors affect in shaping their policies.

Levon Ter-Petrossian was born in Aleppo, Syria to an Armenian-Syrian communist family who emigrated to Armenia in 1946. In 1968, he graduated from the Oriental Studies Department of the Yerevan State University and completed his postgraduate studies at the Leningrad Oriental Studies Institute in 1971. During 1972-1978, Levon Ter-Petrossian worked as a junior researcher at the Literature Institute of Armenia named after Manouk Abeghian.²⁹⁵ He wrote several books in Armenian, Russian and French.

His political life began in 1960s. In May 1988, he became involved with the Armenian Committee of the Karabakh Movement. From December 10, 1988 to May 31, 1989 he was arrested together with other members of the Karabakh Committee. In 1989, he was elected Member of the Board of the Pan-Armenian National Movement and later on he became the Chairman of the Board.²⁹⁶ He was elected as deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the Armenian SSR on August 27, 1989. On August 4, 1990 he became the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Armenia.

²⁹⁵ "Levon Ter-Petrossian", online at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Levon_Ter-Petrossian (accessed on 23.09.2007)

²⁹⁶ *Ibid*

He was elected the first President of the newly independent of Armenia on October 16, 1991 and re-elected on September 22, 1996. He resigned in February 1998. His re-election was marred by allegations of fraud as explained in the chapters above and he was also unpopular as he banned the Armenian Revolutionary Federation and jailed its members.

Robert Kocharian was born in Stepanakert, Nagorno-Karabakh, at that time the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast under the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic. He served in Soviet Army from 1972 to 1974. He graduated from Yerevan Polytechnic Institute's Electro-Technical Department with honors.²⁹⁷ He started to deal with the politics after joining a movement to cede the land of Nagorno-Karabakh from the Azerbaijan SSR to Armenian SSR. He worked in Nagorno-Karabakh's Communist Youth League and Party towards this aim through 1980s. In February 1988, Robert Kocharian became one of the leaders in the Karabakh Movement and he became a deputy of Armenia's Supreme Soviet by 1989. In 1991 he was elected a deputy of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic's Supreme Soviet of the first convocation. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Robert Kocharian became Chairman of the State Defense Committee of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic and was elected self-declared Nagorno-Karabakh Republic's first president on December 24 by the decision of the NKR Supreme Soviet. He continued his post until Levon Ter-Petrossian appointed him as the Prime Minister of Armenia. As he had strong ties with Nagorno-Karabakh, Robert Kocharian followed a different policy regarding Nagorno-Karabakh than Levon Ter-Petrossian. He was harsh in his foreign policy. He did not want to establish relations with Turkey, putting the so-called genocide issue in the first place of Armenia's foreign policy.

²⁹⁷ "Robert Kocharian" online at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Robert_Kocharian (accessed on 30.09.2007)

5.1. Differences between Armenian Foreign Policy under Levon Ter-Petrossian and Robert Kocharian

Differences between Levon Ter-Petrossian and his Prime Minister Robert Kocharian existed mainly in the Karabakh conflict. The differences of Levon Ter-Petrossian and Robert Kocharian lie in the kind of compromise that is acceptable to one and other and the compromise each one gave to Azerbaijan.

Levon Ter-Petrossian believed that the problem of Nagorno-Karabakh had to be resolved within the bounds of international law on the basis of Karabakh's vital interests. He considered a peace agreement crucial to creating the political, economic and social bases for the consolidation of reforms and independence. He was ready to accept a solution based on mutual compromises by the Azerbaijani and Armenian sides which precludes Azerbaijan's domination on Karabakh and protects effective security guarantees including boundary adjustments that made Karabakh contiguous with Armenia.²⁹⁸ According to him, this kind of a timely resolution of the conflict, would end the blockade of Armenia and open up its communication and transfer routes, thus end the economic isolation of Armenia. Moreover, normal relations could be ensured with the neighbouring countries, including Turkey.

