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an international review of peace initiatives



The limits of leadership

**Elites and societies in the
Nagorny Karabakh peace process**

Issue Editor

Laurence Broers

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**Front cover: the remains of a
teahouse in Aghdam.**

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ACG	Azeri-Chirag-Gunashli (Azerbaijan's offshore oilfields)	IDEE	Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe
ADP	Azerbaijan Democratic Party	INGO	International non-governmental organization
AIOC	Azerbaijan International Operating Company	KGB	Committee for State Security
ANIP	Azerbaijan National Independence Party	KLO	Karabakh Liberation Organization
ANM	Armenian National Movement	LINKS	London Information Network on Conflicts and State-building
ANS	Azerbaijan News Service	LOC	Line of contact
ARF	Armenian Revolutionary Federation	MG	Minsk Group
ASALA	Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia	NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
BP	British Petroleum	NGO	Non-governmental organization
BTC	Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (oil pipeline)	NK	Nagorny Karabakh
BSEC	Black Sea Economic Cooperation (Organization)	NKAO	Nagorny Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (region)
BTE	Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (gas pipeline)	NKR	Nagorno-Karabakh Republic
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States	OMON	Special Forces Police Unit
CRINGO	Caucasian Refugee and IDP NGO network	PACE	Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
CRS	Catholic Relief Services	PFA	Popular Front of Azerbaijan
CSCE	Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe	PKF	Peacekeeping forces
DPA	Democratic Party of Artsakh	POW	Prisoner of war
EBRD	European Bank of Reconstruction and Development	PPA	People's Party of Armenia
EU	European Union	RF	Russian Federation
GONGO	'Government-organized' non-governmental organization	RPA	Republican Party of Armenia
GUUAM	Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Moldova	SOCAR	State Oil Company of the Azerbaijan Republic
HCA	Helsinki Citizens' Assembly	SOFAZ	State Oil Fund of the Azerbaijan Republic
HLPG	High level planning group	SSR	Soviet Socialist Republic
IA	International Alert	OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
IDP	Internally Displaced Person	UN	United Nations
		USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
		YAP	Yeni Azerbaycan Party

Map of Azerbaijan and Armenia



Disclaimer: this map shows places referred to in this publication for illustrative purposes and does not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of Conciliation Resources concerning the legal status of any country or territory or concerning the delimitation of frontiers or boundaries.

Key disputed place names

Official Armenian sources do not use Armenian variants of locations in the occupied territories outside of former Nagorny Karabakh Autonomous Oblast. In this publication we have as far as possible used the names employed at the onset of the conflict. Thus for example we have used Stepanakert rather than Khankendi and Shusha rather than Shushi.

Azerbaijani

Khankendi
Shusha
Agdere
Khojavend
Goranboy
Khanlar
Lachin(town)
Lachin (province)
Kelbajar
Gubatly
Zangelan
Jebrail

Armenian

Stepanakert
Shushi
Mardakert
Martuni
Shaumian
Getashen
Berdzor
Kashatagh
Karvajar
Kashunik
Kovsakan
Jabrail

Any writing on unrecognized political formations faces the minefield of how to refer to institutions and political posts lacking international legitimacy. Some authors express this ambiguity through the use of inverted commas, e.g. the 'republic' or the 'president'. In this publication we have opted not to use this approach for the sake of ease of reading. We refer to such institutions and posts as unrecognized or *de facto*.

Political glossary

administrative resources	Resources enjoyed by incumbent candidates in elections, deriving from their control over public sector personnel, finances and allocations, as well as state-owned media. Many post-Soviet governments have made extensive use of these resources to marginalize electoral challenges from opposition groups.
Azeri	There is no clear distinction in meaning between this term and the cognate Azerbaijani. In this publication we have used Azeri to denote ethnically Azeri populations, and the term Azerbaijani to refer without ethnic distinction to the citizens and state institutions of the Republic of Azerbaijan.
de facto / de jure states	A <i>de facto</i> state is a polity, typically emerging from a separatist conflict, with many empirical attributes of internal sovereignty (such as control over a given territory, capacity to provide government and services for its population and popular legitimacy), but which in legal terms forms part of the metropolitan or <i>de jure</i> state from which it has separated. A <i>de jure</i> state possesses external sovereignty, namely recognition and the right to enter into relations with other sovereign states, and is commonly assumed to also possess attributes of internal sovereignty.
ethno-federalism	See <i>titular nation</i> .
First Secretary	The highest executive position within Communist Party structures at the national republic and all-Union levels of the Soviet Union. This position was traditionally held by a member of the <i>titular nation</i> , while a Slav held the position of Second Secretary.
interim status	Related to a phased approach to resolving the conflict, interim status would be the internationally recognized status that Karabakh (while continuing to exist in its present form) would receive having accepted a first phase agreement, before its 'final status' was worked out in a second phase agreement.
international administration	A concept derived from conflict resolution efforts in the former Yugoslavia advanced in some discussions as a solution to the problem of the return of displaced Azeris to the town of Shusha. The concept suggests that Shusha would be administered by an international authority, providing the necessary security guarantees for the returning Azeri population. Once a sufficient level of return had been achieved, the town would then serve as a base from which to implement return to more scattered surrounding settlements. Some Armenian commentators reject this concept as compromising the sovereignty of Nagorno Karabakh.
metropolitan state	A state from which a territory formerly incorporated within its administrative borders has separated and from which this territory seeks independence. The use of the term metropolitan does not imply, however, that such a state should necessarily be seen as 'imperial' or 'colonial' in nature.
Nagorno-Karabakh	A commonly used variant spelling of Nagorny Karabakh in Russian, used in the English language insignia of the unrecognized Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. Technically, however, since <i>nagorny</i> ('mountainous') is a Russian adjective, the variant used in this publication complies with Russian linguistic norms.
near abroad	A term translating the Russian <i>blizhnee zarubezhē</i> , signifying Russia's relationship with the former Soviet republics, now independent states.

A destroyed bridge at Sadakhlo market at the meeting point of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

Source: Ruben Mangasaryan/Patker



<i>nomenklatura</i>	<i>Rus.</i> The <i>nomenklatura</i> formed an informal elite group within the Soviet Union from which all important political posts were appointed and which comprised the establishment. <i>Nomenklatura</i> membership was associated first and foremost with loyalty to the Soviet regime, political conservatism and a number of material privileges and benefits.
<i>oblast</i>	<i>Rus.</i> Region.
<i>obshchina</i>	<i>Rus.</i> Literally meaning 'community', this term is frequently used to denote non-titular (see <i>titular nation</i>) minorities in post-Soviet states. In the context of the Karabakh conflict the term is used in Azerbaijani sources to denote the Karabakh Armenian population, and in Armenian sources to denote the Karabakh Azeri population. In both cases the implication is that the population denoted is non-titular and therefore not deserving of territorialized autonomy. Neither the Karabakh Armenians nor the Karabakh Azeris accept the term as a self-designation.
occupied territories	This term may be used in a narrow sense to denote the territories surrounding Nagorny Karabakh captured by Armenian forces in 1993-94. These are the Azerbaijani regions of Kelbajar, Zengelan, Jebrail, Gubatly and Lachin, occupied in full, and parts of the regions of Aghdam (77 per cent according to independent experts; 35 per cent according to Karabakh authorities) and Fizuli (33/25 per cent). In a wider sense it may be used to denote Nagorny Karabakh and the above-mentioned territories collectively.
package approach	One of the methodologies of arriving at a peace agreement for Nagorny Karabakh discussed in the late 1990s, contrasted with the step-by-step approach. The 'package' implies the simultaneous resolution of all outstanding issues, crucially the issue of status.
perestroika	<i>Rus.</i> Literally meaning 'rebuilding', this term came to popularly denote the political reforms in the Soviet Union initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985.
Politburo	The Politburo, from 'political bureau', was the executive organization of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.
step-by-step approach	One of the methodologies of arriving at a peace agreement for Nagorny Karabakh discussed in the late 1990s, contrasted with the package approach. The step-by-step approach implies a phased process addressing the consequences of armed conflict (above all occupation) before the core issue of status.
Supreme Soviet	The highest representative body within Soviet national republics and the Soviet Union as a whole.
titular nation	The granting of privileged status to the nationality for which a territory was named was a cornerstone of Soviet nationalities policy, and a defining feature of the system often referred to as 'ethno-federalism'. Titular status served to territorialize the eponymous nation, deemed to be 'autochthonous' (indigenous to the territory) within its given boundaries, institutionalizing a powerful sense of ownership by these groups over those territories and legitimating a considerable degree of self-administration (if not self-rule <i>per se</i>). Other (non-titular) ethnic groups tended to become marginalized over time, and seen as immigrants regardless of their settlement history. It was exceptional for one ethnic group to be the titular nation in more than one territory, as the Armenians were in Armenia and the NKAO.
Yerazi	An informal and for some pejorative term used in Azerbaijan to denote Azerbaijanis of Armenian origin. The term means 'Azeris from Yerevan'. The Yerazi form a cohesive political clan that, together with the Nakhichevani clan, has been a dominant force in internal Azerbaijani politics since Soviet times.

Introduction

Laurence Broers

The Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over the region of Nagorny Karabakh has languished in a state of 'no war, no peace' for over a decade since the ceasefire of 1994. The conflict is a central obstacle to the political development of Armenia and Azerbaijan and a key impediment to the development of the South Caucasus region as a whole and its integration into the wider world. It is one of several conflicts between former federal units of the Soviet Union widely framed in terms of a clash between the principles of the self-determination of peoples and the territorial integrity of states. Reference to these principles, understood in absolute terms rather than the more relativistic approach increasingly salient in international practice, continues to dominate the claims of the respective parties to the conflict. Armenia and the Armenians of Nagorny Karabakh insist on sovereign self-determination for the latter, previously an autonomous unit within Soviet Azerbaijan; Azerbaijan insists on territorial integrity within its Soviet-era boundaries, offset by ill-defined autonomy for the Karabakh Armenians.

Overlaying what is fundamentally a territorial dispute are the consequences of the 1991-94 war: a decisive Armenian military victory resulting in Armenian control of Nagorny Karabakh and the further occupation of seven districts surrounding it. Continued occupation or release of these territories forms a key asset to the Armenian side in its attempts to prioritize the determination of Nagorny Karabakh's future status as a precondition for dialogue on other issues. It has thus proved impossible to disentangle negotiations over the consequences of armed conflict from the substantive issues underlying it.

A decade of stagnation has seen international attention to the conflict wane amid exasperation at the lack of progress in the peace process and the more urgent demands of flashpoints elsewhere on the planet. This issue of Accord seeks to refocus attention on the Karabakh peace process and to explore the logic

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behind the current equilibrium of stalemate. In the first part of the issue the history of the conflict is charted, the competing visions of the parties to it are presented in their own terms and the history of the peace process is documented. Yet beyond the battlefield and the negotiating table, both Armenian and Azerbaijani societies have undergone radical transformations as a result of the conflict. These include the mutual expulsion of Armenians from Azerbaijan and Azeris from Armenia (and thereby the loss of much of both republics' former ethnic diversity), the militarization of societies and political cultures, a corresponding weakening of democratic impulses, and stunted economic development deriving from blockades and lost investment, exacerbating the already traumatic transition from command to market economies. The articles in the second half of the issue address these broad transformations with which any peace settlement must engage if it is to endure.

Defining terms

One of the first problems encountered in approaching the conflict over Nagorny Karabakh is that the parties to it and external observers construct the conflict, and therefore define its structure, in different ways. De Waal's opening article quickly dispels the popular notion that the conflict can be reduced to incompatible ethnic or religious identities or so-called 'civilizational' differences. As he shows, such explanations neither explain Armenians' and Azerbaijanis' long history of peaceful cohabitation nor the intermittent nature of explosions of violence between them.

The following articles provide insight into the competing visions of the conflict among the parties to it, and how this is reflected in contradictory views of the

necessary structure of the peace process aimed at resolving it. Two contributions from the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan, Elmar Mammadyarov and Vartan Oskanian, lay out conflicting state perspectives. Azerbaijan's official position defines the conflict as a bilateral interstate conflict between itself and Armenia, an understanding rooted in perceptions of Armenian irredentism, ambitions for territorial expansion and a military invasion of Azerbaijan. In accordance with this view Azerbaijan makes no distinction between Armenia and the Armenians of Nagorny Karabakh; direct negotiations with the *de facto* authorities in Karabakh are ruled out as *a priori* legitimating the latter's claim to sovereign statehood. The official Armenian position defines the conflict in terms of a trilateral framework, defining Nagorny Karabakh and Azerbaijan as the key protagonists, with Armenia playing a only a secondary role of interested party and security guarantor for the Armenians of Karabakh. Rejecting claims of irredentism, the Armenian position situates the conflict within the broader discourse of self-determination and decolonization structuring understandings of the collapse of the Soviet Union as a whole. The Armenians of Nagorny Karabakh support this view and have consistently lobbied for inclusion as an explicitly recognized party to the peace process.

As the following chapters by Baghdasarian and Huseynov show, conflicting conceptual terminology continues in the definition of the respective claims of the Armenian and Azerbaijani populations of Nagorny Karabakh. Informed by hierarchical Soviet understandings of levels of rights inhering in different categories of collective identity, both Karabakh Armenians and Karabakh Azerbaijanis reject the terms 'minority' or 'community' (*obshchina* in Russian), both claiming Karabakh as their national homeland.

The resilience of the Soviet legacy has at least two implications for outside observers. The first is that anything less than assiduous use of terminology can inadvertently reflect the bias of one or other side. To illustrate the complexities of the lexicon of the Karabakh conflict and the potential pitfalls in using one or another term this issue of *Accord* includes a political glossary detailing competing definitions of key terms. The second implication is the thorough discrediting of concepts of autonomy by the experience of dysfunctional federalism under Soviet rule. Secessionist minorities in the South Caucasus regard promises of autonomy with the same lack of seriousness as the leaders of majority groups who make them. Outsiders prescribing autonomy arrangements as solutions to the region's conflicts must take this context into account if they wish their proposals to be taken any more seriously.

A crowded peace process

Situated at the margins of European, Eurasian and Middle Eastern geopolitical spheres, the Karabakh conflict bewilders the observer in terms of the number of actors involved. The conflict has intersected with and deeply coloured the emergence of a new geopolitical space in the South Caucasus, a region historically and today where great powers compete for influence. Indeed, the competing agendas and unilateral initiatives of international mediators are often held to be a key explanation of the lack of progress in the peace process. Early mediation attempts were initiated by Russia, Kazakhstan and Iran; from 1992 the Karabakh conflict emerged as a key test-case for the validity of the 'New World Order' that many claimed would succeed Cold War geopolitics, and the capacity of the institutions created to administer it: the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe, later the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), under whose aegis the 'Minsk Group' was given the mandate to mediate in the Karabakh conflict.

Initially debilitated by unfolding events on the battlefield, the resulting OSCE-sponsored process has been oriented towards securing agreement between the sides on both the content and methodology of a settlement. As the chapter by Jacoby shows, however, the process has not vindicated hopes and expectations for greater cooperation among leading powers. Subsequent chapters by Zulfugarov and Libaridian further provide evidence of how the parties to the conflict continue to fear that peace will institute a new regional hegemony favouring the other side. Their contributions also highlight a central dilemma for many peace processes: the tension inherent in processes managed by states for states in conflict scenarios featuring non-state actors. The *de facto* authorities in Nagorny Karabakh may constitute a particular kind of

non-state actor, one that is highly structured and organized, yet as Libaridian argues, the statist premise underlying international mediation that minorities would relinquish aspirations for independence in return for assurances of stability, economic prosperity and minority rights has proved unfounded. Similarly, as Zulfugarov shows, Azerbaijan's hopes that a body enshrining the principle of territorial integrity would mediate in its favour have not been realized.

This sense of disappointment should not, however, obscure the underlying point that the current structure of the peace process marginalizes precisely those communities that have the most to gain or lose from it: the Karabakh Armenians and the displaced Karabakh Azerbaijani community. Establishing contact between these two constituencies, which must ultimately live in peace in the case of a settlement, must form an integral aspect of future peacemaking efforts, a factor acknowledged in June 2005 by the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry.

The absence of a clear regional hegemon has also contributed to an idiosyncratic feature of the Karabakh conflict explored in Antonenko's article: the self-regulating nature of the ceasefire regime. The relative stability of the ceasefire indicates that neither Armenia nor Azerbaijan have hitherto been inclined to resume violence. However, as Freizer warns in her contribution, rising ceasefire violations, increased military expenditures and mutual demonization may reach a tipping point where such an outcome becomes inevitable.

Parameters of participation: elites and societies

The readiness among some sectors of Armenian and Azerbaijani societies to blame external actors for the lack of progress towards resolution introduces the theme of ownership, and the extent of societal participation in the peace process. As many of the chapters in this issue suggest, only the highest echelons of the political establishments in both countries have been involved in direct contact with the other side: presidents, their aides and foreign ministers. Syndromes of elitism, secretiveness and centralization inherited from Soviet rule have structured post-Soviet approaches to peacemaking in Armenia and Azerbaijan, as regimes have maintained tight monopolies on the management of the peace process and information about its contents. Autonomous civic initiatives to broaden debate on the conflict – and specifically what can legitimately be said about it in public – are regarded with suspicion, or worse, confronted with charges of 'capitulation'. Elitism in the peace process has forestalled the involvement of wider societies and maintains a huge rift between the rhetoric Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders use to frame

the issues for domestic audiences and their positions at the negotiating table. The following series of articles addresses the interface between elites and societies and the impacts of the conflict on different levels of society.

The policing of monopolies on the management of the peace process and contacts with the other side have severely curtailed opportunities for engagement at the civil society level. As Ishkanian and Hasanov show in their article, the number of civic initiatives has dwindled over time and civil society's capacity to broaden the parameters of participation is limited. In Azerbaijan civil society is fragile in the face of a regime enjoying considerable autonomy deriving from its control of oil revenues. In Armenia domestic civil society prioritizes other issues over Karabakh, a reflection of the fact that civil society agendas do not necessarily match outsiders' expectations of it as a constituency for conciliation.

Rzayev and Grigoryan chart the role of the media in covering the conflict. Their somewhat pessimistic conclusion is that while the war provided new opportunities for greater autonomy among journalists, the post-war impasse has seen the media in both Armenia and Azerbaijan draw closer to official stances by reproducing militancy and honouring taboos on the subject of potential concessions. In their contribution Baghdasarian and Yunusov chart some of the major social and attitudinal transformations undergone by Armenian and Azerbaijani societies. Their conclusion strongly suggests the paradox of parallel processes in neighbouring, yet mutually isolated societies. Finally Champain considers some of the economic costs of the current stalemate and the prospects for economic development to positively influence the peace process.

Collectively these articles strongly suggest the movement of societies as a whole away from conciliation and towards the internalization of identities as either victor (Armenia) or victim (Azerbaijan). Mutually exclusive identities constructed *since* the war pose serious obstacles to a politics of dialogue, yet mirror one another in the narratives they tell. Underpinning these identities are competing understandings of historical justice tightly interwoven with national ideologies. For instance, if some Armenian sources have sought to situate the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict within a broader narrative of genocide at the hands of 'Turks', official Azerbaijani sources project the problem of refugees and displacement as a solely Azerbaijani problem. There is, moreover, a reciprocal, competitive aspect to such 'symbolic monopolies', as witness attempts in Azerbaijan to construct a narrative of the Karabakh conflict as 'genocide' at the hands of Armenians. On each side there is a tendency to highlight the most extreme instances of violence (for Azeris, the massacre at Khojaly, for Armenians the pogroms of Sumgait and

Baku), which are not representative but become remembered as such. Narratives of coexistence and cooperation are lost in this process: as the conflict developed, both communities '*began to remember*' historical enmities towards each other, enmities now institutionalized within official narratives reproduced in the media. Plotted along parallel courses, Armenian and Azerbaijani histories do not meet.

