

## **Preface: Accord Nagorny Karabakh**

**Federal Councillor Micheline Calmy-Rey (added 2006)**

The publication *The limits of leadership: elites and societies in the Nagorny Karabakh peace process* is the fruit of the long labour carried out with rigour and determination by the organisation Conciliation Resources. The defining feature of this review in my opinion is the plurality of views that it presents on the Nagorny Karabakh conflict and the constructive nature of the proposals to help resolve this issue. This combination contributes to the publication's openness and will, I hope, lead to a fruitful and reasoned debate among Armenians and Azerbaijanis which will in the long run facilitate a more constructive dialogue between the different parties to the conflict.

My country, Switzerland, is committed to dialogue between nations and between peoples, as it considers dialogue to be the only legitimate means of resolving conflicts. I am convinced that the solution to the Nagorny Karabakh problem will emerge from a peace process based on a dynamic exchange between Armenians and Azerbaijanis and on an honest and structured debate between their representatives.

Moreover, as the authors of the review emphasise, prejudices and biased perceptions of the opposing side, of its history and its responsibilities, played a decisive part in the outbreak of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict and in its escalation. The views and opinions presented here can help both sides to go beyond such perceptions and better to understand other realities in the opposing camp, for example the suffering caused by uprooting, fears of persecution and the absence of any prospect of a satisfactory settlement of the conflict.

They should also stimulate discussions on the conditions for reconciliation and the question of compromise. I realise that many regard the willingness to compromise as a sign of weakness or even of abandonment of a cause to which they are deeply attached. However, the only possible reality for the South Caucasus is the victory of peace. To achieve this, Armenians and Azerbaijanis will have to follow the path of compromise for a solution acceptable to all.

I would like to stress that the work of the OSCE and of the Minsk Group is crucial for the advancement of the peace process. The task is arduous and inevitably involves disappointed hopes, but I am convinced that this is the framework of negotiation in which an agreement can be reached which will end the Nagorny Karabakh conflict and, thanks to a dialogue within and between civil societies, will meet with the approval of the populations concerned.

I hope that you will read these articles critically and I wish you fruitful discussions.

Micheline Calmy-Rey  
Federal Councillor  
Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs  
Switzerland