Levon Ter-Petrossian's priority in the foreign policy of Armenia was stability and time. A long peace and stability period is needed for Armenia to be independent literally. Levon Ter-Petrossian sees it as a mistake in the past that Armenians trusted to the West or to Russia and as a result defeated.²⁹⁹ This could be seen in the first independent Republic of Armenia (28 May 1918-2 December 1920) which had been governed by members of the nationalistic Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) or Dashnaktsutian.³⁰⁰ Therefore, more relations has to be established with all neighbours of Armenia especially Turkey. Independence from the Soviet Union and

²⁹⁸ Gerard J. Libaridian, *The Challenge of Statehood: Armenian Political Thinking Since Independence*, (Watertown, Mass. : Blue Crane Books, 1999), p.73

²⁹⁹ Laçiner, *op.cit.*, p.192

³⁰⁰ Stephan Austourian, "From Levon Ter-Petrosyan to Robert Kocharian: Leadership Change In Armenia, Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies Working Paper Series (Berkeley: University of California, 2000), p.18

the consolidation of Armenian democracy were pre-conditions for the foreign policy.³⁰¹

Levon Ter-Petrossian regarded Turkey as a “door to the West” and thus did not want to put forward the so-called genocide issue and land demands, in spite of the opposition of nationalist Armenians and diaspora. He argued that for the sake of the independence, the so-called Armenian genocide should be left off Armenia’s political agenda. Therefore he was against putting a clause in the “Declaration on the Independence of Armenia” adopted on 23 August 1990. As a result, he and his party were accused of having abandoned *Hay Tad* (The Armenian Cause) which encompasses both genocide recognition and territorial claims.³⁰² The Armenian Communist Party (ACP) and the two main parties of the diaspora, the nationalistic ARF and the bourgeois conservative Armenian Democratic Liberal Organization (ADL) wanted the lost lands of “Western Armenia” to be mentioned in the declaration as well.³⁰³

The era of Levon Ter-Petrossian ended and the hopes of improving relations with Turkey came to an end when Robert Kocharian came into power. His policies were adverse that of Levon Ter-Petrossian’s regarding Turkey. Robert Kocharian nearly declared war against the Turkish people. During his term, a campaign has been started to convince the whole world about the so-called genocide and to pass the so-called genocide bill in the parliaments all over the world.

Robert Kocharian pursued a hard-liner policy in its relations with Turkey. He does not want to ameliorate relations with Turkey. He believes that Russia was a friend whereas Turkey and Azerbaijan were enemies. Levon Ter-Petrossian was against the dependency on Russia and was about to take radical steps in his last days in

³⁰¹ *Ibid.* p.18

³⁰² Austrian, *op. cit.* p.20

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.20

government, but Russia and ultra-nationalist diaspora Armenians brought down Levon Ter-Petrossian and impeded him doing so.³⁰⁴

It can be said that Robert Kocharian follows a nationalistic approach in his foreign policy considering his policies regarding Nagorno-Karabakh. He pursued an uncompromising policy about Nagorno-Karabakh issue. He believed that Karabakh was an independent country and would never be returned to Azerbaijan. Robert Kocharian being from Karabakh hired Karabakhian guards to protect his presidency and took precautions.³⁰⁵ He shaped the domestic and foreign policy of Armenia in the framework of Nagorno-Karabakh dispute and he shaped these policies on nationalistic grounds. On the other hand Ter-Petrossian was more liberal in his foreign policy. As stated above, he was ready to have good relations with neighbouring countries including Turkey and he was ready to make compromise in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Another important difference between the two presidents is their economical policies. Beyond the conflict there was one problem which is the economic and social well-being of the Armenian people in Armenia and in Karabakh- poverty, unemployment, low wages and social problems.³⁰⁶ Each man had a different view of the conflict. Since the cease-fire, the debate within the administrations of Armenia and Karabakh had begun to shift gradually.³⁰⁷ Levon Ter-Petrossian believed that the blockades of Azerbaijan and Turkey and the absence of peace impede the economical development and foreign investments of Armenia.