Democratization and the capacity for peace

If nationalist conflicts defined the 1990s and structured the contours of the re-establishment of independent statehood in the South Caucasus, the current decade is being defined by state-society struggles over the forms that statehood should take. In recent years regimes in both Armenia and Azerbaijan have been confronted with expressions of considerable discontent with the pace and reach of democratization. Lacking robust mandates, and having promoted a culture of homogenizing militancy in part as a result, political elites have left themselves little room for the compromises that any peace settlement must involve. On more than one occasion tentative agreement reached at the negotiating table has foundered when put before domestic audiences. As the articles by Musabayov and Tchilingirian argue, governments in both Azerbaijan and Armenia have sought to manipulate the 'no peace, no war' impasse for internal political gains, rather than to establish preconditions for its resolution. Finally Broers considers the impact of non-recognition on the political development and democratization process in Nagorny Karabakh itself. In short, throughout the region it seems that only democratic dividends deriving from improved state-society relations may ultimately furnish the necessary resources to break the current impasse in the peace process.

It appears inevitable that any future progress towards peace must involve a widening and deepening of participation and therefore ownership of the peace process. This is possible only in a context where regimes feel more secure in their mandates and no longer feel compelled to reify a hardline stance on the Karabakh issue as a litmus test of legitimacy. Achieving this presupposes a far greater public space for engagement between state and society and the creation of a politics of dialogue within, as well as between, societies. Since its inception, the transformative power of the Karabakh conflict has been demonstrated again and again. The crucial question for the future is how political elites and wider societies in Armenia and Azerbaijan will respond to the potentially far-reaching challenge of transforming politics implicit in the quest for its resolution.

The Nagorny Karabakh conflict

origins, dynamics and misperceptions

Thomas de Waal

Thomas de Waal is Caucasus Editor of the Institute for War and Peace Reporting in London. He has written widely on South Caucasian and Russian politics, and is the author of *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War*.

All conflicts have a pre-history. Few have as clear a beginning as the Nagorny Karabakh conflict. The basic positions – the Karabakh Armenians' determination to secede from Azerbaijan with the support of Armenia and Azerbaijanis' resolve to stop that happening – were adopted in February 1988 and that month saw turmoil erupt as if out of the blue in the form of demonstrations, strikes, political quarrels, flights of refugees and pogroms. That full-scale Armenian-Azerbaijani fighting only broke out at the end of 1991 is more a matter of weaponry than of intention.

The events of February 1988 were dramatic, sudden, and almost universally unanticipated in a Europe that had all but forgotten the power of nationalism as a political force. In that sense, by being the first serious nationalist quarrel of the late Communist era, the Karabakh conflict can be called both the most unexpected and the most predetermined of all these disputes. More than any others in Yugoslavia or the Soviet Union, the conflict was all but inevitable because its causes lay in the 'deep structure' of the relationship between its two parties in late Communist times. Four elements – divergent national narratives, a disputed territorial boundary, an unstable security arrangement and lack of dialogue between the two parties – had made fissures that would break Armenia and Azerbaijan apart, as soon as trouble began. Yet because the problem was both so new and so profound, no mechanism was found – or has yet been found – to repair the damage.

Narrating Karabakh: identity and ownership

Contradictory national narratives pervaded both societies at all levels. Before fighting began, intellectuals had formulated detailed arguments that formed a national frame of reference for what happened on the battlefield. These positions were first staked out during



the 1960s post-Stalinist 'thaw' initiated by Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, which created conditions for sanctioned, or 'orthodox', forms of nationalism. These proved difficult to control, however, as diametrically opposed versions of history were later propagated by writers such as Zia Bunyatov and Zori Balayan.

When the dispute broke to the surface in 1988, teams of pamphleteers and propagandists on both sides were ready to rush into the breach and they began producing works with titles such as 'Karabakh: the guilty party in the tragedy is well known'. Disappointingly little has changed in this regard. These ideological battles continue to this day on the internet among a narrow audience, yet opinion polls in both countries suggest an overwhelming majority of respondents find it impossible to countenance Karabakh being given to the 'other' in any peace agreement. It is customary on both sides to believe that to be without Nagorny Karabakh is to have an incomplete national identity, that Armenian or Azerbaijani nationhood is a stunted and wounded

thing without it. This in turn feeds into a wider sensation of insecurity in the face of the threat posed by the 'other' and its allies, real or perceived.

We should not dismiss these fears as fantasies – after all the modern history of both Armenians and Azerbaijanis contains enough real instances of catastrophe and loss to provide grounds for genuine insecurity. In both countries, many more compatriots live outside the home state than inside it, as a result of war, expulsions and Great Power treaties. The *Treaty of Turkmenchai* of 1828 divided Azerbaijan into two – Russian and Iranian – parts and the Great Power politics of 1915–21 truncated Armenia. While the mass killing of Armenians in Anatolia in 1915 dwarfs in scale anything else committed in the neighbourhood in modern history, Azerbaijanis also suffered grievously from early twentieth century history – often at the hands of Armenians. It has been precisely those episodes where Azeris and Armenians suffered at each other's hands (rather than Russians, Georgians or others) that have been the focus of contemporary nationalist narratives.

The modernity of the Karabakh conflict

The first major Armenian-Azerbaijani tensions can be traced to the end of the nineteenth century. Armenians and Azerbaijanis were the two major national groups in the borderland between the Russian, Ottoman and Persian empires and as such were intermingled over territory stretching hundreds of miles. Historically, the Armenians tended to be a more successful socio-economic group, with a heavier concentration in towns and cities as a prosperous merchant class. With the rise of nationalism and heightened Russian-Ottoman conflict at the end of the nineteenth century, the Armenians became both the most militant and the most vulnerable community in Ottoman Anatolia. And, while a few generations before mainly Shiite Azerbaijanis and mainly Sunni Turks might have found little in common, they increasingly found common cause – and were identified as one and the same by Armenians. This has fed through into the Armenian generalization that Azerbaijanis are also ‘Turks’ – and therefore share complicity for the 1915 genocide.

The Armenian-Azerbaijani fighting of 1917-20 can be seen as a messy attempt to draw borders and build a viable state – a bloody process that was being played out across the rest of the Eastern Europe and the Balkans. It was also war by proxy, with Russia and Turkey continuing a long-running territorial conflict that had lasted for most of the previous century, each using the Armenians and Azerbaijanis respectively as their local allies.

The misfortune of Karabakh was that it was always caught in the middle. Geographically it was situated on the Azerbaijani side of the mountainous watershed that runs down between the two countries. Demographically it was mixed, as it evidently had been for centuries: the Armenians predominated in the hills, with more Azerbaijanis in the plains, as well as in the city of Shusha (or Shushi as it was known to its Armenian inhabitants). Culturally it had great significance for both sides. For Armenians, the meaning of Karabakh lay in the dozens of Armenian churches dotted around the territory, its tradition of local autonomy through the “melik” princes of the Middle Ages and the martial reputation of Karabakh Armenians. For Azerbaijanis, the associations were primarily with the khanate based around the great eighteenth century city of Shusha and with the great cultural flowering of composers and poets such as Vagif, Natevan and Uzeir Hajibekov. Karabakh was in short a culturally rich border-zone, like Alsace, Flanders or Kashmir and, like them, fated to be a battlefield.

In 1920-21 the only ‘solution’ of this dispute could come either by military victory – as basically happened in Anatolia, Zangezur and Nakhichevan – or by the imposition from above of a new structure by an imperial power. After the British failed to impose a settlement, the imperial arbiters turned out to be the Bolsheviks, whose 11th Army conquered Karabakh in May 1920. On 5 July 1921 the Bolsheviks’ Caucasian committee, the Kavburo, under the chairmanship of Stalin ruled that the mountainous part of Karabakh would be part of Azerbaijan. In July 1923 the Nagorny (or Mountainous) Karabakh Autonomous Region (NKAO) was created within Azerbaijan, with borders that gave it an overwhelming Armenian population of 94 per cent of the total inhabitants.

This arrangement turned the NKAO into one of only two instances in the Soviet system of an autonomous province inside one union republic that had a strong affiliation to another union republic (the other instance, Russian-majority Crimea, though also unstable, has proved a less fissiparous case). The contradictions of this arrangement were never openly discussed, but the two national narratives were still far apart: many Armenians never accepted the 1921 decision and protests against it were made in 1945, 1965 and 1977. On 20 February 1988 the NKAO local Soviet voted to request the Soviet government to permit Karabakh to leave Soviet Azerbaijan and become part of Soviet Armenia. It was perhaps predictable that the vote took Azerbaijanis completely by surprise: to them that Nagorny Karabakh was part of their republic was a self-evident fact, reinforced by everyday news as well as by scholarly literature that stressed the territory’s Azerbaijani heritage.

A key point must be made here, which is that these underlying structural tensions in the architecture of the region had little impact on the daily life of the residents living there. As most Armenians and Azerbaijanis will tell you, they traditionally had a better trading relationship with each other than either community did with Georgians; rates of intermarriage were also high. Soviet Karabakhis from both communities tended to be bilingual, on good terms with their neighbours and little concerned by the nationalist narratives being advanced by intellectuals in Yerevan or Baku.

It is an elementary mistake therefore to see the Karabakh conflict as a clash of ‘ancient hatreds’ or as a religious dispute. Links of culture, business and marriage still bind Armenians and Azerbaijanis together in Moscow, Georgia and Iran – anywhere in fact outside the zone of the Karabakh conflict.

Security dilemmas

What was it then that pushed these ordinary neighbours into conflict with one another? The precipitate breakdown in security and trust could be attributed to the rigidities of the Soviet state, which had failed to manage the political contradictions inherent in Nagorny Karabakh. The heavily centralized system had enforced security through fear but it had almost no mechanisms of resolving a dispute between two communities by consensus.

The Soviet Union created territorial units defined in terms of nationality, but it did not allow the free formation of horizontal civic bonds across society in the sense of participation in public life by organizations defined neither by nationality nor the Communist Party. By 1988 ideological socialism had vanished as a guiding principle, so, when crisis struck, it was all too logical that both Armenians and Azerbaijanis showed allegiance to their nationality and homeland, rather than to putative ideals of 'brotherhood' and 'workers' solidarity'. They had no interest in engaging in bilateral dialogue in pursuit of an acceptable compromise, even if they had wanted to. No Karabakh Armenians thought of pressing their case in Baku and no Baku leaders thought of inviting them: one Karabakh Armenian advocate of compromise, Valery Grigorian, part of a delegation from Stepanakert to Baku in 1991, was murdered on his return. Instead both sides instinctively sent delegations to Moscow and made telephone calls to the Kremlin to bend the ear of Communist Party officials. Both believed this was a dispute which Moscow would arbitrate and in which there would be one winner.

Ordinary people thus soon lost whatever bonds they had had with their neighbours and friends. Once the political dispute had begun, residents in Shusha and Stepanakert could only be identified as either Armenians or Azerbaijanis – an act of identification that when it came to mixed marriages had to be deliberately made. They had no third option to choose, apart from voting with their feet and leaving their hometown altogether. It is indicative that the Armenian-Azerbaijani community with the strongest civic consciousness, the one in Baku, survived the political strains the longest and fell apart only in January 1990.

Some have seen this breakdown in relations as being economically motivated – as being a quarrel over scarce resources – yet this analysis also does not stand up to scrutiny. The tensions within Karabakh pre-dated by decades the depressed Soviet economy of the 1980s and the province was not appreciably poorer than many other parts of the Soviet Union, having average

economic indicators for Azerbaijan and being slightly poorer than Armenia. A promise of a "small renaissance" by Gorbachev and a big influx of investment from Moscow spearheaded by Arkady Volsky in 1988-89 were not enough to persuade the Karabakh Armenians it was within their interests to stay within Soviet Azerbaijan.

From conflict to violence

The breakneck speed with which events occurred in early 1988 suggests how fragile the situation was. First a large group of Azerbaijanis fled southern Armenia, complaining of brutal harassment (a smaller group had left some months before). Then the Nagorny Karabakh Soviet made its unprecedented vote. This led to rallies in Stepanakert and Baku, and then to the largest demonstrations ever seen in the post-war Soviet Union in Yerevan. At the same time the post-war Soviet Union experienced its first major strike by workers in Nagorny Karabakh.

What tipped the balance from confrontational politics into outright conflict were the pogroms in Sumgait on 28-29 February 1988. These came about through a combustible mix of ingredients: a depressed and polluted town with a mixed ethnic community; a sudden influx into Sumgait of Azerbaijanis fleeing Armenia; a town leadership that was either confused or absent; silence from the authorities in Moscow; reports that two Azerbaijanis had been killed in Karabakh; and a series of angry demonstrations. All of this flared into a ferocious pogrom in the Armenian quarter of the town, leading to a belated armed intervention by the Soviet army. The official death toll (almost certainly reliable because it tallies with lists of named victims) was 26 Armenians and 6 Azerbaijanis. Sumgait effectively made the Karabakh dispute into the Karabakh conflict, with only a lack of access to weaponry preventing an immediate escalation into war.

A crisis of management

Although there have been many conspiracy theories about Sumgait, the weight of evidence suggests that it was a grassroots upsurge of violence, mishandled by the Soviet authorities, but not provoked and still less instigated by them. Moscow played a less than glorious role in the outbreak of the conflict, but it is wrong, as many in the Caucasus still do, to blame the start of the dispute in 1988 on manipulation by the centre, with most ordinary Armenians and Azerbaijanis relegated to the role of bystanders. All the Politburo documents available from the time show that the central decision-making authority of the Soviet Union was immediately out of its depth, unable to cope with an unwelcome and



unfamiliar challenge. Gorbachev was immediately wrong-footed because the republican Communist Parties of Armenia and Azerbaijan refused to comply with his wishes. In an outburst of frustration typical of this period, Gorbachev lashed out at the Party leaders in both Baku and Yerevan, complaining to a Politburo meeting convened to discuss the Sumgait events on 29 February 1988 that, “We need information and it’s hard to obtain it – both sides are hiding it. Everyone is involved.”

In retrospect Gorbachev could probably have used only two tactics in 1988 to dampen down this growing conflagration. It is to his credit that he did not try the first, which was mass repression. Mass arrests of all political activists in Armenia and Azerbaijan might have cowed the populations of both Soviet republics in the short term, but this would have carried a big political cost for Gorbachev and would surely have only postponed trouble to a later date. The second option was still more fantastic even for the most liberal leader in Soviet history. This was to begin a democratic debate designed to find consensus – by flying to the region, holding talks, commissioning an independent enquiry into the problems associated with the dispute and negotiating a compromise solution. In the Soviet Caucasus of 1988, this kind of initiative was simply unimaginable. Significantly, when both Armenians

and Azerbaijanis continue to criticize Gorbachev for his role in the Karabakh dispute, it is not for his failure to be a fair mediator, but for his failure to use the authority of the Kremlin to award Nagorny Karabakh to its just owner – them.

The evidence shows that Moscow in fact lost full control of both Armenia and Azerbaijan as early as 1988. Gorbachev replaced both Communist Party leaders in Baku and Yerevan in May 1988, only to find that their successors took an even more robust line on the Nagorny Karabakh issue. Both Soviet republics embarked on a process of nation-building, adopting new nationalist symbols, creating new institutions, and deporting *en masse* their respective Armenian or Azerbaijani minorities.

Another watershed came in January 1990, when the Soviet leadership lost Azerbaijan, first yielding the streets of Baku to the nationalist opposition and then making things many times worse by sending in the army to the city to crush the Azerbaijani Popular Front and killing dozens of civilians. The first victims of this crisis were Baku’s remaining Armenians, more than 90 of whom died in pogroms before they were evacuated from a city that finally lost its reputation as a haven of multiethnic tolerance.

Escalation and open war

The end of the Soviet Union in 1991 transformed the Karabakh conflict from a civil war to an interstate one. As the 15 former Soviet republics became independent states within their Soviet boundaries, Nagorny Karabakh was formally recognized internationally as being part of Azerbaijan – a central issue that still stands at the heart of the dispute. At the same time the transfer of Soviet weaponry to each side increased the destructive capacity of both combatants.

In purely physical terms, the geographical and demographic realities on the ground set an Azerbaijani side that surrounded Nagorny Karabakh with Azerbaijani towns and villages against an Armenian side that was separated from nearby Armenia but had far greater control of Karabakh itself. The military outcome of the conflict thus hinged on the ability of the Azerbaijanis to blockade Nagorny Karabakh and force their terms on it, set against the capacity of the Armenians to break out of the military cordon and link up with nearby Armenia.

The blackest episodes of the war from the Armenian perspective are the remorseless Azerbaijani shelling of Stepanakert in 1991-92 and the sweep through Karabakh by Azerbaijani forces in 1992. The Azerbaijanis recall with horror the worst massacre of the war when an estimated 485 people, the vast majority civilians, were killed in and around Khojaly by the Armenian forces in February 1992. They also suffered by far the greatest humanitarian crisis with the occupation by Armenian forces of seven regions around Karabakh in 1992-94 and the expulsion of half a million people from those regions. The aftermath of this expansion of the war to a vast swathe of territory outside Nagorny Karabakh (if Karabakh itself is included, then Armenians currently control 13.6 per cent of the internationally recognized territory of Azerbaijan) remains an open wound in the unsolved conflict.

These were brutal acts of war. But the blame for them should be shared with the outside world for failing to commit more resources to securing the warring parties' commitment to a settlement. These brutal acts arguably stemmed from a military logic in a situation of kill-or-be-killed (although it is harder to see a strategic logic in Khojaly, where warped motives of revenge may have played a big role). To prevail, the Azerbaijanis needed to tighten the economic and military noose around Karabakh, an aim that they bloodily failed to achieve. In turn the Armenians needed to transform Karabakh from a vulnerable enclave into a defensible fortress – a task they bloodily achieved.

Together in isolation

A recurrent theme of the Karabakh dispute since 1988 has been the lack of an effective and authoritative outside arbiter. The conflict can be said to have originated as a clash of political ambitions for a traditionally disputed territory at a moment of imperial decline. This quickly turned into a matter of elementary security, when the imperial centre was unable to protect vulnerable communities and both sides fell back on their own resources.

The dynamics of conflict of course soon transformed what had already begun. After February 1988, economic factors also began to fuel the conflict and do so to this day. Profiteering arms-dealers, greedy looters, middlemen and mafiosi all came to have a stake in the growth of the conflict and in its non-resolution. Also, the awfulness of war and the hateful propaganda it has spawned and the desire for revenge caused by a conflict that has taken 20,000 lives have progressively undermined the common culture once shared by Armenians and Azerbaijanis and created an antipathy that is now projected back into the past.

What are the implications of this brief analysis of the roots and evolution of the conflict for attempts to resolve it? First, that socio-economic conditions were not to blame and that Armenian-Azerbaijani social and economic links, although damaged over the years, are entirely repairable. Second, that previous political arrangements for Karabakh have contained lethal structural flaws that perpetuated mutual insecurities, and that only the latter-day Great Powers of Russia and the West have the capacity to devise a new overarching security structure that makes all sides feel safe from potential aggression. Finally, that the heart of the conflict lies within the narrow political narratives that Armenia and Azerbaijan have come to employ both in imagining themselves and the other. To break out of the prison of the conflict, they need to begin the titanic effort of a genuine dialogue about their common future. Since 1988 Nagorny Karabakh has come to represent an ever-widening chasm, but both Armenians and Azerbaijanis need to re-imagine it not only as a territory but as a bridge, on which they have a firm footing but are freely joined to the other side.

