

**RELATIONS BETWEEN ARMENIA AND RUSSIA IN THE 2000s:
FROM STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP TO PRAGMATIC COOPERATION**

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis seeks to analyze the nature of relations between Armenia and Russia in the 2000s. Contrary to the dominant view that relations between these two countries could be labeled as strategic partnership, this thesis argues that these relations could be characterized as pragmatic cooperation. In fact, both countries having close relations in all fields and refraining from pursuing policies that might harm the other's interests in the 1990s, gave priority to their own national interests in the diplomatic and economic fields in the 2000s, while maintaining close cooperation in the security field. In the 2000s, Russia started to pursue a pragmatic foreign policy by improving its relations with Azerbaijan that has rich oil and natural gas reserves. Likewise, Armenia has also started to pursue a balanced foreign policy by enhancing its cooperation with the Western countries and international organizations in diplomatic and security fields in the same period. Moreover, Armenia also deepened its cooperation with Iran in the energy sector to decrease its energy dependence on Russia. Consequently, both Armenia and Russia have started to pursue pragmatic policies in diplomatic and economic fields to maximize their own national interests while maintaining close cooperation in security field. Therefore, bilateral relations between these two countries started to take more pragmatic character than a strategic partnership.

Keywords: Armenia, Russia, Strategic Partnership, Pragmatic Cooperation, Regional Security.

ÖZ

2000'Lİ YILLARDA ERMENİSTAN VE RUSYA ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİLER: STRATEJİK ORTAKLIKTAN PRAGMATİK İŞBİRLİĞİNE

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Bu tez, 2000'li yıllarda Ermenistan ve Rusya arasındaki ilişkilerin doğasını analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. İki ülke arasındaki ilişkilerin stratejik ortaklık olarak tanımlanabileceği şeklindeki hakim görüşün aksine bu tez söz konusu ilişkilerin pragmatik işbirliği olarak nitelendirilebileceğini savunmaktadır. Gerçekten, 1990'lı yıllarda her alanda yakın ilişkilere sahip olan ve birbirlerinin çıkarlarına zarar verebilecek politikalar takip etmektan kaçınan iki ülke, 2000'li yıllarda güvenlik alanındaki yakın işbirliklerini devam ettirirken diplomatik ve ekonomik alanlarda kendi ulusal menfaatlerine öncelik vermişlerdir. 2000'li yıllarda Rusya, zengin petrol ve doğalgaz rezervlerine sahip Azerbaycan ile ilişkilerini geliştirerek pragmatik bir dış politika takip etmeye başlamıştır. Aynı şekilde Ermenistan da aynı dönemde diplomatik ve güvenlik alanlarında Batılı ülkeler ve uluslararası örgütler ile işbirliğini geliştirerek dengeli bir dış politika takip etmeye başlamıştır. Ayrıca Ermenistan, Rusya'ya olan enerji bağımlılığını azaltmak için İran ile enerji işbirliğini de derinleştirmiştir. Sonuç olarak, her iki ülke de güvenlik alanındaki yakın işbirliklerini sürdürürken, kendi ulusal menfaatlerini en üst seviyeye çıkarmak için diplomatik ve ekonomik alanlarda pragmatik politikalar takip etmeye başlamışlardır. Bu nedenle, iki ülke arasındaki ilişkiler stratejik ortaklıktan ziyade pragmatik bir karakter almaya başlamıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ermenistan, Rusya, Stratejik Ortaklık, Pragmatik İşbirliđi, Bölgesel Güvenlik.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The relations between Armenia and Russia improved in the post-Soviet era and reached a level that could be characterized as strategic partnership. In the development of the relations, Russia's endeavor to strengthen its influence on the South Caucasus and Armenia's great dependence on Russia's political, military and economic power played the leading role. In the 2000s, the relations continued to improve. However, in this decade, despite having close relations with Russia, Armenia diversified its foreign and economic policies. Moreover, Russia took steps to improve its relations with Azerbaijan. Accordingly, it can be asserted that that the nature of relations between the countries turned from strategic partnership to pragmatic cooperation.

1.1. Scope and Objective

This thesis aims to demonstrate that despite the relations between Armenia and Russia continued to improve in the 2000s, their nature transformed from strategic partnership to pragmatic cooperation.

In line with this objective, the thesis starts with examining the historical background of the relations until the end of the 1990s. In this examination, it focuses on the evolution of the relations in the post-Soviet era. After examining the state of the relations in the early period of post-Soviet era, it studies the evolution of the relations until 2000. In this context, it tries to explore the nature of relations.

Later on, the thesis focuses on the relations in the 2000s. In this sense, to explore the nature of relations, it examines the mutual affairs and their reflections on diplomacy,

security, economy and society during the time period. In this examination, it tries to demonstrate that the strategic partnership between the two countries in the 1990s turned into pragmatic cooperation in the 2000s.

1.2. Literature Review

In terms of nature of relations between Armenia and Russia in the post-Soviet era, the literature is dominated by the view that both countries have strategic interests in cooperation in the security field. The supporters of this view emphasize the strategic character of these relations, but only some of them use the “strategic partnership” concept to identify the relations, most of them do not use the concept. Moreover, some of them focus on Armenia’s strategic importance for Russia; some of them focus on Russia’s strategic role in Armenia’s security and economy while trying to emphasize the strategic character of the relations.

According to the supporters of this view, the strategic partnership between the two countries is to a great extent based on close cooperation in the security field. Armenia perceives Russia as its guarantor against so-called Turkish threat. Moreover, Russia that has been against foreign powers’ growing influence including Turkish’s on the region gives special importance to maintain its influence on its close ally Armenia. It can be stated that there is a convergence of interest in cooperation in the security field.

Regarding “strategic partnership” concept, it can be stated that this type of relation is a special relation between the two sides. It is critically important for the sides and has an enduring character. It entails an intense cooperation in all fields. Moreover, “the two sides take great care to look out each other’s interests” and consult with each other on regional and international issues. In addition, the two sides have “deep-rooted social, ethnic and historical ties.” Besides, this concept can be used for identifying a relation in

which one side attaches great importance to the other side and maintains with it privileged allied relationship.¹

To begin with, Gaidz Minassian identifies relations between Armenia and Russia as “strategic partnership”. According to him, both countries have strategic interests in cooperating in the security field against so-called Turkish threat. He characterizes the relations in the following statements;

Relations between Armenia and Russia are rooted in a history of rivalry between the Russian and Ottoman empires. They are founded on a common vision of the security issues aimed at thwarting the influence of Turkey in the key region of the South Caucasus. This bilateral alliance survived the fall of the USSR: within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Russia supported Armenia in its military victory over Azerbaijan for the control of Nagorno-Nagorno-Karabakh (1988-1994), a mainly Armenian province attached to Baku since 1921.

This support of Armenia was rooted in distrust of Azerbaijan’s policies in the region: pan-Turkism, refusal to join the CIS, agreement with the United States on the construction of pipelines bypassing Russia. Since 1993, Azerbaijan and Turkey have closed their borders with Armenia, imposing it a general blockade. Thanks to Russian, but also Iranian, support Armenia has been able to avoid chaos and to ensure its security, threatened by a hostile Turk-Azeri environment resulting from disagreement on the “Armenian genocide” of 1915 and the control of Azeri territories by the Armenian forces. In 1997, the Russian-Armenian treaty of friendship formalized their strategic partnership.²

Stanislav Secrieru in his article “Russia’s Foreign Policy under Putin: ‘CIS Project’ Renewed” also identifies the relations between the two countries as strategic partnership. According to him, the strategic partnership is based on strategic importance

¹ Sukru Elekdag, “What Does ‘Strategic Partnership’ Mean”, 01 September 2002, online at http://www.theturkishtimes.com/archive/02/09_01/op_elekdag.html (accessed on 24.09.2010)

² Gaidz Minassian, “Armenia, a Russian Outpost in the Caucasus?”, (Paris:Russia/NIS Center, February 2008), p.11, online at http://www.ifri.org/files/Russie/ifri_RNV_minassian_Armenie_Russie_ANG_fevr2008.pdf (accessed on 24.09.2010)

of Armenia in the eyes of Russia that has struggled to strengthen its influence on the South Caucasus. In his article, he mentions about Russia's efforts for reestablishing its hegemony over the CIS countries. In his view, Russia regards this hegemony as a prerequisite for restoring its super power status.³ Concerning Russia's efforts for reestablishing its control over the South Caucasus, Secieru states that Russia has strengthened its military and economic influence on Armenia in the 2000s. He states that;

The strategic alliance with Armenia, especially after the revolution in Georgia, has deepened in economic and military terms. Armenia continued to play the role of the host to a several Russian bases and several thousand Russian troops, who patrol Armenia's border with Turkey and Iran. During the Georgian political crisis in November 2003, the Russian and Armenian defence ministers signed agreements deepening military cooperation, Yerevan remaining in Kremlin's opinion the only true ally in the South Caucasus.⁴

In line with Secieru, Roy Allison, in his article "The Military and Political Security Landscape in Russia and the South" states that Russia perceives the control of the South Caucasus as strategically important for maintaining its national security. He mentions that in terms of Russia's security interests in the Caucasus, Russian authorities have given great importance to establish close security relations with Armenia.⁵ He asserts that Russia sees Armenia as strategic ally in the region. In addition, he also mentions about Armenia's great dependence on Russian military support. In his view, security concerns forced Armenia to establish close security relations with Russia. He mentions that;

³ Stanislav Secieru, Russia's Foreign Policy Under Putin: "CIS Project" Renewed , National School of Political Studies and Public, January 2006), <http://revistas.ucm.es/cps/16962206/articulos/UNIS0606130289A.PDF>, p.289

⁴ *Ibid.*,p.299

⁵ Roy Allison, "The Military and Political Security Landscape in Russia and the South", in *Russia, The Caucasus and Central Asia*, ed. Rajan Menon, Yuri E. Fedorov and Ghia Nodia, (New York: EastWest Institute, 1999), p.28-29

A quasi-alliance has come into being between Russia and Armenia, which could be seen as reinvigorating Armenia's traditional view of Russia as a source of protection against its Muslim neighbors. As early as in May 1992, Armenia entered into a mutual defense pact with Russia...For Armenia this is a desirable goal, particularly under the nationalist leadership of President Robert Kocharian, since it could not otherwise contain pressure from a much stronger Turkey while remaining on confrontational terms with Azerbaijan.⁶

Rouben Paul Adalian is another mainstream scholar who studies the nature of relations between Armenia and Russia. He states that both countries have strategic interests in maintenance of Russian military presence in Armenia. In his article "Armenian Foreign Policy, Defining Priorities and Coping with Conflict" he mentions that;

For Russia, Armenia has proved to be a reliable partner. In this matter the convergence of interests is very real. Russia wants a presence in the Caucasus. Armenia needs that presence in the Caucasus. That need does not earn Armenia very many points with its neighbors, but it clearly informs Armenia's policies. While voices in the West are raised more and more about the return of Russia to the so-called near abroad, the truth of the matter is that Russia never left. Its forces have remained in many places in the near abroad. In the case of Armenia, the Erevan government made arrangements early on to keep the Russian army posted on the Turkish frontier. Armenia's geostrategic disadvantages compelled its government to make a very quick decision in 1991 when President Yeltsin formed the CIS.⁷

Firat Karabayram emphasizes that the maintenance of the strategic partnership with Russia has been the primary goal of Armenian foreign policy.⁸ According to him,

⁶ Roy Allison, "The Military and Political Security Landscape in Russia and the South", in *Russia, The Caucasus and Central Asia*, ed. Rajan Menon, Yuri E. Fedorov and Ghia Nodia, (New York: EastWest Institute, 1999), p.42

⁷ Rouben Paul Adalian, "Armenian Foreign Policy, Defining Priorities and Coping with Conflict", in *The Making of Foreign Policy in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, ed. Adeed Dawisha and Karen Dawisha, (New York: M.E.Sharpe, 1995), p.319-320

⁸ Firat Karabayram, *Rusya Federasyonu'nun Güney Kafkasya Politikası*, (Ankara: Lalezar Kitapevi, 2007), p.283

Armenia feeling itself insecure against Turkey and Azerbaijan is in need of Russian military support.⁹ Karabayram adds that Russia also gives special importance to maintain close military cooperation with Armenia. Russia uses its military presence in Armenia to strengthen its influence over the South Caucasus.¹⁰

Ahmet Sapmaz also identifies relations between Armenia and Russia as strategic partnership. He states that by this partnership Russia aims to preserve its military-political presence in the region, to have opportunity for intervention to the regional developments, to control South Caucasian countries.¹¹ Sapmaz also states that Armenia views the military cooperation with Russia as the main element of its national security. The military partnership with Russia makes Armenia to feel itself secure in the region.¹²

In the same context, Kamer Kasım states that Russia regards Armenia as a strategic ally in the South Caucasus. According to him, Russia by maintaining its military base in Armenia tries to strengthen its influence over the region. He also states that Armenia's threat perception from its neighbors plays a great role in the maintenance of strategic partnership with Russia.¹³

Tornike Sharashenidze in his article "Interpreting Russian Foreign Policy in the Former Soviet Union" mentions about Alexander Dugin's views regarding the strategic importance of the Caucasus for Russia. According to Dugin, controlling Caucasus can offer Russia to expand towards the southern seas. Besides, in Dugin's view, control of the region is critically important for Russia that tries to create a security belt around its

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.291

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.285

¹¹ Ahmet Sapmaz, *Rusya'nın Transkafkasya Politikası ve Türkiye'ye Etkileri*, (İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat A.Ş., 2008), p.190

¹² *Ibid.*, p.195

¹³ Kamer Kasım, *Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Kafkasya*, (Ankara: Usak Publications, 2009), p.130

territories against West. Regarding Southern Caucasus countries, Dugin identifies Armenia as the most loyal one to Russia.¹⁴

In the same context, Dmitri Trenin in his article “Russia’s Security Interests and Policies in the Caucasus Region” asserts that Russia has vital interests in the Caucasus and is determined to protect these interests. He mentions that Russia’s primary interest in the region is prevention of a security vacuum. Russia perceives any foreign regional or global powers’ infiltration into the region as harmful to its national interests.¹⁵ In this context, for keeping the region under its control, Russia has given great importance to maintain security relations with Armenia.¹⁶

According to Annie Jafalian, security concerns played great role in Armenia’s orientation toward Russia. She asserts that Armenia’s problems with her neighbors forced the country to establish close security relations with Russia. She identifies the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as the leading problem of Armenia with its neighbors. Moreover, she asserts that economic weakness of Armenia also directed the country to draw near to Russia. In this context, she particularly emphasizes Armenia’s energy dependence on Russia.¹⁷

Shireen T.Hunter in her article “The Evolution of the Foreign Policy of the Transcaucasian States” states that Armenia’s problems with her neighbors played

¹⁴ Tornike Sharashenidze, “Interpreting Russian Foreign Policy in the Former Soviet Union (Part I)”, Girs.Org.Ge, 07 February 2010, online at <http://eng.girs.org.ge/index.php?newsid=36> (accessed on 22.09.2010)

¹⁵ Dmitri Trenin, “Russia’s Security Interests and Policies in the Caucasus Region”, p.4, online at <http://poli.vub.ac.be/publi/ContBorders/eng/ch0301.htm> (accessed on 20.09.2010)

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.6

¹⁷ Annie Jafalian, “Influences in the South Caucasus: Opposition & Convergence in Axes of Cooperation”, Conflict Studies Research Centre, February 2004, p.1-2, online at www.da.mod.uk/colleges/arag/document-listings/caucasus/P42-AJ.pdf (accessed on 23.07.2010)

leading role in Armenia's orientation towards Russia. Hunter states that Armenia forged close relations with Russia to offset the perceived threats from her neighbors.¹⁸

In line with Hunter, Tiffany G. Petros in her article "Evolution of Armenia's Foreign Policy" asserts that in the post-Soviet era geo-political considerations forced Armenia to maintain cooperation with Russia on military, political and economic fields. According to Petros, Armenia became a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Collective Security Treaty (CST) to enhance its cooperation with Russia. She also states that Armenia regards Russia's involvement in the South Caucasus as beneficial to its own security interests.¹⁹

However there are different voices regarding the nature of the relations. Edmund Herzig asserts that Armenia pursuing a balanced foreign policy between Russia and the West has intention to be integrated with the West instead of Russia. In his view, Armenia is afraid of becoming a satellite country of Russia. He tries to prove his argument by mentioning Armenia's refusal to join the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Customs Union. He mentions that;

Nevertheless, there are limits to the enthusiasm for deepening relations with Russia, and Yerevan has consistently rejected integrationist proposals that it considered likely to jeopardize its sovereignty, such as the CIS Customs Union or the Russia-Belarus Union. It has been keen to try to maintain balance in its foreign relations and sees such proposals as tying Armenia too closely into Russia's orbit, damaging its prospects for integration into European structures and the global economy, which are important long-term objectives.²⁰

¹⁸ Shireen T.Hunter, "The Evolution of the Foreign Policy of the Transcaucasian States", in *Crossroads and Conflict, Security and Foreign Policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia*, ed. Dary K. Bertsch, Cassady Craft, Scott A.Jones and Michael Beck, (London: Routledge, 2000), p.30

¹⁹ Tiffany G. Petros, Ph.D., Evolution of Armenia's Foreign Policy, Working Paper No. 03/13, DFI International, January 2003, p.4, online at www.aiprg.net/UserFiles/File/wp/jan2003/13.pdf (accessed on 17.09.2010)

²⁰ Edmund Herzig, *The New Caucasus: Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia*, (London: Chatham House Papers, 1999), p.97

Moreover, Pavel Baev asserts that in the 2000s, with Putin's rule Russia took a pragmatic attitude in its foreign policy and started to give less attention to Armenia. In his essay "Russia's policies in the Southern Caucasus and the Caspian area" he states that;

Armenia, being Russia's most reliable ally in the Southern Caucasus, has received the least attention and very little real support from Moscow. Some commentators saw in this signs of 'pragmatic re-orientation' driven by oil interests and warned Putin against 'betraying' the strategic partner. This decline of Russian attention is both relative (comparing with two other South Caucasian states) and absolute (comparing with the late 1990s).

One of the possible explanations is the re-assessment of 'threat' coming from Turkey. In the mid-1990s it was perceived as a massive security challenge but now is normally portrayed as weakening competitor, preoccupied by internal political instability and economic troubles.²¹

It can be inferred from Baev's statements that with Putin's presidency Russia started to follow a pragmatic foreign policy. In line with its new foreign policy, despite Armenia's disturbance, it drew near Azerbaijan in order to maximize its economic interests in the South Caucasus. It is obvious that Russia's efforts for establishing close relations with Azerbaijan contradict with the spirit of Russian-Armenian alliance.

Oktay F.Tanrisever in his article "Russia's Central Asian-Caucasian Policy" states that Putin taking into account the limit of Russia's capacity took a more realist and pragmatic attitude towards the former Soviet countries.²² Moreover, according to Tanrisever, in the 2000s, Russia's near abroad policy that aims to hold the former Soviet countries under its control bankrupted. He states that Russia connived to these

²¹ Pavel Baev (2001), "Russia's policies in the Southern Caucasus and the Caspian area", *European Security*, 10: 2, p.102, online at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09662830108407495> (accessed on 26.09.2010)

²² Oktay F.Tanrisever, "Rusya Federasyonu'nun Orta Asya-Kafkasya Politikası" in *Küresel Politikada Orta Asya*, ed. Mustafa Aydın, (Ankara: Nobel Publications, 2005), pp.62-63

countries' attempts for growing their relations with the Western states and organizations.²³

Moreover, Omer Kocaman mentions about Turkey's role in the development of Russian-Armenian relations. According to him, in the 1990s, perceiving Turkey's policies towards the South Caucasus as threat to them, both Russia and Armenia drew near each other and established strategic partnership. However, in the 2000s, Russia's perception of Turkey started to change. Putin's pragmatic foreign policy was one of the leading factors that led to change Russia's perception of Turkey. In this period, Russia gave up seeing Turkey as a strong rival but instead started to see it as a regional competitor even co-operator. It was this perception change that pushed Russia to make efforts for normalizing relations between Turkey and Armenia.²⁴

Given that the statements of the last four writers, it could be stated that Armenian-Russian relations can be characterized as pragmatic cooperation. Both countries started to give priority to their own national interests while maintaining close relations. Regarding "pragmatic cooperation" concept, it can be stated that in this type of relation, the main goal of the two sides is interest maximization. It is tactical and temporary. In case of a situation in which the interests of the two sides conflict with each other, then each side gives priority to its own national interests.

Having briefly examined the literature on relations between Armenia and Russia, the next section of the chapter will focus on the argument of the thesis.

1.3. Argument

²³ *Ibid.*, p.67

²⁴ Ömer Kocaman, "Rusya'nın Ermenistan Politikası: Tek Boyutlu Siyasetten Çok Boyutlu Siyasete Doğru", 18 February 2006, online at <http://www.turksam.org/tr/a797.html> (accessed on 28.11.2010)

This thesis aims to explore the nature of relations between Armenia and Russia in the 2000s in the light of realist theory that asserts that international political system is anarchic and there is general distrust between states that pursue their own self-interests. According to this theory, states are striving for maintaining their national security and survival without taking into account moral values. Moreover, it asserts that nature of bilateral relations is determined by military and economic power of the states.²⁵

In the 1990s, in line with its strategy of establishing a security belt around itself, Russia endeavored to keep the South Caucasus under its control. Due to pro-Western orientation of Georgia and Azerbaijan, Armenia was the only country on which Russia could strengthen its influence. Moreover, suffering security and economic problems, Armenia was in great need of Russian support. Under these conditions, both countries perceived the improvement of relations as highly beneficial for their national interests. Accordingly, they signed a number of agreements for enhancing cooperation in all fields, particularly in the security fields. In the course of time, cooperation between them reached to a level that could be labeled as strategic partnership. They collaborated with each other in regional issues and refrained from following any policy that could disturb the other side.

In the 2000s, Russia that intensified its efforts to counterbalance growing Western influence on the South Caucasus pursued a more assertive foreign policy towards the region. It took further steps to enhance security cooperation with Armenia. In addition, continuing perceived threats from Azerbaijan and Turkey forced Armenia to maintain close cooperation with Russia in the security field. Accordingly, security relations between the two counties improved in this decade.

In the 2000s, relations between the two countries improved not only in security field but also in other fields. In political field, Russia actively participated in the processes that

²⁵ "Realism in International Relations Theory", online at http://www.oocities.org/virtualwarcollege/ir_realism.htm (accessed in 04.04.2011)

aimed to settle Armenia's problems with its neighbors. Owing to its efforts, it strengthened its mediator role in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Moreover, it strove for keeping the pro-Russian government in rule. However, despite having close relations with Russia, Armenia took steps for strengthening its relations with the West. In this decade, it successfully pursued a balanced foreign policy for maximizing its national interests. As a result, its relations improved not only with Russia but also with Western states and Western political-security organizations. It can be stated that Armenia succeeded in diversifying its foreign policy in this period.

In addition, in this period, Russia for maximizing its national interests in the South Caucasus, especially in economic field, tried to strengthen its relations with Azerbaijan that has rich hydrocarbon reserves. As expected, growing relations between Russia and Azerbaijan troubled Armenia, because Armenia perceived improved Russian-Azerbaijanis relations as detrimental to its national interests. Armenia feared that Russia might change its attitude towards the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in favor of Azerbaijan. Besides, in Armenia's view, Russia's attempts for establishing close relations with Azerbaijan were incompatible with the spirit of Russian-Armenian alliance.

Furthermore, in this period, Russia that started to use economic means together with military and political means to strengthen its influence on the former Soviet countries increased its control on Armenian economy, especially on energy sector. This control reached a level at which Armenia started to consider that its energy security was in threat. In addition, lack of a reliable transportation line between Armenia and Russia also threatened Armenia's energy security. Accordingly, Armenia decided to seek an alternative energy supplier to decrease its high dependence on Russia. In view of that, it initiated new energy projects with Iran to increase its energy security. It may be claimed that Armenia tried to diversify its energy policies in this period.

In conclusion, in the light of realist theory, contrary to the view that relations between Armenia and Russia in the 2000s could be labeled as strategic partnership, this thesis

argues that these relations could be characterized as pragmatic cooperation. In fact, despite the continuation of close cooperation between these countries in the field of security, Armenia's success in diversifying its economic and foreign policies as well as Russia's enhanced diplomatic ties with Azerbaijan have led to the transformation of these relations in the 2000s from strategic partnership to pragmatic cooperation

1.4. Research Method

The thesis aims to explore the nature of relations between the two countries. In that respect, it was needed to examine the evolution of the relations. In line with the objective of the thesis, a comprehensive literature review has been used: Library resources, academic studies, reports of research centers, journals and statistics have been studied.

Moreover, the strategic documents of both countries such as military doctrines have been analyzed to understand the nature of the relations. In addition, declarations of authorities of both countries regarding the relations have been reviewed.

1.5. Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is composed of six chapters. First chapter is the introduction that explains the scope and objective, literature review, argument, research method and organization of the thesis. Second chapter examines the historical background of Armenian-Russian relations. In this context, this chapter studies the evolution of the relations in Tsarist era, in Soviet era and in the 1990s.

The third chapter analyzes security relations between Armenia and Russia in the 2000s. Beginning with trying to explore the strategic importance of Armenia for Russia, the chapter continues with trying to explain Russia's role in Armenia's security. Afterwards, it studies Russian military presence in Armenia and examines security

cooperation between the two countries both in bilateral level and within the framework of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

The fourth chapter examines diplomatic relations between the two countries in the 2000s. After discussing Armenia's success in diversifying its foreign policy, the chapter tries to explore Russia's influence on Armenia's domestic politics. Later on, it examines Russia's attitude towards the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and Armenian-Turkish relations. Lastly, it discusses Armenia's disturbance with improving relations between Russia and Azerbaijan.

The fifth chapter analyzes economic and social relations between the two countries in the 2000s. The chapter begins with examining Russian growing influence on Armenian economy and continues with studying bilateral trade relations. Later on, the chapter discusses Armenia's reaction to Russian growing influence on Armenian economy and its attempt for diversifying its economic policy. The last section of the chapter examines bilateral social and cultural relations.

The sixth chapter is the conclusion that summarizes the findings of this thesis.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF RELATIONS BETWEEN ARMENIA AND RUSSIA

In this chapter, historical background of relations between Armenia and Russia will be examined. In this context, this chapter focuses on the evolution of relations between the two countries during Tsarist era, Soviet era and the 1990s.

2.1. Evolution of Relations in Tsarist Era

In this era, with the expansion of Tsarist Russia towards the Caucasian region, first strong political relations were established between Russians and Armenians. It can be stated that, the basis of alliance between Armenia and Russia was established in this era.

According to historical records, Armenians lived in the South Caucasus, Eastern Anatolia and Northwestern Iran for centuries, and during most of this period they lived under the rule of different empires and states including Eastern Rome, Persian and Ottoman Empires.²⁶ In the beginning of the 15th century, there was not control of any big states over the historic Armenian territories. In the second half of this century, Ottoman Empire conquered these territories and took Armenians under their rule. In the following period, a power struggle emerged between Ottoman and Persian Empires on these territories. As a result of this struggle, in the 17th century, these territories were allotted between the two empires. While Ottomans continued their rule on the western part of these territories, Persians became the new ruler of the eastern part of these

²⁶ “Azerbaijan (Armenians), Minorities at Risk”, (Princeton: University of Maryland, Political Asylum Research and Documentation Service), p.7, online at [http://pards.org/2005/Azerbaijan\(Armenians\)AtRisk.doc](http://pards.org/2005/Azerbaijan(Armenians)AtRisk.doc) (accessed on 20.09.2010)

territories. During this period the Armenians, who were not pleased with their Muslim rulers, started to view Tsarist Russia that was expanding towards the Caucasus as their protector.²⁷

In the first half of the 19th century, Tsarist Russia that was expanding towards the Caucasus following some military victories over Persians took the control of a great part of regions on which Armenians lived.²⁸ In these wars, Armenians actively supported Tsarist Russia's troops against Persians.²⁹ Persian Empire transferred the abovementioned territories to Tsarist Russia with the treaty of Gulistan in 1813 and the treaty of Turkmenchai in 1828. As a result of these transfers, a great number of Armenians migrated from Persian Empire to Tsarist Russia.³⁰ Tsarist Russia founded an Armenian Oblast (Province) in 1828 but twelve years later it dissolved it.³¹

It is alleged that the Armenians in Tsarist Russia had better living conditions than the ones in the Ottoman Empire.³² It is stated that these Armenians successfully participated in economic and political life of Tsarist Russia. It became even an ordinary practice for them to occupy high-ranking positions in the government. As a result of these developments, they integrated with Russian society to a great extent³³ and as mentioned by Suzanne Goldenberg, these state of affairs played a great role in flourishing pro-

²⁷ "Armenianhistory", online at <http://www.armenianhistory.info/under.htm> (accessed on 20.09.2010)

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ "The Policy of Tsarist Russia in Transcaucasia", online at <http://www.armenia.org/cgi-bin/armenica.cgi?192195876501501=1=1=230=13=nada=1=3=A> (accessed on 20.12.2010)

³⁰ Suzanne, Goldenberg, *Pride of Small Nations, The Caucasus and Post-Soviet Disorder*, (London: Zed Books Ltd, 1994), p.158

³¹ "Armenianhistory", online at <http://www.armenianhistory.info/> (accessed on 20.09.2010)

³² *Ibid.*, p.134

³³ "Azerbaijan (Armenians), Minorities at Risk", (Princeton: University of Maryland, Political Asylum Research and Documentation Service), p.8, online at [http://pards.org/2005/Azerbaijan\(Armenians\)AtRisk.doc](http://pards.org/2005/Azerbaijan(Armenians)AtRisk.doc) (accessed on 20.09.2010)

Russian sentiments among them.³⁴ Besides, Goldenberg also alleges that the Armenians, who lived in Ottoman Empire, suffered from economic and political difficulties and experienced a range of discrimination in social life.³⁵

The dissolution of Tsarist Russia by the October Revolution of the Bolsheviks in 1917 gave rise to independence of Armenians like the other nations of Tsarist Russia.³⁶ However, as it will be explained in the next section, the independence of Armenians would not last long.