Robert Kocharian does not accept that the conflict is the only reason behind the lack of the economic development. According to him, the lack of strong management and discipline within the government, corruption, Levon Ter-Petrossian's inability and divisive politics and uneasy relations with the diaspora were the more important

³⁰⁴ Sedat Laçiner, "The Mistakes of Armenia and The Success of Azerbaijan", *Turkish Weekly Journal*, <http://www.turkishweekly.net/comments.php?id=2467> (accessed on 07.10.2007), p.3

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p.4

³⁰⁶ Gerard J. Libaridian, *The Challenge of Statehood: Armenian Political Thinking Since Independence*, (Watertown, Mass.: Blue Crane Books, 1999), p.64

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p.65

reasons.³⁰⁸ Therefore Robert Kocharian proposed that with better management, a strong anticorruption policy, coordination of the resources of the state of Armenia and the diaspora, Armenia could both ameliorate its economy and have time to wait for a better time to deal with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.³⁰⁹ However, because of his aggressive policies that stagger the stabilities in the region, Armenia is kept outside regional cooperation projects such as Baku-Tblisi-Ceyhan Oil and gas pipeline project and railway project.³¹⁰ Robert Kocharian also believes that diplomatic isolation could be broken through a more aggressive diplomacy. Libaridian suggests the reason that Levon Ter-Petrossian appointed Robert Kocharian as the Prime Minister of Armenia in March 1997 to give him the opportunity to prove his point.³¹¹

There are many factors that lie behind Levon Ter-Petrossian's downfall. The economic collapse during his administration was one of the reasons. This economical breakdown started before Petrossian's presidency. Armenia's transition from a socialist economy to a Western-style economy had been a disaster. The earthquake in 1988 left about 514.000 homeless and brought a halt about twenty-five percent of Armenia's economy.³¹² Closing the Medzamor nuclear power plant located outside Yerevan as a caution against a new earthquake, left Armenia in an energy crisis as the plant produced about thirty-six percent of Armenia's electricity.³¹³ By 1992, the Armenian economy had lost almost most of its inputs and markets. In 1992 Prime Minister Hrant Bagratian adopted a radical program of economic reform to rapidly

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p.65

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p.65

³¹⁰ Ulyurt, *op.cit.*, p.15

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.67

³¹² Rutland Peter, "Democracy and Nationalism in Armenia", *Europe-Asia Studies*46, (1994) p. 844,848 in Austourian Stephan, "From Levon Ter-Petrossian to Robert Kocharian: Leadership Change In Armenia, Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies Working Paper Series (Berkeley: University of California, 2000), p.6

³¹³ Stephan Austourian, "From Levon Ter-Petrosyan to Robert Kocharian: Leadership Change In Armenia, Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies Working Paper Series (Berkeley: University of California, 2000), p. 6

marketize the Armenian economy however trade and price liberalization was followed by rapid inflation.³¹⁴

On 27 August 1992, the privatization law was signed by the president. Enterprises formerly owned by the state were sold and the great majority of these enterprises were transformed into open and closed joint stock companies however mass privatization did not get expected results. Because of the privatization national wealth was distributed to the rich. By February 1998, when Levon Ter-Petrosian resigned, about 1,350 medium and large enterprises had been privatized.³¹⁵ Moreover, privatization was undermined by corruption. Levon Ter-Petrosian's brothers, Telman and Petros were, as well as his closest and most powerful ministers were spoilt by large-scale corruption and profiteering did much to tarnish the President's image in the minds of most Armenians.³¹⁶ Armenia's fraudulent presidential elections of 1996 helped to de-legitimize Levon Ter-Petrosian's regime as well.

Another difference between the two presidents of Armenia is their view of diaspora. In the first years of independence, the Armenian government wanted to clarify to the Armenians that it was not a pan-Armenian government but it was the government of the Republic of Armenia and had to think about its citizens and the realities of the country rather than the wishes and the demands of diaspora. Likewise, Levon Ter-Petrosian was against the intervention of the diaspora to Armenian policies. Therefore, he wanted to break down the effect of the diaspora over Armenia. He banned the activities of Tashnaks, Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) which is known with its radical thoughts about Turkey. Tashnaks worked to the disadvantage of the government as they found the foreign policy of Levon Ter-Petrosian not hard enough.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.7