Towards peace in the Nagorny Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan through reintegration and cooperation

Elmar Mammadyarov



Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev before a poster of Heydar Aliyev.

Source: Reuters/Sergei Karpukhin

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The ongoing armed conflict in and around the Nagorny Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan has resulted in the occupation of almost one-fifth of the territory of Azerbaijan and made approximately one out of every eight persons in the country an internally displaced person or refugee. The Government of Azerbaijan's strategy is aimed at the liberation of all occupied territories, the return of forcibly displaced persons to their places of origin, and the establishment of durable peace and stability in the Nagorny Karabakh region as well as in the entire South Caucasus.

The legal and political constituent for the settlement of the conflict is based on the norms and principles of international law, laid down in the United Nations (UN) Security Council resolutions 822, 853, 874 and 884 as well as in the appropriate documents and decisions of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The above-mentioned UN Security Council resolutions were adopted in 1993 in response to the occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan and reaffirmed the sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of the international borders of the Republic of Azerbaijan and all other states in the region.

Although the mediation efforts conducted for over ten years within the framework of the OSCE have not always been consistent and, except for establishment of the ceasefire, have yet to yield results, Azerbaijan continues to be committed to the settlement of the conflict within the OSCE Minsk Group. However, the success of the peace process depends on a similar commitment and constructive approach on the part of Armenia, as well as on the active contribution of all OSCE member states, especially those represented in the Minsk Group and its Co-Chairmen. We are ready to continue negotiations with Armenia in order to eliminate the consequences of its military invasion and occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan.

We are also highly appreciative of the role of other international organizations, particularly the United Nations and the Council of Europe, in formulating and consolidating the general position of the international community. This position is based on respect for the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and condemnation of the occupation and notorious ethnic cleansing of its territories, as well as addressing specific issues that, if left unaddressed, may result in serious obstacles to peace negotiations as well as unpredictable consequences. Thus, the UN General Assembly's consideration at its 59th session of the agenda item entitled 'The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan' played a crucial role in attracting attention to the issue of the illegal

transfer of Armenian settlers into the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, as well as in initiating urgent measures for putting this dangerous practice to an end.

This article is written at a time of cautiously positive signs in the drive to find a settlement to the conflict. Azerbaijan has clearly and unequivocally demonstrated its aspiration towards a constructive resolution based on the so-called Prague process and strives to make full use of all political and diplomatic resources available to it.

The territorial integrity of Azerbaijan cannot be a subject of compromise. We will not surrender an inch of our territory to anyone. Azerbaijan does not want war and remains committed to a peaceful resolution. Yet if forced by deliberate actions aimed at the further consolidation of the current status quo of occupation, Azerbaijan will be ready to resort to any other available measures to legitimately restore its territorial integrity. Territorial acquisitions and the practice of ethnic cleansing are incompatible with universal and European values and contradict the principles and ideas of peace, democracy, stability and regional cooperation.

In order to veil its aggressive policy towards Azerbaijan, the Armenian side frequently speculates on the international legal principle of the right of peoples to self-determination. In reality, the practical realization of this right, as stipulated in the relevant international documents, does not involve unilateral secession, but represents a legitimate process carried out in accordance with international and domestic law within precisely identified limits. Obviously, the critical factor in addressing the issue of self-determination with regard to the conflict in question is that all actions aimed at tearing away a part of the territory of Azerbaijan are unconstitutional and accompanied by violation of basic rules of international law, particularly those prohibiting the use of force and the acquisition of territory.

Our approach to the right of self-determination derives from its true value and envisages securing the peaceful coexistence and cooperation of the Azerbaijani and Armenian communities of the Nagorny Karabakh region and creating the necessary conditions for the effective realization of their right to participate in the conduct of public affairs, including through the formation of legitimate regional authorities at all levels.

We believe that the legal status of the Nagorny Karabakh region can be worked out only with the fully-fledged and equal participation of the citizens of Azerbaijan of both Azerbaijani and Armenian communities within the framework of a lawful and democratic process. While envisaging the realization

of this perspective in the final stage of the peace process, it is logical that the whole strategy would not become a reality without the restoration of Azerbaijan's sovereign rights over all occupied territories and the safe and dignified return of the expelled Azerbaijani population thereto.

Once an agreement is achieved, we will need the international community to help guarantee its implementation through the deployment of multinational peacekeeping forces, support for demining, restoration of communications and rehabilitation of lands, as well as the provision of security guarantees for the population in the Nagorny Karabakh region, including the creation of local police forces in the region for both Azerbaijani and Armenian communities. The Government of Azerbaijan is ready to assist in all possible ways with the infrastructural rebuilding and economic development of the region, including the attraction of investments at the local level.

Special attention in the conflict settlement should be given to the issue of communications in the region. Those who are familiar with the conflict often encounter the notion of 'corridors' or 'unimpeded access'. Azerbaijan suggests a policy of shifting from restricted, antagonistic understandings of the corridor concept to the use of all communications in the region for the mutual benefit of both sides. This approach acquires particular significance with regard to the so-called 'Lachin corridor', which is important for linking both the Armenian population in the Nagorny Karabakh region with Armenia, and Azerbaijan with its Autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan through the territory of Armenia. The use of the Lachin road in both directions along the route Aghdam-Khankendi-Shusha-Lachin-Goris-Shahbuz-Nakhichevan (with the possibility of further extension to Turkey) can provide both Azerbaijan and Armenia with guaranteed secure connections. The significance of utilizing the 'Lachin corridor' in such a way goes beyond the practical benefits of direct transport communication between two states. This road could become a 'road of peace' of great political, economic and pan-regional importance.

The Armenian-Azerbaijani war caused enormous damage and suffering to hundreds of thousands of uprooted people deprived of normal living conditions for more than a decade. A long-term solution for them, deriving from their strong desire to return to their homes, can be found only through a lasting settlement of the conflict.

Old states and new

shifting paradigms and the complex road to peace in Nagorny Karabakh

Vartan Oskanian



**Armenian President
Robert Kocharian.**

Source: Reuters/Mike Segar

Vartan Oskanian is a graduate of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, as well as Harvard University. He has served as the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia since 1998.

Over the course of the last decade, the content and focus of the negotiations on Nagorny Karabakh have changed dramatically. By breaking down the process into stages, it is possible to see how we have come to a point where – with sufficient political will – we can move more concretely towards resolving our differences.

The conflict began in 1988, when Azerbaijan used force to respond to peaceful demonstrations by the people of Nagorny Karabakh calling for this Armenian-populated region to be able to determine its own status. Even as military activities continued, there were various incongruent, uncoordinated, random and impulsive efforts at mediation from within the former Soviet space. In 1992, the conflict resolution process became internationalized through the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Yet just as we thought the fighting had stopped, Azerbaijan mounted another attack in December 1993, which was repelled by the Karabakh Armenians who took control of certain surrounding territories in order to prevent further military aggression. By May 1994, there was a mutually agreed ceasefire. At a summit of the now Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Budapest in December, the OSCE harmonized the various negotiation tracks. Thus the end of military hostilities coincided with the creation of a mechanism for serious negotiations, which continue to this day.

Over the years, international developments and self-determination processes in different parts of the world have led to fundamental changes in international thinking on the issues underlying the Karabakh conflict, as well as in the process and content of the negotiations. Relationships between states – new and old – are evolving. We have witnessed East Timor's independence through a referendum and the signing of an agreement in Sudan concluding a decades-old conflict on the basis of a referendum to be held in one part of the country. There are serious deliberations about the possibility of a referendum to determine Kosovo's status. Among political, legal and academic experts, there is a growing awareness of the possibility and reality of recognizing the right of self-determination in certain circumstances.

Each self-determination struggle must be judged by its own historical and legal circumstances, as well as the realities on the ground. Self-determination conflicts fall into four types depending on the degree of control the state exercises over its entire territory (including the territory on which those striving for self-determination actually live) and the degree of self-determination achieved in practice by those struggling for it. In the first category, those expressing a desire for self-determination exercise that right through a vote and

choose to remain part of the state. The only example of this is Quebec, which has voted to remain part of Canada. The overwhelming majority of today's secession movements conform to a second type, struggling without any degree of self-determination as the state continues to fully control the territory under question. A third category is comprised of borderline cases where the state is not able to control those desiring self-determination, who in turn are not strong enough to maintain control over their territory with any certainty of permanence.

Nagorny Karabakh falls into a completely different, fourth category. Azerbaijan has no control whatsoever over Karabakh, which has achieved all the empirical attributes of complete sovereignty in the last 15 years. In this context the attempt to convince its people to accept Azerbaijani jurisdiction by enticing them with promises of human rights and economic benefits is a senseless exercise. In addition to the duration and depth of its self-determination, Nagorny Karabakh's situation is further reinforced and made complete by the following facts. First, it seceded legally, according to the laws of the day. Second, the territory in question has never been within the jurisdiction of independent Azerbaijan. Third, Azerbaijan, in perpetrating violence against people that it considered its own citizens, has lost the moral right to custody over those people. And, finally, there is the *de facto* political reality of Nagorny Karabakh's proven ability to hold elections, govern its people, protect its borders and conduct international relations.

Azerbaijan's authorities find it difficult to come to terms with these indisputable realities. Instead, they construct their positions on new premises and myths. First, they have convinced themselves that their territories are the essence of the issue. Yet, when this conflict began, there were no territories outside Nagorny Karabakh under Armenian control. Those territories came under Armenian control not only because there was disagreement about Nagorny Karabakh's status, but also because Azerbaijan attempted the complete cleansing of all Armenians from Nagorny Karabakh.

Second, the Azerbaijani authorities want to believe that if they do not realize their maximum demands through negotiations, they can always resort to military solutions. But is it not obvious that a conclusive military resolution is not possible? A successful military solution would require more than conventional arms against the people of Nagorny Karabakh, who are defending their own homes. Azerbaijan can succeed in its attempts only by ethnically cleansing Nagorny Karabakh of all Armenians.

Third, Azerbaijan thinks that time is on its side, a belief rooted in the confidence that oil revenues will enhance their military capacity. This is a great deception, because time is not guaranteed to work in favour of any one side. International tendencies today are moving towards reinforcing the right to self-determination. The longer that Nagorny Karabakh maintains its *de facto* independence, the harder it will be to reverse the wheel of history.

Fourth, the Azerbaijani authorities think an isolated Armenia will be economically unable to sustain its position and will sooner or later agree to serious concessions. This is a faulty assumption because it is the people of Nagorny Karabakh who must first agree to concessions. Furthermore, both Armenia and Nagorny Karabakh have gone beyond mere economic survival and are recording growth.

Finally, Azerbaijan has convinced itself that by presenting Armenia as the aggressor, it will become possible to use international resolutions to force Armenian capitulation. However, Armenians have consistently demonstrated that Azerbaijan is a victim of its own aggression. The territories under Armenian control could be returned in order to assure Nagorny Karabakh's security and future; but they could be kept if that assures the same end more effectively. The purpose is security and self-determination, not acquisition of territory.

The solution will not be found either through military action or international resolutions, and no solution can be imposed from the outside. The only way to a solution is to demonstrate political will and embrace realistic positions. Armenians remain faithful to their initial premises that there cannot be a vertical link between Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh, that it must have a geographic link with Armenia, and that the security of the people of Nagorny Karabakh must be assured.

For us, the basis of resolution is the affirmation of the right of the people of Nagorny Karabakh to self-determination and international recognition of that right. Azerbaijan's acceptance of this fact – and its formalization in an agreement – will open the way for the resolution of the conflict and the elimination of its consequences.

***A monument near Stepanakert, nicknamed
Tatik Papik (Grandfather and Grandmother)
and seen as a symbol of Karabakh.***

Source: Laurence Broers

A Karabakh Armenian perspective

Gegham Baghdasarian

**Gegham Baghdasarian is one of the
founders and the current director of
the Stepanakert Press Club, and
editor of the independent newspaper
Demo. In 1992-93 he ran the press
service of the Nagorny Karabakh
Supreme Soviet, and now also serves
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Nagorno-Karabakh Republic.**

The state of 'no war, no peace' and the complete absence of official relations between Azerbaijan on the one hand and Armenia and the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (NKR) on the other pose serious obstacles to the democratic development of all the states and political entities involved in the conflict. In recent years Azerbaijani officials have used increasingly strong language regarding the possible use of force to resolve the conflict. In Armenia and Nagorny Karabakh the populations are seemingly accustomed to this and reconciled to the prospect of renewed war.

Karabakh Armenian demands

The official position of the NKR is based on three key tenets. First, there can be no direct subordination of one party to the conflict to another – that is, no vertical relationship between Azerbaijan and the NKR. Second, the NKR cannot be an enclave within Azerbaijan: the population of Karabakh must have overland access to the outside world. Third, the NKR must have security guarantees at a level determined by its leadership and its people. The fate of the territories surrounding the NKR – referred to in Armenian sources as the 'security buffer' – is an object of negotiations. This position has converged with the official position articulated by Yerevan following the accession of Robert Kocharian, formerly president of the NKR, to the Armenian presidency in 1998.

The NKR authorities do not reject outright the idea of the return of the Azeri population that fled Karabakh as a result of the war, but consider this a question to be resolved in tandem with the return of Armenian refugees to Azerbaijan. Nonetheless, in April 2005 the Foreign Minister of the NKR, Arman Melikian, announced the promulgation of a citizenship law for the NKR that would extend full citizenship rights to any Azeris returning to Karabakh in addition to a number of cultural rights as a national minority.



Azerbaijan's rejection of direct contacts with the NKR authorities, boycott of all processes concerning the NKR and attempt to cast Armenia in the role of aggressor are seen in Stepanakert as unconstructive and intransigent. The attempt to isolate Karabakh and create an economic and humanitarian crisis for its population flouts the rights of the Karabakh Armenians and is seen as an effort to force them out of their homeland. The Stepanakert authorities believe that the negotiations process can only become effective once the NKR has been properly incorporated into it; after all, it is the Karabakh authorities that are in a position to make decisions on issues of key interest to Azerbaijan, such as territory and refugees. For the Karabakh Armenians, the absence of a sober assessment of the current situation on the part of Azerbaijan is the key barrier to progress in resolving the conflict. Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev's pronouncement that adherence to non-violent methods of resolution is the maximum compromise that Azerbaijan can undertake merely reinforces this view.

Yerevan-Stepanakert relations

It is not just Azerbaijan but Armenia that poses problems for the NKR's hopes of securing participation in the peace process. Stepanakert diplomatically states that meetings between the Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents are viewed with "the necessary understanding." However, dissatisfaction with the current format is easy to discern in these statements, and in Nagorny Karabakh displeasure at exclusion from the peace process is increasingly vocal. Many find Armenia's effective monopolization of the right to resolve the conflict unacceptable, and there are increasing calls for Armenia to assume no responsibilities other than guaranteeing the security of Karabakh Armenians. This has contributed to increased debate on the respective

rights and obligations of the two Armenian states in the resolution of the Karabakh conflict.

For Karabakh Armenians the question of status is paramount. The 'step-by-step' proposal of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Minsk Group was rejected in Karabakh precisely because it proposed to delay the resolution of the status issue. Nonetheless there are differences of position within Karabakh; according to public opinion surveys the population is split between those favouring union with Armenia and a narrow majority that favours independence. Either way, the apparent non-participation of the NKR authorities in what are clearly their own affairs is increasingly incomprehensible to Karabakh Armenian society.

Both government and society in Armenia look upon the prospect of the NKR's independence with scepticism, favouring instead a unified Armenian state. That the Armenian state plays a determining role in the political fortunes of the Karabakh political elite plays no small role in this perception. Yet the relationship works two ways: since the war 'the Karabakh factor' has been a determining one in internal Armenian politics, a reality that neither government nor society in Armenia can ignore. This intricate relationship – the influence of the Armenian state over the Karabakh authorities and the decisive nature of the Karabakh factor in internal Armenian politics – forms a Gordian knot so far resistant to unravelling, and which contributes to the impasse in which we find ourselves.

Societies or elites?

How can we move on from this impasse? It is often claimed that while elites are ready for compromise,

societies are not. This is misleading: one of the key shortcomings of the Karabakh peace process has been the underestimation of the role of societies in conflict and the role played by elites in ensuring that societies are not ready for compromise. In the current context, the establishment of mutual contacts between the two societies (those of the NKR and Azerbaijan) is especially important for the confidence-building needed for progress in the peace process.

Mediators have all but ignored this highly significant aspect of the task they face. It is, however, gratifying to observe a more serious approach to this issue in the societies themselves. Murad Petrosian, Karabakh politician and editor of the newspaper *What is to be done?* has observed:

“If the construction of peace begins...without fundamental changes in public consciousness, then this edifice – even if replete with a roof – sooner or later will share the fate of the Palestinian peace. ... The key to real peace for Armenians lies not in the ruling elite of Azerbaijan but in Azerbaijani public consciousness; likewise for Azerbaijanis, the key lies in the public consciousness of Armenians.”

Outwardly it appears that Azerbaijani society is not ready for conciliation, but this reflects the position of the Azerbaijani political establishment rather than public opinion. A few years ago I was part of a group of Karabakh Armenian journalists visiting Baku and we encountered more constructive views among Azerbaijanis. The atmosphere surrounding our visit was very tense, as the newspaper headlines from the day of our arrival attest: “Armenian terrorists in Baku.” We nonetheless asked if it could be arranged for us to meet some ordinary citizens, and after long deliberations our security escort agreed that we could venture out into a crowded street in central Baku and talk with the first passers-by we encountered. Nine out of the ten we spoke to received us cordially, speaking calmly about the conflict and their problems. Only one of the ten threatened us with vengeance.

The media can play an enormous role in objectively portraying the Karabakh conflict and peace process, and in rejecting ‘enemy’ stereotypes. However, while governments have it within their power to influence public opinion and to prepare the ground for inevitable compromises, they fear that a developing civil society and media could empower ‘underground’ (i.e. real) public opinion vis-à-vis the political establishment. Thus elites maintain a propaganda war, most graphically illustrated by media approaches in Azerbaijan. Leading media, especially television, are government-controlled (as they are in Armenia) and project the ruling elite’s

views masquerading as public opinion. In Armenia and Karabakh the media have until recently resisted the propaganda war, although certain symptoms have appeared suggesting that the Armenian media have taken up the challenge. This was evident in the reactions of some Armenian media to the brutal murder of an Armenian officer by an Azerbaijani counterpart in Budapest, Hungary, in 2004, leading some to claim the ‘genetic incompatibility’ of the two peoples. Nothing has changed in the Karabakh media, yet the authorities reproach journalists for their ‘pacifist’ leanings at a time when Azerbaijani journalists are banging the war drum.

Paths to political development

The way out of the current impasse lies along the path of democratization, a factor long underestimated in mediation efforts. Events in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan have demonstrated the revolutionary potential of post-Soviet societies; however, a more evolutionary path of development without serious upheaval is far preferable in unrecognized states like Karabakh.

After the opposition’s success in the 2004 local elections, it prepared itself to strengthen this achievement in the parliamentary elections of June 2005 in Nagorny Karabakh. However, a historic opportunity was lost and the opposition suffered a crushing defeat. While the opposition was critical of the election, especially the excessive use of administrative resources by the authorities, the overwhelming majority of foreign observers (of which there were approximately 130) praised the elections, asserting that they were of higher quality than analogous elections in Armenia and Azerbaijan. The absence of mass falsification and public disturbances up to and after the election played a key role in this assessment. Many in Karabakh reject the comparison with Armenia or Azerbaijan, preferring to evaluate the recent elections against international standards and the experience of developed Western states, by which measure there is concern that Karabakh’s political evolution may be stagnating.