To sum up, the basis of Russian-Armenian relations was established in Tsarist era. In this era, Tsarist Russia became the new ruler of the great part of historical Armenian territories and thousands of Armenians migrated from other countries to Tsarist Russia. Moreover, in this era, Armenia started to view Russia as a protector. It is assessed that the cultural affinity between Armenians and Russians played a great role in migration of Armenians to Tsarist Russia and in creation of Armenia's perception of Russia as a "protector state".

2.2. Evolution of Relations in Soviet Era

It was this period during which Russian culture influenced Armenian culture considerably. The Soviet policies that aimed to create a unique Soviet society played the leading role in this process. During Stalin's rule, Armenians even encountered with the risk of losing their cultural identities.

As mentioned in the previous section, Armenians' independence that was attained with the dissolution of Tsarist Russia did not last long. In November 1920, the Bolsheviks

³⁴ Goldenberg, *op.cit.*, p.26

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.134

³⁶ "Armenianhistory", online at <http://www.armenianhistory.info/first.htm> (accessed on 20.09.2010)

who established the Soviet Union controlled the South Caucasus and established Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR).³⁷ Armenians in the Soviet Union suffered much from the authoritarian policies of the regime. The decision of the Soviet regime in the beginning of the 1920s related with the allotment of the “historical” Armenian territories frustrated them. According to the mentioned decision, while Nagorno-Karabakh and Nakhichevan were given to Azerbaijan, some parts of the “Western Armenian” were shared between Turkey and Georgia. Moreover, during Stalin’s rule, like other nations in the Soviet Union, Armenians suffered cultural repression of the Soviet regime that aimed to create a unique Soviet culture. In this period, they made great effort to preserve their national culture.³⁸ In addition, they suffered numerous persecutions of the regime. Thousands of them including artists, scientists and political leaders were killed or exiled.³⁹ However, despite cultural repressions of the regime, the industrialization of Armenia raised pro-Soviet sentiments among them. Thus, they supported the Soviet regime.⁴⁰ They greatly supported the Soviet army in the World War II in which thousands of them lost their life.⁴¹

The abovementioned repressions and persecutions come to an end with Stalin’s death. During the leadership of the next Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev; Armenians like the other Soviet nations experienced a cultural revival. The policies of Khrushchev, which called “De-Stalinization” policies, provided relatively favorable political and social conditions for the mentioned cultural revival. This situation continued during the next

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ “Azerbaijan (Armenians), Minorities at Risk”, (Princeton: University of Maryland, Political Asylum Research and Documentation Service), p.3-4, online at [http://pards.org/2005/Azerbaijan\(Armenians\)AtRisk.doc](http://pards.org/2005/Azerbaijan(Armenians)AtRisk.doc) (accessed on 20.09.2010)

³⁹ “Armenianhistory”, online at <http://www.armenianhistory.info/ussr.htm> (accessed on 20.09.2010)

⁴⁰ “Azerbaijan (Armenians), Minorities at Risk”, (Princeton: University of Maryland, Political Asylum Research and Documentation Service), p.3-4, online at [http://pards.org/2005/Azerbaijan\(Armenians\)AtRisk.doc](http://pards.org/2005/Azerbaijan(Armenians)AtRisk.doc) (accessed on 20.09.2010)

⁴¹ “Armenianhistory”, online at <http://www.armenianhistory.info/ussr.htm> (accessed on 20.09.2010)

Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev. In this era, many Armenians who lived in the Soviet Union were appointed to high-ranking positions in the government.⁴² The relations between the Soviet government and Armenians in the Soviet Union deteriorated once again in the last period of the Soviet Union. The main factor that brought this deterioration was the opposition of the Soviet authorities to the unification of Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenian SSR.⁴³

Towards the end of the Soviet regime, Armenians who lived in the Soviet Union initiated a campaign for seceding Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijan and uniting it with Armenian SSR.⁴⁴ In this context, they organized many protests that turned into violence in 1988. In February 1988, the Parliament of Nagorno-Karabakh took a decision calling for the unification of Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenian SSR.⁴⁵ Initially, Armenian SSR accepted the unification demand of Nagorno-Karabakh's Armenians but later, fearing from international reaction, it decided to support independence of Nagorno-Karabakh.⁴⁶ Then, in 1989, the Nagorno-Karabakh Committee and some other small groups in Armenia established the Armenian National Movement (ANM) under the leadership of Ter-Petrossian.⁴⁷

In the subsequent period, the radical Armenian nationalists, who formed armed groups for protecting the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh, organized some attacks against Soviet institutions including the KGB buildings in Yerevan.⁴⁸ These attacks alarmed the

⁴² "Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic", online at http://www.oslo.mamuški.rybnik.pl/p-Armenian_SSR (accessed on 20.09.2010)

⁴³ Sapmaz, *op.cit.*, p.188

⁴⁴ Vafa Guluzadeh, "History of Conflict", online at <http://www.armenianreality.narod.ru/history.html> (accessed on 22.10.2010)

⁴⁵ Goldenberg, *op.cit.*, p.154

⁴⁶ Herzig, *op.cit.*, p.66

⁴⁷ Goldenberg, *op.cit.*, p.142

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.144

Soviet government and the first Soviet troops were sent off to Nagorno-Karabakh for controlling the incidents.⁴⁹ Moreover, for the settling the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the USSR Supreme Soviet offered more autonomy to the region in the beginning of 1989, but this offer did not produce intended results and the skirmishes continued.⁵⁰

Armenians that lived in the Soviet Union had an expectation that the Soviet government would accept their demand regarding the unification of Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenian SSR. However, they would be frustrated with the attitude of the Soviet regime towards their demand, because Soviet regime that was against border changes refused their demand.⁵¹ The Soviet authorities opposed to unification of Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenian SSR because they feared that this unification would encourage similar actions throughout the Union.⁵² In line with this policy, the forces of Soviet regime backed Azeri forces in their operations against Armenians who lived in and around Nagorno-Karabakh.⁵³ At this point, it can be concluded that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict that strengthened nationalist sentiments in Armenian society played a significant role in the independence movement of Armenian SSR.

Armenian SSR was the first SSR that declared its independence following the Baltic SSR's.⁵⁴ On August 23, 1990 Armenian Supreme Soviet issued a declaration that called for pursuing independent foreign policies and creating national structures like national

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.162

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.163

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.142

⁵² Dmitry Furman, Carl Johan Asenius, "The Case of Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)", in *Peacekeeping and the Role of Russia in Eurasia*, ed. Lena Jonson and Clive Archer, (Colorado: Westview Press, 1996), p.146

⁵³ Herzig, *op.cit.*, p.67

⁵⁴ "Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic", online at http://www.armeniapedia.org/index.php?title=Armenian_Soviet_Socialist_Republic (accessed on 20.09.2010)

security arrangements.⁵⁵ Then, according to a decision of Armenian Parliament in February 1991, the country boycotted the all-Soviet referendum that envisaged a new union agreement and instead hold a referendum on national independence on September 21, 1991. In this referendum, 95 per cent of the electorates voted for independence. Armenian authorities made the formal declaration of independence on September 23, 1991. In fact, after the failed coup against Gorbachev in August 1991, the way for independence had been opened for the Soviet republics.⁵⁶ More importantly, the policies of Glasnost (Openness) and Perestroika (Restructuring) of Mikhail Gorbachev established a suitable ground for the nations of the Soviet Union for pursuing national independence movements.

2.3. State of Relations at the Beginning of the Post-Soviet Era

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, intense discussions emerged in Armenia and Russia regarding direction of national foreign policy. In line with these discussions, both Armenia and Russia started to formulate their foreign policies according to their national interests. During this process, the nature of relations between Armenia and Russia in the post-Soviet era started to be shaped.

At the beginning of the post-Soviet era, Armenian authorities, that gave great importance to follow an independent national foreign policy, were against having close relations with Russia.⁵⁷ The first president of Armenia, Levon Ter-Petrossian who believed that the survival of the country depended on following a balanced foreign policy was against establishing alliances with foreign powers including Russia. He mentioned that:

⁵⁵ Goldenberg, *op.cit.*, p.143

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.145

⁵⁷ Tiffany G. Petros, Ph.D., "Evolution of Armenia's Foreign Policy", Working Paper No. 03/13, DFI International, January 2003, online at www.aiprg.net/UserFiles/File/wp/jan2003/13.pdf (accessed on 17.09.2010), p.4

The security of the state and people, not excluding other factors, depends upon the normalization of relations with all our neighbors, the resolution of the existing [Nagorno-Nagorno-Karabakh] confrontation by means of peaceful negotiations and development of regional economic cooperation, which has lead us to the establishment of collective security system in the region."⁵⁸

However, in the course of time, the perceived threats from the neighbors that challenged the security of the country forced Armenian authorities to establish close ties with Russia.⁵⁹ In other words, geopolitical realities of Armenia played a great role in formulation of the national foreign policy.⁶⁰ Indeed, Armenia that had problems with its neighbors felt itself defenseless in the region. In these state of affairs, Armenia perceived Russian support as the guarantee of its national survival.⁶¹

Armenian dependence on Russia was not only in the security field but also in the economic field.⁶² Due to some factors such as the end of the interdependent economic relations of the Soviet era, energy shortages, blockades of Azerbaijan and Turkey, the

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.3

⁵⁹ Shireen T.Hunter, "The Evolution of the Foreign Policy of the Transcaucasian States", in *Crossroads and Conflict, Security and Foreign Policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia*, ed. Dary K. Bertsch, Cassady Craft, Scott A. Jones and Michael Beck, (London: Routledge, 2000), p.30

⁶⁰ Jafalian, *op.cit.*, p.1

⁶¹ Hunter, *op.cit.*, p.30

⁶² Rouben Paul Adalian, "Armenian Foreign Policy, Defining Priorities and Coping with Conflict", in *The Making of Foreign Policy in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, ed. Adeed Dawisha and Karen Dawisha, (New York: M.E.Sharpe, 1995), p.312

disruption of transit routes with Russia, Armenia suffered great economic difficulties.⁶³ As a result, Armenia's dependence on Russian economy continued.⁶⁴

Moreover, in the early period of the post-Soviet era, Russia's political and military influence in the former Soviet region was stronger than the other foreign powers.⁶⁵ However, in time, Russia looked as if it would give up its dominant position in this region. This probability roused security concerns in Armenia.⁶⁶ Indeed in this period, the primary concerns of Russian authorities were related with the domestic problems. The problematic transitions in political and economic systems resulted in great displeasure in Russian society. Seeing this state of affairs as the greatest threat to the country, Russian authorities tried much to get Western economic assistance for recovering national economy. They followed a Western-oriented foreign policy⁶⁷ and regarded having close relations with the NATO and the EU as beneficial for the national interests.⁶⁸ Accordingly, Russia neglected the former Soviet region. The common idea was that this backward region constituted an economic burden on Russia. Thus, Russia must get rid of this region in order to accomplish its internal reforms.⁶⁹ In fact, the goal

⁶³ Stephan H. Astourian, "From Ter-Petrosian to Kocharian: Leadership Change In Armenia", Winter 2000-2001, p.6, online at http://bps.berkeley.edu/publications/2000_04-asto.pdf (accessed on 24.09.2010)

⁶⁴ Haroutiun Khachatryan, "Armenia-Russia Analysis: The Challenge of Economic Independence and the Risk of Reliance", 04 January 2006, online at http://www.agbu.org/publications/article.asp?A_ID=203 (accessed on 20.09.2010)

⁶⁵ Tsygankov, Andrei, "If Not by Tanks, then by Banks? The Role of Soft Power in Putin's Foreign Policy," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 58, 7 (November 2006): 1079-1099, online at <http://www.jstor.org/pss/20451289> (accessed on 30.11.2010)

⁶⁶ Herzig, *op.cit.*, p.95

⁶⁷ Marcel de Haas, "The Development of Russian Security Policy 1992-2002", *BASEES Annual Conference 2003*, p.11

⁶⁸ Dmitri Trenin, "Russia's Security Interests and Policies in the Caucasus Region", p.3, online at <http://poli.vub.ac.be/publi/ContBorders/eng/ch0301.htm> (accessed on 20.09.2010)

⁶⁹ Pavel Baev, *Russia's Policies in the Caucasus*, (London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1997), p.4

of getting rid of the economic burden of the other Soviet republics had been existed in the minds of Russian political elite since the last years of the Soviet Union.⁷⁰

Despite its aim of getting rid of the burden of the former Soviet republics, Russia attempted to integrate the former Soviet states since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. These attempts resulted in the establishment of the CIS on December 08, 1991. The founding countries of the CIS were Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. On December 21, 1991 eight more former Soviet states including Armenia joined the CIS by signing the Almaty Declaration.⁷¹ In the following period, Russia strove for creating a stronger political-military alliance among the members of the CIS. In this context, on May 15, 1992 the CST was signed by most of these countries. Armenia, as a signatory country,⁷² perceived this agreement as an important element for its national security.⁷³ This treaty stipulated collective defense against an attack to any members of the treaty.⁷⁴

The relations between Armenia and Russia developed not only in multilateral level but also in bilateral level. Russia recognized the Republic of Armenia on December 18, 1991⁷⁵ and on December 29, 1991 signed a “Friendship, Cooperation and Security

⁷⁰ Trenin, *op.cit.*, p.3

⁷¹ Oleksandr Sushko, “The Dark Side of Integration: Ambitions of Domination in Russia’s Backyard”, *The Washington Quarterly*. Vol. 27, No. 2. (Spring 2004), p.120, online at http://www.twq.com/04spring/docs/04spring_sushko.pdf (accessed on 24.09.2010)

⁷² Roy Allison, “The Military and Political Security Landscape in Russia and the South”, in *Russia, The Caucasus and Central Asia*, ed. Rajan Menon, Yuri E. Fedorov and Ghia Nodia, (New York: EastWest Institute, 1999), p.40

⁷³ Mikayel Zolyan, “Armenian Foreign Policy Between Russia, Iran and US”, 29 March 2010, online at <http://times.am/2010/03/29/armenian-foreign-policy-between-russia-iran-and-u-s/> (accessed on 20.07.2010)

⁷⁴ Jafalian, *op.cit.*, p.2

⁷⁵ Karabayram, *op.cit.*, p.272

Treaty” with it.⁷⁶ Moreover, after the agreement of September 1992, Russian soldiers were deployed throughout Armenia’s border with Turkey and Iran.⁷⁷

As mentioned above, Armenia’s problems with her neighbors forced Armenian authorities to pursue a pro-Russian foreign policy.⁷⁸ The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was the most crucial issue among these problems. Due to this conflict, not only Armenian-Turkish, but also Armenian-Azerbaijani relations deteriorated. Both Turkey and Azerbaijan imposed economic blockades to Armenia that was suffering shortages of food and energy.⁷⁹

Regarding Russia’s attitude towards the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, it can be stated that Russia’s attitude towards the conflict changed after the dissolution of the Soviet regime.⁸⁰ In this period, Russia ended supporting Azerbaijan forces and this development opened way for the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh to declare their independence.⁸¹ Moreover, Russia backed Armenia in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. It was the patronage of Russia that restrained Turkey from supporting Azerbaijan against Armenia. Turkey could only provide military training for Azerbaijan’s soldiers and imposed diplomatic and economic pressures on Armenia.⁸² However, when the fighting on Nagorno-Karabakh spread to Nakhichevan in May 1992, Turkey as a security guarantor for Nakhichevan, warned Armenia to end the operation. After this warning,

⁷⁶ Sapmaz, *op.cit.*, p.191

⁷⁷ Kamer Kasım, “Armenia’s Foreign Policy: Basic Parameters of Ter-Petrosyan and Kocharyan Era”, 09 May 2006, online at <http://www.eraren.org/index.php?Lisan=tr&Page=Makaleler&MakaleNo=158&Lisan=en> (accessed on 24.09.2010)

⁷⁸ Hunter, *op.cit.*, p.30

⁷⁹ Herzig, *op.cit.*, p.95

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.67

⁸¹ Baev, *op.cit.*, p.38

⁸² Herzig, *op.cit.*, p.67

the CIS commander in chief -Russian general- Marshal Shaposhnikov declared that any Turkey's interventions in the fighting could result in a Third World War.⁸³

Besides, in this period, Russia took some steps to settle the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The first peace plan for the conflict was devised by Russia and Kazakhstan in September 1991. However, this plan that envisaged a ceasefire failed by Nagorno-Karabakh's declaration of independence in 1992.⁸⁴ As it will be seen in the remaining part of the thesis, Russia's mediation in the conflict would continue.⁸⁵

2.4. Development of Relations between 1993 and 2000

With the effects of several factors, the relatively weak relations between Armenia and Russia started to improve with 1993. First of all, being disappointed with Western scarce assistance, Russia returned to its near abroad. In addition, the fear from growing Turkish influence in the South Caucasus forced Armenia and Russia to draw near to each other. Furthermore, the apathy of Western countries towards Armenia also played a role in Armenia's orientation towards Russia.⁸⁶ In the course of time, Russian-Armenian relations reached a point that could be labeled as strategic partnership.

In Russia, from the beginning, Russian radical nationalists criticized pro-Western agenda of President Boris Yeltsin. According to them, Yeltsin ignored Russia's national interests as carrying out Western demands.⁸⁷ In the mid 1992, a debate begun between two groups related with the foreign policy of the country. The first group that was called

⁸³ Baev, *op.cit.*, p.39

⁸⁴ Goldenberg, *op.cit.*, p.169

⁸⁵ Lena Jonson and Clive Archer, "Russia and Peacekeeping in Eurasia", in *Peacekeeping and the Role of Russia in Eurasia*, ed. Lena Jonson and Clive Archer, (Colorado: Westview Press, 1996), p.14

⁸⁶ Hunter, *op.cit.*, p.34

⁸⁷ Jonson and Archer, *op.cit.*, p.9

as “Euro-Atlanticist” supported a pro-Western foreign policy.⁸⁸ According to this group, Russia should cooperate with the West and join into its political and security arrangements. The other group that was called as “Neo-Eurasianist” supported a more nationalist foreign policy. According to this group, “Euro-Atlanticist” did not take into account national interests. They asserted that Russia should pursue an independent foreign policy and create a security zone in it’s near abroad within the CIS structure.⁸⁹

In the first period, the “Euro-Atlanticist” view dominated the national foreign policy. However, the failure of the government in integrating Russia with the West brought about the dominance of the “Neo-Eurasianist” view in the foreign policy.⁹⁰ Indeed, the optimism of Russia regarding establishing an alliance type relation with the West had evaporated in the first two years of the independence. Frustrated with the Western scarce support, Russian government decided to end pro-Western foreign policy and turned to a new foreign policy in which preserving the national interests was accepted as the top priority.⁹¹ In this context, Russia emphasized its desire to integrate the former Soviet states within the CIS. This aim was formulated in the Russian Foreign Policy Concept and Military Doctrine of 1993.⁹² Correspondingly, Russian foreign security policy started to be more assertive in this period. In addition, Russian President Boris Yeltsin made some statements about Russia’s interests in the former Soviet region. In

⁸⁸ Armen V. Abelyan, “Russia’s National Interests in the Transcaucasus and the U.S. Policy: Implications For Armenian National Security”, Thesis, (Monterey: Naval Postgraduate School, March 2006), p.19, online at <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf&AD=ADA445283> (accessed on 22.09.2010)

⁸⁹ Abelyan, *op.cit.*, p.20

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.20

⁹¹ Tornike Sharashenidze, “Interpreting Russian Foreign Policy in the Former Soviet Union (Part I)”, Girs.Org.Ge, 07 February 2010, online at <http://eng.girs.org.ge/index.php?newsid=36> (accessed on 22.09.2010)

⁹² Abelyan, *op.cit.*, p.22

these statements it was declared that Russia had exceptional rights and responsibilities in the region.⁹³

In line with this new approach, Russia started to perceive its withdrawal from the former Soviet region as threat for its national security. Russian authorities believed that if they would not maintain their control in the region, a security vacuum would emerge and foreign powers would fill it.⁹⁴ The military doctrine that was approved in November 1993 defined the conflicts in the former Soviet region as the main threats to national security.⁹⁵ As a result of these kinds of concerns, Russia started to boost its efforts to strengthen its influence in the region.⁹⁶ In this context, Russia concentrated on creating a close integration within the CIS. A speech of Russian Foreign Minister Andry Kozyrev can give us an idea about Russia's view regarding the former Soviet region. In this speech Kozyrev defined the former Soviet region as Russia's historic sphere of influence and asserted that if Russia not maintained its influence in this region then foreign powers would strengthen their influences there.⁹⁷

Accordingly, in this period, having control on the South Caucasus became significantly important for Russia. There were several motives behind Russia's efforts to maintain its control in this region. One of them was related with the security of Russia's southern region. Russia feared that the ethnic conflicts in the South Caucasus might pose threats for its southern region-the North Caucasus republics. This was why Russia involved in the peace process of problems of this region such as the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The second factor was related with Russia's concerns about growing foreign influence in the region. Russia perceived the West's growing influence in this region as

⁹³ Baev, *op.cit.*, p.5

⁹⁴ Trenin, *op.cit.*, p.4

⁹⁵ Jonson and Archer, *op.cit.*, p.10

⁹⁶ Trenin, *op.cit.*, p.4

⁹⁷ Jonson and Archer, *op.cit.*, p.10

detrimental to its interests. One other factor was related with the Caspian Sea's hydrocarbon reserves and their transportation routes. Russia as a leading petroleum and gas exporting country intended to strengthen its control over the mentioned reserves and their transportation lines for its strategic economic interests.⁹⁸ Russia perceived having control over the South Caucasus as a critical step to have a great say on the matters concerning the aforementioned reserves and transportation lines.⁹⁹ Thus, it can be stated that not only geopolitical but also economic interests pushed Russia to increase its influence on the South Caucasus.

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, Russia has been against any foreign engagement in the South Caucasus. In this context, Russia regarded Turkey's growing engagement in the region in the 1990's as a serious challenge to its national interests. Indeed, Turkey's attempts for increasing its influence on the region gave rise to pan-Turkism concerns in Russia. In Russia's view, Turkish influence had potential to penetrate into the inner parts of the Russia where Turkic and Muslim nations live. In case of this development, the territorial integrity of Russia would be on risk, because Turkey may provoke secessionist movements in these regions.¹⁰⁰ Another factor that increased Russia's fear of Turkey was the latter's membership in NATO. Thus, Russia that perceived Turkey as a spearhead of Western influence in the region was irritated by Turkish growing relations with Georgia and Azerbaijan, especially in military sphere. Russia viewed these relations as Western attempts that aimed to counterbalance its influence in the region.¹⁰¹ Without doubt, Russia was against not only Turkish engagement but also any foreign power engagement in the region. It was particularly

⁹⁸ Herzig, *op.cit.*, p.105

⁹⁹ Tornike Sharashenidze, "Russia and Other Big Players in the South Caucasus", 20 November 2009, online at <http://eng.girs.org.ge/index.php?newsid=34> (accessed on 23.09.2010)

¹⁰⁰ Andrei V.Zagorski, "Traditional Russian Security Interests in the Caucasus and Central Asia, Perceptions and Realities", in *Russia, The Caucasus and Central Asia*, ed. Rajan Menon, Yuri E. Fedorov and Ghia Nodia, (New York: EastWest Institute, 1999), p.63

¹⁰¹ Allison, *op.cit.*, p.36

anxious about enhancing cooperation between the South Caucasian states and the West in the security field.¹⁰²

The roots of Russia's efforts to create a security zone around itself lie in its territorial vastness. Russia that has struggled to become a leading force in international arena for two hundred years has been worried about foreign invasion. As a result, it has aimed to create a security belt around the territories of itself by strengthening its influence on its neighbors. In this context, it has given special importance to control the South Caucasus that it perceives as a most vulnerable region to foreign intrusion.¹⁰³ In this context, Russia that tried to protect its influence and prevent growing foreign influence in the South Caucasus needed an ally in the region. It would be Armenia that craved Russian economic and military support. Russia's main goals by establishing alliance with Armenia were getting means to intervene the affairs of the region, protecting its military and political influence in the region and controlling Azerbaijan and Georgia that pursued pro-Western foreign policies.¹⁰⁴

Besides, Armenia was extremely in need of Russia's military and economic support to ensure its national security and avoid economic chaos. After gaining independence, Armenia found itself in a hostile geopolitical environment. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict deteriorated its relations not only with Azerbaijan but also with Turkey; furthermore, its allegations related with "the 1915 events"¹⁰⁵ exacerbated its relations

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p.38

¹⁰³ Tornike Sharashenidze, "Interpreting Russian Foreign Policy in the Former Soviet Union (Part I)", Girs.Org.Ge, 07 February 2010, online at <http://eng.girs.org.ge/index.php?newsid=36> (accessed on 22.09.2010)

¹⁰⁴ Sapmaz, *op.cit.*, p.190

¹⁰⁵ The events took place in 1915 in the eastern Anatolia have not been commonly described or named in an academic way and still open to debate. However, due to the specific focus of the thesis, the events will be referred as "1915 events" in a neutral way and historical descriptions will be avoided. For more information about the events look to <http://www.umd.umich.edu/dept/armenian/facts/genocide.html> (accessed on 12.05.2011)

with Turkey.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, one of the factors that pushed Armenia to establish close relations with Russia was the negligence of the Western countries regarding Armenia's problems. Armenia that did not get expected economic and political support from the West drew near to Russia.¹⁰⁷

In this period, Armenia and Russia cooperated not only in bilateral level but also in the framework of the CIS.¹⁰⁸ Armenia viewed the CIS as an opportunity to guarantee its national security. In this context, it signed the most of the agreements that were made in the framework of this organization. It had signed 305 of the 318 agreements that had been drafted up until May 1993. Moreover, in Russia's view, the CIS was an institutional tool for sustaining Russian interests over the former Soviet regions.¹⁰⁹ Russia by establishing this organization aimed to create strong economic, military and political integration among the former Soviet countries. However the CIS didn't provide the expected results. The main reason for that was that the members had different goals and expectations related with the CIS. Thus, the lack of harmony among the member states hindered many agreements to be implemented, which brought about ineffectiveness of the organization.¹¹⁰

As mentioned above, Western orientation of Georgia and Azerbaijan also forced Russia to make an alliance with Armenia.¹¹¹ Georgia and Azerbaijan that intended to get rid of Russian influence joined the GUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova)

¹⁰⁶ Minassian, *op.cit.*, p.5

¹⁰⁷ Hunter, *op.cit.*, p.35

¹⁰⁸ Ian Bremmer and Alyson Bailes, "Sub-Regionalism in the Newly Independent States", *International Affairs*, Vol.74, No.1, January 1998, p.137, online at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2624671> (accessed on 20.07.2010)

¹⁰⁹ Henry E. Hale, "Independence and Integration in the Caspian Basin I, Independence and Dependence: Energy, the NIS, and Russia", *SAIS Review* 19.1, Winter-Spring 1999, p.178

¹¹⁰ Bremmer and Bailes, *op.cit.*, p.137

¹¹¹ Sapmaz, *op.cit.*, p.192

group that was established in 1996. In addition, the mentioned countries that followed a pro-Western foreign policy declared their intentions to establish stronger economic and military relations with the West. In this context, they participated in Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline project that excluded Russia.¹¹²

In fact, Georgian-Russian relations were strong in the early period of the post-Soviet era. Georgia established a security relationship with Russia to secure its territorial integrity. In this context, it allowed Russian bases and Russian peacekeeping forces on its territory. However in time, Georgia started to regard Russia as the main threat for its territorial integrity. Russia's support for the secessionist movements in Georgia played a major role in this perception change. In the second half of the 1990s, Georgian authorities demanded from Russia to withdraw its troops from Georgian territory.¹¹³ Moreover, they tried hard to enhance security cooperation with the West.¹¹⁴

As a result of abovementioned factors, the relations between Armenia and Russia improved. The two countries signed numerous agreements on military, economic and political fields. Owing to these agreements, Armenia got considerable Russian support in these fields.¹¹⁵ One of the fields that Russia supported Armenia to a great extent was security field. Russia not only supplied arms but also provided military training to Armenia.¹¹⁶ According to some reports, Russia supplied Armenia huge amounts of arms in the period of 1994-1996.¹¹⁷ In this regard, dozens of tanks, armored personnel

¹¹² Abelyan, *op.cit.*, p.27

¹¹³ Allison, *op.cit.*, p.31

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.32

¹¹⁵ Herzig, *op.cit.*, p.97

¹¹⁶ "Armed Forces of Armenia", online at <http://armed-forces-of-armenia.co.tv/> (accessed on 20.07.2010)