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.13

³¹⁶ Ian Bremmer and Cory Welt, "A Break with The Past? State and Economy in Post-Communist Armenia", Helsinki Monitor Volume 8, No.1 (1997), p.3 online at http://www.isn.ethz.ch/osce/networking/secondary_literature/helmon/Helsinki_Mon_95_97/helmon_1_1997_bremmer_welt.pdf (accessed on 30.10.2007)

Tashnak organization continued its existence as a party in exile, mainly in Lebanon, Iran, France, Greece and the United States. However, they wanted to carry their activities to Armenia. Although Levon Ter-Petrossian wanted to break dependency of the diaspora, his policy did not mean that Armenia did not need the diaspora or that not interested in cooperating with its on various levels. Moreover, the appointment of a diasporan as the first Foreign Minister, Raffi Hovhannisian showed a clear desire to include the diaspora in the various processes of government. The dividing line between Levon Ter-Petrossian and the diaspora lied in the Armenia's relations with Turkey. Diaspora refused to support any relations and opposed Levon Ter-Petrossian's normalization attempts with Turkey.

Robert Kocharian made great efforts to develop relations with the diaspora. When Robert Kocharian came into power, he lifted the bans over Tashnaks and released the Tashnak leader Vahan Ovenesjan.³¹⁷ Armenia's relations with diaspora went into a radical change. Diaspora is important for Robert Kocharian for economical improvement of Armenia and also for foreign policy. Therefore, he convened several Diaspora-Armenia conferences to show the diaspora how much Armenia cared them. The first conference was held in Yerevan, in September 1999. The second one was held in May 27-28, 2002. "*Hayasdane polor hayeri hayrenike e*"-"Armenia is the fatherland of all Armenians" was the motto of the second conference whose goal was to link up diasporan Armenians with Armenia with the aim of generating investment and economic assistance. The message of the conference was "invest in Armenia".³¹⁸

Robert Kocharian's foreign policy depends on the gain from easing the tensions between great powers and blocks, rather than increasing these tensions. He thinks that this formula also allows Diaspora Armenians to work effectively in various countries to advance the interests of the Armenian state.³¹⁹ Robert Kocharian welcomes the diaspora's contribution to the reconstruction of the Fatherland in

³¹⁷ Laçiner, *Türkler ve Ermeniler*, p.183

³¹⁸ Groong Research and Analysis Group, "The Second Armenia-Diaspora Conference (May 27-28, 2002) , Armenian News Network/Groong, June 7, 2002 online at <http://groong.usc.edu/ro/ro-20020607.html> (accessed on 05.03.2007)

³¹⁹ "President Robert Kocharian's Speech at the Second Armenia-Diaspora Conference" in Oleynik et al., p.189

several occasions.³²⁰ Third conference was held in 2006. In the declaration of the conference the diaspora showed the complete support of the right of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh to live in freedom and to exercise the right of self-determination. Also the diaspora reaffirms its efforts for international recognition of the Armenian genocide in all countries.³²¹

Diaspora institutions continued its efforts to affect Armenia unilaterally. Robert Kocharian hoped to find new credit and financial aid sources in the diaspora. However the expected economic support was received less than anticipated while Armenia became more dependent on the diaspora.³²² Today it would not be wrong to say that even the domestic politics of Armenia is controlled by the diasporan Armenians.³²³

5.2. Similarities between Armenian Foreign Policy under Levon Ter-Petrossian and Robert Kocharian

Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is the common factor that shapes the foreign policies of the two Presidents of Armenia. Although there seems to be differences in the foreign policies of Levon Ter-Petrossian and Robert Kocharian and their views of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, they both come to an impasse in shaping Armenia's foreign policy because of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Although Levon Ter-Petrossian wanted to solve the conflict and have good relations with its neighbours, he could not achieve the foreign policy moves that he wanted to, therefore in practice the policies of the two presidents regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict seems alike.