The key issue for the peace process is whether the elections influence the resolution of the conflict and to what extent the two issues are interconnected. Many Karabakh Armenians look upon democracy as a means of survival and of protecting their rights. However, democratization also allows for more direct public access to the peace process. At present Karabakh society is poorly informed about the peace process and remote from discussions about it. It is only through democratic transformation that Karabakh society can become more aware of the concrete details of different peace proposals, better placed to articulate its concerns and, most importantly, establish a civic dialogue with Azerbaijani society beyond narrow elite circles.

A Karabakh Azeri perspective

Tabib Huseynov

Tabib Huseynov works for the International Republican Institute in Baku. A graduate of the Central European University, he has participated in a number of dialogue and academic meetings related to Nagorny Karabakh.

Peace talks to resolve the conflict over Nagorny Karabakh have been under way for more than a decade with virtually no tangible progress. Locked in a wearisome 'no war, no peace' situation, both Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as the Karabakh Armenian authorities, have effectively adopted 'wait and see' approaches. The Karabakh Azeris stand out as the most obvious losers from the protraction of the current status quo. Many Karabakh Azeris believe the status quo harms their interests by increasingly depriving them of the opportunity to influence decisions directly affecting them and diminishing their chances of returning to their homeland.

Problems of definition

In Azerbaijan the term 'Karabakh Azeris' used to refer to the population of the wider historical Karabakh region, which included the area of Nagorny Karabakh along with the Lachin and Kelbajar districts (together forming what Azeris refer to as 'upland' or 'mountainous Karabakh') and the adjacent lowland territories ('lowland Karabakh'). Unlike Armenians, Azeris historically did not differentiate between the lowland and mountainous parts and perceived Karabakh as a single geographical, economic and cultural space, where they have always been politically and demographically dominant. For this reason, many Azeris believe the creation of the autonomous region of Nagorny Karabakh in 1923 within 'artificial' (i.e. previously non-existent) borders, was aimed at securing an Armenian majority region within Azerbaijan as part of the Soviet/Russian policy of divide and rule. Thus Armenians were perceived as a major tool for keeping Azerbaijan under constant control.

Official Azerbaijani policy now defines the Karabakh Azeri community as the Azeri population of the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO), which according to the 1989 population census constituted 21.5 per cent of the population of the NKAO (approximately 40,000 people). By this definition, the Karabakh Azeris constitute a small part of the 600,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) from the occupied territories.

However, this official definition is rather ambiguous because Azerbaijan itself rescinded the autonomous status of Nagorny Karabakh in late 1991 (in retaliation for the self-proclamation of the Armenian 'Nagorno-Karabakh Republic') and changed the administrative division of the territory, allocating some parts of the former NKAO to the adjacent Kelbajar, Aghdam and Terter districts. Azeris living in these adjacent districts no longer fell within the official definition of the Karabakh Azeri community, which was reduced to virtually the population of Shusha, where over 70 per cent of the Azeris of NKAO lived before the conflict.



Most importantly, this definition excludes the population of Lachin (approximately 60,000 people), even though throughout the negotiations the issue of the future status of Lachin has been inextricably linked with the future status of Nagorny Karabakh.

Political marginalization

At a domestic level, the problems of the Karabakh Azeri community are indivisible from the wider IDP community of Azerbaijan of which it is part. Azerbaijan has one of the world's largest per capita IDP populations in the world, yet the influence of the IDPs on Azerbaijani politics is minimal. This situation stems from their poor organization, as well as their socio-economic conditions and the political restraints placed on them by the state. For example, in all elections since 1995 IDP voting and registration has not been transparent to monitoring, throwing into question the validity and accuracy of elections among these communities. The authorities have also kept significant parts of the IDP community living in temporary shelters and refugee camps in virtual segregation from the rest of the population. Access to these camps by the opposition, media representatives and civil rights activists has been severely restricted.

IDPs have been further deprived of institutions of self-governance. To date the only governing structures the IDPs possess are appointed 'executive authorities in exile', which function only nominally and deal mostly with the distribution of social allowances. The Azerbaijani authorities have also effectively denied the Karabakh Azeris the right to elect a community leader to represent them in the negotiations. Instead, the presidential appointee heading the Shusha 'Executive Authority in Exile', Nizami Bahmanov, has played this role since 1992.

This context, combined with growing frustration over the lack of progress in negotiations and feelings of abandonment, creates favourable conditions for radicalism and calls for a military solution. Such trends are reinforced by the dominant nationalist discourses portraying the conflict in terms of an Armenian-perpetrated 'genocide' against the Azeris, aimed at

territorial expansion and the creation of a 'Greater Armenia'. In a sense, Azerbaijani society is experiencing trends in public consciousness – similar to those experienced earlier in Armenian society – stemming from a 'defeat complex', unachieved national aspirations and the perceived 'victimization' of the nation.

Of those few non-governmental organizations existing to represent IDP interests the most prominent is the Karabakh Liberation Organization (KLO), which criticizes the "capitulatory" position of the government, "double standards" of the international organizations and calls for a military solution to the conflict. However, the KLO's popular slogan, "No Azerbaijan without Karabakh!" conveys the concern of many Azerbaijanis that the loss of Karabakh signifies the disintegration of the country and the disappearance of the Azeri nation as a whole. Even though the Karabakh Azeri community is weak and disorganized, it has the potential to become a powerful destabilizing force in Azerbaijan tomorrow if its interests are ignored today.

Marginalization from the peace process

Karabakh Azeris (along with the Karabakh Armenians) were recognized as constituting an "interested party" to the conflict in 1992 under the Minsk Group mandate, which mentions "elected and other representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh". However, in practice, the Karabakh Azeri community has been largely dissociated from the negotiations, mostly because of the respective policies of Azerbaijan and Armenia as well as the international organizations. Whether referring to an intrastate or interstate conflict, both Armenian and Azerbaijani approaches ignore the existence of a separate Karabakh Azeri community and therefore overlook the inter-communal dimension of the conflict between the Armenians and Azeris of Karabakh.

As the Karabakh Azeris could not participate in direct talks, their interests have been largely ignored throughout the negotiation process. The so-called 'land for peace' approach or one of its variants, the '5+1+1' formula often referred to during the negotiations, envisages the return of five occupied Azerbaijani territories adjacent to Nagorny Karabakh and then the

Two children, displaced from Karabakh, play in an abandoned oil field in Baku.

Source: Panos/Heidi Bradner

conditional return of Kelbajar and Lachin. The fact that the Armenian side is using the occupied territories outside Nagorny Karabakh as a bargaining chip to secure concessions on Nagorny Karabakh's independence or its unification with Armenia directly jeopardizes the interests of the Karabakh Azeri community.

Safe and dignified return

The primary concern of the Karabakh Azeris is a safe and dignified return to their homeland. As far as they are concerned, any peace document signed between the Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents should include provisions on the future status of the Karabakh Azeris within Nagorny Karabakh, and hence the future status of Shusha and Lachin. Shusha is the cornerstone of the Karabakh Azeris' identity and existence, and their attitude to any peace proposal depends directly on how this proposal allows them to return there in safety and dignity. Shusha was the only one of the five provinces in the former NKAO with an overwhelming Azeri majority (91 per cent) before the conflict and also has a great symbolic meaning for the Azeris, being a historical centre of Karabakh and home to many prominent Azeri cultural figures.

Whereas the Azerbaijan government currently seems to be mostly preoccupied with the return of the Azerbaijani provinces adjacent to Nagorny Karabakh, the Karabakh Azeris cannot envisage the return of adjacent territories without the return of Shusha. Throughout the negotiations the Armenian side has tried to link the return of the Karabakh Azeris to Shusha with the issue of return of Armenians to other parts of Azerbaijan outside of Nagorny Karabakh. However, the Karabakh Azeris believe such a formulation is false and a pretext for denying their right to return, because the question of repatriation of Armenian refugees from parts of Azerbaijan outside of Nagorny Karabakh should be dealt with in parallel with the recognition of a similar right for Azeri refugees from Armenia.

One of the gravest concerns of the Karabakh Azeri community today is active resettlement of the occupied territories by the Armenian authorities. Thus, according to the 'official' programme adopted by the Karabakh Armenian authorities, the population of Nagorny Karabakh would be increased twofold from under 150,000 in early 1990s to 300,000 by 2010. These illegal resettlements and *fait accompli* mindset may significantly complicate the peace process and in the long term may become a major obstacle to conflict resolution.

Not a "new minority"

The Armenian side constantly refers to the Karabakh Armenians' right to self-determination, which they want to realize in the form of secession. Azerbaijan

always counters with the principles of territorial integrity and inviolability of the international borders. However, this alleged self-determination versus territorial integrity dispute surprisingly overlooks the fact that the Karabakh Azeris also have the right to self-determination; moreover, the rights to self-determination of either Karabakh Armenians or Karabakh Azeris do not necessarily imply a right to secession.

The Karabakh Azeris are determined not to accept a solution putting them in an inferior position in relation to their Karabakh Armenian counterparts. The Karabakh Armenians have repeatedly declared that they do not want to be treated as a minority within Azerbaijan, arguing for non-hierarchical relationships between the Azerbaijani state and the Karabakh Armenian authorities. Similarly, the Karabakh Azeris do not want a settlement that makes them a 'new minority' within an Armenian-dominated Nagorny Karabakh. Many Karabakh Azeris would not return to their homes in Karabakh if placed under the jurisdiction of their former foes and not provided with parallel security guarantees and a degree of self-government similar to those provided for the Karabakh Armenians.

Conclusion

Unfortunately, the dominant discourses in both Armenian and Azeri societies and media have largely ignored the problems and concerns of the opposite side. The solution to the conflict requires fundamental shifts in the approaches and policies adopted by both Armenian and Azerbaijani parties to the conflict. It requires a new look at the traditional notions of sovereignty, self-determination, national and ethnic borders and majority-minority relationships. In this regard, the European experience, particularly the potential of the integrative model of the European Union, can be very useful to consider.

There is no doubt that the solution lies in co-existence and cooperation both between Armenia and Azerbaijan as well as between the Karabakh Armenians and the Karabakh Azeris. Further progress in the negotiations requires more active participation by both Armenian and Azeri representatives of Nagorny Karabakh. The international community should help promote civil initiatives involving direct contacts not only between Armenian and Azerbaijani representatives but also between Karabakh Armenians and Azeris. The existence of the Karabakh problem is also a serious impediment to the development of democracy in both Azerbaijan and Armenia. At the same time, decisions on painful compromises need to be made by strong, democratic and legitimate governments.

Personal stories

These personal stories from Armenia and Azerbaijan are drawn from the South Caucasus radio diaries project, which grew out of a two-year pilot project run by Conciliation Resources with Georgian and Abkhaz journalists. Over 20 radio stations in the South Caucasus now participate, broadcasting stories recorded by ordinary people and edited by local journalists.

Divided family

My name is Asmik Akopyan and I live in the village of Karabulak. I am 68 years old and a pensioner. I went to medical school as a young woman and in 1954 was sent to work in Shusha as a nurse. It was there that I met a handsome young Azeri among my neighbours. Despite the fact that both his and my parents didn't approve of our meetings, we paid no heed and eventually married. We were blessed with a large family – I gave birth to two boys and two girls. They were clever, good-looking children, all of them went on to higher education. I was very happy. But then in 1988 the conflict began. I fell ill, and had to convalesce in Ashkhabad in Turkmenistan. I couldn't be treated in Stepanakert because my husband was an Azeri and I

couldn't go to Baku because I was Armenian. So my son-in-law took me to Ashkhabad, where he had relatives. It was there that I learned from the television that Shusha was now under Armenian control and no Azeris remained in the town. I lost contact with my family, knowing only that my children had left for Baku. Then I learnt that my mother was ill, and I thought I should go and look after her and wait for this war to end. Thus I came to Karabulak in 1992, but I never expected this situation to go on for so long. I miss my children terribly, and live only for the hope that we will see each other again. There is nothing I want more.

Basra

In the 1980s I worked as a contract translator at an electricity plant in Nasiriya, Iraq. This was at the height of the Iran-Iraq war and there were frequent bombardments from Iran. Soviet specialists were not permitted to move about freely, but it fell to me to go once a week from Nasiriya to Basra because the authorities dealing with foreigners and visas were located there. There were a number of Soviet specialists working in Nasiriya, among them Azeris. I became friends with one of them, Abil Askerov. He had been in Iraq longer than me, and as his contract was about to expire he asked me to take him to Basra one time as goods were cheaper there, and he wanted to buy some presents before he left. This was not allowed, but nonetheless I agreed and off we went. We were walking around Basra when an artillery bombardment from Iran

suddenly started. Shells were exploding around us as we rushed to the car to get out of the danger zone. Suddenly a shell landed right near us. I had no time to realize what was happening as Abil pressed me up against a wall and covered my body with his own. Seeing the shrapnel scars on the wall around us, we thanked God we had survived. On the way back I asked him why he had protected me instead of running for cover. I will never forget his words. He said "in that moment I thought let fate have its way with me, but let nothing happen to you, as it would be my fault if it did. And then how would I live with myself?" Later, after everything had begun, he called me in Yerevan asking me if there was anything he could do to help, knowing the situation we were in. After that we lost contact, though I would dearly love to know where he is, how he is.

The nightingale of Shusha

I will never forget an encounter I once had in Karabakh. It was the Bulbul [nightingale] Festival in Shusha, and we decided to take a break from the programme. We had guests from Moscow and quickly organized an impromptu picnic by the Isa Bulagu spring, with everything except alcohol as this was the time of Gorbachev's anti-drink drive. Everything was fine except for this lack of wine or spirits, and because of that the picnic ended quite soon. I was in the process of leaving when I heard a mysterious, surprising voice. I took out my dictaphone and walked up the hill, to the point where the voice was coming from. There I found a typical Azerbaijani ensemble with traditional instruments - a *tar* and a *kyamancha*, both similar to a lute. Next to them stood a tall woman holding a *daf* tambourine. She didn't seem to notice me and carried on singing an Azeri folksong from the popular epic

'Gachag Nyabi'. When she had finished she turned to me and asked me to stop recording. It was only then that I realized that she was totally blind. She then told me about her singing career, how she had sung for the great Khanom Shushinsky to get into his academy in Baku. "He accepted me and proposed to take me to Baku. But then my brother Suren forbade me from going," she told me. Hearing the name Suren, I understood that this woman was Armenian, although she sang Azeri folksongs in flawless Azeri. Some time later, after everything had happened in Karabakh, I tried to find out what had happened to this woman. I found out that she had never left Shusha and that she still sang Azeri folksongs on the hill above Isa Bulagu. They had asked her to stop singing those songs, but she didn't listen and carried on as before.

My path

I'll tell my story. I was called up in 1992, at the beginning of the year. It was very difficult – physically, morally. There were a lot of casualties. That was hard, when you'd sit and get talking with someone before the battle, you'd find out about his problems, try to help out in some way and all that, then a few hours later after an artillery bombardment you'd find out this person had been killed. Our division went on the offensive. I knew that even if we took these positions, these heights, we'd never be able to hold them. It was 3,000 against 117 of us – that's just overwhelming force. Yet we fulfilled our orders. And at the last minute, when we'd nearly finished everything, they wiped the floor with us. A very powerful artillery barrage began, and I was injured in the head. I came to in a field hospital. It later became clear that I had lain there for two weeks. I was sent to Baku and installed in a hospital. One and a

half months I had to lie there. In February my wife and two children came to visit me. She didn't have money to come on the bus, she came by foot – seven kilometres there and seven kilometres back, every day. Her boots were all ripped, her feet cold and wet. She'd have one child in a pushchair, one in her arms and a string bag with food in it hanging off one of the pushchair handles. That's how she looked after me, and that's why I got better so quickly. After leaving hospital I got myself discharged. Now I have a small workshop, where I make furniture. It's worked out well, people know of me and I make ends meet. I get a lot out of life and I've raised my two children. But if I had to do things over again, I wouldn't change anything. Because when I was in military training college, day and night they instilled in us three basic psychological concepts for men and citizens – Honour, Courage and the Motherland.

The role of the OSCE

an assessment of international mediation efforts

Volker Jacoby

Volker Jacoby worked as Assistant to the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office for the Nagorny Karabakh conflict 1998-99. In 1999 he completed a PhD on the politics of Armenia, and from 1999-2004 held different positions within the OSCE Mission to Georgia.

"It has to be a solution that works for the government of Armenia and the government of Azerbaijan, and the people of Armenia and the people of Azerbaijan."

Carey Cavanaugh, former US co-chair of the Minsk Group, commenting on talks in Key West, Florida, 2001

"To underestimate the position of Karabakh is a major mistake."

Terhi Hakala, Roving Ambassador of Finland to the South Caucasus

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) began to work on the Nagorny Karabakh conflict in March 1992, soon after newly independent Armenia and Azerbaijan had joined the organization. This coincided with a unique historical moment in which the iron curtain had fallen and there appeared to be mutual understanding among the CSCE participating states that cooperation was better than confrontation. In this euphoria, it appeared that the Soviet Union's successor states, especially Russia, could be included in a world system of equals. The CSCE took the first steps to transform itself into the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE – the name was changed only in December 1994) in an attempt to address issues of common interest in what may now appear a naive spirit of mutual trust and shared values prevailing over narrow national interests.

With its regional remit the CSCE appeared better placed than the United Nations (UN) to deal with the Karabakh conflict, although Armenia and the Karabakh Armenians favoured the UN as a forum for resolution as its historical 'friends' France and Russia were members of the Security Council. Azerbaijan, for the same reason, favoured the involvement of the CSCE, of which its biggest ally Turkey was a member. It was also the strong conviction of key state actors that a breakthrough was imminent that led the CSCE to assume responsibility for mediation in the Karabakh conflict.



When the CSCE initiated what was to become the 'Minsk Process', it was expected that a conference would be held in Minsk, Belarus, as early as spring 1992 where the details of a peaceful settlement would be determined. The CSCE community believed that only technical details would need to be clarified, the groundwork having been worked out by a preparatory body: the 'Minsk Group' of eleven CSCE countries. However, as ever more problems surfaced, the diplomatic preparatory body itself evolved into the forum for negotiations, and the Minsk conference was indefinitely postponed. The participating states accepted this makeshift arrangement without dissent.

Establishing a role: national versus supranational agendas

By 1994, the CSCE confronted a twofold task: firstly, to mediate, facilitate and support a peaceful settlement of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, and secondly to negotiate relations between its participating states and determine the role of the CSCE and, specifically, of the Minsk Process within it. Particularly in the initial phases, frictions between key CSCE players complicated both agendas.

Russia has played a dual role as member of the Minsk Group and as a dominant regional actor. Russia has always had its national objectives in its 'near abroad' (the fourteen formerly Soviet republics, now independent states), not necessarily shared by other members of the Minsk Group. This contradiction manifested itself in Russia's competing mediation efforts: it was Russia, and not the Minsk Group, which brokered the May 1994 ceasefire. The other CSCE participating states honoured this, but were reluctant to agree to sending peacekeeping forces. However, all parties to the conflict

agreed that multinational troops would be preferable to only Russian ones, and in December 1994 the now OSCE established a High Level Planning Group in Vienna, tasked with preparing the stationing of OSCE peacekeeping forces in the conflict zone.