¹¹⁷ Allison, *op.cit.*, p.42

carriers, missiles and some missile launchers were delivered to Armenia.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, Russia preserved its military presence in Armenia. The two countries signed agreements on October 21, 1994 and on March 16, 1995 to station Russian military bases on Armenian territory.¹¹⁹ In this context, the 102nd Russian base was stationed at Gyumri, located near Turkey.¹²⁰ As said by Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Boris Pastukhov, Russian soldiers in Armenia would ensure the security of Armenia and these agreements would protect Russian strategic interest in the Southern Caucasus.¹²¹ In fact, in the Soviet period there was a stronger military presence in Armenia. The 7th Army of the Soviet Union that had been deployed in Gyumri replaced by a weaker military presence with the abovementioned agreements.¹²² As a result, the number of Russian troops that were stationed in Armenia was reduced from 25.000 to 5.000.¹²³

In addition, the two countries conducted joint military exercises, the first of which was made in February 1995 in Armenia.¹²⁴ They also signed a series of military and technical cooperation agreements in 1996.¹²⁵ An accord on air defense was among these agreements.¹²⁶ In April 1997, Armenian Parliament ratified an agreement that backed up

¹¹⁸ Edward Walker, "No War, No Peace in the Caucasus", in *Crossroads and Conflict, Security and Foreign Policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia*, ed. Dary K. Bertsch, Cassady Craft, Scott A. Jones and Michael Beck, (London: Routledge, 2000), p.173

¹¹⁹ Sapmaz, *op.cit.*, p.194

¹²⁰ Jafalian, , *op.cit.*, p.2

¹²¹ Abelyan, *op.cit.*, p.34

¹²² Zagorski, *op.cit.*, p.70

¹²³ Baev, *op.cit.*, p.38

¹²⁴ Baev, *op.cit.*, p.27

¹²⁵ Allison, *op.cit.*, p.42

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.52

Russian right to establish a command group and Motorized Rifle Division in Yerevan.¹²⁷

Besides, Armenia and Russia signed the “Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance Treaty” on August 29, 1997. This treaty envisaged mutual military support in the case of a foreign attack or a foreign attack threat and joint protection of Armenian borders. The term of the treaty was 25 years and could be extended for 10 years if one side would not object. This treaty was significantly important for both countries: Owing to the agreement, Russia could maintain its military presence in Armenia.¹²⁸ Moreover, Armenia that felt itself insecure in the region, regarded this treaty as an important element of its national security.¹²⁹ It was the first time since the end of the Soviet era that Russia undertook the defense of a country against third party’s military attack. The treaty also covered closer cooperation in security field and coordination on military-technical policies.¹³⁰

The two countries also collaborated closely on international affairs. In many international issues, Armenia supported Russia’s attitude.¹³¹ Moreover, Russia supported Armenians in their allegations related with “the 1915 events”. The lower

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.50

¹²⁸ Abelyan, *op.cit.*, p.34

¹²⁹ Zagorski, *op.cit.*, p.69

¹³⁰ Harry Tamrazian, “Armenia/Russia: Landmark Treaty Includes Provision for Mutual Defense”, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 09 August 1997, online at <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1086156.html> (accessed on 23.09.2010)

¹³¹ Mikayel Zolyan, “Armenian Foreign Policy Between Russia, Iran and US”, 29 March 2010, online at <http://times.am/2010/03/29/armenian-foreign-policy-between-russia-iran-and-u-s/> (accessed on 20.07.2010)

house of the Russian legislature (the Duma) recognized the abovementioned allegations on April 27, 1994.¹³²

Relations between the two countries also improved in the economic sphere. In this period, as a consequence of Turkey and Azerbaijan's economic blockades, Armenia was excluded from many regional projects including BTC oil pipeline. All these developments negatively affected Armenian economy¹³³ and the dependence of Armenian economy on Russia continued.¹³⁴ The Russian financial credits that were got in that period played a vital role in Armenian economy that was on the edge of collapse.¹³⁵ Moreover, owing to their familiarity with Russian culture, it was easy for Armenian firms to make trade with Russia.¹³⁶ In this context, Armenian authorities made every attempt to maintain integrated ties between Armenian and Russian economies. When Russia decided in 1993 to breakdown the common ruble zone, Armenia resisted to that decision and strove to remain inside the zone. In fact, Armenia would be one of the last former Soviet countries that used its national currency.¹³⁷ On November 22, 1993 it introduced its national currency, dram.¹³⁸

¹³² "Fact Sheet: Armenian Genocide", *Knights of Vartan Armenian Research Center, The University of Michigan-Dearborn*, online at <http://www.umd.umich.edu/dept/armenian/facts/genocide.html> (accessed on 18.07.2010)

¹³³ Kamer Kasım, "Armenia's Foreign Policy: Basic Parameters of Ter-Petrosyan and Kocharyan Era", 09 May 2006, online at <http://www.eraren.org/index.php?Lisan=tr&Page=Makaleler&MakaleNo=158&Lisan=en> (accessed on 24.09.2010)

¹³⁴ Petros, *op.cit.*, p.5

¹³⁵ Herzig, *op.cit.*, p.97

¹³⁶ Hale, *op.cit.*, p.171

¹³⁷ Haroutiun Khachatryan, "Armenia-Russia Analysis: The Challenge of Economic Independence and the Risk of Reliance", 04 January 2006, online at http://www.agbu.org/publications/article.asp?A_ID=203 (accessed on 18.07.2010)

¹³⁸ "Armenia Economy", online at http://www.photius.com/wfb1999/armenia/armenia_economy.html (accessed on 22.07.2010)

Russia also helped Armenia to overcome its energy crisis. In the beginning of 1994, Armenia that was in great need of electricity, demanded help from Russia to reactivate the Metsamor power plant that was shut down after the 1988 earthquake. In return, Russia provided financial assistance to Armenia to ensure a secured operation of this plant. In this context, it gave Armenia 88.3 billion rubles in credit in August 1996.¹³⁹

Regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict; this conflict continued to affect Armenia's relations with Russia. In this period, Russia became one of the leading arbitrators in the conflict besides the Minsk Group of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).¹⁴⁰ In May 1994, a protocol was signed in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan under the CIS patronage after the negotiations between the sides of the conflict. This protocol entailed a cease-fire and deployment of a CIS Peacekeeping Force in the region. Russia who had struggled for excluding the OSCE from the peace process, viewed this protocol as a great success.¹⁴¹ However, the sides of the conflict refrained to sign the formal cease-fire for some time. The questions related with the Armenian occupation on Azerbaijan territories outside Nagorno-Karabakh and the status of Nagorno-Karabakh impeded them to sign the permanent cease-fire. Eventually, on account of Russia's great efforts, the cease-fire agreement was signed on July 27, 1994.¹⁴² However, due to Azerbaijan's opposition, Russia could not deploy its peacekeepers in the region.¹⁴³ The cease-fire ended the warfare, but it did not change the status quo in the region. Armenian occupation on Nagorno-Karabakh and seven districts of Azerbaijan continued.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁹ "Russia and Armenia Sign Loan Agreement", online at <http://www.nti.org/db/nisprofs/armenia/powerrea.htm> (accessed on 22.07.2010)

¹⁴⁰ Herzig, *op.cit.*, p.68

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.168

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p.169

¹⁴³ Baev, *op.cit.*, p.28

¹⁴⁴ Walker, *op.cit.*, p.170

Moreover, in Armenia's victory against Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh war¹⁴⁵, Russia's role was critical. There were claims that Russian army supported Armenia against Azerbaijan.¹⁴⁶ These allegations contradicted with Russian President's declaration in September 1993 in which he stated that Russia would not sale any arms to neither Azerbaijan nor Armenia until the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was resolved.¹⁴⁷ Even there were claims that Russian troops actively participated in the Nagorno-Karabakh war. However, these claims have not been proved yet.¹⁴⁸ In addition, Russia's support to Armenia in the Nagorno-Karabakh war deepened Armenia's dependence on Russia. This support also strengthened Russian military, political and economic influence in Armenia.¹⁴⁹ As expected, Russian support to Armenia brought uneasiness in Armenia's neighbors, especially in Azerbaijan.¹⁵⁰ For demonstrating its "neutrality" in the conflict, Russia declared its support to the resolutions of the UN Security Council that called the withdrawal of Armenian occupation from Azerbaijan territories.¹⁵¹

Regarding the direction of Armenian foreign policy, it can be stated that since its independence, Armenia had tried to develop its relations not only with Russia but also with the West.¹⁵² The role of Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrossian was great in

¹⁴⁵ The war between Armenia and Azerbaijan on Karabakh that lasted between 1988 and 1994, for more information look to [http://pards.org/crs_country/CRSReportArmenia-AzerbaijanConflict\(August8,2003\)Updated.pdf](http://pards.org/crs_country/CRSReportArmenia-AzerbaijanConflict(August8,2003)Updated.pdf) (accessed on 21.08.2010)

¹⁴⁶ "Azerbaijan, Seven Years Of Conflict In Nagorno-Karabakh, I. Immediate Background to the Conflict, February 1988-March 1993", *Human Rights Watch / Helsinki*, online at http://www.reocities.com/fanthom_2000/hrw-azerbaijan/hrw-contents/3.html (accessed on 22.10.2010)

¹⁴⁷ Walker, *op.cit.*, p.173

¹⁴⁸ Baev, *op.cit.*, p.39

¹⁴⁹ Tornike Sharashenidze, "Interpreting Russian Foreign Policy in the Former Soviet Union (Part II)", 08 February 2010, online at <http://eng.girs.org.ge/index.php?newsid=37> (accessed on 22.09.2010)

¹⁵⁰ Jafalian, *op.cit.*, p.2

¹⁵¹ Baev, *op.cit.*, p.40

¹⁵² Minassian, *op.cit.*, p.12

efforts for maintaining a balanced foreign policy between Russia and the West. Ter-Petrosian who sought to overcome the economic difficulties of the country believed that the country should have friendly ties with its neighbors, especially with Turkey. To have good relations with Turkey, which he saw as a gateway to the West, he refrained from controversial issues such as “the 1915 events”. In addition, he believed that Armenia should end its dependency on Russia to achieve full independence.¹⁵³ However, due to some factors Ter-Petrosian could not attain his goals.

The main factor that hindered Ter-Petrosian to actualize his abovementioned plans was the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Indeed this conflict forced Armenia to take into account its security concerns and thus Armenia drew closer to Russia.¹⁵⁴ Ter-Petrosian was sure that as long as the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict exists, Armenia could not solve other problems.¹⁵⁵ In this context, he took some steps to solve the conflict. However his efforts gave rise to criticisms of Armenian opposition, which became harsh in 1997 when he seemed ready to accept the Minsk Group’s plan which covered the withdrawal of Armenian troops from the Azerbaijan territories except Nagorno-Karabakh.¹⁵⁶ The opposition parties condemned him with betrayal and growing protests forced him to leave the presidency in February 1998.¹⁵⁷ He was replaced with more nationalist leader,

¹⁵³ Reha Yılmaz, *Armenian Foreign Policy During Levon Ter-Petrosian And Robert Kocharian Period*, (Qafqaz University, 2009), p.15, online at www.qafqaz.edu.az/journal/20092602armenian.pdf (accessed on 26.08.2010)

¹⁵⁴ Kamer Kasım, “Armenia’s Foreign Policy: Basic Parameters of Ter-Petrosyan and Kocharyan Era”, 09 May 2006, online at <http://www.eraren.org/index.php?Lisan=tr&Page=Makaleler&MakaleNo=158&Lisan=en> (accessed on 24.09.2010)

¹⁵⁵ Sedat Laçiner, “The Mistakes of Armenia and the Success of Azerbaijan”, 08 February 2007, online at <http://www.turkishweekly.net/columnist/2467/the-mistakes-of-armenia-and-the-success-of-azerbaijan.html> (accessed on 24.09.2010)

¹⁵⁶ Kamer Kasım, “Armenia’s Foreign Policy: Basic Parameters of Ter-Petrosyan and Kocharyan Era”, 09 May 2006, online at <http://www.eraren.org/index.php?Lisan=tr&Page=Makaleler&MakaleNo=158&Lisan=en> (accessed on 24.09.2010)

¹⁵⁷ Herzig, *op.cit.*, p.69

his Prime Minister Robert Kocharian.¹⁵⁸ In Kocharian's rule, Armenia increased its efforts to boost cooperation with Russia in military, political and economic spheres.¹⁵⁹

It can be stated that Kocharian's nationalistic foreign policy draw the country near Russia. Kocharian had uncompromising attitude not only regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict against Azerbaijan but also regarding "the 1915 events" against Turkey. Armenia that perceived Turkey and Azerbaijan as threats for its survival felt it as a necessity to take strong Russian support.¹⁶⁰ Inevitably, Russia's influence on Armenia strengthened in this era. This was interesting, because in this period most of the former Soviet republics were taking steps to move away from Russia's influence.¹⁶¹

Regarding the South Caucasian states, Georgia and Azerbaijan strengthened their cooperation with the Western security structures in this period. Both countries signed treaties on defense cooperation with the U.S. According to a security cooperation treaty of March 1998, the U.S. would support Georgia in defense and the two countries would exercise joint military exercises. In the framework of this agreement, a few months later U.S.' warships visited Georgia. Moreover, Russia was worried about a possible U.S.'s military presence in the Caspian Sea, because it was alleged that Azerbaijan government proposed NATO to deploy its military facilities on Azerbaijan territory.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁸ Zagorski, *op.cit.*, p.159

¹⁵⁹ Karabayram, *op.cit.*, p.281

¹⁶⁰ Herzig, *op.cit.*, p.96

¹⁶¹ Sedat Laçiner, "The Mistakes of Armenia and the Success of Azerbaijan", 08 February 2007, online at <http://www.turkishweekly.net/columnist/2467/the-mistakes-of-armenia-and-the-success-of-azerbaijan.html> (accessed on 24.09.2010)

¹⁶² Allison, *op.cit.*, p.38

Furthermore, in 1999, Georgia and Azerbaijan decided to leave the CST.¹⁶³ However, as mentioned before, the other South Caucasian country Armenia did not follow Georgia and Azerbaijan, instead it drew near Russia. On April 01, 1998, Russian Foreign Minister declared that Russia desired to maintain its strategic partnership with Armenia.¹⁶⁴ In this period, high-ranking visits also continued between the two countries. In July 1999 Armenian Prime Minister, Foreign and Defense Ministers visited Russia to negotiate bilateral relations.¹⁶⁵ Moreover, Russia continued to support Armenian army. In this period, Armenia received more than a dozen of MIG-29 fighters from Russia.¹⁶⁶ Besides, a part of Russian military hardware that was withdrawn from Georgia transferred to Russian base in Armenia.¹⁶⁷

In addition, some international developments forced Russia to give additional importance to strengthen its relations with the CIS countries including Armenia. NATO's enlargement plans towards Russia, NATO's military operation in Kosova and the supposed foreign support behind Chechen guerrillas forced Russia to strengthen its influence on the former Soviet region, since Russia viewed external threats as the biggest threats to its national security.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶³ Ibid, p.27

¹⁶⁴ "A Russian Chronology, April-June 1998", Conflict Studies Research Centre, online at <http://www.da.mod.uk/colleges/arag/document-listings/russian/J16.pdf> (accessed on 21.08.2010)

¹⁶⁵ Dr. Mark. A. Smith, "A Russian Chronology, July-September 1999", Conflict Studies Research Centre, online at <http://www.da.mod.uk/colleges/arag/document.../J21%20-%20Complete.pdf> (accessed on 21.08.2010)

¹⁶⁶ "Chronology of the Armenian-Azerbaijan Conflict (1988-1999)", online at <http://state-history.az/en/?p=89> (accessed on 21.08.2010)

¹⁶⁷ Carol Migdalovitz, Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict, Congressional Research Service, 08 August 2003, CRS Issue Brief for Congress, Received through the CRS Web, p.13, online at [http://pards.org/crs_country/CRSReportArmenia-AzerbaijanConflict\(August8,2003\)Updated.pdf](http://pards.org/crs_country/CRSReportArmenia-AzerbaijanConflict(August8,2003)Updated.pdf), (accessed on 21.08.2010)

¹⁶⁸ Haas, *op.cit.*, p.11

NATO's military operation in Kosovo in 1999 played a great role in reformulation of Russian national security policy. With this event, Russia started to perceive security policies of the West as threats to itself. This perception change resulted in changes in the National Security Concept and Military Doctrine of Russia.¹⁶⁹ Furthermore, NATO's enlargement plans towards Russia also perceived as threat by Russia. These plans pushed Russia to take steps for enhancing cooperation with the member states of the CIS. In Russia's view an integrated CIS could counterbalance the perceived NATO threat.¹⁷⁰

In conclusion, it can be assessed that the basis of Armenian-Russian relations was established in Tsarist era. In Soviet era, Armenians' social and cultural life was affected considerably by Russian culture. In the first two years of the post-Soviet era, Russian-Armenian relations remained relatively weak. With 1993, in line with strategy of strengthening its influence on the former Soviet countries, Russia endeavored for having close relations with Armenia. Moreover, Armenia that was challenged by security and economic problems got closer to Russia. Accordingly, relations between the two countries improved and reached a level that could be characterized as strategic partnership. In the following chapters, the evolution of relations in the 2000s will be examined.

¹⁶⁹ Abelyan, *op.cit.*, p.27

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p.28

CHAPTER 3

SECURITY RELATIONS BETWEEN ARMENIA AND RUSSIA IN THE 2000s

In this chapter, the nature of security relations between Armenia and Russia in the 2000s will be examined. The chapter will begin with analyzing the strategic importance of Armenia for Russia. In this context, the first section tries to explain the importance of the South Caucasus for Russia, because without taking into account this importance it will be difficult to understand Armenia's importance for Russia. Afterwards, Russia's concerns regarding the region will be examined. Later, Russia's goal of enhancing security cooperation with Armenia will be discussed.

In the second section, Russian role in Armenia's security will be analyzed. In this context, firstly, the factors that make Armenia dependent on Russian military support will be examined. After that, Armenia's perception on Russian role in Armenia's security will be discussed. In the third section, Russian military presence in Armenia will be examined. In this context, some information will be given about Russian military units in Armenia. In the fourth section, the security cooperation between the two countries will be analyzed. Accordingly, the evolution of the security relations, Russian military-technical support to Armenia and joint military activities will be examined.

In the last section, security cooperation between the two countries within the framework of the CSTO will be analyzed. After describing the nature of the organization, the section will discuss the attitudes of the two countries towards the organization. Subsequently, the cooperation areas of the two countries within the organization will be discussed.

3.1. Strategic Importance of Armenia for Russia

Alexander Dugin, a leading figure of the Eurasians states that the South Caucasus is strategically important for Russia because it provides Russia to reach the southern seas and Caspian hydrocarbon resources. In addition, this region is a part of security belt that is needed to protect the country against the foreign powers.¹⁷¹ Moreover, in Russia's perspective, lose of control in the region may lead to escalation of the separatist movements in the North Caucasus which in turn may pose a threat to territorial integrity of Russia.¹⁷² Thus, from the beginning, Russia has been trying to strengthen its influence on the region.¹⁷³

With the 2000s, Russian interests in the region started to be challenged by West's growing engagement in the region.¹⁷⁴ The implementation of BTC oil pipeline and the "Rose Revolution" in Georgia were the two outstanding events that Russia felt defeated against the West.¹⁷⁵ Russian elites perceived the Rose revolution as a direct USA's intrusion in Russian sphere of influence.¹⁷⁶ As one of the major actors of the West, NATO boosted its activities in the region after the Istanbul Summit of 2004 in which the strategic importance of the South Caucasus was emphasized. In this summit, it was declared that NATO aimed to strengthen its cooperation with the South Caucasian countries (Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan). In parallel with this decision, NATO

¹⁷¹ Tornike Sharashenidze, "Interpreting Russian Foreign Policy in the Former Soviet Union (Part I)", 07 February 2010, online at <http://eng.girs.org.ge/index.php?newsid=36> (accessed on 22.09.2010)

¹⁷² Sapmaz, *op.cit.*, p.199

¹⁷³ Yu.Ye. Ivanov, "Russia's National Security Problems in Transcaucasia And The Era Of Globalization", 01 January 2005, online at <http://vlex.com/vid/russia-transcaucasia-globalization-55679225> (accessed on 02.12.2010)

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ Sapmaz, *op.cit.*, p.164

¹⁷⁶ Mikayel Zolyan, "Armenian Foreign Policy Between Russia, Iran and US", 29 March 2010, online at <http://times.am/2010/03/29/armenian-foreign-policy-between-russia-iran-and-u-s/> (accessed on 02.12.2010)

signed Individual Partnership Action Plans (IPAPs) with these countries in December 2005.¹⁷⁷

Moreover, the USA's influence also strengthened in the South Caucasus in this period. The events of September 11, 2001 were a turning point in relations between the USA and the South Caucasian countries. Following these events, the USA enhanced its military cooperation with these countries in the framework of the "global war on terrorism". In the subsequent period, these countries participated actively in anti-terrorist campaign of the USA.¹⁷⁸ Among these countries, Georgia has established the strongest ties with the USA. The USA signed a Charter on Strategic Partnership with this country.¹⁷⁹ Afterwards, the USA initiated a Train-and-Equip Program to train Georgian troops in April 2002. In the framework of this program, it supplied military assistance to Georgia for counter-terrorism operations.¹⁸⁰ The main goal of the USA in improving relations with the regional countries was to reinforce its military presence in the region.¹⁸¹ The other goal of the USA was to get control of energy resources of the Caspian region. In other words, the USA perceived the region as a chance to diversify its energy needs. It tried much to be involved in production and transportation activities of Caspian hydrocarbon reserves.

¹⁷⁷ Stepan Grigoryan, "The Future of Southern Caucasus in the Light of New Geopolitical Reconfigurations", *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 2008, p.104, online at http://www.lfpr.lt/uploads/File/2008-20/Grygoryan_ENG.pdf (accessed on 02.12.2010)

¹⁷⁸ Stepan Grigoryan, "The Future of Southern Caucasus in the Light of New Geopolitical Reconfigurations", *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 2008, p.106, online at http://www.lfpr.lt/uploads/File/2008-20/Grygoryan_ENG.pdf (accessed on 02.12.2010)

¹⁷⁹ Tornike Sharashenidze, "Russia and Other Big Players in the South Caucasus", 20 November 2009, online at <http://eng.girs.org.ge/index.php?newsid=34> (accessed on 23.09.2010)

¹⁸⁰ "Georgia Train and Equip program (GTEP)", online at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/gtep.htm> (accessed on 02.12.2010)

¹⁸¹ Dov Lynch, "Misperceptions and Divergences" in *What Russia Sees, Chaillot Papers, No: 74*, ed.by Dov Lynch, (Paris: The Institute for Security Studies, January 2005), p.11, online at <http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/cp074.pdf> (accessed on 02.12.2010)

Furthermore, the EU also took some steps to strengthen its influence in the region. In October of 2006, Partnership and Cooperation Agreements were signed between the EU and the South Caucasian states¹⁸² and one month later, the EU included these countries in its European Neighborhood Policy (ENP).¹⁸³ The primary motive of the EU in improving relations with these countries has been to ensure the stability of the neighboring regions of the EU.¹⁸⁴ In addition, the EU was also interested in safely transportation of the Caspian energy resources to the Western market.¹⁸⁵

Russia's reaction to the growing Western influence in the region has been shaped by its general attitude towards the West. NATO's operation in Kosovo and its subsequent enlargement in 1999 affected Russia's perception of foreign threats significantly. Following these developments, Russia started to regard NATO's enlargement as the leading threat to its national security and reflected this consideration both in the national security concept¹⁸⁶ and the military doctrine of the country.¹⁸⁷ These documents that were written in an assertive attitude towards the West¹⁸⁸ underlined that Russia was determined to protect its national interests against external threats. In this context, keeping the former Soviet area under Russia's control was defined as indispensable. In

¹⁸² Stepan Grigoryan, "The Future of Southern Caucasus in the Light of New Geopolitical Reconfigurations", *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 2008, p.104, online at http://www.lfpr.lt/uploads/File/2008-20/Grygoryan_ENG.pdf (accessed on 02.12.2010)

¹⁸³ Minassian, *op.cit.*, p.13

¹⁸⁴ Richard Giragosian, "Shifting Security in the South Caucasus," *CONNECTIONS*, 6(3) Fall 2007: 100-106., p.102, online at <http://www.pfpconsortium.org/file/2664/view> (accessed on 02.12.2010)

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p.103

¹⁸⁶ Abelyan, *op.cit.*, p.28

¹⁸⁷ "The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation", 05 February 2010, online at http://www.sras.org/military_doctrine_russian_federation_2010 (accessed on 02.12.2010)

¹⁸⁸ Haas, *op.cit.*, p.12

addition, any conflict in this region was identified as potential external threat.¹⁸⁹ In the National Security Concept it is mentioned that;

Threats to the Russian Federation's national security in the international sphere can be seen in attempts by other states to oppose a strengthening of Russia as one of the influential centres of a multipolar world, to hinder the exercise of its national interests and to weaken its position in Europe, the Middle East, Transcaucasus, Central Asia and the Asia-Pacific Region.¹⁹⁰

In line with the principles of the new strategic documents, Russia endeavored to strengthen its political, military, economic and cultural influence in the South Caucasus¹⁹¹ and intensified its efforts to prevent the integration of the regional countries with the Western political-military organizations.¹⁹² It perceived the growing relations between the regional countries and the West as great threats to its national interests. Due to mentioned relations, it feared of losing its influence in the region¹⁹³

In Putin's belief, having control on the near abroad was the prerequisite for maintaining the great power status of the country in the world.¹⁹⁴ In his speech in April 2006 he mentioned about his view regarding the former Soviet countries;

We've long since lost the Soviet Union, it would seem, and so one could ask, what's the point now in worrying about our common humanitarian space and in lamenting the common foundation we had built in this area?

¹⁸⁹ Fatma Aslı Kelkitli, "Russian Foreign Policy in South Caucasus Under Putin", 2008, p.70, online at http://www.sam.gov.tr/perceptions/volume13/winter/fatma_asli_kelkitli.pdf (accessed on 20.09.2010)

¹⁹⁰ "National Security Concept of the Russian Federation", online at <http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/gazeta012400.htm> (accessed on 20.11.2010)

¹⁹¹ Sapmaz, *op.cit.*, p.164

¹⁹² Kelkitli, *op.cit.*, p.70

¹⁹³ Sapmaz, *op.cit.*, p.162

¹⁹⁴ Secrieru, *op.cit.*, p.289

But the thing is that this common humanitarian foundation never did disappear. It is still with us today and it is more relevant than ever.

We feel a pull towards each other today. Why is this? What is happening? We all know, of course, that we live in independent countries and we all feel pride in even the most modest achievements of our peoples. But we have also become acutely aware that, though our peoples now live in the independent states that make up this vast Eurasian area and enjoy all the benefits that independence brings, we nonetheless have a common socio-cultural heritage. It is here, in this socio-cultural heritage, that lie our considerable competitive advantages in the modern, global world, and it would be foolish not to make use of them.¹⁹⁵

Moreover, according to Putin, if Russia did not pursue an effective policy in that region then foreign powers would strengthen their influences there. Thus Russia must work hard to integrate this region with itself.¹⁹⁶ Accordingly, as it will be examined in detail in the thesis, Russia in order to strengthen its influence on Armenia endeavored for increasing its control on Armenian politics, security structure and economy.¹⁹⁷

Armenia's importance in the eyes of Russia increased¹⁹⁸ because after the withdrawal of Azerbaijan and Georgia from the CST in 1999, Armenia remained as the only country in the region in which Russia could maintain its military presence.¹⁹⁹ Regarding Russia's relations with Georgia and Azerbaijan in the 2000s; some developments deteriorated Azerbaijan and Georgia's relations with Russia. These developments were Russia's support for the breakaway regions within Georgia, Russia's usage of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as a means for preserving its interests in the region, Russia's aspiration to become monopoly in the transportation of Caspian energy riches, Russia's

¹⁹⁵ Dr. Mark A. Smith, "A Review of Russian Foreign Policy, July 2007", p.5, online at [www.da.mod.uk/colleges/arag/document-listings/russian/07\(20\)MAS.pdf](http://www.da.mod.uk/colleges/arag/document-listings/russian/07(20)MAS.pdf) (accessed on 02.12.2010)

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid*, p.294

¹⁹⁷ Kelkitli, *op.cit.*, p.81

¹⁹⁸ "Russia Boosts Alliance With Armenia as U.S. Gains Foothold in Georgia", 08 June 2002, online at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/pp060902.shtml> (accessed on 02.12.2010)

¹⁹⁹ Abelyan, *op.cit.*, p.35

usage of gas deliveries as a means for imposing pressure on these countries.²⁰⁰ Consequently, maintaining close security relations with Armenia became one of the most important goals of Russian leadership who perceive the control of the South Caucasus indispensable for Russia's survival.

As stated above, Russia gives great importance to maintain close cooperation with Armenia. With this cooperation, Russia tries not only to preserve its military presence in the South Caucasus or to control Azerbaijan and Georgia²⁰¹ but also to prevent a potential Turkish bloc in its southern border, because Russia regards Armenia as a geographic barrier between Turkey and Azerbaijan.²⁰² During his visit to Armenia in September 2001, Russian President Putin defined Armenia as a reliable partner of Russia and emphasized the importance of that country for Russia's lasting influence in the South Caucasus. Putin also stated they desire to deepen the military cooperation with Armenia.²⁰³

3.2. Russia as a Principal Component of Armenia's Security

Russian military support plays an important role in Armenia's national security.²⁰⁴ As stated by Armenian officials, Russian military support makes Armenia to feel safe

²⁰⁰ Abushov, *op.cit.*, p.187

²⁰¹ Sapmaz, *op.cit.*, p.190

²⁰² Raffi K. Hovannisian, "The Caucasus and Its Geopolitical Neighborhood: Horizons for Peace and Security", September 2000, *Occasional Paper Number Twenty-One, Armenian Center for National and International Studies*, online at <http://www.acnis.am/articles/horizons.htm> (accessed on 02.12.2010)

²⁰³ Emil Danielyan, "Russia, Armenia See Closer Ties After Summit", 15 September 2001, online at <http://www.azatutyun.am/content/article/1567024.html> (accessed on 24.11.2010)

²⁰⁴ "102nd Military Base", online at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/102-military-base.htm> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

against third countries.²⁰⁵ In other words, Armenia heavily depends on Russian military support for maintaining its security.