³²⁰ "President Robert Kocharian's Speech on the Occasion of Independence Day" in Oleynik et al., p. 185

³²¹ "Armenia-Diaspora Third Conference" online at <http://www.armeniadiaspora.com/conference2006/declaration.html>, (accessed on 05.03.2007)

³²² Sedat Laçiner, "The Mistakes of Armenia and the Success of Azerbaijan", *Turkish Weekly Journal*, <http://www.turkishweekly.net/comments.php?id=2467> (accessed on 07.10.2007), p.3

³²³ Laçiner, *Türkler ve Ermeniler*, p.184

Both presidents tried to separate the Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijan and occupy Azerbaijani territories other than Nagorno-Karabakh. However, believing the normalization of the relations with the other countries due to the economical situation of Armenia, Levon Ter-Petrosian tried to make some attempts which are regarded as “concessions” by Tashnaks. Levon Ter-Petrosian was impeded by the opposition within the country and the diaspora and couldn’t act independently in the political arena.

Like Levon Ter-Petrosian Robert Kocharian also depended on the diaspora. Moreover, Armenia became dependent on Russia because of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, therefore the foreign policies of the two Presidents seem alike although they follow different policies because of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

5.3. Factors Affecting Armenian Foreign Policy under Levon Ter-Petrosian and Robert Kocharian

In order to understand the foreign policy of Levon Ter-Petrosian, it is important to observe the role of Gerard Libaridian, Levon Ter-Petrosian’s presidential adviser. Libaridian who played a leading role in the negotiations with Turkey and those regarding Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was completely opposed to Levon Ter-Petrosian’s approach to the genocide and Armenian-Turkish relations. It is interesting that Libaridian was a former member of Tashnaks who are strongly opposing Levon Ter-Petrosian.³²⁴ He tried to convince the world the so-called genocide issue until his resignation from ARF in 1988. He was also very influential in shaping Levon Ter-Petrosian’s policy toward Armenian diaspora. In his book, *The Challenge of Statehood: Armenian Political Thinking Since Independence*, Libaridian explains that democratization process was set back by two decisions Levon Ter-Petrosian made during his tenure: The banning of the ARF and the use of the army to control crowds on the evening of 26 September 1996 following the presidential elections.³²⁵ In late December 1994, Levon Ter-Petrosian signed an

³²⁴ Laçiner, *Türkler ve Ermeniler*, p.194

³²⁵ Libaridian, *The Challenge of Statehood: Armenian Political Thinking Since Independence*, p. 43

order banning the ARF on national security grounds, because there were evidents that the party was responsible for criminal acts and was engaged in illegal activities.³²⁶

Libaridian does not accept that Levon Ter-Petrosian lost the support of his people arguing that after ten years of leadership under most trying circumstances, he still received the support of about half the voters against a united opposition and a formidable candidate.³²⁷ He also argues that Levon Ter-Petrosian did not resign because of the pressure from his traditional antagonists, the conventional opposition; the Communist Party of Armenia (CPA), The Democratic Party of Armenia (DPA), the National Democratic Union (NDU) and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), but because of the position taken by individuals with whom he had worked closely over the last decade.

Libaridian's point is logical. Levon Ter-Petrosian trusted Robert Kocharian as his Prime Minister who had different view of policies regarding the foreign policy of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh policy. Moreover the Defense Minister Vazgen Sarkisyan and the Interior and Security Minister Serge Sarkisyan to whom Levon Ter-Petrosian trusted were opposing him in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and his acceptance of the OSCE Minsk Group draft proposal of 1997. Libaridian did not agree with the point that Levon Ter-Petrosian agreed the formula as a result of excessive pressure from the other countries and the mediators, the Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group, representing Russia, the United States and France. He believes that the OSCE mediators did not exert unusual pressure on him in 1997.³²⁸ According to him the efforts of the mediators were directed at the restart of the negotiations, not at the acceptance by the parties of the draft itself.

Levon Ter-Petrosian believed the confidentiality and did not reveal the contents of the proposal. Therefore, the public did not learn about the proposal which took much

³²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 43

³²⁷ *Ibid.* p. 48

³²⁸ *Ibid.* p.59

opposition and brings Levon Ter-Petrossian's resignation. This could be considered as a fault of Levon Ter-Petrossian as if there had been a referendum on the proposal, it could be argued that the people of Armenia would have voted in favor of Levon Ter-Petrossian's solution. Libaridian strongly believes that a referendum would have been resulted as such.³²⁹ However, Levon Ter-Petrossian thought that it was not proper to present the details of a proposal that was still a proposal and had not been negotiated by the parties.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.62

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The collapse of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1991 affected the Caucasus region and did not bring remedy for the long-standing problems in the territories it occupied. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is one of the examples of this development. When Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in Russia as the General Secretary of the Communist Party in 1985, the hopes for re-attaching Karabakh to Armenia aroused again with the effect of the ideas of *perestroika* and *glasnost*. With the independence of Armenia and Azerbaijan, the Nagorno-Karabakh became a conflict not only between two sovereign states but also an international conflict.