The US, at least from 1994, developed interests in the region linked to the presence of oil in the Caspian basin and its agenda of diversifying oil production and transportation while circumventing Iran. Tensions between Armenia and Turkey, a Minsk Group member state supporting Azerbaijan, mounted in the aftermath of the Armenian occupation of Kelbajar in March 1993: Turkey declared a blockade on Armenia and admitted to supporting Azerbaijan's army with military hardware.

In mid-1993, the Swedish Minsk Group chair, responding to conflicts generated by the different national agendas, moved to limit the circle of participants in the peace talks. Minsk Group players seen as less important would be informed but would not take part in the subsequent negotiations. After the ceasefire Russia assumed a role as Minsk Group co-chair with Sweden, and in 1997 a permanent 'Troika' of co-chairs, consisting of Russia, the US and France, was formed. This was followed by an active period of shuttle diplomacy to find a resolution, hampered by the fact that Minsk Group co-chairs are less likely to act exclusively as individual mediators than as representatives of their respective states. The only OSCE body in place on the ground is the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, a post occupied since 1997 by Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk of Poland. His mandate, however, does not include negotiations.

The Minsk Process: issues, proposals and principles

Once more stable working relationships had been established within the Minsk Group its discussions focused on Nagorny Karabakh's status and security, as well as refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the problem of the once Azerbaijani-dominated Karabakh town of Shusha. Between 1997 and 2001 four options, representing different methodologies of resolution, were discussed. The first, referred to as the 'package solution', favoured talking about all issues, including Karabakh's final status, simultaneously to achieve the optimum balance. Given the number of issues on the table, this approach would offer more leeway for compromise. The package proposal presented by the co-chairs in May-July 1997 consisted of two agendas: 'Agreement I' on ending the conflict, including troop withdrawals, deployment of peacekeepers, return of displaced persons and security guarantees; and 'Agreement II' on Karabakh's final status. The agendas were separate, as the 1997 OSCE Ministerial Council reported, 'to allow the parties to negotiate and implement each at its own pace, but with a clear understanding that at the end of the day all outstanding issues will have to be resolved.' Reactions in Baku and Yerevan were encouraging, but Stepanakert rejected it.

The so-called 'step-by-step' solution, proposed in September 1997, was premised on sealing Agreement I first before dealing with Agreement II, with the question of the Lachin corridor linking Nagorny Karabakh with Armenia moved to Agreement II. Nagorny Karabakh would continue to exist in its present form until agreement on final status was reached, but would gain internationally recognized 'interim status'. In principle the step-by-step solution would build a constructive atmosphere in the early stages focused on military aspects, paving the road for negotiations on the more complex political issues.

However, the Karabakh Armenians were not ready to agree to make the first step by withdrawing from the occupied regions of Azerbaijan. Stepanakert argued that this buffer zone was its main source of leverage, which could not be given up without agreement on what concrete security guarantees it would receive in return. Once again, the Karabakh Armenians demonstrated that despite the restricted status accorded to them in the negotiations, Stepanakert wielded significant power of veto over possible settlement options.

The 'common state' proposal, presented in November 1998, proposed a vaguely defined common state between Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh, featuring more or less 'horizontal' relations between Baku and

Stepanakert. It was rejected by Azerbaijan on the grounds of the violation of its territorial integrity and of the principles agreed by the OSCE at its summit in Lisbon, December 1996, where Armenia had been alone in rejecting a statement reiterating principles for a settlement stressing the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Finally, President Robert Kocharian of Armenia and President Heydar Aliyev of Azerbaijan discussed a proposal based on an exchange of access to territory in 2001, though this never got as far as an OSCE draft agreement. In the course of the domestic debates launched only after the talks, Aliyev reported (and Kocharian denied) that it had involved Armenia surrendering access to a strip of its southern district of Meghri, offering Azerbaijan direct access to Nakhichevan, in return for accepting Armenian control over the Lachin corridor connecting Karabakh with Armenia.

None of the proposals could bring the sides close to agreement on status by reconciling the needs of self-determination with territorial integrity to the liking of all parties. Being founded on the Helsinki principles (named after the 1975 Helsinki Final Act of the CSCE), the OSCE stands for the inviolability of the frontiers of its participating states. Although the principle of territorial integrity is stipulated with a view to interstate conflicts, how this aspect should be dealt with regarding intrastate conflicts is determined only implicitly. The Final Act speaks of the right of peoples to self-determination "in conformity...with...territorial integrity of States". This convinces some authors of the OSCE's inability to be neutral. The Helsinki principles, however, stipulate one important aspect: any decision to alter frontiers must take place 'by peaceful means and by agreement'. Hence there is no contradiction between accepting the inviolability of frontiers and being neutral at the same time, provided any agreement reached is acceptable to the parties to the conflict.

Preconditions for compromise

Azerbaijan perceives the OSCE as an 'international executor' that should help it regain at the negotiation table the territorial integrity it lost on the battlefield. This problem has become clearly visible in the discussions around whether Nagorny Karabakh should be accepted as a party to the conflict; at present it is only as an 'interested party' with lower negotiating status in the OSCE process than Armenia and Azerbaijan. Within the Minsk Group it was widely believed that Yerevan would have enough influence in Stepanakert to secure the Karabakh Armenians' compliance with any peace deal reached, thereby obviating the need for their separate and equal representation in the peace process. This has turned out to be a crucial error. On the other hand, elevating Nagorny Karabakh to the status of equal party in the negotiations process is not palatable for Azerbaijan.

The Minsk Group so far has not managed to bridge this gap.

The assumption that agreement can be effectively negotiated man-to-man between the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan has also proved mistaken. Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosian was forced to step down in 1998 by his own ministers after publicly advocating making concessions to Azerbaijan. President Heydar Aliyev came under intense pressure in 2001 when he returned home from talks with Kocharian at Key West, and the results achieved in Key West vaporized in the face of domestic criticism. Commenting on what happened in Key West, French Minsk Group co-chair Carey Cavanaugh commended both presidents for being “ahead of their population.” Yet Ter-Petrosian’s resignation and Aliyev’s rapid abandonment of compromise raise fundamental doubts regarding the sustainability of agreements reached by leaders in isolation from their societies. If a strategy to involve the population including the political opposition is absent, peacemaking is likely to fail. The converse argument that it was Ter-Petrosian’s attempt to include and inform the population that led to his downfall is inaccurate. The 1997 press conference where he appeared to attempt to do this was his first press conference in five years. It had been preceded by a long silence and no substantial attempts to get the Armenian population on board his peace project.

Room for peacebuilding?

The activities of the Minsk Process since its inception have been almost exclusively focused on *peacemaking* – achieving an agreement rather than a comprehensive solution or a change in attitudes. In contrast, the concept of *peacebuilding* accepts the need to change attitudes in order to create an atmosphere in which an agreement is feasible as a first step towards a comprehensive solution. Exclusive reliance on political leaders exposes any deals they may strike to the risk of rejection back home. The desirability of complementing peacemaking with peacebuilding is underscored by this need for more communication with the wider societies, without which there can be no sense of public ownership of the peace process. As the Karabakh case shows, no agreement is feasible without popular support.

The problem goes beyond questions of public relations, however, to touch upon fundamental concepts of national identity and interest. For example, among Armenians the differing positions of Stepanakert and Yerevan may in turn each differ from positions originating in the Armenian diaspora. Yet conflict among Armenians is itself a taboo in Armenian political culture, in which attempts are often made to exclude one or other view by labelling it as ‘betraying’ Armenian

national ideals. On the Azeri side, there is also a compelling argument for greater internal dialogue among the different stakeholders, and in particular with the Azeri IDP community. A range of conciliation processes within and between all the different social groupings is required before a stable consensus can be reached at the leadership level. Here too there could be a role for the OSCE in supporting forums for conciliatory discussions and in encouraging the parties to the conflict to embark on processes of establishing a societal consensus on what the ‘national interest’ on the Karabakh issue actually is.

The OSCE has so far not taken up this issue nor worked with the leaders to develop such a complementary approach. Though unprecedented for the OSCE, track one diplomacy should be complemented by track two and track three diplomacy undertaken by other actors in an integrated multi-track approach. Obviously, this would mean allowing direct contacts between Armenians and Azerbaijanis. Given the rejection of this idea in Azerbaijan, one possible focus of the Minsk Group could be to convince the parties to agree on the complementary nature of peacemaking and peacebuilding. This would also include accepting direct talks with the *de facto* authorities in Stepanakert. Closely linked to that could be the role of the Minsk Group in advocating the opening of a direct road link (possibly under international control) across the line of contact, allowing international organizations access to Nagorny Karabakh without violating the *de jure* border of Azerbaijan.

The OSCE can only be as strong as its participating states allow it to be. Yet antagonisms between the interests of OSCE participating states endure. The OSCE’s experience of mediating in the Karabakh conflict shows there are no grounds to assume that an agglomeration of actors is stronger or more forward-thinking than its individual members. However, mediating in this conflict also poses the dilemma of simultaneous and gradual processes. One process is the Armenian-Azerbaijani peace process, another the development of OSCE capacity within the framework of the conflicting agendas of its participating states, while intra-societal discussions comprise a third. This list is not complete. The interconnectedness of all these processes is evident, yet the conceptual and institutional frameworks at hand to deal with such complex issues are not sufficient. Peace processes elsewhere underscore the importance of third parties maintaining clearly defined roles, and highlight the value of complementary efforts between a range of different state and non-state actors in support of a multi-level peace process. The efforts and constraints of OSCE mediation symbolize the world we live in, and invite us to conceive a completely new, holistic style of politics.

The elusive 'right formula' at the 'right time'

a historical analysis of the
official peace process

Gerard J. Libaridian

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In March 1992, with the accession of Armenia and Azerbaijan, the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) adopted a ministerial decision to mediate the Nagorny Karabakh conflict. Mediation by the CSCE (renamed the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 1994) through its 'Minsk Conference' soon became the main avenue for continued negotiations. Yet although the negotiations have provided opportunities to test a series of formulas that might still be useful in achieving a solution, the OSCE mediation has failed to bring a solution. Even the ceasefire of 1994, achieved through two stages, was the result of unilateral Russian efforts and direct talks between the parties.

The Minsk Conference's aim of convening an assembly where the status of Nagorny Karabakh would be negotiated was initially confounded by developments on the battlefield. The conference intended for summer 1992 never convened, and later in the year the Minsk Conference was reformulated as the Minsk Group and later the 'Minsk Process'. Continued military operations constantly shifted the ground from under Minsk Group mediation: the Armenian occupation of successive districts throughout 1993 forced mediators to substitute proposals with "timetables" for dealing with the consequences of military hostilities. To increase efficiency, the Minsk Group started meeting without Armenia and Azerbaijan, whose veto power in the group would condemn any proposal before it was even formulated. Subsequently even that group of nine stopped meeting. The co-chairs assumed full responsibilities for proposals and often did not even inform the others of their actions. By the spring of 1999 the co-chairs (Russia, the US and France) took a step back and assumed a role supporting direct talks between the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan, more recently supported by talks between the foreign ministers.



It is not possible to give a full account of the OSCE process's weaknesses here. They included, among other things: the ambivalence of Nagorny Karabakh towards a process in which its representatives participated only as an 'interested party' rather than full member; unstable leadership of the process in the early years; uneven levels of interest among key group members, whose attention often shifted to other international crises, and their own self-interested dividedness and inability to exert concerted pressure on the conflicting parties; and the cumbersome nature of the process, involving eleven countries plus Nagorny Karabakh representatives. In the absence of a determined effort, the Minsk Conference, conceived as arbitration, functioned for a while as a mediation process and ended up as a facilitation mechanism.

Problems and responsibilities of parties in conflict

Ultimately, though, the parties to the conflict are responsible for any solution. A determined set of conciliatory policies by the parties could have overcome obstacles posed by the internationalization of the conflict. Yet each side had ardently-held historical, moral and legal justifications for their actions. It appeared to both sides that any concession, minor or major, symbolic or real, would endanger their security, sense of identity and survival. These beliefs became part of the political and nationalist discourse that replaced the 'brotherhood' of Soviet republics. Sometimes blinded by these strong beliefs, or compromised by the fragile and fractured nature of the emerging political structures in their newly independent republics, the parties often miscalculated

their military, economic, political and diplomatic resources, or exaggerated their ability to impose their will on the other. This was particularly true of Azerbaijan in the early years of the conflict and Armenia after 1997. Azerbaijan was sure it could win militarily and ideally expel Armenians from the Nagorny Karabakh Autonomous Region (NKAO), but lost. The Armenian side believed military victory would compel the Azerbaijanis to make concessions they were not ready to make, given the international community's support for the principle of territorial integrity. On at least one critical occasion during the negotiations, each of the parties rejected proposals that would have satisfied their needs, hoping for more and calculating that time was on their side.

Moreover, all negotiations were confidential, if not secret. The OSCE and the parties preferred not to disclose details of formulas and proposals until there was agreement on a document. This approach left the public out of the process, casting a shadow of suspicion over all proposals, which became vulnerable to demagogic exploitation by opposition groups. The charge of 'selling out' was one not easily overcome by politically weak authorities. In an atmosphere filled with nationalistic rhetoric, authorities often failed to garner public support for reasonable solutions, and found themselves blaming their 'peoples' for their unreadiness for compromise.

Armenia and its dilemmas

Differences between the positions of the governments in Armenia and Nagorny Karabakh further complicated the process. Notwithstanding the fact that many

mediators expected Armenia to determine policies in both capitals, and Azerbaijan's portrayal of such differences as an Armenian ploy, Nagorny Karabakh's development as a separate political entity produced a permanent tension between the authorities in Yerevan and Stepanakert. Having taken Armenia's economic and military support for granted, Nagorny Karabakh could afford to be a single-issue government in its external relations, whereas Yerevan's relations with its neighbours and the world were necessarily more multi-dimensional. Just as its position on the conflict determined the scope and character of its relations with the international community, so other dimensions limited its options with regard to resolving the conflict. Where Yerevan was ready for compromises, Stepanakert was able to resist and, more often than not, prevail, since Nagorny Karabakh's struggle for extraction from Azerbaijani suzerainty held a universal appeal for Armenians everywhere as historical vindication for a victimized nation.

Once the ceasefire was established and held, relations between Yerevan and Stepanakert reflected the problems of the peace process revolving around two sets of issues: first, substantive positions with regard to the three main problems: status, security, and consequences of the conflict (including blockades, refugees and displaced persons); second, the methodology of a solution: should all three key issues be resolved in a 'package deal' or should the status problem, being the most difficult, be relegated to a second stage agreement?

Armenia's President Levon Ter-Petrosian had revised his approach to the Karabakh problem since leading the Karabakh Committee in 1988, when he had been an advocate of reunification with Armenia. Under his presidency the Armenian government's approach was to define the issue as the security of Nagorny Karabakh and its right to self-determination – not necessarily meaning the internationally unpopular goals of independence or reunification with Armenia. Ter-Petrosian sought a compromise where the Armenian side would concede that Nagorny Karabakh would be legally part of Azerbaijan; in return Azerbaijan would agree to a status above the nominal autonomy that the NKAO had enjoyed until 1988, but a notch below independence. Further, Azerbaijan would lift their blockades and provide strong security guarantees including Armenian control of the Lachin corridor and Armenia's right to defend the status and people of the territory. It was also understood that as a result of any agreement on Karabakh, Turkey would agree to a normalization of relations with Armenia. Thus, Ter-Petrosian refused to recognize the NKAO's unilateral declaration of independence and hoped that Azerbaijan would revise its goal of attaining complete control of

Karabakh through military victory and ethnic cleansing. Azerbaijan's obstinacy on settling the status issue on its own terms was mirrored by a similar insistence by the Karabakh authorities. With agreement on status still distant, the failure to make progress on a 'package deal' was unacceptable for the Ter-Petrosian administration, which by 1993 pragmatically opted for the 'step-by-step' approach. The rationale for this was that while Armenia could survive the blockades, economic development would be difficult if not impossible for as long as relations with its neighbours were not normalized and renewed fighting remained on the agenda. The 'no war, no peace' situation required substantial state resources to be devoted to war preparedness, diverting them from other needs, such as economic or social reforms, or attracting much needed investment. The administration did not believe support from the diaspora sufficient to counterbalance Azerbaijan's advantages: the support of the international community (including Armenia's presumed friends Russia and Iran) for Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, and oil as a financial resource and weapon of diplomacy.

Shying away from a policy that might imply territorial ambitions, Ter-Petrosian's focus was the continued secure and free existence of the Karabakh Armenian population in their historic land. The basic formula for a negotiating strategy would be the return of territories for peace. Nagorny Karabakh, on the other hand, by and large opted for a 'territories for status' formula, arguing that the occupied territories were the strongest card it held to obtain its goal of a full "divorce" from Azerbaijan, if not in favour of a union with Armenia, at least independence from Azerbaijan. Baku, on the other hand, believed that time and the combination of oil diplomacy and outside support for the principle of territorial integrity would ultimately deliver Karabakh. Thus the step-by-step approach was in essence rejected by both Nagorny Karabakh and Azerbaijan, and the negotiations became exercises in futility.

Missed opportunities

Nonetheless both package and step-by-step approaches could have been fruitful and came close to success. Direct and confidential negotiations initiated by Armenia between the personal and plenipotentiary representatives of Presidents Aliyev and Ter-Petrosian between December 1995 and November 1996 made serious progress and could have culminated in resolving the status issue had Azerbaijan not decided that the concessions it made during the negotiations might not be warranted if it played its oil diplomacy card at the OSCE Lisbon Summit in December 1996. Aliyev believed that countries granted oil exploration concessions by Azerbaijan could be induced to force Armenia to accept Nagorny Karabakh as part of

Azerbaijan in return for vague promises of autonomy and security. The manoeuvre at the summit, vetoed by Armenia, destroyed the chance that the only substantive negotiations on status until then might have reached a negotiated solution.

Some elements of the confidential negotiations were, nonetheless, incorporated in two successive Minsk Group 'package deal' proposals presented to the parties in May and July 1997. The leadership of Karabakh rejected them outright, Azerbaijan wavered, while Armenia accepted them with serious reservations as a basis for further negotiations.

The result was the Minsk Group proposal of September 1997, which adopted the step-by-step approach. It left the question of status and the Lachin district to be dealt with in the future but offered solutions to the questions of occupied territories, blockades and refugees and proposed a peace treaty and normalization on that basis. Armenia and Azerbaijan accepted it with serious reservations, but the Karabakh authorities and a few powerful members of Ter-Petrosian's administration rejected it, insisting on a package deal. This internal opposition led to Ter-Petrosian's resignation, and the accession of the former president of Nagorny Karabakh, Robert Kocharian to the Armenian presidency in April 1998. In opposing the September 1997 proposal as a basis for negotiations, Kocharian and his allies believed that the Armenian side was in a position to insist on a package deal that could achieve independence or unity with Armenia. They did not share Ter-Petrosian's urgency to resolve the conflict, ascribing less significance to the blockades' effect on stalling economic development. Instead they blamed him for failing to fully utilize the diaspora or maximize the "spiritual" resources of the country, such as the general yearning for redress of historic grievances, appeals to a common sense of righteousness deriving from those grievances, and patriotic fervour transcending political differences.