The main factor that makes Armenia in need of Russian military support has been the threat perception from Turkey and Azerbaijan.²⁰⁶ In Armenian Military Doctrine and National Security Strategy, the so-called Azerbaijan threat is defined as the greatest threat to national security and Turkey's close relations with Azerbaijan are also stated as external threat. In addition, both documents have articles related with Armenia's ambition to develop its security relations with Russia.²⁰⁷ In the military doctrine of Armenia, security cooperation with Russia is stated as a means to counterbalance the abovementioned threats.²⁰⁸ In the National Security Strategy, it is mentioned that;

Although Russia includes a part of the Caucasus, Armenian Russian relations go far beyond the regional level. The importance of Russia's role for the security of Armenia, the traditional friendly links between the two nations, the level of trade and economic relations, Russia's role in the Nagorno-Karabakh mediation effort, as well as the presence of a significant Armenian community in Russia, all contribute to a strategic partnership.

The foundation for this strategic partnership was established through a Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance and the Declaration on the Collaboration towards the 21st Century. Both these agreements and a bilateral agreement on defense cooperation, including within the framework of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), serve as the main pillars of the Armenian security system.

²⁰⁵ "Armenian and Russian Defense Ministers Agreed on Cooperation and Information Exchange in Military Sphere", 02 October 2002, online at http://www.panarmenian.net/eng/politics/news/2406/ARMENIAN_AND_RUSSIAN_DEFENSE_MINISTERS_AGREED_ON_COOPERATION_AND_INFORMATION_EXCHANGE_IN_MILITARY_SPHERE (accessed on 02.12.2010)

²⁰⁶ Karabayram, *op.cit.*, p.291

²⁰⁷ Emil Danielyan, "Kocharian Signs Armenian Defense Doctrine", 26 December 2007, online at <http://www.armtown.com/news/en/rfe/20071226/200712261/> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²⁰⁸ "The Military Doctrine of the Republic Of Armenia", online at <http://armenianmilitary.com/?p=81> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

The Russian military presence in Caucasus is an important factor for Armenia's security and for the preservation of the political and military balance in the region. The Republic of Armenia and the Russian Federation jointly guard the Armenian borders and cooperate in air defense.

Armenia attributes a great importance to its cooperation with Russia in the areas of defense, military-technical relations, energy, transportation, regional stability and security, and in the improvement of the legal status of the large number of Armenians residing in Russia.²⁰⁹

Accordingly, during the 2000s, Armenian authorities supported development of security relations with Russia. In December 2004, Armenian Defense Minister Serzh Sargisian described Armenian-Russian relations as strategic and stated that these relations played a great role in Armenia's security. In his view, owing to Russian military supplies, Armenia felt itself protected in the region.²¹⁰ In another report in October 2005, he stated that Russian military presence in Armenia constituted an essential part of Armenian national security and asserted that Russian troops defended Armenia against third countries.²¹¹ Moreover, in a report titled "Directions of National Security Strategy of Armenian Republic", which was issued in 2006, it was mentioned that security cooperation with Russia neutralized the so-called military threat coming from Turkey.²¹² Furthermore, during a meeting with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov in Moscow in December 2007, Armenian Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian asserted that maintaining stability in the South Caucasus depended much on close cooperation of Armenia and Russia. After the meeting, Russian Foreign Ministry issued a statement. In

²⁰⁹ "National Security Strategy of The Republic of Armenia". online at <http://www.mil.am/1297157753> (accessed on 16.08.2011)

²¹⁰ Tigran Liloyan, "Russia-Armenia Relations Play Key Role For Armenia Security", 17 December 2004, online at <http://www.armeniandiaspora.com/showthread.php?15333-Russia-Armenia-relations-play-key-role-for-Armenia-security> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²¹¹ "102nd Military Base", online at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/102-military-base.htm> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²¹² "Cooperation with Russia and Iran Neutralizes Military Threat from Turkey", 06 March 2006, online at <http://asbarez.com/53331/cooperation-with-russia-and-iran-neutralizes-military-threat-from-turkey/> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

the statement it was mentioned “The parties expressed satisfaction with joint activities within the CIS and CSTO and reaffirmed intention to interact within international organizations, including UN and OSCE.”²¹³

Besides, in an interview with Russian newspaper in June 2008, Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian stated that Russian military support was significantly important for Armenia’s security. He mentioned that “The allied, strategic cooperation with Russia is very important for Armenia, and we intend to expand and reinforce it through new mutually beneficial projects.”²¹⁴

Regarding the agreement of the lease extension of the 102nd Russian base in August 2010, Russian President Medvedev stated that both Armenia and Russia would jointly work to maintain security and stability in the region. He added that the two countries would assist each other in case of a military threat.²¹⁵ Correspondingly, Armenian President Sargisian stated that;

We had a very large and substantial agenda for our talks. I will start with the most important thing. We confirmed once again at the very highest level our mutual commitment to continue building and strengthening the cooperation between our two countries. This is in our countries’ strategic interests and the interests of greater security and stability throughout this region. Our relations are those of strategic allies, and this reflects our peoples’ feelings and meets the demands of Armenia’s and - I hope – Russia’s real national interests.

²¹³ “Armenia And Russia Should Work For Regional Security”, 06 December 2007, online at <http://www.panarmenian.net/eng/world/news/24204/> (accessed on 20.09.2010)

²¹⁴ “Armenia Will Expand Strategic Cooperation with Russia and Deepen Friendly Partnership with the US”, 16 June 2008, online at http://www.gab-ibn.com/IMG/pdf/Ar1-Armenia_Will_Expand_Strategic_Cooperation_With_Russia_And_Deepen_Friendly_Partnership_With_The_US.pdf (accessed on 20.09.2010)

²¹⁵ “Russia Signs Base Lease Extension with Armenia”, 30 August 2010, online at <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/61780> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

Five agreements were signed today following our talks. I particularly want to note the agreement on building new power units at our nuclear power plant, and the protocol that amends the terms of the agreement we have with Russia on the Russian military base on our soil. This protocol not only extends the timeframe for Russia's use of this base, but also expands the scope of its geographic and strategic responsibilities. Previously, the base's operation was limited by the former Soviet Union's external borders, but this restriction has now been removed from the text of the agreement. Russia has taken on responsibility for jointly guaranteeing Armenia's security and helping to equip our armed forces with modern arms.²¹⁶

In other words, with this agreement Russia became the guarantor of Armenia's security.²¹⁷ Moreover, Russia's commitment to protect Armenia makes it nearly impossible for Azerbaijan to resort to force to retake its occupied territories from Armenia.²¹⁸ The deputy chairman of President Sargisian's Republican Party Razmik Zohrabian stated that the agreement would strengthen Armenia's security against Azerbaijan. He asserted that in case of a war with Azerbaijan, Russia would support the Armenian side.²¹⁹ Briefly, Armenia regards Russia's military support significantly important for its survival against Azerbaijan and Turkey.

3.3. Russian Military Presence in Armenia

Russia has a strong military presence in Armenia. This presence plays a great role in Armenia's defense establishment. The main part of this presence is the 102nd base in

²¹⁶ "Joint News Conference Following Russian-Armenian Talks", 20 August 2010, online at <http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/810> (accessed on 16.08.2011)

²¹⁷ Emil Danielyan, "Closer Military Ties With Armenia To Boost Russia's Regional Clout", 12 August 2010, online at http://www.rferl.org/content/Closer_Military_Ties_With_Armenia_To_Boost_Russias_Regional_Clout/2126126.html (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²¹⁸ Ariel Cohen, "Reset the Russian Reset Policy", 10 August 2010, online at <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704164904575420983022047918.html> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²¹⁹ "New Russian-Armenian Defense Pact 'Finalized'", 23 August 2010, online at http://www.rferl.org/content/New_RussianArmenian_Defense_Pact_Finalized/2128266.html (accessed on 05.12.2010)

Gyumri that is located near to Turkey's border. Moreover, Russian soldiers patrol Armenia's borders with Iran and Turkey.

The 102nd base, which was formerly the Soviet Army's 127th Motor Rifle Division,²²⁰ is a part of the Russia's Transcaucasian Group of Forces. It was established in 1995 in the framework of CIS's joint air defense system.²²¹ The base has 74 tanks, more than two dozens of combat vehicles, five towed artillery vehicles, 30 Mig-29 fighter and several batteries of S-300 air defense systems.²²² Russian combat aviation and air defense units assist Armenian troops to protect Armenia's airspace.²²³ Russia also has a radar station with a capacity operating within a radius of 300 km²²⁴ which enables Russia to monitor the airspace of eastern Turkey.

In the 2000s, a number of agreements were signed between Armenia and Russia concerning Russian military presence in Armenia. In October 2001, the two countries signed a protocol about reinforcement of the 102nd base. This agreement authorized Russia for deploying anti-aircraft systems in the base. Moreover, during Russian Defense Minister's visit to Yerevan in September 2001, an agreement on raising the living standards of Russian soldiers in Armenia was signed, which provided extra terrain to the 102nd base.²²⁵

²²⁰ "Russian 102nd Military Base", online at <http://www.glossary.com/dictionary.php?q=Russian%20102nd%20Military%20Base> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²²¹ "102nd Military Base", online at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/102-military-base.htm> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²²² "Russian 102nd Military Base", online at <http://www.glossary.com/dictionary.php?q=Russian%20102nd%20Military%20Base> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²²³ "102nd Military Base", online at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/102-military-base.htm> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²²⁴ "Russian Air Base In Armenia Ready to Open Fire At NATO Planes", 04 May 2004, online at www.accessmylibrary.com/coms2/summary_0286-21251195_ITM (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²²⁵ Kelkitli, *op.cit.*, p.82

In the course of time, the 102nd base was reinforced with weapons and other military equipment of Russian troops that were withdrawn from Georgia²²⁶ between the end of the 1990s and 2006.²²⁷ Armenia not surprisingly welcomed those transfers.²²⁸ Indeed, Armenia provides Russian 102nd base with all public utilities and does not get any payment from Russia for the base²²⁹. On the other side, Russian military transfers to Armenia created a great concern for Azerbaijan.²³⁰ Azerbaijan authorities asserted that a part of Russian military hardware that was sent to Armenia from Georgia was handed over the Nagorno-Karabakh army. They stated that such military transfers would raise tension in the region and negatively affect the settlement of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.²³¹ They also alleged that this kind of transfers contradicted with the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty.²³² However, both Armenian and Russian authorities immediately denied Azerbaijan's allegations. Instead, they asserted that all the military hardware was deployed in the 102nd base.²³³ It can be assessed that the main goal of Russia by transferring its military hardware from Georgia to Armenia was

²²⁶ "102nd Military Base", online at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/102-military-base.htm> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²²⁷ Emil Danielyan, "Russia to Modernize Armenia Base", 14 February 2007, online at http://www.gab-ibn.com/IMG/pdf/Ru5-_Russia_To_Modernize_Armenia_Base.pdf (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²²⁸ Karabayram, *op.cit.*, p.291

²²⁹ "Russian 102nd Military Base", online at <http://www.glossary.com/dictionary.php?q=Russian%20102nd%20Military%20Base> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²³⁰ Migdalovitz, *op.cit.*, p.13

²³¹ "Russian Arms Found in Karabakh", 21 November 2007, online at http://www.kommersant.com/p827774/r_527/Azerbaijan_Nagorno_Karabakh_Georgia/ (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²³² "Azerbaijani Defense Ministry Condemns Russia For Equipping Armenia With Its Weapons", 25 December 2006, online at <http://www.regnum.ru/english/760613.html> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²³³ "Russian Arms Found in Karabakh", 21 November 2007, online at http://www.kommersant.com/p827774/r_527/Azerbaijan_Nagorno_Karabakh_Georgia/ (accessed on 05.12.2010)

not to strengthen Armenia's position against Azerbaijan but to strengthen its position in the region.

According to Russian officials, the 102nd military base was established in response to Armenia's demand.²³⁴ They also assert that this base is not against the third countries; instead it protects both Russian and Armenian interests.²³⁵ Moreover, in August 2010 the two countries agreed on extending the presence of this base from 2020 to 2044.²³⁶ This agreement by allowing Russian soldiers to stay in the region up to 2044 strengthened Russia's position vis-à-vis the Western military presence in the South Caucasus.

Russian soldiers do not only serve in the 102nd military base but also patrol Armenia's borders with Iran and Turkey. About 2.000 Russian soldiers are in charge of protecting these borders.²³⁷ Armenia and Russia pay equally the expense of Russian soldiers.²³⁸ Moreover, Russian border troops have been in charge of the security of Zvartnots Airport (Yerevan) since 2005. In December 2006, the commander of Russian Border Troops in Armenia stated that Armenian citizens constituted 37 % of Russian Border Troops in Armenia²³⁹ and added that letting foreign citizens to serve in Russian troops

²³⁴ Karabayram, *op.cit.*, p.286

²³⁵ Sergei Blagov, "Russia Act to Keep Ties with Armenia Strong", 22 April 2007, online at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav042307a.shtml> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²³⁶ Marianna Grigoryan, "Russia Signs Base Lease Extension with Armenia", 20 August 2010, online at <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/61780> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²³⁷ "Armenia Builds up Its Military Might Against the Background of the Deeping Crisis in the Relations with Azerbaijan that Threatens with Full-Scale War", 27 August 2004, online at <http://www.armeenseforum.nl/ip/archive/index.php?t-395.html> (accessed on 20.04.2011)

²³⁸ "40% of Russian Frontier Guards in Armenia Serve on Contract", 22 March 2006, online at http://www.panarmenian.net/eng/politics/news/16961/40_of_Russian_Frontier_Guards_in_Armenia_Serve_on_Contract (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²³⁹ "37% of Russian FSS Border Troops in Armenia Make Armenians", 21 December 2006, online at <http://www.panarmenian.net/eng/politics/news/20421/> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

to such an extent was not a common practice.²⁴⁰ Furthermore, Armenian President Sargsian described the Russian border guards' service as one of the fundamental element of the Armenian-Russian relations. He mentioned that;

We are satisfied with the activity and professionalism of the border guards. Good relations and mutual understanding has been established with the border guards, which provides an opportunity to find quick and effective solutions to arising questions.²⁴¹

3.4. Bilateral Security Cooperation

In the 2000s, security cooperation between Armenia and Russia enhanced²⁴² and owing to this cooperation, Russia's predominant role in Armenia's defense establishment strengthened.²⁴³ As stated by Russian Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov military cooperation had a strategic character.²⁴⁴

In this period, the two countries signed a number of agreements to enhance military cooperation. In October 2002, the Defense Ministers of the two countries signed two agreements. The first agreement was related with joint usage of military complexes of the two countries and the second one was related with the exchange of military information.²⁴⁵ One more agreement on military-technical cooperation was signed

²⁴⁰ "40% of Russian Frontier Guards in Armenia Serve on Contract", 22 March 2006, online at http://www.panarmenian.net/eng/politics/news/16961/40_of_Russian_Frontier_Guards_in_Armenia_Serve_on_Contract (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²⁴¹ "President Serz Sargsyan Speaks Highly of Strengthening Strategic Armenian-Russian Cooperation", 05 December 2009, online at <http://www.arka.am/eng/defence/2009/12/05/17910.html> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²⁴² *Ibid.*

²⁴³ Kelkitli, *op.cit.*, p.82

²⁴⁴ "102nd Military Base", online at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/102-military-base.htm> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²⁴⁵ "Armenian And Russian Defense Ministers Agreed On Cooperation And Information Exchange In Military Sphere", 02 October 2002, online at

during Armenian President Kocharian's visit to Moscow in January 2003.²⁴⁶ Moreover, during his visit to Yerevan in November 2003, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov signed several agreements on military field. He identified Armenia as Russia's sole partner in the region and stated that Russia would continue to provide this country with new weapons.²⁴⁷ Furthermore, in 2004, Armenia purchased two IL-76 military transport aircrafts from Russia at discounted price.²⁴⁸

Besides, in his report in December 2004, Armenian Defense Minister Serzh Sargisian stated that Russia provided technical expertise to Armenia.²⁴⁹ Also, during his visit to Yerevan in October 2007, Russian Defense Minister Serdyukov mentioned that Russia was determined to enhance security cooperation with Armenia. In response, Armenian President Sargisian declared that Armenia would do everything to do so.²⁵⁰ In addition, Russia also supported Armenia's military modernization program. In this context, it provided Armenia with new military hardware.²⁵¹

http://www.panarmenian.net/eng/politics/news/2406/ARMENIAN_AND_RUSSIAN_DEFENSE_MINISTERS_AGREED_ON_COOPERATION_AND_INFORMATION_EXCHANGE_IN_MILITARY_SPHERE (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²⁴⁶ Kelkitli, *op.cit.*, p.83

²⁴⁷ Sergei Blagov, "Armenia And Russia Reassert Bonds Amid Georgia's Crisis", 16 November 2003, online at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav111703.shtml> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²⁴⁸ "Armenia Builds up Its Military Might Against the Background of the Deeping Crisis in the Relations with Azerbaijan that Threatens with Full-Scale War", *Agency WPS/Defense and Security (Russia)*, 27 August 2004, online at <http://theriseofrussia.blogspot.com/2009/02/armenia-builds-up-its-military-might.html> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²⁴⁹ Tigran Liloyan, "Russia-Armenia Relations Play Key Role For Armenia Security", 17 December 2004, online at <http://www.armeniandiaspora.com/showthread.php?15333-Russia-Armenia-relations-play-key-role-for-Armenia-security> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²⁵⁰ Emil Danielyan and Satenik Vantsian, "Russian Defense Chief Visits Armenia", 30 October 2007, online at <http://www.armtown.com/news/en/rfe/20071030/200710301/> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²⁵¹ "Armenia Builds up Its Military Might Against the Background of the Deeping Crisis in the Relations with Azerbaijan that Threatens with Full-Scale War", *Agency WPS/Defense and Security (Russia)*, 27 August 2004, online at <http://theriseofrussia.blogspot.com/2009/02/armenia-builds-up-its-military-might.html> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

Later on, in December 2009, Armenian Defense Ministry announced that Armenia and Russia signed an agreement for exporting weaponry to other countries. Speaking on the agreement, Armenian Defense Minister Seyran Ohanian stated that the agreement would enhance military cooperation and strengthen the armed forces of the both countries.²⁵² Moreover, in July 2010, security officials of both countries met in Yerevan and discussed on military cooperation. After this meeting, Armenian National Security Council Secretary declared that the sides signed some agreements including implementation of some joint defense projects.²⁵³

Another cooperation area between Armenia and Russia has been the defense of Armenia's air space. Russian air defense units have actively taken part in the defense of Armenian air space since 1999.²⁵⁴ Moreover, the two countries conducted some joint air defense maneuvers²⁵⁵ and Russia helped Armenia to modernize its air defense systems.²⁵⁶ Furthermore, Armenian Defense Ministry announced on December 20, 2010 that a Russian-Armenian joint air defense command post started to operate in Armenia. It was stated that the post had modern systems to detect and destroy a threat at air borders in a few seconds.²⁵⁷

²⁵² Emil Danielyan, "Armenia, Russia Sign Arms Export Deal", 17 December 2009, online at <http://www.azatutyun.am/content/article/1906988.html> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²⁵³ Emil Danielyan, "Closer Military Ties With Armenia To Boost Russia's Regional Clout", 12 August 2010, online at http://www.rferl.org/content/Closer_Military_Ties_With_Armenia_To_Boost_Russias_Regional_Clout/2126126.html (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²⁵⁴ "Armenia Builds up Its Military Might Against the Background of the Deeping Crisis in the Relations with Azerbaijan that Threatens with Full-Scale War", *Agency WPS/Defense and Security (Russia)*, 27 August 2004, online at <http://theriseofrussia.blogspot.com/2009/02/armenia-builds-up-its-military-might.html> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²⁵⁵ Kelkitli, *op.cit.*, p.82

²⁵⁶ Emil Danielyan, "Russia to Modernize Armenia Base", 14 February 2007, online at http://www.gab-ibn.com/IMG/pdf/Ru5-_Russia_To_Modernize_Armenia_Base.pdf (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²⁵⁷ "Russian-Armenian Air Defence Command Post Opened in Armenia", 20 December 2010, online at <http://www.panarmenian.net/eng/politics/news/58763/> (accessed on 05.02.2011)

Military cooperation between Armenia and Russia also includes officer training. Armenia sends its officers to Russia for training. Up to now, hundred of Armenian officers have been trained in Russian military educational institutions.²⁵⁸ In January 2006, Russian Defense Minister Sergey Ivanov stated that nearly five hundreds Armenian officers were training at Russian military institutions and added that Russian military would continue to train Armenian officers.²⁵⁹ Besides, Russia also sends military experts to Armenia for training Armenian officers. During Russian Defense Minister Sergey Ivanov's visit to Yerevan in September 2001, the two countries signed an agreement related with Russia's military-technical assistance to Armenia. In the framework of this agreement, Russia sent a number of military experts to Armenia.²⁶⁰ Furthermore, to develop military-technical cooperation, the two countries organizes joint panels first of which was held in the autumn of 2004.²⁶¹

Conducting joint military exercises is one of the cooperation areas of the two countries. Throughout the 2000s, the two countries conducted many joint military exercises. During Russian Chief of General Staff Anatoly Kvashin's visit to Armenia in October 2001, the two countries agreed on conducting joint air defense maneuvers.²⁶² In September 2005, they conducted a four-day long joint military exercise near Turkey's

²⁵⁸ "Armenia Builds up Its Military Might Against the Background of the Deeping Crisis in the Relations with Azerbaijan that Threatens with Full-Scale War", *Agency WPS/Defense and Security (Russia)*, 27 August 2004, online at <http://theriseofrussia.blogspot.com/2009/02/armenia-builds-up-its-military-might.html> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²⁵⁹ Ruzanna Stepanian, "Russia, Armenia Vow to Keep up Military Ties", 26 January 2006, online at <http://www.armtown.com/news/en/rfe/20060126/200601261/> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²⁶⁰ Kelkitli, *op.cit.*, p.82

²⁶¹ "Armenia Builds up Its Military Might Against the Background of the Deeping Crisis in the Relations with Azerbaijan that Threatens with Full-Scale War", *Agency WPS/Defense and Security (Russia)*, 27 August 2004, online at <http://theriseofrussia.blogspot.com/2009/02/armenia-builds-up-its-military-might.html> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²⁶² Kelkitli, *op.cit.*, p.82

border. Both sides participated in the exercise with their armored vehicles, warplanes, combat helicopters and air defense systems. The aim of the exercise was to test the interoperability of the two armies. In the exercise, the troops defended Armenia against an imaginary military attack from Turkey.²⁶³ Furthermore, in September 2006, the two countries conducted a joint counter-terrorism exercise in Armenia. The two-week long exercise intended to increase the operational readiness of both countries against a terrorist attack.²⁶⁴

In July 2010, the head of Armenian National Security Council Arthur Baghdasarian declared that to enhance military-industrial cooperation, Armenia and Russia signed some agreements. He made this announcement following his meeting with Russian military-industrial representatives that were in Yerevan for an official visit.²⁶⁵ Later on, during Russian President Medvedev's visit to Yerevan in August 2010, the two countries signed new agreements on military cooperation.²⁶⁶ According to one of these agreements, Russia was supposed to provide Armenia with modern weapons and military hardware.²⁶⁷

Furthermore, in the summer of 2010, Armenian media asserted that Armenia was planning to modernize its military force and develop its defense industry capacity. It

²⁶³ Vladimir Socor, "Russian-Armenian Military Exercise Anachronistic", *Eurasia Daily Monitor* Volume: 2 Issue: 172, 16 September 2005, online at http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=30867&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=176&no_cache=1 (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²⁶⁴ "Anti-terrorism Drills at Armenia NPP Set For Active Phase", 25 September 2006, online at <http://en.rian.ru/world/20060925/54240711.html> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²⁶⁵ "Armenia and Russia Reach Agreement to Boost Cooperation in Military-Industrial Sector", 20 June 2010, online at <http://www.arka.am/eng/defence/2010/07/20/20755.html> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²⁶⁶ Marianna Grigoryan, "Russia Signs Base Lease Extension with Armenia", 20 August 2010, online at <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/61780> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²⁶⁷ "Russia Treats Its Commitments as An Ally Very Seriously, Says Medvedev", 30 August 2010, online at <http://asbarez.com/84352/%E2%80%98russia-treats-its-commitments-as-an-ally-very-seriously%E2%80%9D-says-medvedev/> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

was this period in which Armenian Defense Minister Seyran Ohanyan declared that they aimed to purchase long-range precision-guided weapons to strengthen the long-range strike capacity of the army. According to Armenian media, if Armenia decided to purchase these weapons, they would be purchased from Russia. Armenia media also claimed that by purchasing these weapons, Armenia aimed to make the alleged Russia's sale of S-300 missile systems to Azerbaijan void.²⁶⁸ To make clear, the alleged Russia's sale of S-300s to Azerbaijan disturbed Armenia because these systems have capability to reinforce Azerbaijan's defense system. Thus, with purchasing abovementioned weapons, Armenia aims to strengthen the strike capacity of its army against Azerbaijan's army.

In brief, no matter how different their motives, both Armenia and Russia perceive making cooperation in military field as vitally important for protecting their national interests. Thus, it can be concluded that both countries will continue to take steps to enhance security cooperation.

3.5. Cooperation within the Framework of the CSTO

Russia spearheaded a creation of a new security structure, the CSTO, in October 2002, with some members of the CIS, including Armenia.²⁶⁹ The aim of Russia in creating the CSTO was to create a stronger military integration among the members of the CIS²⁷⁰ and to play an important role in European and Central Asian security establishment. It can be inferred from Putin's speeches that the organization is seen as a counter balance

²⁶⁸ Emil Danielyan, "Closer Military Ties With Armenia To Boost Russia's Regional Clout", 12 August 2010, online at <http://www.iccn.ge/closer-military-ties-with-armenia-to-boost-russias-regional-clout.html> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²⁶⁹ Marcin Kaczmarek, "Russia Creates a New Security System to Replace the C.I.S.", 10 January 2006, online at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/pp011106.shtml> (accessed on 20.11.2010)

²⁷⁰ Secrieru, *op.cit.*, p.295

to prevent NATO's eastward expansion.²⁷¹ In Russia's security strategy until 2020, the organization is defined as a key mechanism to counter regional military challenges and threats²⁷² and the foreign policy concept of Russia regards cooperation with the member states of CSTO as a priority area.²⁷³ Moreover, in the national strategy of Armenia, membership in the CSTO is identified as a key component of national security.²⁷⁴

One of the most important articles in the charter of the organization stipulates joint defense against a foreign attack. This article states that any attack against one member will be perceived as an attack against the whole organization. Furthermore, the member states of the CSTO pledged that they would not join other military organizations or establish alliances with other countries²⁷⁵ but would improve the coordination and cooperation on regional and international security-political developments with other member states of the CSTO.²⁷⁶

The CSTO that has a joint military command located in Moscow, a rapid reaction force in central Asia and a common air defense system²⁷⁷ conducts military exercises every year in order to develop military cooperation among the member countries. In this context, an exercise was held in Armenia in 2008, "Rubezh-2008". This was a large-

²⁷¹ J. H. Saat, "The Collective Security Treaty Organization", February 2005, *Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, Conflict Studies Research Centre, Central Asian Series 05/09*, p.5, online at [http://www.da.mod.uk/colleges/arag/document-listings/ca/05\(09\)-JHS.pdf](http://www.da.mod.uk/colleges/arag/document-listings/ca/05(09)-JHS.pdf) (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²⁷² "Armenia Approves Collective Security Rapid Reaction Forces", 23 February 2010, online at <http://www.news.az/articles/9842> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²⁷³ "The Foreign Policy Concept Of The Russian Federation", online at <http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/econcept.htm> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²⁷⁴ "National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia", online at <http://www.mil.am/1297157753> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²⁷⁵ "Charter of The Collective Security Treaty Organization", online at http://untreaty.un.org/unts/144078_158780/5/9/13289.pdf (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²⁷⁶ Abelyan, *op.cit.*, p.35

²⁷⁷ Stina Torjesen, "Russia as a Military Great Power", in *The Multilateral Dimension in Russian Foreign Policy*, ed. Elana Wilson Rowe and Stina Torjesen (New York: Routledge, 2009), p.185

scale exercise in which about 4.000 soldiers participated.²⁷⁸ Moreover, as a member of the CSTO, Armenia buys Russian military equipment at discounted prices. Furthermore, in the framework of joint air defense system, Russia supports Armenian air defense with its Mig-29 jetfighters and S-300 air defense batteries.²⁷⁹

Russia that pioneered the establishment of the CSTO has been the dominant member of the organization. Indeed, the official language of the organization is Russian.²⁸⁰ In addition, theoretically, all members provide the organization with equal amount of contributions, but in practice, Russia is the leading military and financial contributor.²⁸¹ It supplies military equipment to other member states at low prices and educates the officers of these states.²⁸²

After a meeting in June 2008 in Moscow, the presidents of the two countries, Medvedev and Sargisian published a joint declaration²⁸³ in which it was stated that both countries saw the CSTO as an effective security organization that had capability to defend its member states against foreign attacks.²⁸⁴ After this meeting, Medvedev stated that as members of the CSTO, Armenia and Russia were responsible for each other's security and both countries strictly abide by this principle.²⁸⁵

²⁷⁸ "Collective Security Treaty Organisation", online at <http://z9.invisionfree.com/21c/index.php?showtopic=9815&st=0&> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²⁷⁹ Abelyan, *op.cit.*, p.36

²⁸⁰ Saat, *op.cit.*, p.19

²⁸¹ Torjesen, *op.cit.*, p.186

²⁸² Abelyan, *op.cit.*, p.35

²⁸³ "High-Level Russian-Armenian Talks Held in the Kremlin", 24 June 2008, online at http://www.gab-ibn.com/IMG/pdf/Ar16-_High-Level_Russian-Armenian_Talks_Held_In_The_Kremlin.pdf (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²⁸⁴ "Armenia, Russia to Develop Military and Political Cooperation", 24 June 2008, online at <http://www.panarmenian.net/eng/world/news/26310/> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²⁸⁵ Marianna Grigoryan, "Russia Signs Base Lease Extension with Armenia", 30 August 2010, online at <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/61780> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

On February 04, 2009, the CSTO decided to create the Collective Rapid Reaction Force. In a few months, it completed the plans regarding this new force. The mission of this force includes protection of the member states against foreign-armed attacks, conducting joint military exercises, struggling with international terrorism, preventing drug and arms trade and so on.²⁸⁶ During Armenian Parliament session in which the mission of this force was discussed, the chairman of the foreign relations committee Armen Rustamyan asserted that the CSTO would respond to any foreign military attack against Armenia.²⁸⁷ Similarly, Armenian officials have recurrently stated that in case of a war with Azerbaijan they would expect CSTO to assist them militarily.²⁸⁸

Cooperation between Armenia and Russia within the framework of the CSTO seems developing. In his speech in July 2010, the Secretary General of the CSTO stated that they were very interested in Armenia's military cooperation within the framework of the CSTO. He stated that as a part of this cooperation, they aimed to incorporate Armenian military-industrial establishments with Russian ones. He also stated that the two countries were implementing a pilot program in this direction.²⁸⁹ Moreover, during his visit to Armenia in August 2010, Russian President Medvedev stated that maintaining peace in the region was the mission of Russia and added that in the framework of the CSTO, Russia was responsible for Armenia's security.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁶ "Collective Security Treaty Organization", online at <http://www.mfa.am/en/international-organisations/CSTO/> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²⁸⁷ "Armenia Approves Collective Security Rapid Reaction Forces", 23 February 2010, online at <http://www.news.az/articles/9842> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²⁸⁸ "A war with Karabakh may turn into CSTO-Azerbaijan war?" 19 May 2011, online at <http://www.panarmenian.net/eng/politics/news/70378/> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²⁸⁹ "Armenia and Russia Reach Agreement to Boost Cooperation in Military-Industrial Sector", 20 July 2010, online at <http://www.arka.am/eng/defence/2010/07/20/20755.html> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

²⁹⁰ "Russia Treats Its Commitments as An Ally Very Seriously", Says Medvedev", 30 August 2010, online at <http://asbarez.com/84352/%E2%80%98russia-treats-its-commitments-as-an-ally-very-seriously%E2%80%9D-says-medvedev/> (accessed on 05.12.2010)

In conclusion, in the 2000s, security cooperation between Armenia and Russia enhanced both in bilateral level and within the framework of the CSTO. Having close security cooperation with Armenia facilitated it for Russia to maintain its influence over the South Caucasus. In addition, Russian military support made Armenia feel safe against the third countries. In the next chapter, the evolution of economic and social relations between these two countries in the 2000s will be examined.