The conflict can be traced back to late nineteenth century. Nagorno-Karabakh is an ongoing conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Armenians claim that the area encompassing the western region of the Azerbaijani Republic including Nagorno-Karabakh, belonged to Armenia since the formation of the Armenian people in the seventh BC. In contrast Azerbaijanis argue that beginning in the eight century immigrating Armenians forced the cultural, linguistic, and religious assimilation of the indigenous Albanian population of Nagorno-Karabakh, therefore modern Armenian inhabitants of the Nagorno-Karabakh are not Armenians but are Armenianized Albanians; thus Azerbaijanis.

Armenia demanded either the incorporation of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic into Armenia or establishing an independent “Nagorno-Karabakh Republic” putting the “right of self determination” forward. However, Azerbaijan argued that the Nagorno-Karabakh was inseparable part of Azerbaijan and because of the principle of “territorial integrity”, secession of Nagorno-Karabakh is unacceptable.

Nagorno-Karabakh is formally (administratively) a part of Azerbaijan, however currently it is *de facto* an independent state, though unrecognised by any other state,

including Armenia or international organisation. There has not been sustained warfare between the conflicting parties since May 1994 as they signed a cease-fire. However, there is no total end to the violence, it is not a war but neither is it peace. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict prevented both Armenia and Azerbaijan from economic recovery and political stability. Azerbaijan lost 20 percent of its territory.

Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), with its current name the Organisation on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) intervened in the conflict in 1992 and established a small group composed of Armenia, Azerbaijan, France, Finland, Germany, Italy, Russia, Sweden, the Netherlands, Belarus, Turkey, and the United States called Minsk Group.

At the OSCE Lisbon Summit in December 1996, a set of principles was accepted which recognized the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. This part has been adopted by 53 countries except Armenia. Following the Lisbon Summit, a peace proposal called “package deal” was initiated by the Minsk group co-chairman. The “package deal” called the withdrawal of all occupying Armenian armed forces from Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding areas of Azerbaijan and the return of all refugees to their homes. However, “the package deal” was considered as a failure or Levon Ter-Petrossian’s foreign policy by the Armenian opposition. Another peace proposal was made in September 1997 known as “step by step” approach according to which Armenian forces first would withdraw one of the territories that they occupied outside the Nagorno-Karabakh region and then the process enter the new phase. This proposal was accepted by Azerbaijan and Armenia however refused by Karabakh leaders, Robert Kocharian. Levon Ter-Petrossian’s tendency to agree the OSCE’s proposal caused his resignation and the election of Robert Kocharian as the new president of Armenia. The OSCE was not successful in bringing the Karabakh conflict to a successful resolution however, its effort continues regarding the solution of the conflict.

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is the essential factor in shaping the foreign policy of Armenia. When the foreign policies of the two presidents, Levon Ter-Petrossian and Robert Kocharian are observed, it will be seen that Nagorno-Karabakh conflict

lies behind the decisions taken regarding the foreign policy of Armenia. Moreover, the relations of Armenia with the other countries have been shaped within the framework of the conflict. As explained in the third chapter, Levon Ter-Petrossian wanted to improve Armenia's relations with the other countries however he could not do that because of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The conflict made Armenia dependent on Russia and give Russia the possibility to sustain its military bases in Armenia. As stated in the fourth chapter, Robert Kocharian also tried to lessen the dependency on Russia but could not succeed, like his predecessor. Russian troops in Armenia seemed as a guarantee for Russian political support in the conflict.