Almost a year after the September 1997 offer, the Minsk Group offered another package deal document based on the 'common state' formula considered in other conflicts. The proposal reflected the principle of a 'horizontal' relationship between Nagorny Karabakh and Azerbaijan instead of the vertical one implied in the concept of autonomy. Armenia and Nagorny Karabakh accepted it with some serious reservations; Azerbaijan reportedly accepted early in the drafting of the document, but ultimately rejected it. Beginning in April 1999 the negotiations moved to the level of the presidents, turning the Minsk Group co-chairs mainly into spectators. By the summer of 1999 the basis of negotiations had moved to what can best be described as a land swap. Kocharian had demanded that Nagorny Karabakh be annexed to Armenia and, in principle,

accepted Aliyev's return demand for Azerbaijani control of the Meghri district of southern Armenia that separates the exclave of Nakhichevan from Azerbaijan. This unlikely and widely unpopular formula began to unravel as Kocharian changed his position. He then offered passageway rights to Azerbaijan through or over Meghri in return for full sovereignty over the disputed territory. Aliyev had had enough trouble selling the initial exchange and was not in a position to accept the revised formula. A final attempt by the US to make the formula work at a meeting of the two presidents in 2000 in Key West, Florida, failed to achieve any results.

Back to basics?

Since 2003, negotiations have been conducted between the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan, with occasional meetings between the two presidents. Azerbaijan has returned to a step-by-step approach, continuing to believe that time is on its side, especially with the completion of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil export pipeline. Armenia has reluctantly followed, although Yerevan would prefer that any first stage agreement make at least some reference to the way the status would be determined in the future. The Minsk co-chairs have not produced a proposal of their own since the Key West meeting and their participation seems to be perfunctory. Content with a situation of no renewed hostilities, Russia, the US and France have had a long list of more imminent issues to deal with, while Stepanakert has not participated in the bilateral discussions.

The passing of time has favoured none of the conflict parties. The more time passes, the more difficult it is to return occupied territories. Economic progress in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh has not been reflected in improved living standards for most. Contrary to Armenia's expectations the international community has not approved the status quo, yet Azerbaijan has also been disappointed with the same community's refusal to compel Armenian withdrawal, despite its formal position and legal argument. Similarly, while the diaspora has continued its political and economic support of Armenia, it has not made much of an impact on the position of the major powers and has increasingly focused its attention on genocide recognition.

Ultimately, a negotiated solution depends on three factors: the degree of urgency felt by the parties to the conflict to reach a solution; sufficient political capital held by their leaders to sell a compromise solution to publics used to hard-line rhetoric; and the combined and determined support of regional and international players to support such a solution. The two alternatives to a negotiated solution – a renewal of hostilities or a solution imposed through forceful action by the major powers – cannot be attractive to either party.

Obstacles to resolution

an Azerbaijani perspective

Tofik Zulfuqarov

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Azerbaijan's pursuit of international mediation by the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in the early 1990s was motivated by a number of factors. It was hoped international involvement in the negotiations and implementation of agreements reached would forestall accusations of partiality or bias in Azerbaijan's approach to resolving the problems underlying the conflict, while also offsetting the weakness of Azerbaijan's military and administrative resources in responding to Armenian aggression. Furthermore, it was hoped that the Western powers might offset Russia's political and military support for Armenia. The principles of the CSCE privileged the preservation of the territorial integrity of participating states, while European experience and standards of autonomies could be used in the development of a model for the Armenian minority in Azerbaijan. Finally, the CSCE's framework of ethical and moral principles could potentially help put an end to the ethnic cleansing of Azeris in the conflict zone (a hope that proved to be unfounded).

1992-1994: between the negotiating table and the battlefield

Following discussion at various levels, the CSCE Ministerial Council adopted a set of resolutions in March 1992, the main thrust of which was that all hostilities should cease immediately and the ground be prepared for talks on the future status of Nagorny Karabakh. This decision formed the legal basis or mandate for a planned conference in Minsk, Belarus, due to open in May 1992 involving eleven CSCE participating states including Azerbaijan and Armenia.

The Azeri and Armenian communities of Nagorny Karabakh were to participate in the conference as 'interested parties'. Azerbaijan agreed to this format on the understanding that although the Karabakh Armenians' status in the negotiations could not and should not equal that of Minsk Conference



participating states, their active involvement was vital. This approach is still followed by Azerbaijani negotiators today, despite claims by the Armenians and some international observers that Azerbaijan refuses to hold talks with 'Nagorny Karabakh'. This is nothing more than a propaganda tool to legitimize (already at the negotiating phase) the Karabakh Armenians' claim to independent statehood and the mono-ethnic composition of Karabakh's population achieved through ethnic cleansing.

In the first half of 1992 intensive clashes on the battlefield continued alongside the CSCE's initial mediation efforts. The success of Armenian armed forces in taking Shusha and the Lachin region and killing the Azeri population of the town of Khojaly resulted in the total ethnic cleansing of Azeris from Nagorny Karabakh. These developments cut the ground from underneath the ongoing talks, as the consequences of the occupation of Shusha and Lachin became the priority issue for the Minsk Conference, demanding resolution before Nagorny Karabakh's status could be decided. At the suggestion of US Secretary of State Warren Christopher, it was decided to hold pre-conference talks in Rome and a series of extraordinary preparatory meetings. The mediators put forward the so-called 'Calendar of Urgent Measures' outlining specific steps for the withdrawal of Armenian troops from the Shusha and Lachin districts and the return of the Azeri population.

The approach taken in the period to 1996 by the CSCE (or OSCE after December 1994 when it metamorphosed from 'Conference' to 'Organization') was characterized by the assumption that the status of Nagorny Karabakh could only be discussed once the consequences of military action had been resolved and an international peacekeeping force deployed in order to ensure the

safety of returnees. However, mediation efforts were again overtaken by events on the ground. Armenia successfully exploited the political instability and 1993 regime change in Azerbaijan to annex Azerbaijani districts around Nagorny Karabakh and cleanse them of their Azeri population. In the light of such events, negotiation efforts were hollow. It was not until the autumn-winter of 1993 that Armenian military expansion finally met with some real resistance from Azerbaijani forces. The intensity of the struggle and significant losses of human life and military hardware served to warn the Armenian leadership of the costs of its expansionist military strategy. Thus previously unsuccessful attempts of mediators to secure a ceasefire agreement finally bore fruit in May 1994 as a result of Russia's active intervention.

Around that time the conflict transformation process began to divide into two strands. One was concerned with the structure and forms of international involvement, in particular the nature of and responsibility for the international peacekeeping operation and observer mission; the other focused on issues directly connected with the Armenian-Azeri conflict and the proposals put forward to resolve it.

Competing mediator agendas

Many Azerbaijani experts believe that Russia and the Western powers see control of any Karabakh peacekeeping operation as the key to overall influence in the region. The lack of a common standpoint between the region's would-be hegemonies on this issue is one of the main obstacles to progress in the negotiations.

Until 1995, Russia attempted to establish a monopoly on the right to lead, mediate and control the peace process, despite co-chairing the Minsk Group with

Finland. From the perspective of Azerbaijani negotiators discussion of the substantive issues was less important to Russia than preserving a one-sided framework for mediation. Mediator Vladimir Kazimirov's main desire, it seemed, was to substitute the quadripartite negotiations format involving Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Nagorny Karabakh Armenians and Azeris as interested parties, with a tripartite format involving Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Armenians of Nagorny Karabakh.

The second thrust of Russia's interests was focused on imposing on the CSCE its 'special role' in controlling, staffing and implementing the peacekeeping operation in the conflict zone. Its proposed Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) peacekeeping initiative was perceived by Azerbaijan as a thin disguise for a plainly Russian operation. Russia further sought the role of guarantor of Nagorny Karabakh's status, arguing that the draft agreement should contain an article assigning it that function. The Western states declined Russia's suggestions and adhered to Azerbaijan's position that only a multinational operation conducted under the aegis of the CSCE could be considered.

These differences between the standpoints of Russia and Armenia on the one hand, and Azerbaijan and the West on the other, were at their most obvious in late 1994, on the eve of the OSCE Budapest summit. Prior to the summit Azerbaijani President Aliyev declined an invitation from Russian President Boris Yeltsin to discuss a Russian or CIS-led peacekeeping operation to be agreed at the forthcoming event. By the time of the summit, the Western countries had already made their decision: the peacekeeping operation would be a multinational, OSCE-led initiative. This standpoint was reflected in the summit's special resolution. Russia's formal consent contrasted with its fundamental rejection of any such initiative, leading to a new tactic in Russian diplomatic efforts. This consisted of insisting upon a prior peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan as a precondition for any subsequent peacekeeping operation. Given the absence of such an agreement, the international peacekeeping operation could not go forward. As the current state of ceasefire prevents the imposition of sanctions on Armenia, as well as reducing any imperative to agree to peace, the 'no war, no peace' situation has continued for the last eleven years.

Resolution efforts: the 'status for territory' impasse

From 1996 Armenia began to adopt a harder line, insisting on the simultaneous resolution of Nagorny Karabakh's status and liberation of the occupied territories around Nagorny Karabakh. This position essentially reflects the 'status for territory' formula: the

return of Azerbaijani territories occupied as a consequence of war in return for determining Nagorny Karabakh's political status. This stance caused a radical break in the approach taken by mediators since 1992, as well as fundamentally contradicting the letter and spirit of the UN Security Council resolutions. Unfortunately, the mediators failed to show the necessary firmness, going along with this unconstructive suggestion and taking the negotiations process into the impasse in which it still finds itself today.

In March 1996, Swiss Foreign Minister Flavio Cotti and his Russian counterpart Yevgeny Primakov discussed the possibility of including points on the status of Nagorny Karabakh in the preliminary agreement. Following their meeting, positions defining Nagorny Karabakh's status in very broad terms became the subject of negotiations within the Minsk Group. It should be noted that both Russia and the West supported the notion that any model considered should necessarily preserve the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. This united position was firmly backed by Azerbaijan and featured in the statement made by the acting president of the OSCE at the organization's Lisbon Summit in December 1996. The endorsement of this position in such an important document aroused Armenian indignation as it clearly demonstrated that the international community was not prepared to stand by and watch Armenia annex Azerbaijani territory.

In early 1997, the Minsk Group came to be chaired by Russia, France and the United States. Azerbaijan had actively lobbied for the inclusion of the United States in the capacity of co-chair as a counterweight to Russia and, in part, France, which is perceived as pro-Armenian by Azerbaijani society. Azerbaijan's proposal for Germany's inclusion was unfortunately not backed by Armenia.

In the year following the formation of the Minsk Group's tripartite co-chairmanship, the co-chairs put forward two proposals for the settlement of the conflict, both considered by Azerbaijan as acceptable starting-points for further negotiations. While accepting the proposals as a basis for renewed talks, Baku pointed out that by introducing attempts to define the issue of status into documents dealing with the conditions for the liberation of the occupied territories around Nagorny Karabakh, the mediators were leading the peace process to stalemate.

The Armenian side declined both proposals, calling on the co-chairs to develop a 'package solution' granting Nagorny Karabakh the status of an independent state, after which the liberation of part of the occupied territories around Nagorny Karabakh would be feasible. This led to a hiatus in the peace process until November 1998, when the co-chairs put forward a third proposal

based on an entirely new concept. On the whole close to the first two proposals, the third further suggested the possibility of the creation of a 'common state'. However, far from implying the integration of Karabakh into Azerbaijan by means of some mechanism yet to be defined, this document proposed the integration of two equal sovereign entities. The sometimes-reported view that this proposal was initially greeted with enthusiasm in Azerbaijan is mistaken. The lack of reaction among official sources in Azerbaijan was taken by some of our negotiating partners as a positive sign, but in reality any proposal that sought to predetermine a sovereign status for Karabakh was naturally unacceptable to Azerbaijan.

The Minsk Group co-chairs then proposed direct negotiations between the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan. These meetings were intended to provide an opportunity for the sides to develop a common model for settlement. Although the meetings are still being held today, this aim has not been met. Azerbaijan feels that this is due to the stance adopted by Armenia, as declared by Robert Kocharian upon coming to power. The basic premises of this standpoint are that: the liberation of part of the territories around Nagorny Karabakh is possible only after Azerbaijan's agreement to the independence of Nagorny Karabakh; and the territory situated between the administrative of the former Nagorny Karabakh Autonomous Oblast and Armenia must be given to Armenia.

This strategy is clearly intended to reduce Azerbaijan to capitulation, an outcome seen by the Armenian side as the logical consequence of its own military victory.

The Charter of Four

In the light of these territorial demands, the so-called 'land swap' proposal was developed. The parameters surrounding this proposal were kept secret, and even today it is difficult to say precisely what the proposal involved or who authored it. Nevertheless, the author of this article resigned in protest from his post as foreign minister of Azerbaijan at the admissibility of even discussing such a project. The fragments of information filtering through to the Azerbaijani public caused widespread protest, leading finally to the publication of the so-called 'Charter of Four'. This document was prepared and published by prominent civic rather than political actors (this author, one of the four behind the document, was no longer in public office) and supported by hundreds of social and political organizations. Outlining the approach the authors felt the Azerbaijani government should pursue in attempting to resolve the Karabakh issue, it represented a kind of 'mini-referendum' on the government's Karabakh policy.

Its main points were:

- the acceptability of the use of force, alongside political methods, in order to resist aggression and restore territorial integrity;
- the possibility of granting the entire Nagorny Karabakh population – Azeri and Armenian – a wide degree of autonomy;
- the necessity of a phased approach to the resolution of the conflict, whereby the status of Nagorny Karabakh would be decided only after the surrounding territories are liberated. Only after the liberation of these lands could the parameters and norms for a model of broad autonomy of Nagorny Karabakh within Azerbaijan be determined;
- the necessity of wide international involvement in the process at all stages at the levels of negotiations, implementation of agreements and post-conflict rehabilitation.

The Azerbaijani government subsequently used the Charter of Four as 'evidence' of the Azerbaijani public's unreadiness for compromise. Rather, the document provided an indication of the parameters of compromise palatable to the Azerbaijani public, which Aliyev had clearly exceeded in his negotiations with Kocharian.

Prospects

Aliyev's illness and death, and the change of leadership in Azerbaijan slowed the process of conflict settlement. After Ilham Aliyev's accession, the meetings between presidents were resumed and supplemented by meetings between the foreign ministers of the two countries.

In August 2005, the co-chairs proposed a new concept: interim status. Some of the territory around Nagorny Karabakh could be liberated in exchange for recognition of the *de facto* present-day situation in Karabakh until the final status of the region is determined through negotiations facilitated by international mediators. This proposal reflects an attempt to break out of the 'package' versus 'step-by-step' impasse in structuring peace proposals. As such expert opinion on both sides positively assesses the 'interim status' model as a way of progressing from the 'package' versus 'step-by-step' dichotomy that characterized the late 1990s, but has now lost its currency. However, there are indications that Armenian negotiators have attempted to include in the preliminary agreement points predetermining the status of Nagorny Karabakh as an independent state. This suggests that Yerevan is once again seeking to exchange liberation of occupied territories for independent status. Unless this strategy is abandoned, the talks have little chance of success and tensions arising from the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict will persist.

Self-regulating ceasefire

Oksana Antonenko

For more than a decade the ceasefire line, or line of contact (LOC), separating Azerbaijan and *de facto* Armenian-controlled Nagorny Karabakh, has been observed by all parties without external peacekeepers or a permanent monitoring force. This self-regulating aspect of the ceasefire line is unique to the Karabakh conflict. In other conflicts where no political settlement has been reached, such as Kashmir or Cyprus, a third-party force (in these cases the United Nations) observes and sometimes enforces the ceasefire. In the former Soviet Union, a joint peacekeeping force composed of Russian, Georgian and North Ossetian units observes the ceasefire in South Ossetia; in both Abkhazia and Transnistria Russian peacekeepers are deployed under a Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) mandate.

Limited instances of ceasefire violations, low casualty levels (around 200 dead and wounded) and no instances of military escalation beyond the LOC testify to the unprecedented success of this self-regulating system. Some experts believe that the ceasefire has been observed due to an existing military balance between the sides, assuring neither of military victory should a new confrontation occur. However, the question remains to what extent this system is sustainable and effective in the long run without any progress towards the political settlement of the conflict.

The Russian mediated ceasefire between Armenia and Azerbaijan was drafted as an initiative of the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic, and the Federal Congress and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, and came into effect at midnight on 11-12 May 1994. However, mediators and parties to the conflict were unable to agree on the deployment of a peacekeeping force, the main obstacle being its composition. The Azerbaijani side rejected any involvement of a Russian-led peacekeeping force, yet the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE later OSCE – Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) lacked a mechanism to create a multinational peacekeeping force, and in any case Western armies were preoccupied with Bosnia.

On 5-6 December 1994 the OSCE Summit in Budapest agreed in principle that a multinational peacekeeping

force should be sent to Nagorny Karabakh. According to the OSCE initiative, this force would consist of 3,000 soldiers with no country providing more than 30 per cent. Following the Budapest summit the OSCE established the High-Level Planning Group (HLPG) mandated to make recommendations regarding the deployment of an OSCE peacekeeping force. However, the HLPG document made the deployment of the peacekeeping force dependent on the successful implementation of the political settlement process. Without progress towards a political settlement no peacekeeping force could be deployed.

In the absence of a permanently deployed force, OSCE monitors carry out monitoring of the LOC through regular visits. These visits are announced in advance and involve visits separately to both sides of the LOC from Azerbaijan and from Armenia. In the past monitors also made symbolic crossings of the LOC after a corridor had been de-mined by both sides. However, these crossings have ceased after an incident involving a mine that exploded. This system includes neither the permanent presence of monitors nor any element of surprise. It also does not incorporate any confidence-building measures between the forces deployed on both sides of the LOC, between which no clear rules of engagement exist in the absence of a political settlement. As a result both the *de facto* authorities of Nagorny Karabakh and the government of Azerbaijan maintain high levels of military presence at the line as well as a well-developed infrastructure of trenches and other fortifications. A number of measures have been discussed, including possibilities for a direct 'hotline' of communication between commanders, cooperation on pest control with benefits for both sides, and the exchange of information regarding non-strategic minefields.

If a settlement is reached, the issue of deploying a peacekeeping force will again be raised in accordance with OSCE decisions. Under these circumstances peacekeeping forces will most likely be mandated not to observe the line of separation between the parties to the conflict, but to promote safe movement of people, observe some disarmament and confidence-building measures and possibly to oversee the process of refugee return. However, the old disagreements remain regarding the composition and rules of engagement of any future peacekeeping force. The Armenian side supports the deployment of a Russian-led force along the LOC, while the Azerbaijani side supports the deployment of a bigger international force throughout the entire conflict area, with a much broader mandate including support for refugee return. In the meantime, however, making OSCE inspections more intrusive and implementing minor confidence-building measures could help to make the system more effective.

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A last chance for peace?

Sabine Freizer

In the autumn of 2005 Azerbaijan and Armenia seem to be as close to peace as they have ever been. But will the negotiations fail once again? If they do prospects for a resumption of large-scale combat are much more real than before. Burgeoning military expenditures, increasing ceasefire violations, and the demonization of the other side are all ominous signs that the time for talks is running out.

Since May 2004 the Azerbaijani and Armenian foreign ministers have met on eleven occasions in what has come to be known as the Prague Process. The countries' presidents have expressed their support of the progress being made in their own tête-à-tête encounters. In August 2005 Minsk Group co-chairs apparently presented a one-page settlement strategy. If parties continue talks based on this discussion document, a comprehensive peace agreement may be ready in 2006.