CHAPTER 4

DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN ARMENIA AND RUSSIA IN THE 2000s

In this chapter, diplomatic relations between Armenia and Russia in the 2000s will be examined. The chapter begins with discussing Armenia's success in diversifying its foreign policy and continues with examining cooperation between Armenia and Russia within the framework of the CIS. Afterwards, the influence of Russia on Armenian domestic politics will be discussed. Subsequently, Russia's attitude towards the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and Armenian-Turkish relations will be assessed. In the final section, the disturbance of Armenia with growing Russian-Azerbaijanis relations will be discussed.

4.1. Armenia's Success in Diversifying Its Foreign Policy and Russia

Since the end of Soviet era, Armenia has followed a balanced foreign policy that is called "complementary" foreign policy. In line with policy, it has endeavored to strengthen its relations with both regional powers (Russia and Iran) and the West. Given that security and economic problems of the country, Armenian rulers believed that they had to follow such a foreign policy.

According to political observers, Armenia's "complementary" foreign policy is a result of the realities of the country. The historical and geopolitical considerations forced Armenian authorities to follow such a foreign policy. Having strained relations with its neighbors, economic and military weakness of the country made it necessary to follow such a foreign policy. In other words, with following a balanced foreign policy,

Armenian authorities aimed to overcome country's economic and military vulnerability.²⁹¹

In an interview in June 2008, Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian mentioned about balanced foreign policy of Armenia;

We shall conduct an active, intensive foreign policy based on the defense of interests and pragmatism, which means greater involvement of international and regional organizations in the country, reinforcement of relations on both bilateral and multilateral bases.²⁹²

Moreover, describing strategic relations with Russia as vitally important, Nalbandian stated that they also wanted to develop relations with the West. He mentioned that;

Armenia will also develop cooperation with the United States and will work for deeper integration to European structures. We will cement relations with our partner states and will spare no effort to improve relations with those countries we are experiencing problems with. We want a secure and stable region to live in. This is the evidence of continuity of Armenia's foreign policy. Changes will be insignificant²⁹³

In this context, Armenia has followed a foreign policy that seeks to improve relations not only with the regional states and organizations but also the Western ones. As mentioned in the national strategy of the country, cooperation with Western organizations and states together with partnership with Russia accepted as the key

²⁹¹ Richard Giragosian, "Geopolitics and the Formation of Foreign Policy in the South Caucasus: An Examination of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia", *Armenian International Policy Research Group*, October 2003, p.6, online at <http://www.aiprg.net/UserFiles/File/wp/jan2003/19.pdf> (accessed on 20.09.2010)

²⁹² "Armenia Will Expand Strategic Cooperation with Russia and Deepen Friendly Partnership with the US", 16 June 2008, online at http://www.gab-ibn.com/IMG/pdf/Ar1-Armenia_Will_Expand_Strategic_Cooperation_With_Russia_And_Deepen_Friendly_Partnership_With_The_US.pdf (accessed on 20.09.2010)

²⁹³ "Armenia Intends to Cement Cooperation with Russia and U.S.", 16 June 2008, online at <http://www.panarmenian.net/eng/politics/news/26219/> (accessed on 20.09.2010)

components of national security.²⁹⁴ As a result, Armenia's relations has developed not only with Russia but also with the West: The cooperation with NATO gained momentum, the relations with EU improved, the influence of the USA on Armenia strengthened and integration of Armenian economy with the international economy improved.

Armenia is the only member state of the CSTO that has strong relations with NATO.²⁹⁵ In December 2005, NATO and Armenia signed an Individual Partnership Plan (IPAP). This plan covered issues as holding regular talks on regional security, cooperation for designing national security documents, conducting joint military exercises and etc...²⁹⁶ In the framework of this plan, a military reform started to be implemented in Armenian army.²⁹⁷ Furthermore, the country participated in some joint military exercises of NATO.²⁹⁸

Given those Russian officials' statements, it can be assessed that growing Armenian-NATO relations do not disturb Russia. In his statement, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov expressed that both Armenia and Russia maintained their relations with NATO and added that Russia did not have problems with NATO except the eastern enlargement plan of it.²⁹⁹ Indeed, Armenia-NATO cooperation was not affected negatively by the perpetual crisis between Russia and NATO. Despite the strained

²⁹⁴ "National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia", online at <http://www.mil.am/1297157753> (accessed on 20.09.2010)

²⁹⁵ Minassian, *op.cit.*, p.13

²⁹⁶ Yuri Simonian, "Yerevan Remains Loyal To Moscow", *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 28 June 2007, p.7, online at <http://www.hayary.org/forums/viewtopic.php?f=12&t=142&st=0&sk=t&sd=a&start=180> (accessed on 20.09.2010)

²⁹⁷ Minassian, *op.cit.*, p.13

²⁹⁸ Jafalian, *op.cit.*, p.5

²⁹⁹ Emil Danielyan, "Russia 'Not Worried' About Armenia's NATO, Georgia Ties", 03 October 2008, online at <http://www.armtown.com/news/en/rfe/20081003/200810031/> (accessed on 20.09.2010)

relations between Russia and NATO due to the August 2008 war in Georgia, Armenia hosted NATO's "The Cooperative Longbow/Lancer exercises" in the fall of that year.³⁰⁰ However, there were some cases that Armenia refrained from cooperation with NATO due to Russia's opposition. For instance, due to Russia's opposition, Armenia withdrew from NATO's command-and-staff exercise (the Cooperative Longbow/Cooperative Lancer 2009) in Georgia in May 2009.³⁰¹ Commenting on Armenia's plan to participate in the mentioned exercise, Russian parliamentary Semen Baghdasarov stated that as being a close partner of Russia, Armenia should not participate in the exercise. Additionally he claimed that NATO would never become a genuine ally to Armenia and without Russia's support it would be difficult for Armenia to settle its problems.³⁰²

Moreover, as declared repeatedly by Armenian politicians, Armenia does not have an ambition to join NATO. Armenian President Sargisian who described NATO as a component of national security³⁰³ declared that they had no plan to join NATO and added that the cooperation in the field of security with Russia would remain the main constituent of the country's defense doctrine.³⁰⁴ In the same context, Armenian Defense Minister Serge Sargisian declared, "Membership in the Alliance has never been on our foreign policy agenda."³⁰⁵

³⁰⁰ Ara Tadevosian, "Armenia Strives to Maintain Balanced Foreign Policy", *IWPR Institute for War & Peace Reporting*, CRS Issue 461, 25 September 2008, online at <http://iwpr.net/report-news/armenia-strives-maintain-balanced-foreign-policy> (accessed on 20.09.2010)

³⁰¹ "Armenia Officially Pulls Out of NATO-led Drills in Georgia", 05 May 2009, online at <http://en.rian.ru/world/20090505/121452409.html> (accessed on 20.09.2010)

³⁰² "Moscow is Concerned Over Armenia's Participation in NATO Military Trainings in Georgia", 22 April 2009, online at <http://www.panarmenian.net/eng/world/news/30603/> (accessed on 20.09.2010)

³⁰³ "Between Russia and the West; Armenia in the Wake of the August Events", 22 October 2008, online at <http://www.armeniandiaspora.com/forumdisplay.php?645-October-2008/page15&order=desc> (accessed on 20.09.2010)

³⁰⁴ Emil Danielyan, "Armenia Rule Out Abkhazia, South Osetia Recognition", 04 September 2008, online at <http://www.armtown.com/news/en/rfe/20080904/200809041/> (accessed on 20.09.2010)

³⁰⁵ Jafalian , *op.cit.*, p.5

In line with its complementary foreign policy, Armenia also improved its relations with the USA in the 2000s. Armenia's support to the USA's war against terrorism played a great role in the development of bilateral relations.³⁰⁶ In the following period of the September 11 attacks in the USA, Armenia opened its airspace to the USA's air forces. Afterward, in April 2004, the two states signed an agreement that allowed the USA's aircrafts to land in Armenia.³⁰⁷ Furthermore, Armenian soldiers participated in the international missions in Iraq, Kosovo³⁰⁸ and Afghanistan, which were led by USA. In return, the USA assisted Armenia not only in economic field but also in other fields, including military.³⁰⁹ Besides, relations between Armenia and the EU also improved in the 2000s. Armenia that became a member of the Council of Europe in the beginning of the 2000s³¹⁰ strove to be integrated with the EU through the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP).³¹¹ In 2009, it joined the Eastern Partnership program of EU.³¹²

In the 2000s, Armenian complementary foreign policy became effective in a successful manner. During Russian-Georgian war in August 2008, Armenia did not support either side.³¹³ In September 2008, it signed a declaration of the CSTO that criticized the

³⁰⁶ Petros, *op.cit.*, p.6

³⁰⁷ Alla Mirzoyan, "Armenia's Foreign Policy, 1991-2004: Between History And Geopolitics", Doctoral Thesis, (Florida International University, 2007), p.87, online at <http://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/dissertations/AAI3301617/> (accessed on 20.11.2010)

³⁰⁸ Minassian, *op.cit.*, p.12

³⁰⁹ Haroutiun Khachatrian, "Armenia Faces New Security Challenges After The August War In Georgia", 20 August 2008, online at <http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/4921> (accessed on 20.09.2010)

³¹⁰ Petros, *op.cit.*, p.13

³¹¹ "National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia", online at <http://www.mil.am/1297157753> (accessed on 20.09.2010)

³¹² "Armenia", online at <http://www.easternpartnership.org/partner-states/armenia> (accessed on 20.09.2010)

³¹³ Mikayel Zolyan, "Armenian Foreign Policy Between Russia, Iran and US", 29 March 2010, online at <http://times.am/2010/03/29/armenian-foreign-policy-between-russia-iran-and-u-s/> (accessed on 20.07.2010)

Georgia's military operation against South Ossetia.³¹⁴ Moreover, it did not recognize the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia despite Russia's demand on the issue.³¹⁵ In his speech given in September 2009, Armenian President Sargsian made it clear that Armenia would not recognize the mentioned regions as independent states. He declared that Armenia could not recognize the independence of these regions before recognizing Nagorno-Karabakh,³¹⁶ because Armenian authorities believed that if Armenia recognized the former Georgian autonomies but not the so-called Nagorno-Karabakh regime then Armenian public would be disturbed. In this context, Armenian President Sargsian stated, "Having the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Armenia can not recognize another entity in the same situation as long as it has not recognized the 'Nagorno-Karabakh Republic'".³¹⁷

Accordingly, it can be stated that Russian-Georgian crisis did not harm Armenia-NATO cooperation. Armenia continued to implement its IPAP with NATO and as mentioned before, hosted a NATO military exercise in the fall of 2008.³¹⁸ In other words, Armenia succeeded in maintaining its complementary foreign policy during Russian-Georgian war by refraining from supporting either Russia or pro-Western Georgia.

³¹⁴ Emil Danielyan, "Russia 'Not Worried' About Armenia's NATO, Georgia Ties", 03 October 2008, online at <http://www.armtown.com/news/en/rfe/20081003/200810031/> (accessed on 20.09.2010)

³¹⁵ Ara Tadevosian, "Armenia Strives to Maintain Balanced Foreign Policy", *IWPR Institute for War & Peace Reporting*, CRS Issue 461, 25 September 2008, online at <http://iwpr.net/report-news/armenia-strives-maintain-balanced-foreign-policy> (accessed on 20.09.2010)

³¹⁶ Emil Danielyan, "Armenia Rule Out Abkhazia, South Ossetia Recognition", 04 September 2008, online at <http://www.armtown.com/news/en/rfe/20080904/200809041/> (accessed on 20.11.2010)

³¹⁷ "Will Russian Peacekeepers Lift Blockade off Karabakh? - October, 2008", October 2008, online at <http://theriseofrussia.blogspot.com/2009/08/rhetoric-is-beginning-to-take-shape.html> (accessed on 20.11.2010)

³¹⁸ Emil Danielyan, "Russia 'Not Worried' About Armenia's NATO, Georgia Ties", 03 October 2008, online at <http://www.armtown.com/news/en/rfe/20081003/200810031/> (accessed on 20.11.2010)

In conclusion, Armenia succeeded in diversifying of its foreign policy in the 2000s. It enhanced its cooperation with both Russia and the West. However, Russia continued to remain as the main political, military and economic ally of Armenia.

4.2. Cooperation within the Framework of the CIS

Composed of the most of the former Soviet states, the CIS has some supra-natural powers for coordinating economic, political and security affairs among the member countries.³¹⁹ Russia has perceived the CIS as a tool to increase its military, political and economic influence on the other members of the organization.³²⁰ In line with Russia's efforts, in the 2000s, cooperation between Armenia and Russia enhanced within the context of the CIS.

As mentioned in its Foreign Policy Concept, in order to revitalize its great power status, Russia aims to create a stronger integration within the CIS. In this concept it is mentioned that the CIS can prevent the West's growing influence in the near abroad.³²¹ Besides, in the National Security Concept of Russia, establishing a close integration and an efficient cooperation within the CIS are identified as key strategic missions for ensuring military security of Russia.³²² In April 2002, in his annual address to the Federal Assembly of the Russia, Putin stated that;

I want to stress that Russian foreign policy will in the future be organized in a strictly pragmatic way, based on our capabilities and national interests: military and strategic, economic and political. And also taking into account

³¹⁹ "Russia in the CIS", online at http://www.allrussias.com/rf/cis_1.asp (accessed on 20.11.2010)

³²⁰ Abelyan, *op.cit.*, p.30

³²¹ *Ibid*, p.29

³²² "National Security Concept of the Russian Federation", online at <http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/gazeta012400.htm> (accessed on 20.11.2010)

the interests of our partners, above all in the CIS... Working with CIS countries is Russia's main priority in foreign policy.³²³

However, in the course of time, the CIS did not create expected integration among the member states. Most of the agreements neither put into practice nor ratified³²⁴ due to disagreements among the member states. In the course of time, the CIS's mechanisms became weaker, even paralyzed.³²⁵

Regarding Russian-Armenian cooperation within the CIS in the 2000s, relations between the two countries improved particularly in the field of security within the framework of CST.³²⁶ Apart from the field of security, the two countries also cooperated in social, economic and humanitarian fields.³²⁷ Armenia actively participated in almost all activities of the CIS and joined most of sub-organizations of it.³²⁸ Given that Armenia's dependence on Russian economic, military and political support, it can be assessed that Armenia views the CIS as a means to get more Russian support in the abovementioned fields.

³²³ "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation", 18 April 2002, online at http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2002/04/18/0000_type70029type82912_70662.shtml (accessed on 17.08.2011)

³²⁴ Marcin Kaczmarek, "Russia Creates a New Security System to Replace the C.I.S.", 10 January 2006, online at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/pp011106.shtml> (accessed on 20.11.2010)

³²⁵ Alexander Nikitin, "Russian Foreign Policy In The Fragmented Post Soviet Space", *International Journal On World Peace*, Vol. XXV No. 2, June 2008

³²⁶ "Armenia Builds Up Its Military Might Against The Background of the Deepening Crisis in The Relations With Azerbaijan That Threatens With Full-Scale War", Agency WPS/Defense and Security (Russia), 27 August 2004, online at <http://www.armeenseforum.nl/ip/archive/index.php?t-395.html> (accessed on 20.04.2011)

³²⁷ "National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia", online at <http://www.mil.am/1297157753> (accessed on 20.11.2010)

³²⁸ "Commonwealth of Independent States", online at <http://www.armeniaforeignministry.am/en/international-organisations/CIS/> (accessed on 20.11.2010)

However, the ineffectiveness of the CIS gave rise to new initiatives in military and economic fields. Due to pro-Western orientation of some members of the CIS, (Georgia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine and Moldova) it became nearly impossible to cooperate on military matters. Thus, the organization did not bring about an effective political-military bloc against foreign powers such as NATO. As a consequence, as mentioned in the previous section, Russia spearheaded the foundation of the CSTO in 2002 with some members of the CIS, including Armenia.³²⁹

The lack of strong integration experienced not only in the military field but also in the economic field. Despite the comprehensive efforts of Russia, even a free trade area could not be created. Accordingly, the failure of the CIS in economic field pushed Russia to create the Eurasian Economic Community (EAEC) in October 2000.³³⁰ However, regardless of its great enthusiasm for having close relations with Russia, Armenia did not join this community. In fact, except Armenia, all members of the CSTO became member of this community which can be interpreted as Armenia tried to protect its economic independence against Russia by refraining from join this community.³³¹

4.3. Russia's Influence on Armenia's Domestic Politics

Russia considers the continuation of Armenian government as critically important for preserving its military and political influence not only in Armenia but also on the South Caucasus. In this sense, in the 2000s, it tried hard to ensure the continuity of Armenian

³²⁹ Marcin Kaczmarek, "Russia Creates a New Security System to Replace the C.I.S.", 10 January 2006, online at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/pp011106.shtml> (accessed on 20.11.2010)

³³⁰ Roza Zhalimbetova and Gregory Gleason, "Eurasian Economic Community (EEC) Comes Into Being", online at <http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/216/print> (accessed on 20.11.2010)

³³¹ Minassian, *op.cit.*, p.19

government. It supported its candidacies in the presidential and parliamentary elections of the country.

Since the end of Soviet era, Russia has been an influential actor in Armenia's domestic politics. With Putin's presidency, this influence became much felt with more Russian involvement in the country's internal politics.³³² It can be assessed that the increasing Western influence in Russia's periphery, as witnessed by the Orange and Rose revolutions, pushed Russian government to pay additional significance to maintain its control on the CIS states.³³³ Russia that was worried with the "colored revolutions" in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan was against new revolutions in other CIS countries. To prevent such a revolution in Armenia, it supported pro-Russian leadership of this country. In this sense, Russian President Putin emphasized the need for stability in the leadership of Armenia. Giving such a speech, Putin aimed to ensure the continuity of Nagorno-Karabakhtsi clan (natives of Nagorno-Karabakh who are more pro-Russian than natives of Yerevan) in the leadership of Armenia.³³⁴

Accordingly, Russia supported Kocharian's companion Prime Minister Sergey Sargisian's ruling party -Republican Party- in the parliamentary elections of 2007.³³⁵ Russian officials made speeches that revealed their backing for the mentioned party. During his visit to Yerevan in April 2007, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov made it clear that Russia supported Sargisian. Besides Lavrov, a number of other Russian officials including Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov also declared their support

³³² Kim Iskyan, "Armenia in Russia's Embrace, Big Bad Pariah," *Moscow Times*, 24 March 2004, online at <http://www.strategypage.com/militaryforums/47-885.aspx> (accessed on 20.11.2010)

³³³ Mirzoyan, *op.cit.*, p.81

³³⁴ Minassian, *op.cit.*, p.10

³³⁵ Sergei Blagov, "Russia Act to Keep Ties with Armenia Strong", 22 April 2007, online at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav042307a.shtml> (accessed on 24.11.2010)

for Sargisian.³³⁶ They also made it clear that Russia was strongly opposed to regime change in Armenia. Furthermore, in this period, there were many reports in Russian media that Russia would support Sargisian's party.³³⁷

Moreover, in Armenian presidential election of February 2008, Russia supported Kocharian's companion Prime Minister Sergey Sargisian against former President Ter-Petrosian. In this context, Russian Prime Minister Viktor Zubkov and State Duma speaker Boris Gryzlov visited Yerevan just before the election. Apparently, the purpose of these visits was to develop bilateral relations, however according to many political observers, the main purpose was to make it clear that Russia supported Sargisian in the election. As stated by an Armenian official, the timing of the mentioned visits was important because in that period thousands of former President Ter-Petrosian's supporters organized street protests against the government.³³⁸

Having believed that Ter-Petrosian would harm relations between Armenia and Russia, Russia did not want Ter-Petrosian to win the presidential election of 2008. Indeed, Ter-Petrosian had made it clear in his speeches that he would revise Armenian relations with Russia. He declared that Armenian national security could be secured well by developing relations with all countries rather than an alliance with Russia.³³⁹ Moreover, Petrossian's thoughts regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict also pushed Russia to support Sargisian against him. The ambition of Ter-Petrosian to solve the conflict disturbed Russia that perceived the continuation of the conflict as a means to maintain

³³⁶ "Russia Takes Sides in Armenian Elections", 09 April 2007, online at http://www.kommersant.com/p757114/r_500/Armenia_elections/ (accessed on 24.11.2010)

³³⁷ "Moscow Signals Support for Armenian Power Handover", 16 April 2007, online at <http://theriseofrussia.blogspot.com/2009/02/vladimir-putin-tries-to-keep-armenia-as.html> (accessed on 24.11.2010)

³³⁸ "Does Moscow Back Armenia's Embattled Leaders?", *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 12 February 2008, online at http://www.pf-armenia.org/blogs/politics-and-international-relations/?tx_wecdiscussion%5Bsingle%5D=37 (accessed on 24.11.2010)

³³⁹ *Ibid.*

its influence in the region.³⁴⁰ Accordingly, Russia by supporting Sargisian who had an uncompromising attitude towards the conflict, aimed to make the conflict unsettled, which would ensure the continuity of Russian influence in the South Caucasus.

In addition, in the 2000s, Armenian government sought to get Russia's support for maintaining its rule. The visit of Kocharian just before the presidential election of February 2003 was an example of this seeks.³⁴¹ Moreover, after elected as president of Armenia in 2008, Sargisian made his first foreign visit to Russia. During his meetings with newly elected Russian President Medvedev and incoming Prime Minister Putin, Sargisian thanked for Russia's support of Armenian government in coping with political turmoil during and after the presidential election. He stated that Armenian government felt Russia's support throughout the election process. He emphasized his willingness and determination to develop further relations. In turn, Medvedev stated that "This is your first visit after the elections, and, of course, we see special symbolism in this fact." In addition, Putin added that "No matter how the internal political process in Armenia unfolds, what has been built in the past years in relations between the Russian Federation and Armenia will be maintained and will develop in the future."³⁴²

Russia did not confronted by any resistance by Armenian government while meddling with domestic politics of this country. The main factor that kept away Armenian government from opposing Russian interferences was the country's dependence on Russia. This dependence was not only in security-military fields but also in economic field, especially in energy sector. Indeed, without Russian support in the mentioned

³⁴⁰ "Armenia: Russia's Strengthening Hand," 19 February 2008, online at http://www.stratfor.com/analysis/armenia_russias_strengthening_hand (accessed on 24.11.2010)

³⁴¹ Kamer Kasım, *Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Kafkasya*, p.51

³⁴² Sergei Blagov, "Armenia Seeks Stronger Ties With Russia", *Eurasia Insight*, 26 March 2008, online at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav032708a.shtml> (accessed on 24.11.2010)

fields, it was difficult for Armenian government to maintain its rule. Thus, Armenian government gave great importance to get Russian support for maintaining their rule.³⁴³

On the other hand, Armenian opposition parties did not welcome Russian meddling with Armenia's domestic politics. During the presidential election of February 2003, they condemned Kocharian to sell strategic assets of the country to Russia to get its support in the election.³⁴⁴ During this election process, for the first time, pro-Western ideas and sentiments were voiced strongly in the country. In the course of time, the number of voices supporting pro-Western orientation increased in Armenian public and political life. During Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's visit to Yerevan in 2005, representatives of some opposition parties asserted that Armenia needed to readjust its foreign policy towards the West.³⁴⁵ Armenian opposition who were against increasing Russian influence in the country viewed both Kocharian and Sargsian as Russia's men in Armenia.³⁴⁶

4.4. Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict and Russia

Nagorno-Karabakh has special meaning for both Armenians and Azerbaijanis who identify themselves as the origin settlers of it. Both nations assert that there are cultural links between the region and their national identities.³⁴⁷ Regarding Armenians' perception of this land, it could be stated that Armenians see this land as their cultural

³⁴³ Kim Iskyan, "Armenia in Russia's Embrace, Big Bad Pariah", *Moscow Times*, 24 March 2004, <http://www.strategypage.com/militaryforums/47-885.aspx> (accessed on 24.11.2010)

³⁴⁴ Mirzoyan, *op.cit.*, p.81

³⁴⁵ Aris Ghazinyan, "From Russia With Love?: Foreign Minister's Visit An Opportunity For Assessment", 19 February 2005, <http://www.armeniandiaspora.com/showthread.php?18759-ArmeniaNow> (accessed on 24.11.2010)

³⁴⁶ Mirzoyan, *op.cit.*, p.83

³⁴⁷ Goldenberg, *op.cit.*, p.156

centre symbolizing their national unity.³⁴⁸ It could be stated that the roots of the conflict lie in Soviet's "divide and rule" policies. The Soviet Union, for controlling the nationalist ambitions of the republics, drew the borders of the republics across ethnic lines. In line with these policies, Nagorno-Karabakh that had a large Armenian population was kept under Azerbaijan's sovereignty in 1920's.³⁴⁹

As expected, Armenia and Azerbaijan have completely different attitudes towards the conflict. Azerbaijan emphasizes that it is against the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh or unification of this region with Armenia. Azerbaijanis authorities declare that the recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh by Armenia will trigger a war in the region. Instead, they state that they are ready to give more autonomy to this region.³⁵⁰ Moreover, according to Azerbaijanis, Russia supports Armenians against them in the conflict. They asserted that Russia uses the conflict to maintain its influence on the region.³⁵¹

On the other hand, Armenian authorities have different views regarding the conflict. They assert that an independent status should be given to Nagorno-Karabakh or this region should be united with Armenia.³⁵² In the National Security Strategy of Armenia, the conflict is identified as the key national problem and Armenia is described as the guarantor of the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh. In addition, it is stated that the

³⁴⁸ Ceylan Tokluoglu (2011): "The Political Discourse of the Azerbaijani Elite on the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict (1991—2009)", *Europe-Asia Studies*, 63:7, p.1234, online at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2011.592272> (accessed on 30.08.2011)

³⁴⁹ "Azerbaijan (Armenians), Minorities at Risk", (Princeton: University of Maryland, Political Asylum Research and Documentation Service), p.11, online at [http://pards.org/2005/Azerbaijan\(Armenians\)AtRisk.doc](http://pards.org/2005/Azerbaijan(Armenians)AtRisk.doc) (accessed on 20.09.2010)

³⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p.10

³⁵¹ Ceylan Tokluoglu (2011): "The Political Discourse of the Azerbaijani Elite on the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict (1991—2009)", *Europe-Asia Studies*, 63:7, p.1244, online at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2011.592272> (accessed on 30.08.2011)

³⁵² Migdalovitz, *op.cit.*, p.9

Nagorno-Karabakh's authority should approve any final solution regarding the conflict and there must be a territorial connection between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh.³⁵³ Moreover, in the military doctrine of Armenia, the conflict is identified as one of the serious external threats. In this context, Azerbaijan's endeavors to establish stronger armed forces and its aspiration to solve the conflict militarily are identified as main external military threats.³⁵⁴

The negative effect of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on Armenia has been enormous. The conflict has deteriorated Armenia's relations with both Azerbaijan and Turkey.³⁵⁵ Due to this conflict, Armenia was excluded from regional economic projects and had to spend large amounts of money to establish a strong army.³⁵⁶

Up to now, international organizations and countries including Russia devised a number of peace plans to settle the conflict. In the first years of the post-Soviet era, Russia competed with the West to become the chief mediator in the conflict. Later on, in 1994, it compromised with the West and agreed on to be co-chair of the OSCE's Minsk Group. In 1997, it became a permanent co-chair of the mentioned group together with the USA and France.³⁵⁷

³⁵³ "National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia", online at <http://www.mil.am/1297157753> (accessed on 24.11.2010)

³⁵⁴ "The Military Doctrine of the Republic Of Armenia", online at <http://armenianmilitary.com/?p=81> (accessed on 24.11.2010)

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.130

³⁵⁶ Armen Grigorian, "The EU and the Karabakh Conflict, in The South Caucasus: A Challenge for the EU", *Chaillot papers*, No: 65, December 2003, p.131, online at <http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/cp065e.pdf>, (accessed on 24.11.2010)

³⁵⁷ Emil Sanamyan, "Russia Brokers Armenia-Azerbaijan Commitment to 'A Political Settlement,' More Talks", 02 November 2008, online at <http://www.reporter.am/go/article/2008-11-02-russia-brokers-armenia-azerbaijan-commitment-to--a-political-settlement--more-talks> (accessed on 24.11.2010)

With Putin's presidency, Russia intensified its efforts to settle the conflict. In this context, Russian officials frequently visited the conflict sides³⁵⁸ and declared that they supported a political settlement of the conflict within the format of the Minsk Group.³⁵⁹ In his visit to Armenia in September 2001, Putin declared that Russia was ready to act as a mediator in the conflict and stated that they would support any settlement that would be constituted by the conflict sides. He also expressed Russia's desire to be the guarantor of a possible solution in the conflict. He stated, "Russia will support any solution acceptable to both states (Armenia and Azerbaijan) and is ready to act as its guarantor."³⁶⁰ Despite its official policy regarding the conflict that could be summarized as a balanced policy, Russian attitude towards the conflict has evolved in parallel with its national interests.³⁶¹

Moreover, the efforts of the OSCE for settling the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict also gained momentum in the 2000s: A harmony was established among the members of the OSCE's Minsk Group to settle the conflict. As a result of the intensive efforts of the Minsk Group, high-level meeting at Key West, US was held in April 2001.³⁶² In the following period, in the framework of the Minsk Group's initiatives, some documents were released and submitted to the conflict sides. In June 2006, after the Prague summit a document known as "the Prague Document" and in November 2007 after the Madrid summit a document called "the Madrid Principles" were submitted to sides. "The

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.7

³⁵⁹ "Armenia FM to Discuss Wider Cooperation with Russia", 12 July 2007, online at <http://forum.hyeclub.com/showthread.php/8071-The-Rise-of-the-Russian-Empire-Russo-Armenian-Relations/page57> (accessed on 24.11.2010)

³⁶⁰ Emil Danielyan, "Russia, Armenia See Closer Ties After Summit", 15 September 2001, online at <http://www.azatutyun.am/content/article/1567024.html> (accessed on 24.11.2010)

³⁶¹ Oktay F.Tanrısever, "Rusya Federasyonu'nun Orta Asya-Kafkasya Politikası" in *Küresel Politikada Orta Asya*, ed. Mustafa Aydın, (Ankara: Nobel Publications, 2005), p.54

³⁶² Domitilla Sagramoso, "The UN, the OSCE and NATO", in *Chaillot Papers*. No:65, *The South Caucasus: a Challenge for the EU*, ed. Dov Lynch, (EU: Institute for Security Studies, December 2003), p.75 online at <http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/cp065e.pdf> (accessed on 15.09.2010)

Madrid Principles” stipulated the withdrawal of Armenian forces from Azerbaijan territories, the normalization of relations between the conflict sides, deployment of peace-keepers in the conflict region and determination of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh in future by referendum.³⁶³

Russia’s efforts in the conflict settlement process gained momentum after the Russian-Georgian war in August 2008. As a result of Russia’s mediation, the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan met in Moscow on November 2, 2008. After the meeting, the leaders signed a joint declaration in which they pledged to reach a settlement in the course of the negotiations of Minsk Group. In fact, the meeting did not end up with a great progress in the peace process. Instead, it re-emphasized that political efforts would continue to settle the conflict. Moreover, the declaration did not include any contentious issues and written painstakingly to avoid false interpretations that as if some concessions were given to either side. It can be stated that Russia that wanted to have the leaders sign a joint declaration, did not put any controversial statements in the declaration. After all, the declaration was a historical one, because before this declaration the leaders of the conflict sides signed only two declarations that were made in 1991 and 1992.³⁶⁴ In the following period, Russia continued its efforts to settle the conflict. Owing to Russia’s arbitration, the sides of the conflict met at times to negotiate on the conflict. It can be assessed that Russia by organizing these meetings aimed to strengthen its influence on the conflict sides.

Armenia has been pleased with Russia’s efforts about the settlement of the conflict. In his speech in June 2010, Armenian Foreign Minister Nalbandyan stated that they were grateful to Russia for its positive role in the peace process. He particularly emphasized

³⁶³ Tatu, Hakobyan, “Russia’s President, in Yerevan, Sees Quick Action on Nagorno Karabakh”, 25 October 2008, online at <http://www.reporter.am/index.cfm?objectid=2E7D2047-3FF3-752C-2EFABEB2CC3D0E97> (accessed on 24.11.2010)

³⁶⁴ Emil Sanamyan, “Russia Brokers Armenia-Azerbaijan Commitment to a Political Settlement, More Talks”, 02 November 2008, online at <http://www.reporter.am/go/article/2008-11-02-russia-brokers-armenia-azerbaijan-commitment-to--a-political-settlement--more-talks> (accessed on 24.11.2010)

Russian President Medvedev's efforts related with the settlement of the conflict. He mentioned that;

Russia's President Dmitry Medvedev applies great efforts to contribute to the sides to settle the issue. Due to his efforts Armenian and Azerbaijani Presidents have had several important meetings... Russia has declared it's impossible to have any pressure upon the sides and that the sides should settle their conflicts.³⁶⁵

According to many political analysts, despite Russian officials' declarations about supporting the settlement of conflict, the conflict serves the interests of Russia.³⁶⁶ They assert that if the conflict is resolved, then Russian influence will decrease in the region. Particularly, a settlement may reduce Armenia's dependence on Russia's military power. Furthermore, it may reduce Armenia's dependence on Russia's energy supplies because in that case Armenia may import Azerbaijan's energy supplies.³⁶⁷ Moreover, Russia believes that a resolution in the conflict will probably give rise to a situation in which the relations between the regional countries and the West become stronger.³⁶⁸ Russia also manipulates the conflict to sell weapons to the conflict sides.³⁶⁹ Thus, it can be assessed that Russia is against settlement of the conflict.

³⁶⁵ Edward Nalbandyan, "Armenian-Russian Ties Verified By Time", 21 June 2010, online at <http://www.panorama.am/en/politics/2010/06/21/nezavisimaya-gazeta/> (accessed on 24.11.2010)

³⁶⁶ "Russia: Trying To Maintain a Balance in the Caucasus", 24 November 2009, online at http://www.stratfor.com/analysis/20091124_russia_trying_maintain_balance_caucasus (accessed on 24.11.2010)

³⁶⁷ Emil Danielyan , "Russia Takes Initiative In International Push For Karabakh Peace", 28 October 2008, online at <http://www.armeniandiaspora.com/showthread.php?148951-Russia-Takes-Initiative-In-International-Push-For-Karabakh-Peace> (accessed on 24.11.2010)

³⁶⁸ Nicola Morfini, "The Nagorno Karabakh Crisis and the (Re-)Emergence of Russian Power in the Southern Caucasus", 31 July 2010, online at <http://www.turkishweekly.net/op-ed/2733/the-nagorno-karabakh-crisis-and-the-re-emergence-of-russian-power-in-the-southern-caucasus-.html> (accessed on 24.11.2010)

³⁶⁹ Ariel Cohen, "Reset the Russian Reset Policy", 10 August 2010, online at <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704164904575420983022047918.html> (accessed on 24.11.2010)

Manifesting itself as the leading mediator capable of solving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Russia tried to strengthen its influence not only on Armenia but also on Azerbaijan.³⁷⁰ Indeed, one of the leading aims of Russia in keeping the conflict “frozen” was to get Azerbaijan under its control. Since, the growing relations between the West and Azerbaijan that has a strategic location in Caucasus and substantial amount of hydrocarbon reserves disturbed Russia.³⁷¹ Accordingly, Russia used the conflict as a leverage to hinder Azerbaijan from making new energy agreements with the West, since such agreements would undermine Russia’s strong position in the world energy supply.³⁷²

Moreover, Azerbaijan that was determined to settle the conflict increased its military spending³⁷³ owing to its increasing revenues from the BTC oil pipeline that started to operate in 2006.³⁷⁴ Azerbaijan repeatedly declared that if Armenia did not withdraw its troops from Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding territories then a war was unavoidable.³⁷⁵

4.5. Russia's Attitude towards Armenian-Turkish Relations

As stated in the National Security Strategy of Armenia, there is no diplomatic relations between Armenia and Turkey. In addition, due to ongoing economic blockade of

³⁷⁰ Kamer Kasım, *Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Kafkasya*, p.127

³⁷¹ Vasili Rukhadze, “Russia’s Geopolitical Counter-Offensive in the Former Soviet Union”, 30 May 2007, online at http://www.gab-ibn.com/IMG/pdf/Ru6-_Russia_s_Geopolitical_Counter_Offensive_In_The_Former_Soviet_Union.pdf (accessed on 24.11.2010)

³⁷² Tornike Sharashenidze, “Russia and Other Big Players in the South Caucasus”, 20 November 2009, online at <http://eng.girs.org.ge/index.php?newsid=34> (accessed on 23.09.2010)

³⁷³ Abushov, *op.cit.*, p.209

³⁷⁴ “Armenia, Azerbaijan: Russia, the West and Nagorno-Karabakh”, 05 March 2008, online at http://www.stratfor.com/memberships/112286/analysis/armenia_azerbaijan_russia_west_and_nagorno_karabakh (accessed on 24.11.2010)

³⁷⁵ Minassian, *op.cit.*, p.13

Turkey, Armenian economy has suffered great problems.³⁷⁶ In fact, the tense relations between the two countries have a historical background. Armenia regards Turkey as one of the serious threats to its national existence. The “1915 events” played a great role in this perception. The war on Nagorno-Karabakh also deteriorated Armenian-Turkish relations.

Up to now, Armenia that has been suffering from economic problems has endeavored to lift the economic blockade of Turkey. In this context, it sought international support including Russia’s. During his meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov in Yerevan in February 2005, Armenian President Kocharian expressed his hopes that Russia would continue its efforts to lift the economic blockade of Turkey. In response, Lavrov expressed Russia’s readiness to do so.³⁷⁷

Russia’s attitude towards Armenia-Turkey relationships has evolved since the dissolution of the Soviet regime. In the 1990s, Russia perceived the strained relations between Turkey and Armenia as beneficial for its interests in the region. It manipulated the so-called Turkish threat to strengthen its influence on Armenia. However, from the beginning of the 2000s, Russia’s perception of Turkey started to change. Russian President Putin’s pragmatic foreign policy was one of the leading factors that led to the mentioned perception change. In this period, Russia gave up perceiving Turkey as a strong rival; instead it started to perceive Turkey as a regional competitor even a co-operator. This perception change pushed Russia to make an effort for normalizing relations between Turkey and Armenia. In line with this effort, Putin declared in

³⁷⁶ “National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia”, online at <http://www.mil.am/1297157753> (accessed on 28.11.2010)

³⁷⁷ “Russian FM Discusses Ties, Karabakh In Armenia”, 18 February 2005, online at <http://www.turkishweekly.net/news/4949/russian-fm-discusses--ties-karabakh-in-armenia.html> (accessed on 28.11.2010)

January 2005 that Russia was ready to act as a mediator to normalize Turkish-Armenian relations.³⁷⁸

The August 2008 war between Russia and Georgia that disrupted the Georgian transportation route between Armenia and Russia increased the importance of Turkish route for both Armenia and Russia. Furthermore, given that it's developing relations with Turkey, Russia perceived the normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia as a way of increasing its influence in the region.³⁷⁹ Besides, in the post war period, Russia gave much importance to the mentioned normalization to deepen the isolation of Georgia in the region.³⁸⁰ Thus, it can be stated that political and economic considerations pushed Russia to involve much in the normalization process of Turkish-Armenian relations.

The mentioned Russia's involvement together with the USA and the EU's efforts played a great role in achievement of "Zurich Protocol" in August 2009. By signing the protocol, both Turkey and Armenia pledged to take some steps to normalize relations.³⁸¹ However, the process did not proceed successfully. In the beginning of 2010, Armenia declared that it suspended the approval of the protocols. Commenting on this development, Russian Foreign Ministry's spokesman Andrei Nesterenko stated that Armenia did not withdraw from the protocols but only suspended the ratification of them, so the prospect of normalizing relations between Turkey and Armenia was

³⁷⁸ Ömer Kocaman, "Rusya'nın Ermenistan Politikası: Tek Boyutlu Siyasetten Çok Boyutlu Siyasete Doğru", 18 February 2006, online at <http://www.turksam.org/tr/a797.html> (accessed on 28.11.2010)

³⁷⁹ David Davidian, "Turkish-Armenian Protocols: Reality and Irrationality", 01 October 2009, online at <http://www.armenianweekly.com/2009/10/01/davidian-turkish-armenian-protocols-reality-and-irrationality/> (accessed on 28.11.2010)

³⁸⁰ Richard Giragosian, "Regional Developments And Armenian National Security", 12 January 2009, online at http://www.noravank.am/eng/articles/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=3480 (accessed on 28.11.2010)

³⁸¹ David Davidian, "Turkish-Armenian Protocols: Reality and Irrationality", 01 October 2009, online at <http://www.armenianweekly.com/2009/10/01/davidian-turkish-armenian-protocols-reality-and-irrationality/> (accessed on 28.11.2010)

preserved. He also added that the restoration of relations between the two states would make stronger the stability of the region and positively affect the political atmosphere of the region. Furthermore, he stated that Russia hoped that the sides would be able to cope with the deadlock and then re-establish diplomatic relations.³⁸² Russian Foreign Ministry official Andrey Kudrin also stated that they supported the process and added that they hoped that the normalization of the relations would contribute to the security of the region.³⁸³

Moreover, in February 2010, the director of the Caucasus Institute Alexander Iskandaryan claimed that Russia would take a great role in the normalization process of Turkish-Armenian relations. He stated that Russia's growing cooperation with Turkey pushed it to concern much with the issue. He even asserted that without Russia's support, the mentioned process could not go forward.³⁸⁴ On the other hand, Firat Purtaş asserts that if Armenia does not give up its allegations against Turkey regarding the "1915 events" and does not reach a peaceful settlement with Azerbaijan on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations is nearly impossible.³⁸⁵

Given that Russian politicians' declarations concerning the normalization process of Turkish-Armenian relations, it can be concluded that Russia supports the process, at least in theory. However, most probably the reality is different: The stalemate in the normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations helps Russia to maintain its influence in the region. In other words, Russia regards the continuation of the stalemate in

³⁸² "Russia Comments on Armenia's Decision To Suspend Ratification Of Zurich Protocols", 23 April 2010, online at <http://en.apa.az/news.php?id=120742> (accessed on 28.11.2010)

³⁸³ "Russian Foreign Ministry: Normalization of Armenia-Turkey Relations Should not be Irritable Process", 22 June 2009, online at <http://en.apa.az/news.php?id=104126> (accessed on 28.11.2010)

³⁸⁴ Alexander Iskandaryan, "Russia's Role in Armenian-Turkish Process to Grow, Expert", 10 February 2010, online at <http://www.news.az/articles/armenia/8738> (accessed on 28.11.2010)

³⁸⁵ Firat Purtaş, *Rusya Federasyonu Ekseninde Bağımsız Devletler Topluluğu*, (Ankara: Platin Publications, 2005), p.237

Armenian-Turkish relations as beneficial for its national interests, since it believes that if the mentioned stalemate is resolved, then its influence in the region will weaken.

4.6. Disturbance of Armenia with Growing Russian-Azerbaijanis Relations

In the 1990s, Azerbaijan by signing the BTC oil pipeline agreement with the Western energy companies had undermined Russia's interests towards the Caspian hydro-carbon reserves.³⁸⁶ Azerbaijan aimed to increase its independence level from Russia by signing the agreement. Owing to the BTC, Azerbaijan would not be dependent of Russian pipeline networks.³⁸⁷ In the 2000s, Russia aiming to maximize its national interests in the South Caucasus endeavored to improve its relations with Azerbaijan that has rich hydrocarbon reserves. In the course of time, Russian-Azerbaijanis relations improved owing to Russia's attempts. As expected, Armenia that perceived security threat from Azerbaijan was disturbed by growing relations between Russia and Azerbaijan, since it feared that Russia might change its attitude towards the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in favor of Azerbaijan.

The main goal of Russia in improving its relations with Azerbaijan was preventing this country from establishing strong relations with the West. In particular, Azerbaijan's hydrocarbon reserves magnetized Russia that followed a pragmatic foreign policy towards the region.³⁸⁸ Furthermore, the two countries have a common border, control of which is vitally important for Russia's security.³⁸⁹ In his term Putin, for preventing growing Western (the USA) influence in the South Caucasus, tried to improve Russia's

³⁸⁶ Fırat Purtaş, "Hazar Bölgesinde Rekabetin Yeni Boyutu: Silahlanma Yarışı", 01 October 2004, online at <http://turksam.org/tr/a21.html> (accessed on 28.08.2011)

³⁸⁷ Oktay F. Tanrısever, "Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict and Regional Stability in the Caspian Basin", 2009, p.4, online at <http://www.eu4seas.eu> (accessed on 28.08.2011)

³⁸⁸ Lika Ertobeli, "Peculiarities of Russian-Armenian Relations", 03 August 2009, online at <http://eng.girs.org.ge/index.php?newsid=27> (accessed on 28.11.2010)

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

relations with Azerbaijan.³⁹⁰ During his visit to Azerbaijan in January 2001, the two countries signed an agreement on relations that called as “Baku Declaration”. The agreement that had 10 years term envisaged improving relations including military cooperation.³⁹¹ In this visit, the two countries also settled the dispute regarding the division of the Caspian Sea.³⁹² According to Firat Purtaş, this visit opened a new page in Russia’s policy towards the South Caucasus.³⁹³ In the subsequent period, the two countries settled some other disputes and took steps to enhance cooperation in various fields: Russia ended its opposition to BTC project and Azerbaijan agreed to lease its Gabala radar station to Russia. Furthermore, in response to Russia’s demands, Azerbaijan took measures to prevent Chechen insurgents’ infiltration from Azerbaijan to Russia.³⁹⁴

Besides, during a meeting in Baku in February 2006, Putin and his Azeri counterpart Ilham Aliyev declared that they sought to enhance military-technical cooperation. In this meeting, it became clear that Russia would supply weapons to Azerbaijan on a commercial basis.³⁹⁵ According to some reports, in 2007, Azerbaijan purchased some tanks from Russia. This sale was important because the last military sale deal between the two countries was signed in the 1990s.³⁹⁶ Commenting on the claim that Russia sold

³⁹⁰ Mirzoyan, *op.cit.*, p.73

³⁹¹ Richard Giragosian, “Political Chronology, The South Caucasus: A Chronological Summary of Key events Since Independence, 1991-2004”, online at <http://arisc.org/resources/chronology/political#1991> (accessed on 30.11.2010)

³⁹² Mirzoyan, *op.cit.*, p.75

³⁹³ Firat Purtaş, *Rusya Federasyonu Ekseninde Bağımsız Devletler Topluluğu*, (Ankara: Platin Publications, 2005), p.231

³⁹⁴ Migdalovitz, *op.cit.*, p.14

³⁹⁵ “Armenian Army Chief Untroubled By Russian-Azeri Military Ties”, 23 February 2006, online at <http://www.armtown.com/news/en/rfe/20060223/20060223/> (accessed on 30.11.2010)

³⁹⁶ Tatul Hakobyan, “Russia’s President, in Yerevan, Sees Quick Action on Nagorno Karabakh”, 25 October 2008, online at <http://www.reporter.am/index.cfm?objectid=2E7D2047-3FF3-752C-2EFABEB2CC3D0E97> (accessed on 24.11.2010)

weapons to Azerbaijan, Russian Defense Minister Sergey Ivanov stated that Russia did not sell weaponry that could shift the balance of powers in the region. He also added that arms trade was a legal dealing and there was no barrier in front of a possible arms sale between Russia and Azerbaijan.³⁹⁷

Russia's endeavor to improve its relations with Azerbaijan continued during Russian President Dmitry Medvedev's presidency. Russia that aimed to become the major worldwide energy supplier gave great importance to control the Caspian hydrocarbon reserves. In this context, Russia signed an agreement with Azerbaijan to purchase a part of Azeri gas supplies.³⁹⁸ In his visit to Baku in July 2008, Medvedev identified Azerbaijan as the strategic partner of Russia in the region and expressed Russia's aspiration for developing its relations with this country. In this visit, the two countries signed a "Declaration of Friendship and Strategic Partnership".³⁹⁹ In the declaration, both sides stated that they support a settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict that would meet the terms of the principle of "territorial integrity". Moreover, both sides also declared that they would strive for developing military cooperation.⁴⁰⁰

Growing relations between Russia and Azerbaijan brought about great uneasiness in Armenia, because Armenia believed that these relations grew at the expense of Russian-

³⁹⁷ "The Russian Military Bases Are Allocated In Armenia At Our Request", 26 January 2006, online at <http://www.a1plus.am/en/print/politics/2006/01/26/4440> (accessed on 30.11.2010)

³⁹⁸ Nicola Morfini, "The Nagorno Karabakh Crisis and the (Re-)Emergence of Russian Power in the Southern Caucasus", 31 July 2010, online at <http://www.turkishweekly.net/op-ed/2733/the-nagorno-karabakh-crisis-and-the-re-emergence-of-russian-power-in-the-southern-caucasus-.html> (accessed on 30.11.2010)

³⁹⁹ Lika Ertobeli, "Peculiarities of Russian-Armenian Relations", 03 August 2009, online at <http://eng.girs.org.ge/index.php?newsid=27> (accessed on 30.11.2010)

⁴⁰⁰ Tatul Hakobyan, "Russia's President, in Yerevan, Sees Quick Action on Nagorno Karabakh", 25 October 2008, online at <http://www.reporter.am/index.cfm?objectid=2E7D2047-3FF3-752C-2EFABEB2CC3D0E97> (accessed on 24.11.2010)

Armenian relations.⁴⁰¹ Armenia feared that Russia might change its attitude towards the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in favor of Azerbaijan. Thus, any high-ranking visits between Russia and Azerbaijan gave rise to speculations that Russia's position in the conflict might change in favor of Azerbaijan.⁴⁰² In addition, in the mid-the 2000s, when it was reported that Russia planned to build a railroad that would connect Iran with Russia through Azerbaijan, Armenian media criticized Russia for the mentioned plan. Furthermore, Armenian media also criticized Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov's visit in 2005 to Baku's Martyr's Avenue, a memorial of Azerbaijanis, who were killed during the Soviet military intervention to the ethnic clashes that occurred between Azerbaijanis and Armenians in 1990.⁴⁰³

Armenia was also disturbed by the claim of Russian press in the summer of 2010 that Russia had sold S-300 air defense systems to Azerbaijan.⁴⁰⁴ Despite Russia's denial of the claim, Armenian authorities asserted that the alleged sale would change the balance of powers in favor of Azerbaijan. Moreover, they stated that they perceived the sale as Russia's betrayal to them. The main factor that made Armenia worried about the alleged sale was that the S-300 systems could enable Azerbaijan to protect its key energy complexes in the event of a new war with Armenia.⁴⁰⁵ According to some political analysts, it was this arms sale that made Azerbaijan not to react fiercely to the military

⁴⁰¹ Samvel Martirosyan, "Armenian-Russian Relations Face Uncertain Times", 23 February 2005, online at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav022405.shtml> (accessed on 30.11.2010)

⁴⁰² Lika Ertobeli, "Peculiarities of Russian-Armenian relations", 03 August 2009, online at <http://eng.girs.org.ge/index.php?newsid=27> (accessed on 30.11.2010)

⁴⁰³ Samvel Martirosyan, "Armenian-Russian Relations Face Uncertain Times", 23 February 2005, online at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav022405.shtml> (accessed on 30.11.2010)

⁴⁰⁴ Ariel Cohen, "Reset the Russian Reset Policy", 10 August 2010, online at <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704164904575420983022047918.html> (accessed on 30.11.2010)

⁴⁰⁵ Emil Danielyan, "Closer Military Ties With Armenia To Boost Russia's Regional Clout", 12 August 2010, online at http://www.rferl.org/content/Closer_Military_Ties_With_Armenia_To_Boost_Russias_Regional_Clout/2126126.html (accessed on 30.11.2010)

agreement of August 2010 between Armenia and Russia⁴⁰⁶ that was examined in the previous chapter.

In conclusion, in the 2000s, both Russia and Armenia gave great importance to maintain close diplomatic relations. During this period, Russia was not only deeply interested in Armenian problems with Turkey and Azerbaijan but also tried to be an influential actor on Armenian domestic politics. Moreover, for maximizing its national interest, it also took steps to improve its relations with Azerbaijan that was perceived by Armenia as the greatest foreign threat. As expected, the growing Russian-Azerbaijan relations disturbed Armenia, since Armenia feared that Russia might change its position regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in favor of Azerbaijan.

As well, in this decade, despite having close relations with Russia, for maximizing its national interests, Armenia diversified its foreign policy. In the course of time, it succeeded in improving its relations with the Western states and Western political-security organizations. Regardless of Russian authorities' statements that Russia was not against close relations between Armenia and the West, it can be assessed that the enhanced security cooperation between Armenia and the West disturbed Russia that perceived growing Western influence on the former Soviet region as a major threat to its national security. The next chapter will be focusing on the evolution of economic and social relations between Armenia and Russia in the 2000s.

⁴⁰⁶ Ariel Cohen, "Reset the Russian Reset Policy", 10 August 2010, online at <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704164904575420983022047918.html> (accessed on 30.11.2010)

CHAPTER 5

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN ARMENIA AND RUSSIA IN THE 2000s

In this chapter, economic and social relations between Armenia and Russia in the 2000s will be analyzed. The chapter begins with discussing Russian growing influence on Armenian economy and continues with examining bilateral trade relations. Afterwards, reaction of Armenia to Russian growing economic influence on Armenian economy and its struggle to decrease its dependency on Russian energy supplies will be discussed. In the last section of this chapter, bilateral social and cultural relations will be examined.

5.1. Russian Growing Influence on Armenian Economy

In the 2000s, Armenian-Russian economic relations improved and in line with this improvement Russian influence on Armenian economy strengthened. These developments were closely related with Russia's general strategy of keeping the former Soviet region under its control.