The conflict also has negative effects on the relations with Turkey. As explained in the third and fourth chapters, due to the conflict the borders between Armenia and Turkey are closed and the relations between the two countries cannot improve. Without the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Turkey will not open its borders. Also, in order the borders to be opened, Armenia should recognize the territorial integrity of Turkey at first. As stated in the third chapter, Levon Ter-Petrossian was aware of the fact that without the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict the economic recovery of Armenia is not possible. Therefore, he tried to normalize relations with Turkey and tried to lessen the effect of the diaspora over the country. However, he did not succeed.

After his resignation Robert Kocharian who follows exactly opposite policies of Levon Ter-Petrossian came into power. He had good relations with the diaspora and he strongly supported the so-called genocide issue. In Robert Kocharian's presidency Armenia pursued a hard-liner policy in its relations with Turkey. He tried to cover the wrong practices in domestic and foreign policies by drawing the attention to another side by intensifying the policy of Turkish enmity in the domestic public opinion.

Due to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Armenia suffers economic distress. It is explained in the fifth chapter that because of the conflict, Armenia is kept outside regional cooperation projects such as Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Oil and gasline project and railway project. Therefore, Armenia should solve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict

in order to attain economic welfare and normalize its relations with the countries in the region. Otherwise, it will continue to be isolated and will not be able to break its chains from Russia and the diaspora and act independently. Thus, the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will be to the good of Armenia. As a result of a solution the economic restrictions that Turkey and Azerbaijan are applying to Armenia will be lifted which will in turn effect positively the Armenian economy. On the other hand Armenia will be able to lessen its defense expenditures and divert them to the development of the country.

As a result, it can be concluded that Nagorno-Karabakh conflict affects the foreign policy of Armenia and in order to have good relations with the other countries, the conflict should be solved. However, it does not seem likely for the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict to be resolved unless the leaders change in Armenia. In this regard, the presidential elections of Armenia in 2008 is important for the future of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. If Serge Sarkisyan wins the elections, the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will be postponed 10 more years as it was in the Robert Kocharian era. Moreover, so-called genocide propoganda of Armenia throughout the world would be widened. There is a weak opposition against Sarkisyan in the elections. Opposition parties in and out the Parliament who don't want Sarkisyan to win the elections try to run a candidate. Thus they came up with the name of former president Levon Ter-Petrossian.

Recently, on 26 October 2007, Levon Ter-Petrossian announced his candidacy to run in the 2008 Presidential elections³³⁰. According to him, he was not sure whether to put forward his candidacy, but the events of 23 October, when the police detained several of his supporters as they urged Yerevan residents to participate in the rally planned for 26 October, compelled him to react.³³¹ 62-year-old former President of Armenia is the only politician that can defeat Sarkisyan. If Levon Ter-Petrossian wins the elections, it would be important for the future of the conflict as Levon Ter-Petrossian believes that without the resolution of the conflict, economic

³³⁰ "Levon Ter-Petrosyan Yeniden Sahnede", *Hürriyet*, 27 October 2007

³³¹ "Levon Ter-Petrosyan Challenges the Karabakh Elite", *CACI Analyst*, 31 October 2007, online at <http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/4727> (accessed on 01.11.2007)

development is impossible. Therefore, he wants to end Armenia's regional isolation. The opposition parties remind Petrossian's policies in favor of a finding solution to Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and assert that his presidency will facilitate the resolution process.

If Levon Ter-Petrossian wins the elections he will work for the solution of the conflict and criticize the Robert Kocharian administration. However, in such a case, Robert Kocharian will remind the economical distress faced in Levon Ter-Petrossian era. Russia supports Sarkisyan in this elections. Europe declares that the democratic values of the elections matters however aims to divert Armenia from the orbit of Russia. It is early to make suggestions about the results at the time being. However, the results of the elections will determine the future of the conflict and thus the future of the foreign policy of Armenia.

It is not easy to presume that if Armenia will be able to take attempts in solving the conflict as the results of the elections in 2008 will show who will come into power. If Sarkisyan wins the elections, the resolution of the conflict does not seem possible. On the other hand if Levon Ter-Petrossian wins, the resolution seems more likely. If the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is not solved, the foreign policy of Armenia will continue to be affected by it. Because the foreign policy of Armenia and the relations of Armenia with the other countries is shaped by the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

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