The two sides are closer than ever before because they have accepted that any peace deal will be implemented step by step. Nagorny Karabakh's ultimate status can only be resolved after the impact of confidence-building measures and security guarantees are felt on the ground. Karabakh Armenian forces backed by Armenia will withdraw from all or most of the occupied territories. International peacekeeping forces will be deployed, internally displaced people will return to their pre-war homes and trade and communication links will be restored. Only after this – in ten, fifteen or twenty years – would the status of Nagorny Karabakh be determined after an internationally sanctioned self-determination plebiscite with the exclusive participation of Karabakh Armenians and Azeris. Until then Nagorny Karabakh will remain *de jure* part of Azerbaijan, yet *de facto* independent.

This is not the first time that the negotiators appear to have found a winning formula. After the April 2001 Key West talks the signing of a comprehensive peace proposal also seemed possible. Yet the negotiations ground to a standstill. Former Minsk Group co-chair Carey Cavanaugh rationalized, "the presidents were ahead of their people," to explain the failure, but a more persuasive explanation would be that the gap between what the Armenian and Azerbaijani leadership was saying in private and in public was too wide. Today

nothing has changed. While the Prague Process inches forward little is being done in Baku, Yerevan or Stepanakert to prepare people for peace. Regional leaders have for years strategized that tough talk boosts domestic ratings.

While there may have been little ethnic basis for the war when it started, official propaganda has helped ensure the build up of mutual hatred. Both populations have been psychologically prepared to begin another cycle of fighting and killing. In Azerbaijan in particular over half a million internally displaced people from Nagorny Karabakh and the surrounding districts have become a strong pro-war constituency, some 84 per cent calling for the use of force to resolve the conflict in a 2004 poll by the Baku Press Club.

Azerbaijan's rocketing oil revenues are changing the situation on the ground. In July 2005 Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev announced an increase in military spending from US\$135 million in 2003, to US\$300 million in 2005. After Armenian officials stated that they would respond in kind, Baku promised to spend US\$600 million on the military in 2006. Armenia, which continues to suffer from exclusion from regional projects and a persistent blockade, cannot afford to match Azerbaijan's expenditures. A new generation of Azerbaijani officers trained in or by Turkey, and the country's provision of troops to Anglo-American-led operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, have increased the military's battle readiness. After over a decade of neglect, the Azerbaijani army must still overcome problems of outdated weaponry, corruption, inefficient operational planning, programming and budget systems, but a real willingness to reform to carry out a winning offensive can bring rapid change.

Azerbaijan's threat to employ force to restore its territorial integrity is real. Armenian hardliners argue that withdrawal from the security zone around Nagorny Karabakh is suicide, yet continual occupation of Azerbaijani territory while Baku is rapidly arming itself only provides justification for an Azerbaijani attack.

Withdrawal is the best security guarantee available today to Stepanakert. Should Nagorny Karabakh forces withdraw from the occupied districts and international peacekeepers be deployed, Azerbaijan would be bound by an internationally recognized peace agreement not to resort to force. If it violates the agreement by attacking, it will undermine the very international links it depends on for its newfound wealth as a producer and safe transit for oil and gas for years to come.

Both Baku and Yerevan have an interest to reach a peace settlement soon. Otherwise they will have few levers to stop the wheels of war.

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Bridging divides

civil society peacebuilding initiatives

Avaz Hasanov and Armine Ishkanian

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Independent civil society groups and social movements emerged in Armenia and Azerbaijan only in the last decade of Soviet rule. Following the Soviet collapse, democracy promotion became a central part of Western aid programmes as civil society development came to be seen as critical for democratization and a successful transition. These efforts led to the phenomenal growth in the number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Attempts by civil society actors to influence the Armenian-Azerbaijani peace process have thus been simultaneous to their emergence as a constituency for democratization across their respective societies. On a range of issues this has often pitted civil society against governments suspicious and unaccustomed to autonomous initiatives and wary of the foreign funding that supports these organizations. Nonetheless, since 1994 civil society initiatives, often working in very difficult conditions, have addressed various issues including the protection of human rights, the release of hostages and prisoners of war (POWs), the problems affecting refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), and the need to find a peaceful solution to the conflict.

Current circumstances, including the controversial renewal of the Aliyev regime in Azerbaijan, government-opposition confrontation in Armenia and the wave of 'revolutions' across the former Soviet Union, have worsened conditions for civil society while simultaneously creating new opportunities for it. While regimes are perhaps more reluctant than ever to loosen their monopoly on peacemaking, the need for movement in the peace process is creating openings for new forms of civic contact across the conflict divide.

Peacebuilding: possibilities and challenges

A number of factors have limited the effectiveness and impact of NGOs in Armenia and Azerbaijan: capacity, the political environment and the nature of the societies of which civil society itself forms part.



Increased poverty in these countries has meant that few organizations are membership based and supported, making NGOs dependent on foreign donors for the overwhelming majority of their funds. This allows politicians as well as journalists to question the motivations and aims of NGOs that work on peacebuilding and conflict resolution. At the same time international involvement specifically targeted at conflict resolution efforts has been less forthcoming than, for example, in neighbouring Georgia. This has been in part a question of access, as Baku and Stepanakert have not been able to agree on a common mandate arrangement allowing international NGOs to have a mutually approved presence in Nagorny Karabakh. The fact that most of the NGOs engaged in this work are also quite small, with a limited scope of operations, compounds these problems: NGOs reach a small segment of the population while the larger public remains unaware of their work and cynical towards the very notion of civil society. There is consequently a limited level of participation in the peace process and a very low sense of ownership of it.

Beyond issues of capacity, current political realities further circumscribe opportunities for NGO development. In 1999 President Heydar Aliyev announced that “for as long as we have not signed a peace agreement with Armenia there is no need for cooperation between our NGOs and Armenians. When Kocharian and I resolve the issue, it will inevitably involve compromises with which many will disagree. Then let NGOs reconcile the two peoples”. In other words, NGOs are assigned the role not of active players in the peace process but mitigators of public criticism directed at their leaders. Activists on both sides

engaged in meetings with representatives of the other side have faced reprisals, sometimes physical, on their return home, creating an intimidating atmosphere integral to governmental attempts to monopolize the negotiations process. These conditions often demand considerable personal courage on the part of civil society actors in the everyday conduct of their work, and combined with competition over funds, have put considerable strain on personal relationships within already small NGO communities. Especially (but not only) in Azerbaijan, personal conflicts and turf battles have divided civil society and debilitated its capacity to present a united front.

The politicization of NGOs in the context of government-opposition struggles is also significant. Particularly since the civil society-driven ‘Rose’ and ‘Orange’ revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine, governments in Armenia and Azerbaijan have regarded their own civil societies with renewed suspicion as covert vehicles of opposition. A long-standing strategy favoured by governments in addressing this threat has been the proliferation of government-funded ‘front’ organizations (or GONGOs – government-organized NGOs). A recent term that has come to describe GONGOs in Armenian is *grbanayin* (‘pocket’) NGOs, a term used to describe NGOs seen as working for or ‘in the pocket’ of the authorities. In Azerbaijan government-controlled militant ‘quasi-NGOs’, such as the Karabakh Liberation Organization, pose as expressions of pluralism but serve as instruments of intimidation. There has been very little in the way of alliances between NGOs and political parties to promote civic peacebuilding initiatives, underlining the rift between ‘political society’ and civil society.

Yet the fact should not be underestimated that most civil society actors in Armenia and Azerbaijan, while sharing commitments to non-violence and democracy, adhere to incompatible visions for the future of Nagorny Karabakh. Civil societies, after all, form part of – and emerge from – wider societies; with those societies reproducing ever more antagonistic visions of the conflict and its future, it is unrealistic to expect that civil society actors should be close to one another in their thinking. On both sides civic actors may actively campaign for a non-violent and participatory peace process and to mitigate excesses of enemy stereotyping obtaining in official propaganda. However, this consensus on method cannot be taken to imply a convergence of their *political* goals in the resolution of the conflict. Assessments of civil society's mediatory potential must take this factor into consideration. Civic actors may have particular capacities to channel the concerns of their own societies to the leadership, and to open up difficult or taboo subjects. Yet bridging political divides between societies, and addressing the competing visions of justice underlying them, arguably presents a distinct set of challenges requiring the identification and development of additional mediatory capacities to dedicate to this task.

The projects and the organizations

Local NGOs in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Nagorny Karabakh have organized and participated in dialogues between the parties involved in the conflict, they have worked for the release of POWs, organized youth camps, and led civic education and conflict resolution training programmes as well as skills training programmes for refugees and IDPs. The aim of these activities has been to keep the lines of communication open, to allow individuals from Armenia and Azerbaijan to meet, to combat processes of de-humanization and enemy stereotyping, and to foster social attitudes more receptive to reconciliation and dialogue. One of the first initiatives, the 1991 Peace Caravan, organized by the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly (HCA) chapters in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, provided the context for Armenian and Azeri civil society activists to meet on the Azerbaijani-Armenian border at Kazakh-Ijevan (referred to as the 'peace corridor') to discuss prospects for the resolution of the conflict and to issue a joint appeal for peace. The HCA chapters in the Caucasus, which are part of the larger HCA global network of organizations, also established 'The Transcaucasus Dialogue' in 1992 to coordinate and support the work of the individual HCA chapters in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Nagorny Karabakh as well as their regional cooperation. In 1992, Anahit Bayandour (Armenia) and Arzu Abdullayeva (Azerbaijan) were awarded the Olof Palme Memorial Fund Peace Prize and in 1998 Abdullayeva also received the 'European Union and US Government's Award for Democracy and Civil Society'.

Another successful initiative was a conference in 1995 held in Bonn, Germany, with the support of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. The conference resulted in a series of agreed confidence-building measures including the release of hostages and POWs, and mutual visits by civil society activists, journalists, and students. In the following years hundreds of hostages and POW exchanges took place as part of the agreed confidence-building measures, but as Mary Kaldor and Mient Jan Faber argue, due to political circumstances and a lack of momentum this process came to a standstill in the late 1990s. From the late 1990s there have been various regional meetings and initiatives. These include the 1998 Nalchik seminar, leading to the creation of the Caucasus Forum, one of the longest-lasting and most important forums for NGO cooperation, and the 2001 Tsakhkadzor conference, which created opportunities for civil society activists to discuss pathways to peace. These meetings were an example of local NGOs cooperating with international counterparts, being facilitated by International Alert. One can also note the founding in 2001 of the Caucasian Refugee and IDP NGO Network (CRINGO), established in order to assist the displaced population.

More recently the Consortium Initiative, implemented by a coalition of international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) made up of Catholic Relief Services, Conciliation Resources, International Alert, and the London Information Network on Conflicts and State-building (LINKS), has sought to bring a more comprehensive approach. The Consortium Initiative represents a government-funded initiative (it is funded by the United Kingdom government) aimed at a more strategic approach of intersecting strands taking in political and civil society dialogue, conflict-sensitive development and public awareness of the conflict and peace process. It is also explicitly aimed at including all the constituencies in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Karabakh and among displaced communities with a stake in the resolution of the conflict.

Regional approaches have frequently been necessary given the constraints imposed by authorities on meetings with representatives of the other side in each other's countries. Although this has diluted the potential for direct Armenian-Azerbaijani dialogue by situating contacts within a regionalist agenda, it has at times been the only way to incorporate Karabakh Armenians due to Baku's reluctance hitherto to approve meetings between Azeris and Karabakh Armenians in particular. It has also been one of the few means of fostering a sense of pan-Caucasian commonality of interest in a region riven by conflict, blockades and front lines.

In addition to NGOs, there are some smaller grassroots organizations comprised of refugees, the mothers or wives of soldiers, and families of hostages or POWs.

These organizations often work with NGOs and there is an increasing tendency for these organizations to institutionalize over time and to register as NGOs themselves. Armenian diasporic communities, particularly those in the US, have lobbied for foreign aid and publicized the Armenian position. Although diasporic NGOs and individuals from the US, Europe, and the Middle East have contributed to humanitarian aid and development initiatives since independence, there has been little in the way of cooperation with and support for local NGOs involved in peacebuilding and conflict resolution initiatives in Armenia. On the contrary, some diasporic organizations, especially nationalist political parties, have taken more intransigent positions.

Women's NGOs and networks

A striking feature of NGOs in the former Soviet states is the considerable number of women involved. Women from Armenia and Azerbaijan have been working together through NGOs as well as transnational advocacy networks to promote peacebuilding and conflict resolution. An example of women's NGOs' collaborative efforts is the Transcaucasus Women's Dialogue, which was established in 1994 under the aegis of the National Peace Foundation in Washington, DC. From 1997-99, the Transcaucasus Women's Dialogue organized various projects involving the environment, democratic rights and education, including a three-year summer school at Tbilisi State University. Another women's regional initiative was the 'Working Together – Networking Women in the Caucasus' programme (1997 – 2002) sponsored by the Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe (IDEE) with funding from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the US Department of State. 'Working Together' was a programme for women leaders in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia to promote greater cross-border networking. Through a range of training, civic education, NGO development and cross-border networking activities, the IDEE programmes attempted to enhance the leadership abilities and capacity of women leaders and their NGOs, and to advance women's participation in public life.

Mixed prospects

The capacity of civil society to impinge upon the Karabakh peace process has always been subject to cycles of opportunity and constraint imposed by internal political developments in Armenia and Azerbaijan. It may appear in the current period that civil society faces more constraints than opportunities, and in some senses prospects do not appear good. The conflict is no closer to resolution, momentum is difficult to maintain, militant rhetoric is on the increase, and there is a danger that individual activists and organizations will

become disillusioned by the lack of progress. Even where they enjoy access, civil society actors do not appear to be able to influence politicians. Furthermore, rising oil revenues and the successful opening of the BTC pipeline suggest greater, rather than less, autonomy for the Azerbaijani state from society.

Against this somewhat bleak picture, there is no doubt that since the ceasefire of 1994 NGOs have played a key role by maintaining dialogue, promoting a culture of peace and human rights, working toward the release of POWs, and facilitating the meeting of individuals from the parties to the conflict. Over the years NGOs have gained experience and developed new skills and capacities leading even the most conservative circles of government to recognize the potential of civil society. On 14 June 2005 a statement issued by the Azerbaijani Ministry of Foreign Affairs actively supported prior international calls for the establishment of direct contacts between the Karabakh Armenian and Karabakh Azeri communities. According to the statement, direct inter-communal dialogue and associated confidence-building measures will contribute to creating the prerequisite conditions for normalizing relations between Karabakh Armenians and returning Azeris. This represents an important opening for these two core constituencies to establish a dialogue for the first time since the war. Another trend is the growth of civil society in Karabakh itself, a nascent phenomenon tempering the influence of the military in Karabakh Armenian politics.

Looking to the future, the key priority for civil society is to act as a conduit for wider, more informed participation in the peace process. Broad-based public awareness of and participation in the peace process is essential for the region to develop democratically and a mutually acceptable, sustainable solution to the conflict to be found. This requires civil society to develop proposals on both substantive and procedural issues for consideration by the negotiating parties. It also demands outreach to marginalized communities and internal dialogue on painful, often taboo issues. The accession of both Armenia and Azerbaijan to the Council of Europe in June 2000, and their resulting obligation to resolve the Karabakh conflict by peaceful means, should serve to indicate to peacebuilders in the region that they can count on the support of European structures such as the Council of Europe and the European Union. This support will be crucial for civil societies; ultimately however, the challenge is to include disaffected populations in a meaningful dialogue on options for peace, and to thereby instil in them a sense of ownership over the resulting peace process.

Between freedom and taboo

media coverage of the Karabakh conflict

Mark Grigoryan and Shahin Rzayev

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Mark Grigoryan, a founder of the Caucasus Media Institute in Yerevan, moved to London after an attempt on his life. He writes on journalism in the former Soviet Union and has been involved in training journalists from the region. He is now a producer for the BBC World Service.

The Karabakh conflict provides a useful prism through which to examine the vicissitudes of media freedom in post-Soviet Armenia and Azerbaijan. In neither state have robust media independent of the state or other political or business interests emerged. Although the conflict posed a major challenge to Soviet traditions of state-muzzled media, the post-ceasefire situation since 1994 has seen a backtracking trend towards media conformity with official positions. This is linked to a homogenization of political views dictated by positions of victory and defeat respectively, and to the political economy of the post-Soviet information market. Current media coverage of the conflict tends to be nationalistic, although media in Armenia, which has more reason to be satisfied with the status quo, tends to be more reserved and ready to express preparedness to restore good relations. In both countries, however, societies are deprived of objective or full information on the content and direction of the negotiations to resolve the conflict, an information deficit precluding any meaningful public participation in the peace process.

The Soviet period (1988–1990)

The birth of the movement in 1988 to bring Nagorny Karabakh under Armenian control came at a time when the Soviet press was flourishing. Thanks to Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms, previously censored materials – archive documents, forbidden literary works and critiques of Soviet policy – could now be made public in the Moscow press. This only applied to the past, however. When it came to coverage of current affairs, the media offered comment and analysis from positions put forward and approved by the Communist authorities, rather than providing objective information.

Predictably enough, the Soviet media's first response to the mass demonstrations in Stepanakert and Yerevan was profound silence. Subsequent events in Kafan in Armenia (the flight of Azeris) and Sumgait in Azerbaijan (anti-Armenian pogroms) received little or no mention at all. Instead, the media resorted to the standard didactic promotion of Soviet internationalism and the



‘brotherhood of peoples’; the hundreds of thousands of demonstrators were labelled ‘a handful of nationalists and extremists’, labels completely at odds with the jubilant mood of patriotic fervour sweeping through Armenian society and indeed the reality it could see before its very eyes. Azerbaijani society was also frustrated by the lack of information: it was only known that ‘something was happening in and around Karabakh’. Throughout the summer and autumn of 1988, the public on both sides perceived the Moscow media, on which they depended in the absence of any local reporting on the conflict, as supporting the enemy.

The Soviet media’s attempts to conceal the seriousness of the conflict contributed to a climate of rumour and speculation conducive to escalation. They also forced populations to seek alternative sources of information. Public rallies formed one: people even spoke about ‘information meetings’. The alternative dissident press, known as *samizdat*, formed another. *Samizdat* traditionally reported facts never seen in the official press, but reached only a small audience. *Samizdat* publications flourished at this time, printing nationalistic and anti-Soviet material that could not be published by official sources and was largely seen by the public as ‘the truth’. By summer 1989, over ten periodicals were coming out in Yerevan. The first independent newspaper to appear in Baku was *Azerbaydzhan*, the organ of the Committee for People’s Aid to Karabakh. Around that time, programmes such as ‘Dalgə’ (Wave), openly discussing the escalating conflict, began to be shown on Azeri television.

In autumn 1989, the USSR adopted a law on the press and abolished censorship. This inaugurated a period of new, openly non-Communist newspapers both

disseminating and reflecting emergent nationalist platforms in their respective societies. Although representing an alternative to official sources, these outlets (such as *Hayk*, published by the Armenian National Movement, and *Azadlyg*, published by the Popular Front of Azerbaijan) cannot be seen as the development of a genuinely free press. Rather, they represented ‘counter-propaganda’, shaped by rejection of Soviet stereotypes and labels and thus a discourse still structured by Soviet rules of the game. A battle had been joined in the media between the Soviet establishment and nationalist constituencies for reform, but the terms of engagement were still defined by the regime.

Soviet collapse and conflict escalation

The attainment of independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 was followed by the emergence of new independent papers in Armenia and Azerbaijan. In Azerbaijan many of these became extremely popular, notably *Ayna*, *Zerkalo*, *Seher*, *7 Giun* and *Aidylyg*. Azerbaijan’s first independent information agency Turan appeared around that time, as did party newspapers: *Millet* of Etibar Mamedov’s National Independence Party; *Istiglal* of the Social Democratic Party led by the Alizade brothers; and *Yeni Musavat* of Isa Gambar’s Musavat party. Chingiz Mustafayev established an independent television studio 215 KL. As well as providing a more widely trusted source of information the quality and timeliness of conflict reporting significantly increased. New independent papers were also springing up in Armenia. *Munetik*, *Vremya*, *Azg* (the newspaper of the Ramkavar-Azatakan party) and *Yerkir* (affiliated to the Armenian Revolutionary Federation) began to gain popularity.