With Putin's presidency, Russian foreign policy towards the former Soviet region became more assertive.⁴⁰⁷ Russia that aimed to make its position strong in international arena intensified its efforts for establishing stronger control on the former Soviet countries.⁴⁰⁸ Accordingly, it struggled to strengthen its influence on these countries not only in military but also in economic fields, since Russian authorities believed that if

⁴⁰⁷ Richard Giragosian, "Shifting Security in the South Caucasus," CONNECTIONS, 6(3) Fall 2007: 100-106., p.103, online at <http://www.pfpconsortium.org/file/2664/view> (accessed on 02.12.2010)

⁴⁰⁸ "National Security Concept of the Russian Federation", online at <http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/gazeta012400.htm> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

Russia wanted to strengthen its influence on these countries, then it had to dominate their economies. In this context, they tried hard to control strategic sectors of these countries' economies.⁴⁰⁹ Accordingly, they prompted Russian companies to invest in these countries. In other words, Russian government and Russian companies collaborated to accomplish the ultimate goal of the state: Strengthening Russia's influence on the former Soviet region.⁴¹⁰

In line with its abovementioned aims, Russia took steps for increasing its control on Armenian economy.⁴¹¹ Accordingly, it tried to acquire ownership or management of strategic sectors of Armenian economy. To do this, it mainly applied to property-for-debt swaps.⁴¹² In fact, Armenia's dependence on Russia's energy supplies and its incapacity to pay its debts for these supplies facilitated it for Russia to make these debt agreements. In this context, a number of such deals between were signed Russia and Armenia that transferred many Armenian strategic assets to Russian control.⁴¹³

It can be stated that a number of high level visits between Armenia and Russia at the beginning of the 2000s had a great role in creation of a suitable environment for growing Russian influence on Armenian economy. During Armenian President Kocharian's visit to Moscow in September 2000, the two countries showed their willingness to strengthen economic cooperation. In this visit, the leaders of the two countries, Kocharian and Putin signed a joint declaration in which they committed to

⁴⁰⁹ Jeronim Perovic, "From Disengagement to Active Economic Competition: Russia's Return to the South Caucasus and Central Asia", p.65-66 online at <http://www.demokratizatsiya.org/bin/pdf/DEM%2013-1%20Perovic.pdf>, (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴¹⁰ Abelyan, *op.cit.*, p.47

⁴¹¹ Kamer Kasım, *Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Kafkasya*, p.130

⁴¹² Vladimir Socor, "Armenia's Energy Sector, Other Industrial Assets Passing Under Russia's Control", *IASPS Policy Briefings: Oil in Geostrategic Perspective*, Date: November 13, 2002, Number: 5, online at <http://www.iasps.org/strategic/socor12.htm> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴¹³ Emil Danielyan, "Russia Tightens Grip on Armenia With Dept Agreements", 06 May 2003, online at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/business/articles/eav050703.shtml%20> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

develop economic cooperation.⁴¹⁴ Later on, during Putin's visit to Yerevan in September 2001, "The Treaty on Long-Term Economic Cooperation up to the Year 2010" was signed between the two countries.⁴¹⁵ Commenting on the agreement, both leaders stated that they hoped that the two economies would integrate with each other. Putin also asserted that Russia's involvement in Armenia's energy sector would contribute to Armenian economy. Moreover, in this visit, officials of Armenian Energy Ministry and Russian companies' managers agreed on establishing a special "coordinating council" for running energy projects in Armenia.⁴¹⁶

One of the factors that facilitated Russian growing influence on Armenian economy⁴¹⁷ was the uncertainty in the South Caucasus that discouraged Western companies to invest in Armenia. Without confronted by the Western companies, Russian companies that were supported by Russian government invested heavily in strategic sectors of Armenian economy.⁴¹⁸ They invested much in energy, banking, transportation and telecommunication sectors.⁴¹⁹ Russian investments in Armenia reached to \$2.8 billion at the end of 2010.⁴²⁰ This amount constitutes one third of the whole foreign investments

⁴¹⁴ Jafalian, *op.cit.*, p.2

⁴¹⁵ "Address by Russian President Vladimir Putin at Meeting with Representatives of Armenian Business Circles, Yerevan, Armenia", 15 September 2001 online at <http://www.ln.mid.ru/bl.nsf/5d5fc0348b8b2d26c3256def0051fa20/4a1bca117feaba6143256acc00330a53?OpenDocument> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴¹⁶ Emil Danielyan, "Russia, Armenia See Closer Ties After Summit", 15 September 2001, online at <http://www.azatutyun.am/content/article/1567024.html> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴¹⁷ Noyan Tapan, "Russia and Lebanon Make Largest Investments in Real Sector of Armenian Economy in 2007", 16 April 2007, online at http://www.gab-ibn.com/article.php3?id_article=405 (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴¹⁸ Abelyan, *op.cit.*, p.48

⁴¹⁹ Minassian, *op.cit.*, p.9

⁴²⁰ "Russian-Armenian Relations", 22 December 2010, online at <http://premier.gov.ru/eng/visits/ru/13494/info/13498/> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

to Armenia in the post-Soviet era.⁴²¹ In the 2000s, Russia was the chief economic partner of Armenia and the leading investor to Armenian economy.⁴²² In August 2010, Armenian Foreign Minister Nalbandian stated that Russian companies involved in about 1.400 business enterprises operating in Armenia.⁴²³ Moreover, in his meeting with Russian President Medvedev on 20 August 2010 in Yerevan, Armenian President Sargsyan stated that;

Russia is the main foreign investor in the Armenian economy, accounting for more than 60 percent of all foreign investment. Last year alone, Russia invested \$500 million in strategic sectors of our economy, in the energy sector, transport, and telecommunications. We are expecting a very solid investment package in the near future too. This includes the joint project to build a new unit at the Armenian nuclear power plant, and build new transport infrastructure, which has great importance for our entire region.

In turn, Medvedev stated that;

Russia is one of the biggest foreign investors in Armenia's economy, and our companies are present in practically all sectors of Armenian economic life. They are working in the energy sector, in banking, construction, communications and telecommunications. Most important of all is that this work not only guarantees that Armenia has reliable supplies of various energy resources, but that they work profitably too. Armenian industry, agriculture and social facilities all have stable energy supplies today. The President and I discussed today how to further develop this cooperation.⁴²⁴

Regarding Russian growing influence on Armenian economy; in November 2002, a "property-for-debt" agreement was signed between the two countries. According to the

⁴²¹ "Russian Investments in Armenia are Significant", 21 January 2008, online at <http://www.armtown.com/news/en/a1p/20080121/56526/> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴²² "Russia Remains the Leading Economic Partner of Armenia", 06 February 2008, online at <http://www.armradio.am/news/?part=eco&id=11820> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴²³ "Russian-Armenian Relations Exemplary for Post-Soviet Space-Minister", 18 August 2010, online at <http://english.ruvr.ru/2010/08/18/16232547.html> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴²⁴ "Joint News Conference Following Russian-Armenian Talks", 20 August 2010, online at <http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/810> (accessed on 16.08.2011)

agreement, Armenia's nearly \$98 million debt to Russia was wiped out in return for transfer of the ownership of five Armenian industrial plants to Russian companies.⁴²⁵ In March 2003, another "property-for-debt agreement was signed. In accordance with this deal, Russian state-run company Inter RAO Unified Energy Systems (UES) took management of Metsamor nuclear power plant for five years⁴²⁶ and agreed with Armenian government in 2008 to extend the deal for additional five years.⁴²⁷ The deal also transferred ownership of a cascade of six hydroelectric plants to UES. Furthermore, with this deal, UES obtained 80 percent of the Armenia's electricity sector.⁴²⁸

Moreover, in December 2003, Russian company UES took management of Armenia's biggest thermal power, Hrazdan. One month later, UES got possession of the plant as part of the debt agreement and continued to operate it with newly established Hrazdan Energy Company.⁴²⁹ Afterwards, in April 2006, Gazprom and Armenian authorities signed a 25-year deal on energy cooperation. The deal granted Russia to build an oil refinery in Armenia near Iranian border and management right over the part of the Iran-Armenia gas pipeline that passes on Armenia's territory.⁴³⁰ Moreover, with this deal, ArmRosGazprom⁴³¹ acquired the right of constructing the mentioned part of this

⁴²⁵ Mirzoyan, *op.cit.*, p.79

⁴²⁶ Abelyan, *op.cit.*, p.50

⁴²⁷ "Russian-Armenian Uranium JV to Start Its Work in Oct-Nov 2008", 09 September 2008, online at http://www.minatom.ru/en/news/11716_09.09.2008 (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴²⁸ Abelyan, *op.cit.*, p.50

⁴²⁹ "Russia Business Developing Positions in Armenia Economy", 24 September 2009, online at http://www.gab-ibn.com/IMG/pdf/Ru2-_Russia_Business_Developing_Positions_In_Armenia_Economy.pdf (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴³⁰ Minassian, *op.cit.*, p.8

⁴³¹ ArmRosGazprom is a joint venture of Armenian Energy Ministry, Russian Gasprom and Itera companies. It has been the sole gas distributor in Armenian domestic market. Gasprom has the majority stake with 57.79 percent in this enterprise. Itera group holds 7.71 percent of stocks and the rest belongs to Armenian government. For more information look to http://www.gab-ibn.com/IMG/pdf/Ru2-_Russia_Business_Developing_Positions_In_Armenia_Economy.pdf (accessed on 15.03.2011)

pipeline.⁴³² In addition, Russia increased gas price from \$56 to \$110 for a thousand cubic meters and committed that it would not increase the price till 2009.⁴³³

In mining sector, in 2000, Russian-Armenian joint venture Armenal took the control of Kanaker Aluminum Plant in Yeravan. In December 2002, Russian Aluminum Company RusAl purchased the whole shares of this plant⁴³⁴. In February 2007, it was reported that Armenian government had decided to transfer the management of largest gold mines to Russian mining companies.⁴³⁵ In April 2007, the head of Rosatom Sergey Kirienko signed an agreement with Armenian Prime Minister Serzh Sargisian for developing Armenia's unexploited uranium reserves in the southeastern Syunik region.⁴³⁶ Afterwards, in August 2007, Russian mining company Alrosa and Armenian government signed a deal on diamond processing.⁴³⁷

Furthermore, in September 2007, Russian mining company Madneuli Resources bought the Ararat Gold Recovery Company that was one of the biggest firms in Armenia's mining sector.⁴³⁸ Afterwards, in December 2007, Armenian Copper Programme signed a \$257 million loan agreement with Russian VTB Bank. The Head of Central Bank of

⁴³² Vladimir Socor, "Armenia Giveaways to Russia From Property For Debt To Property For Gas", 19 April 2006, online at http://www.gab-bn.com/pdf_avril-mai/Ar14%20-%20Armenia%20s%20Giveaways%20To%20Russia%20%20From%20Property%20For%20Debt%20To%20Property%20For%20Gas.pdf (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴³³ Minassian, *op.cit.*, p.8

⁴³⁴ "Russian Aluminum Giant Reopens Modernized Yerevan Plant", 26 February 2006, online at <http://www.armtown.com/news/en/rfe/20061026/200610261> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴³⁵ Emil Danielyan, "Russia Set to Expand Economic Presence in Armenia", 06 February 2007, online at http://www.gab-ibn.com/IMG/pdf/Ru1-_Russia_Set_To_Expand_Economic_Presence_In_Armenia.pdf (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴³⁶ "Russia To Look For Uranium In Armenia", 23 April 2007, online at <http://www.armtown.com/news/en/rfe/20070423/200704233> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴³⁷ "Russian Diamonds For Armenia", 09 August 2007, online at http://www.gab-ibn.com/IMG/pdf/Ar9-_Russian_Diamonds_For_Armenia.pdf (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴³⁸ Kelkitli, *op.cit.*, p.86

Armenia stated that it was the first case that Armenian private sector got such a large loan from abroad.⁴³⁹ Moreover, in July 2008, the two countries established a collective enterprise for mining and processing uranium in Armenia.⁴⁴⁰

In banking and insurance sector, in 2003, Russian insurance company Ingosstrakh purchased 75 percent of shares of Efes, Armenia's leading company in insurance sector.⁴⁴¹ In March 2004, Russian Vneshtorgbank (Foreign Trade Bank) purchased 70 percent of shares of Armenia's Savings Bank whose name became Vneshtorgbank Armenia.⁴⁴² Later on, in December 2007, Russian Gazprombank announced that it had purchased 80 percent of shares of Armenian Areximbank (Armenian-Russian Export-Import Bank). In the announcement, it was stated that growing Russian investments in Armenia played a great role in this purchase.⁴⁴³

In communication sector, in October 2006, Russian Comstar Telesystems Company purchased 75 percent of shares of Armenia's Telecommunications Company Callnet and its subsidiary company Internet service provider Cornet.⁴⁴⁴ Later on, in November 2006, Russian telecommunication company Vimpelcom purchased 90 percent of share of Armenian telephone company Armentel from Greek Telecommunications Company

⁴³⁹ "Russian VTB Bank and ACP Signed Loan Agreement at Sum of \$257mln", 08 December 2007, online at http://www.gab-ibn.com/IMG/pdf/Ar15-_Russian_VTB_Bank_and_ACP_signed_loan_agreement_at_sum_of_257mln.pdf (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁴⁰ "Russian-Armenian Uranium JV to Start Its Work in Oct-Nov 2008", 09 September 2008, online at http://www.minatom.ru/en/news/11716_09.09.2008 (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁴¹ Kelkitli, *op.cit.*, p.85

⁴⁴² Vladimir Socor, "Armenia Selling More Infrastructure, Industry to Russia", 07 November 2006, online at http://www.gab-ibn.com/IMG/pdf/Am7-_Armenia_Selling_More_Infrastructure_Industry_To_Russia.pdf (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁴³ "Gazprombank Acquired 80% of Areximbank's Shares", 02 December 2007, online at <http://www.banks.am/en-news-2-1730.html> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁴⁴ Vladimir Socor, "Armenia Selling More Infrastructure, Industry to Russia", 07 November 2006, online at http://www.gab-ibn.com/IMG/pdf/Am7-_Armenia_Selling_More_Infrastructure_Industry_To_Russia.pdf (accessed on 15.03.2011)

OTE.⁴⁴⁵ A few months later, Vimpelkom possessed the remaining shares of Armentel and by so became the sole owner of this company.⁴⁴⁶ In the following period, Vimpelkom invested tens of million dollars to modernize fixed-line and mobile phone networks of Armentel⁴⁴⁷ that controls nearly half of Armenia's mobile telephone market.⁴⁴⁸ In September 2007, Russian telecommunications company Mobile TeleSystems purchased 80 percent of share of Armenia's biggest company in mobile phone network, Vivacell.⁴⁴⁹

In transportation sector, in 2002, Russia's airline company Sibir owned Armenia's private airline company Armavia.⁴⁵⁰ In 2003, Sibir also acquired the majority shares of Armenian Airlines in return for the debt of the latter.⁴⁵¹ Moreover, in January 2008, Armenian government transferred management of the country's railway network to Russia's state-run rail company, RZD. Under the management of RZD, Armenia's railway network was renamed the South Caucasus Railway (SCR).⁴⁵² According to the contract, RZD would manage the railway for 30 years. Concerning the contract,

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁶ "Top Ten Economic Events in Armenia in 2007", 07 January 2007, online at <http://www.arka.am/eng/economy/2008/01/07/7619.html> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁴⁷ "Russian Owner Pledges More Investments In Armenian Phone Network", 07 April 2008, online at <http://www.armtown.com/news/en/rfe/20080407/200804073/> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁴⁸ Vladimir Socor, "Armenia Selling More Infrastructure, Industry to Russia", 07 November 2006, online at http://www.gab-ibn.com/IMG/pdf/Am7-_Armenia_Selling_More_Infrastructure_Industry_To_Russia.pdf (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁴⁹ "CIS/RUSSIA: Russian Business Tightens grip on CIS", *Oxford Analytica Daily Brief Service*. 06 May 2003

⁴⁵⁰ "CIS/RUSSIA: Russian Business Tightens Grip on CIS", *Oxford Analytica Daily Brief Service*. 06 May 2003

⁴⁵¹ Emil Danielyan, "Russia Tightens Grip on Armenia With Dept Agreements", 06 May 2003, online at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/business/articles/eav050703.shtml%20> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁵² Hovannes Shoghikian, "Russian Railway 'Not Honoring' Armenia Investment Pledges", 17 March 2009, online at <http://www.armtown.com/news/en/rfe/20090317/200903172/> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

Armenian Transport and Communications Minister Andranik Manukian asserted that the country's railway network was on the edge of collapse, so it had been a necessity to transfer its management to foreigners. He mentioned that;

Please understand that if we left the railway in the current state, we would have no train fleet a few years later. And you also know the state of rail tracks and other infrastructure. That is why I believe we are making a good deal.⁴⁵³

Moreover, in September 2002, Armenian government transferred the country's largest cement plant to Russian gas Export Company Itera in return for its dept.⁴⁵⁴ In April 2004, the Russian company Volgaburmash bought Armenia's largest chemical plant Nairit.⁴⁵⁵ In the following period, owing to investments, the factory started to work at full capacity and paid its debts and then made profit.⁴⁵⁶

Besides, Russia helped Armenia in its struggle to overcome global economic crisis. In this context, it provided financial assistance to Armenia. In February 2009, Armenian Finance Ministry announced that Russia agreed to give \$500 million loan to Armenia.⁴⁵⁷

5.2. Trade Relations between Armenia and Russia

According to data from Armenian National Statistical Service, Russia was the chief trade partner of Armenia in the 2000s. Nearly one-fourth of all Armenia's foreign trade

⁴⁵³ Shakeh Avoyan, "Russian Company Takes Over Armenian Railway", 16 January 2008, online at http://www.gab-ibn.com/IMG/pdf/Ar2-_Russian_Company_Takes_Over_Armenian_Railway.pdf (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁵⁴ Emil Danielyan, "Russia Tightens Grip on Armenia With Dept Agreements", 06 May 2003, online at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/business/articles/eav050703.shtml%20> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁵⁵ Kelkitli, *op.cit.*, p.86

⁴⁵⁶ ""Armenian Chemical Deal Ends in Tears", CRS 177, 21 Feb 2005, online at <http://iwpr.net/report-news/armenian-chemical-deal-ends-tears> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁵⁷ Emil Danielyan, "Armenian-Russian Loan Deal 'Finalized'", 10 February 2009, online at <http://www.azatutyun.am/content/article/1599759.html> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

was made with Russia in this period.⁴⁵⁸ Primary export items of Russia to Armenia were natural gas, nuclear fuel, industrial products and foodstuffs. Imports items of Russia from Armenia were precious stones, chemicals and alcoholic beverages.⁴⁵⁹

Trade relations between Armenia and Russia were weak in the 1990s. Due to the post-Soviet economic conditions, the dominant role of Russia on Armenian economy weakened. The crisis in Russian economy and arrival of new foreign players in the South Caucasus were among the factors that weakened economic relations between the two countries. As a result, volume of trade turnover between them remained relatively low.⁴⁶⁰ In the beginning of the 2000s, Russia's share in Armenia's foreign trade was about 15 percent⁴⁶¹ and trade turnover between them remained below \$300 million.⁴⁶²

In the course of time, with the development of economic relations between the two countries, trade turnover increased gradually.⁴⁶³ It reached to \$300 million in 2005⁴⁶⁴, \$500 million in 2006, \$800 million in 2007⁴⁶⁵ and \$1.070 million in 2008.⁴⁶⁶ However,

⁴⁵⁸ Russia Remains The Leading Economic Partner of Armenia, 06 February 2008, online at <http://www.armradio.am/news/?part=eco&id=11820> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁵⁹ Haroutiun Khachatryan, "Armenia-Russia Analysis: The Challenge of Economic Independence and the Risk of Reliance", 04 January 2006, online at http://www.agbu.org/publications/article.asp?A_ID=203 (accessed on 20.09.2010)

⁴⁶⁰ Abelyan, *op.cit.*, p.44

⁴⁶¹ Petros, *op.cit.*, p.6

⁴⁶² "Russian Foreign Trade with Armenia", online at <http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~chegeo/armenia.htm> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁴ "Armenian Cooperation with Russia", 26 March 2008, online at http://www.russia-ic.com/rus_international/in_depth/715/ (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁶⁵ Sergei Blagov, "Armenia Seeks Stronger Ties With Russia", *Eurasia Insight*, 26 March 2008 <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav032708a.shtml> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁶⁶ "Trade and Economic Cooperation Between Russia, Armenia 'Unique'", 04 March 2010, online at <http://www.yerevanreport.com/2312/trade-economic-cooperation-between-russia-armenia-unique/> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

the August 2008 war in Georgia damaged trade relations for a period.⁴⁶⁷ Trade turnover decreased to \$900 million in 2009,⁴⁶⁸ but this state of affairs did not last long. Trade turnover increased in 2010 and reached to \$995 million. In this year, export from Russia to Armenia amounted \$835 million and export from Armenia to Russia amounted \$160 million. Moreover, Russia's share in Armenian total foreign turnover was about 21 percent.⁴⁶⁹ This ratio was about 22.5 in 2009.⁴⁷⁰ Thus, it can be stated that there was unbalanced trade between Russia and Armenia, which was in favor of Russia. This imbalance was a sign of dependence of Armenian economy on Russian economy.

Besides, the two countries signed a number of agreements and organized some activities to improve trade relations. Industrial exhibitions and business forums were among these activities. Armenia hosted Armenian-Russian business forum in the spring of 2008 and "Expo-Russia Armenia industrial exhibition" in the fall of 2008.⁴⁷¹ Moreover, Armenia intended to create free trade zones on its territory to develop trade relations with Russia.⁴⁷² Furthermore, Armenia was interested in Russia's project of creating a ruble

⁴⁶⁷ Sergei Blagov, "Armenia Seeks Stronger Ties With Russia", *Eurasia Insight*, 26 March 2008 <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav032708a.shtml> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁶⁸ "Trade and Economic Cooperation Between Russia, Armenia 'Unique'", 04 March 2010, online at <http://www.yerevanreport.com/2312/trade-economic-cooperation-between-russia-armenia-unique/> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁶⁹ "Russia Represents 20,8% in Foreign Trade of Armenia", 01 February 2011, online at <http://vestnikkavkaza.net/news/economy/10561.html> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁷⁰ "Trade and Economic Cooperation Between Russia, Armenia 'Unique'", 04 March 2010, online at <http://www.yerevanreport.com/2312/trade-economic-cooperation-between-russia-armenia-unique/> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁷¹ "Yerevan to Host Expo-Russia Armenia Industrial Exhibition", 27 October 2008, online at <http://www.panarmenian.net/news/eng/?nid=27475> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁷² "RAO Mars to Become One of First Free Trade Zones in Armenia", 15 February 2011, online at <http://www.arka.am/eng/economy/2011/02/15/24094.html> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

zone within the CIS. In February 2009, Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan stated that Armenia was interested in using rubles to trade with Russia.⁴⁷³

5.3. Armenia's Reaction to Russian Growing Influence on Armenian Economy

Russian growing influence on Armenian economy brought about different reactions in Armenia. While Armenian government perceived Russian growing investments to Armenian economy as beneficial, opposition parties perceived Russian growing control on Armenian economy as a threat for national security.

Armenian opposition parties asserted that there were political motives of Russia in growing its influence on Armenian economy. In their opinion, Russia aimed to make Armenia more dependent on it by strengthening its control on Armenian economy, especially in energy sector.⁴⁷⁴ They stated that Russia's attitude towards Armenian-Iranian gas pipeline confirmed their view. They asserted that Russia undermined Armenia's plans to be a transit country for Iranian gas.⁴⁷⁵ Indeed, as it will be examined in the next section, in line with Russia's demand, the planned diameter of the mentioned pipeline was narrowed.

Armenian opposition parties also criticized the deals that transferred the control of a number of strategic firms to Russian firms in return for debt. They accused government for not taking into account other options to pay its debts to Russia. They asserted that government could have repaid these debts with loans from the West. They also criticized government for making the mentioned deals behind closed doors without

⁴⁷³ "Armenia Wants to Use Rubles to Deal with Russia", 05 March 2009, online at <http://english.pravda.ru/business/finance/05-03-2009/107191-armenia-0/> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁷⁴ Rafael Teymurazyan, "Russian Capital in Armenia: Political or Economic Presence?" 08 October 2007, online at <http://www.168.am/en/articles/5072> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁷⁵ Mirzoyan, *op.cit.*, p.88

consulting with them.⁴⁷⁶ Moreover, they criticized Russia for not providing much economic assistance to Armenia despite enhanced military-political cooperation. They stated that Western countries provided Armenia much financial aids than Russia.⁴⁷⁷

On the other hand, Armenian government officials denied the opposition's claims that the transfer of Armenian companies to Russian entrepreneurs would undermine national sovereignty of the country. They asserted that the companies that were transferred to Russian firms were loss making ones and the property for debt deals helped the country to get rid of its debts.⁴⁷⁸ They added that they had not witnessed any event that Russia used its influence on Armenian economy to influence Armenian politics.⁴⁷⁹ They also stated that under the management of Russian firms; the mentioned companies operated effectively and provided Armenians with new jobs. Moreover, Armenian authorities also rejected opposition's claim that the property for debt agreements were not made transparently. They stated that Russian firms acquired Armenian enterprises because they offered higher prices⁴⁸⁰ in investment tenders.⁴⁸¹

⁴⁷⁶ Emil Danielyan, "Russia Tightens Grip on Armenia With Debt Agreements", 06 May 2003, online at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/business/articles/eav050703.shtml%20> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁷⁷ Haroutiun Khachatryan, "Armenia-Russia Analysis: The Challenge of Economic Independence and the Risk of Reliance", 04 January 2006, online at http://www.agbu.org/publications/article.asp?A_ID=203 (accessed on 20.09.2010)

⁴⁷⁸ Emil Danielyan, "Russia Tightens Grip on Armenia With Debt Agreements", 06 May 2003, online at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/business/articles/eav050703.shtml%20> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁷⁹ Naira Melkumian, "Armenia: Russia Tightens Economic Grip", 11 November 2006, online at <http://iwpr.net/report-news/armenia-russia-tightens-economic-grip> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁸⁰ Rafael Teymurazyan, "Russian Capital in Armenia: Political or Economic Presence?" 08 October 2007, online at <http://www.168.am/en/articles/5072> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁸¹ Haroutiun Khachatryan, "Armenia-Russia Analysis: The Challenge of Economic Independence and the Risk of Reliance", 04 January 2006, online at http://www.agbu.org/publications/article.asp?A_ID=203 (accessed on 20.09.2010)

However, many companies that were transferred to Russian firms in the beginning of the 2000's did not operate⁴⁸² or operated below their capacity for many years.⁴⁸³ According to many Armenians, Russia was not in need of these companies because it had many similar ones on its own territory. This situation led to criticisms of not only Armenian opposition⁴⁸⁴ but also government. For instance, Armenian government was not contented with Russian management of Armenian rail network. In 2009, Armenian Transport and Communications Minister Gurgun Sargsian stated that Russian firms had not fulfilled their investment pledges. He asserted that Russian firms had fulfilled only 30 percent of their investment commitments for 2008.⁴⁸⁵ As seen above, Armenian government and opposition had opposite opinions regarding Russian growing influence on Armenian economy, but they both criticized Russian firms for not operating many of enterprises that had been transferred to them.

To respond the abovementioned criticism, Russian authorities stated that their expectations about Armenian companies did not prove right and many of these companies were not moneymaking for them.⁴⁸⁶ Indeed, most of these companies were obsolete and in demand of large investments.⁴⁸⁷ In April 2007, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov stated that Russian companies could operate only a part of the companies

⁴⁸² "Debating Big Brother's Presence: Concerns Linger of Armenia as "Outpost"", 02 November 2007, online at <http://armenianow.com/?action=viewArticle&AID=2579&CID=2560&IID=&lng=eng> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁸³ Haroutiun Khachatryan, "Armenia-Russia Analysis: The Challenge of Economic Independence and the Risk of Reliance", 04 January 2006, online at http://www.agbu.org/publications/article.asp?A_ID=203 (accessed on 20.09.2010)

⁴⁸⁴ "Debating Big Brother's Presence: Concerns Linger of Armenia as "Outpost"", 02 November 2007, online at <http://armenianow.com/?action=viewArticle&AID=2579&CID=2560&IID=&lng=eng> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁸⁵ Hovannes Shoghikian, "Russian Railway 'Not Honoring' Armenia Investment Pledges", 17 March 2009, online at <http://www.armtown.com/news/en/rfe/20090317/200903172/> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁸⁶ "Debating Big Brother's Presence: Concerns Linger of Armenia as "Outpost"", 02 November 2007, online at <http://armenianow.com/?action=viewArticle&AID=2579&CID=2560&IID=&lng=eng> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁸⁷ Abelyan, *op.cit.*, p.54

that they owned from Armenia. He asserted that Russian companies had not taken into account the special features of these companies and had not investigated properly the factors that made them out of order.⁴⁸⁸ Given that the obsolescence of Armenian companies, it can be assessed that the ultimate goal of Russian companies in investing Armenian economy was not making economic profit, but to strengthen Russia's influence on Armenia. Thus, Armenian opposition may be right in their claim that there were political motives behind Russian growing influence on Armenian economy.

5.4. Armenia's Attempts to Diversify Its Economic Policy

Armenia that lacks enough energy resources has been dependent on Russian energy supplies in the post-Soviet era.⁴⁸⁹ Moreover, the economic blockades of Turkey and Azerbaijan aggravated this dependence.⁴⁹⁰ Nearly eighty percent of Armenia's gas demand is supplied by Russia.⁴⁹¹ Armenia also depends on Russian nuclear fuel to operate its nuclear facilities.⁴⁹² However, being dependent on Russian energy resources to such an extent brought about serious problems for Armenia in the 2000s.

The great part of these problems stemmed from the vulnerability of the transportation route (the Georgian route) between Armenia and Russia. This route was cut off at times due to some reasons and during these periods Armenian economy suffered great troubles.⁴⁹³ In the National Security Strategy of Armenia, it is stated that the disruption

⁴⁸⁸ "CIS Econ Relations Ripe for Market Principles - Lavrov ", 04 April 2007, online at http://library.aua.am/library/news/archive/2007_04-04.htm (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁸⁹ Jafalian, *op.cit.*, p.2

⁴⁹⁰ Kelkitli, *op.cit.*, p.81

⁴⁹¹ Naira Melkumyan, "Russia Gas Price Hike Shocks Armenians", 23 February 2010, online at http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Central_Asia/LB23Ag01.html (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁹² "The 'Super-Projects' of Sargsyan and Energy Dependence on Russia", 20 October 2008, online at <http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=13531> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁹³ Mirzoyan, *op.cit.*, p.75

of transportation ways with Russia affects Armenia's economy negatively.⁴⁹⁴ Besides this problem, increases in the price of Russian gas also brought about difficulties for Armenian economy.⁴⁹⁵ Having no alternative gas supplier, Armenia was forced to accept these price increases. Thus, energy security of Armenia was under threat.

As stated above, the Georgian route between Armenia and Russia was closed several times in the 2000s. Russia closed the Upper Lars pass on the Georgian-Russian border after the terrorist attack in Beslan in September 01, 2004 under the pretext of security⁴⁹⁶ and in the summer of 2006, under the pretext of need of repair of the border facilities.⁴⁹⁷ During these periods, Armenia experienced difficulties in getting enough amounts of Russian energy supplies because the Upper Lars pass was one of the two overland trade ways of Armenia with Russia. Twenty percent of all Armenia's trade with Russia was done via this pass.⁴⁹⁸ As stated by Russian Transport Minister Igor Levitin, the lack of a stable transport route was the most serious problem of economic relations between the two countries.⁴⁹⁹ Moreover, the incident that brought into public view the heavy dependence of Armenia on Russian energy supplies was the August 2008 War in Georgia. This war, by cutting off⁵⁰⁰ Georgian transport route displayed the depth of

⁴⁹⁴ "National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia", online at <http://www.mil.am/1297157753> (accessed on 20.09.2010)

⁴⁹⁵ Ruzanna Stepanian, "Russia, Armenia Vow to Keep up Military Ties", 26 January 2006, online at <http://www.armtown.com/news/en/rfe/20060126/200601261/> (accessed on 30.11.2010)

⁴⁹⁶ "Russia/Armenia: Yerevan Remains Dependent on Moscow", *Oxford Analytica Daily Brief Service*, 05 November 2004, online at <http://www.oxan.com/display.aspx?ItemID=DB113721> (accessed on 30.02.2011)

⁴⁹⁷ Emil Danielyan, "Soaring Trade Boosts Russian-Armenian Economic Ties", 30 October 2007, online at http://www.gab-ibn.com/IMG/pdf/Ar20-_Soaring_Trade_Boosts_Russian-Armenian_Economic_Ties.pdf (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁴⁹⁸ "Russia/Armenia: Yerevan Remains Dependent on Moscow", *Oxford Analytica Daily Brief Service*, 05 November 2004, online at <http://www.oxan.com/display.aspx?ItemID=DB113721> (accessed on 30.02.2011)

⁴⁹⁹ "Russians Buy Another Major Armenian Firm", 14 September 2007, online at <http://www.armtown.com/news/en/rfe/20070914/200709142> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁵⁰⁰ Kamer Kasım, *Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Kafkasya*, p.57

Armenia's dependence on Russian energy supplies. In this period, Armenia could not get Russian energy supplies and suffered energy shortage.⁵⁰¹

Towards the middle of the 2000s, for reducing its dependence on Russian energy supplies, Armenian government started to cooperate with Iran in energy sector.⁵⁰² Moreover, Iran that aimed to strengthen its influence on the South Caucasus given great importance to enhance its cooperation with Armenia. Furthermore, Iran that suffered from Western economic sanctions and felt isolated in the region perceived Armenian territories as an alternative trade route with the outside world.⁵⁰³

The first important development regarding energy cooperation between Armenia and Iran was the agreement of May 2004 that stipulated construction of a gas pipeline for transporting Iranian gas to Armenia.⁵⁰⁴ However, Russia was disturbed with the mentioned pipeline project. Russia's opposition to the project stemmed from mainly two reasons: First, Russia aimed to keep Armenia dependent on its energy supplies, and second, Russia aimed to prevent a possible Armenia's participation into Nabucco Project in the future. In fact, Russia's opposition to the project was expected, because Russia had been against any energy projects that might lessen European countries' dependence on Russian energy supplies.⁵⁰⁵ Thus, Russia was against Iranian gas to be

⁵⁰¹ Richard Giragosian, "Regional Developments And Armenian National Security", 12 January 2009, online at http://www.noravank.am/eng/articles/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=3480 (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁵⁰² Stepan Grigoryan, "The Future of Southern Caucasus in the Light of New Geopolitical Reconfigurations", *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 2008, p.108, online at http://www.lfpr.lt/uploads/File/2008-20/Grygoryan_ENG.pdf

⁵⁰³ Richard Giragosian, "Regional Developments And Armenian National Security", 12 January 2009, online at http://www.noravank.am/eng/articles/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=3480 (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁵⁰⁴ Sergei Blagov, "Russia and Armenia: United by Geopolitics, Divided by Energy Resources", 16 May 2004, online at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/business/articles/eav051704.shtml> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁵⁰⁵ Vahe Davtyan, "Russia-USA-Iran and Energy Security of Armenia", 26 October 2009, online at <http://www.keghart.com/print/782> (accessed on 23.07.2010) (accessed on 15.03.2011)

exported to third countries through Armenian territory. To prevent such a scenario, it put pressure on Armenia to narrow the diameter of the mentioned pipeline. As a result, Armenia narrowed the diameter of the pipeline⁵⁰⁶ that started to operate in May 2009.⁵⁰⁷

In October 2008, Armenian President Sargisyan announced that they intended to implement some large-scale economic projects including building a new nuclear power plant building and an Iran-Armenia railway. He stated that they aimed to develop the country's economy with these projects. Sargisyan's announcement led to some speculations that Armenia aimed to curb Russian influence in the country's economy.⁵⁰⁸ Indeed, in his visit to Tehran in April 2009, Sargsyan discussed with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on joint economic projects. In this context, he declared "Yerevan places paramount importance on proposed projects and those underway, such as the oil pipeline, the joint railway, and the hydroelectric power plant."⁵⁰⁹

Currently, Armenia gets about 2.3 billion cubic meters of gas annually from Iran via this pipeline. This amount of gas is nearly equal to annual volume of Russian gas that Armenia gets.⁵¹⁰ According the agreement between Iran and Armenia, Armenia converts the gas to electricity and exports it to Iran for a period.⁵¹¹ Doubtless to say, taking into

⁵⁰⁶ Atom Markarian, "Russia's Gazprom Against Iranian Gas Transit Through Armenia", 21 March 2005, online at <http://www.azatutyun.am/content/article/1576191.html> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁵⁰⁷ "Armenia Commences Gas Imports", 14 May 2009, online at <http://www.zawya.com/story.cfm?id=ZAWYA20090514045432> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁵⁰⁸ Marianna Grigoryan, "Armenia: New Projects A Stab At Independence From Moscow?" 16 October 2008, online at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav101708.shtml> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁵⁰⁹ "Iran, Armenia Insist on Energy and Trade Ties", 14 April 2009, online at http://old.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=192190 (accessed on 17.08.2011)

⁵¹⁰ "Iran-Armenia Gas Pipeline Inaugurated", 04 December 2008, online at http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=183993 (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁵¹¹ Marianna Grigoryan, "Armenia: New Projects A Stab At Independence From Moscow?" 16 October 2008, online at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav101708.shtml> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

consideration the fragility of Georgian trade route, the construction of this pipeline reduced Armenia's dependence on Russian gas to some extent and strengthened Armenia's energy security.

Energy cooperation between Armenia and Iran was not limited with the abovementioned gas pipeline. In March 2007, the two countries signed a new agreement that covered the constructing of Meghri hydroelectric power plant on the Armenian side of Araks River by Iranian companies.⁵¹² It was declared that the construction of the mentioned power plant would be started in 2011.⁵¹³ Furthermore, in December 2008 the two countries signed an agreement for constructing an oil pipeline. In the framework of this agreement, in the beginning of 2009, Armenia started to construct the 300-km pipeline that would pump Iranian oil products including gasoline and diesel fuel from Tebriz oil refinery to Armenia. As stated by Armenian officials, owing to this pipeline Armenia's energy security will increase and the cost of oil products will decrease.⁵¹⁴ The pipeline is planned to operate in 2014.⁵¹⁵ In this context, Armenian Energy Minister Armen Movsisyan stated, "The diversification of energy sources is a guarantee of our country's energy security...the pipeline will provide the country with stable imports."⁵¹⁶

⁵¹² "Meghri Hydro Power Plant To Be Built By Iranian Companies", 17 April 2007, online at <http://www.armeniandiaspora.com/showthread.php?166840-Meghri-Hydro-Power-Plant-To-Be-Built-By-Iranian-Companies> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁵¹³ "Minister: Construction of Meghri Hydro-Power Station (Armenia) to Start in 2011", 10 February 2011, online at <http://www.arka.am/eng/energy/2011/02/10/23983.html> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁵¹⁴ "Iran Replacing Russia as Armenia's Energy Supplier", 24 March 2009, online at <http://www.armeniandiaspora.com/showthread.php?163913-Iran-Replacing-Russia-As-Armenia-s-Energy-Supplier> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁵¹⁵ "Details of Iran-Armenia Oil Pipeline Announced", 18 January 2011, online at http://pipelinesinternational.com/news/details_of_iran-armenia_oil_pipeline_announced/054198/ (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁵¹⁶ "Iran-Armenia Set to Build Oil Pipeline", 16 February 2011, online at http://www.tradearabia.com/news/ogn_193645.html (accessed on 17.08.2011)

On the other hand, Russia once more manifested its interest in this oil pipeline. In June 2010, Gazprom declared that it would participate in the construction of this pipeline.⁵¹⁷ It can be inferred from Russia's reactions to Armenia-Iran energy cooperation that Russia to protect its dominant role on Armenian energy sector will strive for taking part in any energy projects of Armenia with the third countries.

Besides, Armenia and Iran also cooperated in transportation sector. In August 2009, the two countries signed Armenia-Iran railway project.⁵¹⁸ Armenia has three railway links with the outside world but only the Georgian line is active. The other two links with Turkey and Azerbaijan are out of service. Thus, Armenia strongly needs Armenia-Iran railway link. It can be asserted that if this project is put into practice, then Armenia will have an opportunity for improving its trade relations not only with Iran but also with other countries.

5.5. Social and Cultural Relations between Armenia and Russia

On account of the shared Soviet past, Russian culture influenced Armenian culture considerably.⁵¹⁹ At present, Russian is the most spoken language in Armenia after Armenian language.⁵²⁰ It is usual to see people speaking Russian on shopping. In

⁵¹⁷ "Armenia-Iran Pipeline: Russian Gas Giant Announces Its Participation in Construction Project", 01 June 2010, online at http://www.armenianow.com/economy/23423/armenairan_gas_pipeline_construction (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁵¹⁸ "Armenia-Russia Working on Iran Rail Link", 08 October 2010, online at <http://www.artsakank.com.cy/en/news/print/armenia/2010/armenia-russia-working-iran-rail-link> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁵¹⁹ Tony Halpin and John Hughes, "Living with Big Brother: Armenia-Russia Relations are Based on Language, Culture and, Lately, Economics", 19 May 2006, online at http://www.armenianow.com/special_issues/moscow/6391/living_with_big_brother_armeniaru (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁵²⁰ "Republic of Armenia, Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends In Europe", *Council of Europe/ERICarts*, p.27 2010, online at http://www.culturalpolicies.net/down/armenia_112010.pdf (accessed on 15.03.2011)

shopping centers there are a lot of foodstuffs that contain information in Russian.⁵²¹ Moreover, Russian is used widely in media. There is a great volume of Russian-written press and literature.⁵²² In addition, there are several radio and TV stations that broadcast various programs in Russian.⁵²³ Furthermore, several Russian TV channels broadcast in the country.⁵²⁴

Besides, Russian language is taught in secondary and higher education schools in Armenia.⁵²⁵ Thousands of Armenian students get education in Russian higher educational institutions. In academic year of 2006-2007 this number was more than 5.000. Moreover, hundreds of Armenian students are granted scholarships from Russia and study in Russia's educational establishments.⁵²⁶ Additionally, Yerevan hosts Russian-Armenian State University that uses Russian in education. Founded in 1997 the university is administered by the authorities of both countries.⁵²⁷ Together with providing education in Russian, it has also a mission of disseminating Russian culture in the country.⁵²⁸ More than 2.000 students get education in that university.⁵²⁹

⁵²¹ Tony Halpin and John Hughes, "Living with Big Brother: Armenia-Russia Relations are Based on Language, Culture and, Lately, Economics", 19 May 2006, online at http://www.armenianow.com/special_issues/moscow/6391/living_with_big_brother_armeniaru (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁵²² "Republic of Armenia, Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends In Europe", *Council of Europe/ERICarts*, p.27 2010, online at http://www.culturalpolicies.net/down/armenia_112010.pdf (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁵²³ "Republic of Armenia, Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends In Europe", *Council of Europe/ERICarts*, p.27 2010, online at http://www.culturalpolicies.net/down/armenia_112010.pdf (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁵²⁴ "Media Landscape: Armenia", 05 November 2010, online at http://www.ejc.net/media_landscape/article/armenia/ (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁵²⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵²⁶ "Russian-Armenian Relations", 29 January 2009, online at <http://premier.gov.ru/eng/visits/world/6095/info/3236> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁵²⁷ "Russian-Armenian State University", online at <http://russian-armenian-state-university.co.tv/> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

For developing cultural relations between the two countries, in February 2008, a center of “Russian World” was opened in Yerevan State University. The center was filled with numerous Russian educational and scientific materials.⁵³⁰ Commenting on the future of the cooperation regarding the higher education between the two countries, the Deputy Director of State University-Higher School of Economics branch in St.Petersburg Professor Daniil Alexandrov stated that they started in 2009 to cooperate with Armenian universities in various fields from scientific surveys to student-exchange programs. He added that owing to interaction both in teachers and students’ levels, the cooperation would deepen in the future.⁵³¹

Moreover, the two countries carry out various programs to develop bilateral cultural relations. In this context, they hosted many cultural activities in the 2000s. In 2005, Armenia celebrated “the Year of Russia in Armenia” and in 2006, Russia celebrated “the Year of Armenia in Russia”.⁵³² During these celebrations, many political, economic, and cultural activities were organized in both countries⁵³³. In January 2006, during the opening ceremony of the festival “Year of Armenia in Russia”, Russian President Putin stated that there were similarities between the cultures of the two nations and added that these similarities and mutual trust played a great role in the establishment of strong relations between the two states. He mentioned that;

⁵²⁹ “Russian-Armenian Relations”, 29 January 2009, online at <http://premier.gov.ru/eng/visits/world/6095/info/3236> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁵³⁰ “Russian World in Armenia”, 07 February 2008, online at <http://www.panorama.am/en/education/2008/02/07/eph/> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁵³¹ Daniil Alexandrov, “Cooperation Between Russia and Armenia in the Field of the Higher Education has a Good Future”, 24 January 2010, online at <http://www.panarmenian.net/eng/world/interviews/43174/> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁵³² “Russian-Armenian Relations”, 29 January 2009, online at <http://premier.gov.ru/eng/visits/world/6095/info/3236> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁵³³ “Smbatyan: Interregional Cooperation Between Armenia and Russia Expanding”, 28 September 2005, online at <http://www.panarmenian.net/eng/world/news/14782/> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

We all expect that the richness of culture, history and modern achievement of Armenia will be bright and unforgettable for the Russian citizens. Various Armenian organizations hospitably opened their doors for the Russian intellectuals and representatives of public and youth organizations as well as business circles of our country. Together we worked at the project strengthening strategic partnership between our states. I am convinced that during the Year of Armenia in Russia that is starting today common undertakings in economic, scientific, cultural and educational fields will receive worth development. Russia highly appreciates the traditions of trust and neighborhood with the Armenian people. The common historical and spiritual values, mutual sympathy that is conveyed from generation to generation, appear as a firm basis for them.⁵³⁴

Armenian President Kocharian also made a speech in the opening ceremony of the Year of Armenia in Russia. He mentioned about the festival “Year of Russia in Armenia” that was held in 2005. According to him, that festival had contributed to bilateral relations in all fields. He claimed that the festival by creating stronger contacts between the two nations resulted in stronger economic, political and social relations between the two states. He added that;

Our partnership should be guided by the logic of lasting interaction. For about two centuries the relationships between our nations have developed within a united state. This certainly claimed the highest level of mutual engagement in everything. Our literature and culture, achievements in science and economy are imbued with it. It is also the brotherhood in arms hardened in many wars. It is obvious that a firm cultural fundament has been laid.⁵³⁵

⁵³⁴ “Putin: Russia Values Traditions of Trust and Neighborhood with Armenian People”, 23 January 2006, online at http://www.panarmenian.net/eng/world/news/16061/Putin_Russia_Values_Traditions_of_Trust_and_Neighborhood_with_Armenian_People (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁵³⁵ “Kocharian: Armenians in Russia and Russian in Armenia cannot be Aliens”, 23 January 2006, online at http://www.panarmenian.net/eng/politics/news/16060/Kocharian_Armenians_in_Russia_and_Russians_in_Armenia_Cannot_Be_Aliens (accessed on 15.03.2011)

Furthermore, in 2008, several cultural activities were organized in Armenia in the context of “Season of Russian Culture” and in 2009, Russia hosted similar activities in the context of “Season of Armenian Culture”.⁵³⁶ In addition, in the context of developing cultural relations with Russia, the square in Yerevan center was named “Square of Russia” in 2008. The presidents of Armenia and Russia were present at the gala ceremony of opening this square. In his speech at the ceremony, Armenian President Sargisian emphasized the cultural and historical unity of the two nations and stated that the square symbolized this unity. Besides, Yerevan city mayor Ervand Zakharyan described Russians as the closest friends of Armenians and added that the close relations between the two nations did not lose energy in the course of time.⁵³⁷

There is also similarity between the religion beliefs of the two nations. In March 2010, commenting on the construction of the third Russian Orthodox Church in Armenia, the head of the Holy Armenian Apostolic Church Catholicos Karekin II stated that the construction of the new church would contribute to fraternal relations between the two nations. He also declared that the visit of Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill to Yerevan for seeing the construction of the church confirmed the friendship of two nations. Both Patriarch Kirill and Karekin II declared that their churches shared the same spiritual values despite a number of differences in their cultural background.⁵³⁸

In conclusion, economic relations between Armenia and Russia improved in the 2000s. The important development was that Russia strengthened its influence on Armenian economy considerably via getting ownership of numerous Armenian companies. Russia increased its control on Armenian economy, particularly on energy sector. In the course

⁵³⁶ “Russian-Armenian Relations”, 29 January 2009, online at <http://premier.gov.ru/eng/visits/world/6095/info/3236> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁵³⁷ “Armenian, Russian Presidents Attend Gala Ceremony in Yerevan”, 21 October 2008, online at <http://www.armeniandiaspora.com/showthread.php?147980-Armenian-Russian-Presidents-Attend-Gala-Ceremony-In-Yerevan> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

⁵³⁸ Milena Faustova, “Russia, Armenia to Solidify Ties”, 15 March 2010, online at <http://english.ruvr.ru/2010/03/15/5311615.html> (accessed on 15.03.2011)

of time, Russian control on Armenian energy sector reached a point at which Armenia started to think that its energy security was in threat. Accordingly, to increase its energy security Armenia initiated a number of energy projects with Iran. It can be said that Armenia diversified its energy policies with cooperating with Iran in energy sector.

Regarding social-cultural relations in the 2000s, as former Soviet countries both Armenia and Russia gave great importance to preserve and improve these relations. In this context, they organized a number activities and programs. The next chapter is the conclusion that will summarize the findings of this thesis.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This thesis has tried to explore the nature of relations between Armenia and Russia in the 2000s. Contrary to the dominant view that these relations could be labeled as strategic partnership, the hypothesis of thesis was that they could be characterized as pragmatic cooperation.

It could be stated that the basis of strong Armenian-Russian relations was established in Tsarist Russia period. With this era, Armenians started to perceive Russia as their protector against other states. Cultural affinity between Armenians and Russians played a great role in this perception. Regarding Soviet period, it could be stated that although they suffered much from Soviet policies that aimed to create a unique society, Armenians in the Soviet Union supported the regime. In this period, like other nations of the Union, their social and cultural life was affected considerably by Russian culture. With the dissolution of the Soviet regime in 1991, both Armenia and Russia emerged as newly independent states.

In the first period of its independence, Russia tried hard to be integrated with the Western political, economic and security systems. In this sense, it pursued a pro-Western foreign policy and did not focus on the former Soviet countries. Moreover, in this period, Armenia trying to pursue a balanced and independent foreign policy was reluctant to establish close relations with Russia. Under these conditions, Russian-Armenian relations did not improve much at the beginning of the post-Soviet era.

The year of 1993 was a turning point in terms of development of Armenian Russian relations. First of all, Russia that was disappointed with the Western scarce economic

assistance reformulated its foreign policy. In its new foreign policy, protection of national interests was accepted as a top priority. In line with this policy, Russia started to give great importance to strengthen its influence in general on the former Soviet region, in particular on the South Caucasus. Given that Georgia and Azerbaijan followed a pro-Western foreign policy, Armenia gained special importance in the eyes of Russia. Moreover, Armenian leadership realized that without Russian military and economic assistance it would be too difficult to overcome the security and economic problems of the country.

Under these conditions, both Armenia and Russia drew near each other. They perceived enhancement of cooperation in all fields as beneficial for their national interests. Accordingly, throughout the 1990s, besides taking steps to improve security relations, they enhanced cooperation in diplomatic and economic fields. Moreover, they refrained from following foreign policies that could harm the other's interests. Russia took a pro-Armenian attitude towards the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and assisted Armenia to overcome its energy crisis. However, the field in which they established the closest ties was the security. Russia supplied Armenia huge amounts of military hardware and trained Armenian officers. In addition, Russia used its military presence in Armenia to keep the region under its control. Moreover, Armenia feeling itself insecure in the region regarded Russia's military support as the main element of its national security. Taking into consideration the close cooperation in all fields and the strategic importance of security cooperation for both countries, it can be assessed that the relations between the two countries in the 1990s could be characterized as strategic partnership.

Strong relations between Armenia and Russia continued in the 2000s. Regarding security relations in this period, it could be stated that both countries continued to give great importance to maintain close security cooperation. With Putin's presidency, Russia that started to perceive Western growing influence on the former Soviet region as a major threat to its national interests intensified its efforts to keep the region under its control. Regarding the South Caucasus, after the withdrawal of Azerbaijan and

Georgia from the CST in 1999, Armenia remained as the only allied country in the region the control of that was perceived as vitally important for maintaining Russia's territorial integrity. Consequently, maintaining close security relations with Armenia became one of the most important goals of Russian leadership.

Moreover, Armenia's problems with Azerbaijan and Turkey continued in the 2000s. As mentioned in its strategic documents, Armenia regarded Russian military support as critically important to preserve its survival against the perceived threats from Azerbaijan and Turkey. Hence, it could be concluded that both Russia and Armenia sustained their strategic interests in maintaining close cooperation in the security field. Accordingly, in the 2000s, security cooperation between the two countries enhanced and owing to this cooperation, Russia's predominant role in Armenia's defense structure strengthened. Russia that maintained its military base and border guard troops in Armenia declared repeatedly that it was the sole guarantor of Armenia's security. In addition, it supplied Armenia large amounts of military hardware and reinforced its 102nd base in this country. Besides, both countries also cooperated within the framework of the CSTO. In this sense, they participated in military exercises of this organization and Russia supported Armenia to establish a stronger army. As members of the CSTO, they are responsible for each other's security against any foreign threats.

One can ask why militarily strong Russia has given special importance to enhance security cooperation with militarily weak Armenia. The answer lies to a great extent in the strategic importance of Armenia for Russia. Given that pro-Western orientation of Georgia and Azerbaijan, the only country in the South Caucasus is Armenia that has close relations with Russia.

Regarding diplomatic relations between the two countries in the 2000s, it could be stated that Russia intensively participated in the processes that aimed to settle Armenia's problems with its neighbors. In this context, it used shuttle diplomacy between Armenia and Azerbaijan to find a settlement in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. It declared that it

was ready to be the guarantor of a possible solution in the conflict. Moreover, it started to take part in mediation efforts that aimed to normalize Armenian-Turkish relations. According to some political analysts, Russia that perceived the strained relations between Turkey and Armenia as beneficial for its interests in the 1990s changed its perception with Putin's pragmatic foreign policy. In the new decade, Russia gave up seeing Turkey as a strong rival; instead it perceived the normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia as a way of increasing its influence on the region.

On the other hand, according to some political analysts, despite Russian officials' declarations that they support the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the normalization process of Armenian-Turkish relations, the reality is probably different. They assert that Russia manipulates the conflicts to keep the region under its control. In their opinion, if Armenia's problems with its neighbors are resolved, then Russia's influence over the region will probably decrease.

Furthermore, in this decade, despite having strong relations with Russia, Armenia followed a balanced foreign policy between regional countries and the West. The main goal of Armenia was to overcome its vulnerability in the economic and security fields. In the course of time, its relations improved not only with Russia but also with the Western states and Western political-security organizations. In particular, in political and military fields, cooperation between Armenia and the West enhanced. Armenia participated in NATO's exercises and hosted one of these exercises on its territories. It can be concluded that Armenia succeeded in diversifying its foreign policy. However, regardless of Russian authorities' declarations that Russia was not against close relations between Armenia and the West, it may be asserted that growing relations between Armenia and the West, in particular in the security field, disturbed Russia, since Russia perceives West's growing influence on the former Soviet region as a major threat to its national security.

Besides, in this decade, Russia pursuing a pragmatic foreign policy under Putin's rule endeavored to develop its relations with Azerbaijan that has rich oil and natural gas reserves. As a result of Putin's efforts, relations between Russia and Azerbaijan improved to a great extent. Russia succeeded in extending the lease of Gabala radar station in Azerbaijan. Russia uses this radar station to control its southern neighbors. The two countries also resolved a number of conflicts that had hindered the development of bilateral relations. However, as expected, improvement of relations between Russia and Azerbaijan made Armenia troubled, since Armenia was suspecting that Russia might change its attitude towards the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in favor of Azerbaijan. In Armenia's view, Russia's attempt to improve its relations with Azerbaijan contradicts with the spirit of Russian-Armenian close cooperation.

It could be stated that despite having strong diplomatic relations, in the 2000s, both Armenia and Russia took some steps that bothered each other. While Armenia's efforts for enhancing security cooperation with the West disturbed Russia, Russia's efforts for developing its relations with Azerbaijan troubled Armenia. It could be asserted that both countries motivated by their own national interests while taking the mentioned steps. In other words, they took pragmatic approach in their foreign policies.

Regarding economic relations, throughout this decade, mutual trade turnover between Armenia and its primary economic partner Russia increased more than three times and reached to one million dollars. Moreover, in line with its strategy of strengthening its influence on the former Soviet countries, Russia strove for increasing its control on Armenian economy, because it believed that in order to strengthen its political influence on Armenia, it had to control Armenian economy.

Besides, Armenia's dependence on Russia's energy supplies and its incapacity to pay its debts for these supplies facilitated it for Russia to increase its control on Armenian economy. Accordingly, following a number of "property for debt" deals that signed in the first half of the 2000s, many strategic assets of Armenia were transferred under

Russian control in return for Armenia's debt to Russia. In addition, Russian companies that were supported by Russian government got the ownership or management of numerous Armenian companies most of which operate in energy, banking, transportation and telecommunication sectors. However, in the course of time, Russian control on Armenian economy reached a point at which Armenia started to consider that its energy security was in threat. The fragility of Georgian transportation route between Armenia and Russia increased the threat level. Consequently, Armenia sought for diversifying its energy policies. In this regard, in the second half of the 2000s, Armenia initiated new energy projects with Iran to increase its energy security. A gas pipeline that transports Iranian gas to Armenia started to operate towards the end of the decade. Moreover, Armenia and Iran agreed to construct an oil pipeline that would pump Iranian oil products to Armenia and also a hydroelectric power plant in Armenia.

It could be assessed that Armenia that had been dependent on Russian energy supplies since its independence tried to diversify its energy policy by cooperating with Iran in the energy field. It aimed to strengthen its energy security by decreasing its dependence on Russian energy supplies. It can be stated that Armenia gave priority to its national interests while deciding about cooperation with Iran in the energy field. On the other hand, it could be asserted that the growing cooperation between Armenia and Iran in the energy sector disturbed Russia that views any energy projects of foreign countries in the region as a threat to its economic interests. Accordingly, it took some steps to limit this cooperation.

In conclusion, in this study it was observed that both Armenia and Russia pursuing a pragmatic foreign policy gave priority to their national interests in diplomatic and economic fields despite continued to cooperate closely in the security field in the 2000s. Armenia diversified its foreign policy by improving its relations with the West and diversified its economic policies by strengthening energy cooperation with Iran. In addition, Russia drawing near Azerbaijan enhanced its relations with this country.

Accordingly, it could be asserted that the nature of relations between the two countries transformed from “strategic partnership” to “pragmatic cooperation”.

It is a question whether pragmatic cooperation between the two countries will continue or turn into strategic partnership in the future. It could be stated that the changes in security perceptions of each country towards the region may play a great role in a possible transformation of the nature of relations. Moreover, priorities of each country’s foreign policies may also play a role in this process. If pragmatic cooperation continues, then Russia would probably intensify its efforts to resolve Armenia’s problems with Turkey and Azerbaijan. In this case, it is likely that Armenia would be forced to take a more constructive attitude in its problems with Turkey and Azerbaijan.

On the other hand, if Russia’s relations with Turkey deteriorate and/or if security cooperation between the West and regional countries (Georgia and Azerbaijan) improves then the strategic importance of Armenia for Russia would probably increase. Accordingly, it would probably take into account Armenia’s interests much more while deciding on its policies towards the region and refrain from taking steps that may bother this country. In this case, Russia will probably not support a settlement in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict that would not be supported by Armenia. Moreover, it may give much support to Armenia’s allegations against Turkey in international forums. In conclusion, if the strategic importance of Armenia for Russia increases then Russia would probably hold a more pro-Armenian attitude in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and Armenian-Turkish relations. In turn, Armenia would probably take an uncompromising attitude in its problems with Turkey and Azerbaijan.

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