Many of these outlets enthusiastically projected diametrically opposed nationalist visions of the events unfolding in Karabakh. It was common in the Armenian media to portray Armenians as victims of Stalin's policy and the Bolsheviks' territorial agreement with Turkey, and more recently of the Kremlin's political short-sightedness and Turkey's allegiance to Azerbaijan. Further, the media claimed Azeris had responded to peaceful and lawful Armenian demonstrations by subjecting Armenian civilians living in Azerbaijan to terror, ethnic cleansing and mass deportation, including 'Operation Ring' from April 1991. Naturally, this stance was effective in enhancing images of 'victim' and 'aggressor'.

Articles in the Azerbaijani media tended to contrast Armenian nationalist tendencies with the Azeri spirit of internationalism. Often written by members of the intelligentsia, they also dwelt on the 'friends of the Armenians' in the Kremlin, the corruption of Moscow journalists, the information blockade of Azerbaijan, Armenian terrorist organizations such as the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA) and the mass deportation of Azeris from Armenia under Stalin. The native population of Karabakh was said to consist of assimilated Caucasian Albanians, with Armenians coming in to settle from Turkey during the Russian imperial period.

Full-scale war in Karabakh

The onset of full-scale war in Karabakh in 1992 provided new evidence of the power and potential of the new generation of journalists, a number of whom became war correspondents reporting from or near the front line. Working far from centres of censorship and at a time of general political upheaval, war correspondents were harder to control. The resulting divergence between official reports of events on the battlefield and the eyewitness accounts and video coverage broadcast in independent sources contributed to the rise and fall of governments. Azerbaijani President Ayaz Mutalibov's dismissal was in part due to revelations in independent sources regarding the numbers of Azeris killed at Khojaly in February 1992.

The significance of the media's new-found power was not lost on those who acceded to power in part as a result of its influence. The Popular Front of Azerbaijan, led by President Abulfaz Elchibey, that replaced Mutalibov's administration oversaw the rise of a multitude of new publications and private TV and radio companies; Elchibey's administration also passed a new law on the media. This flourishing of the media was expedient for as long as it supported the regime. Most Azerbaijani media supported Elchibey, calling on Azeris to continue the fight for Karabakh until 'victory was theirs'. Dissenting voices were few – only the Social Democratic Party newspaper *Istiglal* contradicted the

hawkish chorus with an article entitled 'Time to stop!' at the height of the Azerbaijani offensive in summer 1992 after the capture of Mardakert/Agdere. This call was ignored by most media and the population at large, yet *Istiglal* proved right: the fleeting Azeri victories were soon followed by heavy losses. The onset of the stunning series of military defeats in 1993 was met with a media clampdown in Azerbaijan. On 2 April 1993, on the eve of the Armenian occupation of the Kelbajar district, Elchibey issued a decree introducing military censorship. In the end the Popular Front government fell to a military coup rather than media revelations; military and political censorship nonetheless continued for another five years.

In spite of the conflict strong links between information agencies of the two sides were forged during the war. Partnership was developed between the Azeri Turan and Armenian Snark (now Arminfo). The agencies exchanged information throughout the entire war and continue to do so today.

Post-ceasefire developments

In the period of state building and consolidation following the ceasefire of 1994 the media in both countries have undergone a transformative process reflecting new social and political realities. For impoverished populations television is by far the most influential medium, which consequently attracts overweening influence from both the state and business interests with political ambitions (or at least desires to appease those in control of regulatory mechanisms). While there is a higher margin of autonomy in the press, the influence of political groups and wealthy individuals is also significant here. Lean resources, undeveloped distribution networks, self-censorship and in some cases harassment further limit the potential for independent print journalism.

The post-ceasefire period has seen an overall decline of interest and coverage of the conflict, despite periodic peaks related to specific events in the peace process. In both Azerbaijan and Armenia discourse on the peace process in governmental and oppositional media have converged to express seemingly consensual understandings of 'national interests'. A key implication is the wide observation of taboos on the nature and specifics of concessions that could be made to the other side. These taboos are supported by ingrained terminologies used to structure discourse on the conflict. In Azerbaijan, for instance, Armenia and Armenians are routinely referred to as 'aggressors', while Armenian Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian was forced to retreat before a media storm when he publicly referred to the 'occupied territories', rather than the popular labels 'security zone' or even 'liberated territories'.

In Armenia, a consistent decline of interest towards the Karabakh problem over the post-ceasefire years reflects the public mood that the conflict is solved by *de facto* Armenian control over Karabakh. Even if public opinion also considers concessions necessary to gain a peaceful resolution to the conflict, the specifics of Armenia's possible concessions remain one of the most tabooed subjects in the press. Few analytical articles are published on Nagorny Karabakh, and those that are usually deal with the legal and political reasons for Karabakh's secession, Armenia's historical right to Karabakh and the 'liberated territories' (the seven neighbouring districts), or the might of the Armenian army.

By contrast Azerbaijani public opinion does not believe that the conflict is over, a view reflected and encouraged by the media. The possibility of a military solution features increasingly frequently, occasionally spilling over into blatant war propaganda. For instance, ANS, the leading private Azerbaijani TV and radio company, opens its daily news programmes with the words 'Armenia's aggression towards Azerbaijan continues'. ANS presenters refer to the conflict as the 'first Karabakh war', thereby clearly preparing viewers for a second. In the state-controlled Azerbaijani media, 'pro-Armenian tendencies' and 'cooperation with Armenians' are negative labels regularly used in campaigns to discredit opposition parties and independent NGOs. Human rights activists and journalists who meet and communicate with Armenian colleagues are ostracized.

Media in Azerbaijan have also had to contend with a dramatically deteriorating political climate since 2002. Regulatory mechanisms have multiplied, financial pressure has increased and non-conformist media have faced increasing persecution, culminating in the murder in March 2005 of journalist Elmar Huseynov, editor of what was widely seen as Azerbaijan's most outspoken newspaper *Monitor*; the newspaper subsequently closed. The scope for autonomous initiatives, including contacts with Armenian journalists, is thus extremely narrow. Some contacts have nonetheless been maintained, some within regional frameworks, others bilaterally. A regional example is the Internews Crossroads programme, a project producing a half-hour magazine programme with ten minutes apiece from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. The Institute for War and Peace Reporting also works throughout the region to support independent journalists. Bilateral contacts have been maintained by the Yerevan and Baku Press Clubs, including joint public opinion surveys. Contacts between Azerbaijani and Karabakh Armenian journalists remain especially sparse. Although groups of Armenian and Azerbaijani journalists have visited Baku and Stepanakert respectively, these contacts have declined in recent

years. Contacts are now limited to one or two individuals, notably journalist Eynulla Fatullaev's visit to Karabakh in 2005, covered in the newspaper *Realny Azerbaydzhan*. A small number of articles from the Azerbaijani press are printed in the independent newspaper *Demo* published by the Stepanakert Press Club and supported as part of the Consortium Initiative.

Room for debate?

Coverage of the Karabakh conflict has evolved parallel to and as a result of changing political realities in post-Soviet Armenia and Azerbaijan. In the conflict's initial stages Soviet traditions of propaganda and misinformation predominated. Once the conflict had escalated into war, however, two parallel processes occurred: the professionalization of the media took place simultaneously with its 'nationalization', that is, its adoption and projection of nationalist values and narratives. These values were seen as compatible with democracy, insofar as national democratic forces were seen, at least initially, as upholding media freedoms and pluralism. Furthermore, censorship and control were difficult to enforce in the conditions of war and political upheaval characterising the early 1990s.

However, the outcome of the war, the linking of political legitimacy to stances arising from it and new socio-economic realities have inhibited the post-war disentanglement of the media from nationalist platforms. In Armenia, victory has dulled interest in questioning the outcome of the war or the national idea underlying it; in Azerbaijan a fragile regime's exploitation of defeat as a 'consensus issue' has made nationalist rhetoric compelling. In both countries, impoverished populations, rudimentary infrastructure and a tough regulatory environment mean that media outlets do not survive through direct relationships with their consumers, but through patronage from either the state or individuals vulnerable to state pressures on account of their wealth. This situation differs from the Balkans, where Western policy rendered far more assistance to independent media, especially if they were oppositional. As a result success in the Armenian or Azerbaijani media market dictates the accommodation of official policy lines on key issues.

Whereas nationalist discourse in the media in the early 1990s was initially associated with anti-Soviet and democratic values, it is now associated with a homogenization of political views and conformity with official state positions in the peace process. Still primarily concerned with their own survival, the media in Armenia and Azerbaijan have yet to secure the necessary autonomy to engage their respective societies in a debate on the Karabakh peace process that is critical, yet constructive.

War, social change and 'no war, no peace' syndromes in Azerbaijani and Armenian societies

Laura Baghdasarian and Arif Yunusov

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Like any war, the Nagorny Karabakh conflict has wrought numerous significant social changes, including waves of refugees and humanitarian and social crises. However, when addressing change in Armenian and Azerbaijani societies it is useful to distinguish between 'post-war' consequences of the conflict and what could be termed 'no war, no peace' syndromes relating to the current impasse. The latter include militarization and the integration of combatants into the 'peace process', the stalling of democratic development, the internalization of identities of victor (Armenia) and victim (Azerbaijan) and contradictory approaches to mediation. The prevalence of these syndromes and their role in maintaining animosity towards the 'enemy' warns against labelling them as 'post-war'. On the contrary, they can be seen as syndromes potentially leading to a second round of armed hostilities. This ambiguity is a defining feature of the situation today: while certain radical forces within government and opposition in both states seek to maintain a certain level of public antagonism towards the 'other', there is also a need to prevent this condition from reaching crisis point. 'Managed antagonism' affords key players certain political dividends, encouraging the deployment of the Karabakh factor in internal political struggles. An important consequence is the perception that it is societies, and not political elites, who are not ready for resolution of the conflict and that hostility and hatred define Azerbaijani-Armenian relations.

Consequences of the war and social change

Before looking more closely at the 'no war, no peace' syndromes, it is useful to review some of the changes in Azerbaijan and Armenia societies as a consequence of the war. Above all, large-scale population movements during and after the war have reshaped the Armenian and Azerbaijani demographic and political landscapes. At the outset of the conflict the refugee issue was a rallying cry and key argument between the conflicting parties. Over the years, however, refugees and displaced persons have assumed different functions in the discourse of Armenian and Azerbaijani negotiators. The continued existence of 'tent camps' (or 'tent cities') holding displaced Azerbaijani populations has served as an unequivocal reminder of the unresolved status of the conflict for Azerbaijani society as a whole, and as a graphic demonstration of Azerbaijan's suffering as a result of the conflict for international actors visiting these camps. By contrast, the issue of Armenian refugees has not been so politically charged. The following sections show how the two countries have been affected differently by population shifts.



Refugees and displaced persons

After the beginning of the conflict in 1988 both sides were overwhelmed by mass population movements. By 1990 the Azerbaijani government was registering large numbers of refugees from Armenia (see *figure 1*) as well as 48,000 Meskhetian Turks from Uzbekistan.

Figure 1. Refugees from Armenia into Azerbaijan, 1990

	Registered February	Registered September
Azeris from Armenia	186,000	201,000
Kurds from Armenia	18,000	2,500*
Russians from Armenia	3,500	1,500 *

* many Russian and Kurdish refugees moved to Russia during 1990.

Figure 2. Azerbaijan State Statistical Department figures for Azeri IDPs displaced from NK and seven occupied regions, 1993

	April	December
	243,000	779,000

Calculating the number of Azeris internally displaced from Nagorny Karabakh was hugely complicated, but in 1993-94 on the basis of State Statistical Department figures (see *figure 2*) the Azerbaijani government announced the presence of more than one million refugees and displaced persons in the republic, accounting for 12 per cent of its population. Despite subsequent political stabilization in Azerbaijan, the government continues to cite similar figures. However, according to the data of independent experts, the

United Nations (UN) and the International Organization for Migration there may now be around 750,000 refugees and displaced persons in Azerbaijan, accounting for slightly more than 9 per cent of the population.

Figures regarding the number of refugees and displaced persons in Armenia are again difficult to break down. At the end of 1993, according to the official figures, the number of refugees and displaced persons from the Karabakh and Georgia-Abkhazia conflicts amounted to nearly 11 per cent of the population of Armenia (see *figure 3*). These figures are probably exaggerated and have worked their way into international sources: the UN cited a figure of nearly 500,000 refugees in Armenia on the basis of such official information. Over time, part of the refugee population returned to Karabakh or otherwise left Armenia, so by December 2000 refugees accounted for more than 8 per cent of the republic's population. Some 30,000 refugees from Azerbaijan took Armenian citizenship at the beginning of 2002.

Figure 3. Numbers of refugees and IDPs registered by the Armenian government

	End 1993	Dec 2000
Armenians from Azerbaijan and NK	335,000	238,000
Displaced persons from border regions	78,000	72,000
Refugees from Abkhazia	6,000	8,000
Refugees from Chechnya	–	3,000

Post-war migration outflows

After the ceasefire in 1994 migration outflows from both republics continued, but were now associated with political instability and economic hardship, reflected in the fact that these outflows were composed mainly of Azerbaijanis and Armenians rather than minority groups. Out-migration remains uncontrolled and it is impossible to determine reliable figures, but official sources in Azerbaijan acknowledge that the figure of 800,000 outward migrants since 1994 is an underestimate. Between 1991 and 2000 more than 1.5 million left for Russia alone, where according to unofficial sources up to 2 million Azerbaijani citizens (equivalent to 25 per cent of the population of Azerbaijan) live and work today.

As in Azerbaijan, the Karabakh ceasefire put an end to the flow of refugees from the conflict zone to Armenia, but as the socio-economic situation in Armenia deteriorated the number of migrants leaving the country increased noticeably. According to the data of independent experts up to one million people left Armenia in the period 1990-2001 (see *figure 4*), suggesting at least 26 per cent of Armenia's population left in the first decade after independence.

Figure 4. Independent estimates of people leaving Armenia for selected destinations, 1990-2001

Russia	620,000
United States	100,000
Ukraine	80,000
Western Europe	20,000
Belarus	15,000

Demographic change

The demographic profiles of both republics show further changes wrought by the war and resulting socio-economic and political developments. During the conflict not less than 600,000 Azerbaijani citizens belonging to national minorities left the country; as a result, more than 90 per cent of the population are now ethnic Azeris. The composition of the non-Azeri population has also sharply changed: if before Armenians and Russians were the dominant non-titulars (see the *political glossary*), now Lezgins, Talysh and Kurds have taken their place.

The biggest wave of migrants from Armenia was composed of Azeris and Muslim Kurds. The almost complete removal of Armenia's Muslim population occurred during the most difficult years of the conflict. Migration of representatives of other groups from Armenia, already demographically marginal in the Soviet period, did not have such a significant impact on Armenia's population profile.

All of the above data bear witness to the humanitarian disaster caused by the conflict. Behind these statistical facts lie real people with serious psychological traumas, even if some have established new lives in new surroundings. The displaced Azerbaijani population living in 'tent camps' finds itself in the worst situation: confronted by disease, poverty, declining humanitarian aid and a government that would sooner exploit it for propaganda purposes than address its problems, this population is increasingly vulnerable to radicalization. Efforts to voice its problems have resulted in public disorder, blocked highways and clashes with security forces. Opposition forces also attempt to exploit their frustration, further aggravating their predicament and complicating approaches to alleviating it.

Former combatants

During the war combatants were seen in their own societies as heroic defenders of the homeland. Their political role, however, has been perceived more ambivalently. Armenian and Azerbaijani militias and armed bands appeared spontaneously in the period 1988-91 and were used by many political forces, including political parties, as vehicles for banditry and the removal of political opponents. Armenia perceived the danger posed by armed bands first and in 1990-91 nearly all militias were incorporated into the body of regular armed forces, while many militias simply moved to the conflict zone in Nagorny Karabakh. At least half of the arms in the republic (some tens of thousands of units) remained in the possession of the population, a factor reflected subsequently in levels of violent crime.

In Azerbaijan the process of forming regular military units took place later, and as late as 1993 self-defence volunteers and militias affiliated with political organizations were engaged on the Karabakh front. During the fiercest fighting in Karabakh in 1992 Azerbaijani forces were made up of 21,000 regular army soldiers, 7,000 volunteers from battalions of the Popular Front and other political parties and up to 4,000 members of special police units. The scale of volunteer engagement was of no small concern to the government in Baku: in 1993 President Heydar Aliyev disbanded 33 volunteer battalions consisting mainly of opposition followers. Aliyev's disbandment policy to a great extent accounted for the subsequent crisis on the front and contributed to the fall of seven regions around Karabakh to Armenian forces. In 1994-95 Aliyev dealt his internal security forces a similar blow, arresting 710 officers and disbanding its militias.

Since the ceasefire the role of former combatants in each society has been different. Organizations composed of former combatants have assisted veterans, the war-wounded and bereaved families, as well as seeking to educate younger generations in a

military-patriotic tradition. These have been viewed popularly as entirely legitimate agendas aimed at providing justice for deserving elements of society short-changed by the state.

The most influential combatants' organization in Armenia, *Yerkrapah* ('Defenders of the Land') was formed in 1994 on the initiative of the first Armenian Minister of Defence Vazgen Sarkisian. Sarkisian was a key figure in the military-political life of Armenia from the outset of the Karabakh conflict and continued to wield great influence at the Ministry of Defence even after leaving his post. *Yerkrapah* was effectively financed from the coffers of the Ministry of Defence and its members had the right to wear ceremonial arms. With a sizeable membership (40,000), it played a significant role in the internal politics of the country, especially in the aftermath of the 1996 presidential election. Responding to opposition street protests against the election result, *Yerkrapah* members enforced the state of emergency declared by the authorities in Yerevan. They did so wearing full camouflage uniforms (which by law can only be worn by regular army soldiers) and bearing machine guns, grenade launchers, sniper rifles and hand grenades. *Yerkrapah* continued to wield significant influence until Sarkisian's assassination in 1999.

In Azerbaijan a different situation developed after the ceasefire. While formally declaring a policy of welfare, from the outset the government regarded veterans of the Karabakh war with great suspicion. It spared no effort to prevent the emergence of veterans' social or political organizations, resorting to repressive measures in some cases. In October 1994 the *Nijat* ('Salvation') organization, supporting bereaved families, was disbanded and nearly 40 Karabakh veterans sentenced. In the second half of the 1990s the Azerbaijani government initiated a number of proceedings against members of former volunteer battalions, such as the case of the *Garangush* brigade charged with an attempted coup in the Autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan, and imprisoned dozens of veterans. In January and February 2001 the government mercilessly dealt with protest actions mounted by members of the Society for the Wounded of Karabakh demanding a rise in pensions: 14 disabled protesters were arrested. More than once the government has cracked down on activists of the Karabakh Liberation Organization. Against a backdrop of increasing socio-economic hardship in Azerbaijan and rising disenchantment with the peace process, these actions against veterans (especially the disabled) have provoked indignation in society and predisposed veterans to ever more radical positions. Surveys provide evidence of the more radical stances held by veteran groups, a factor commonly highlighted when public attitudes towards developments in the peace process are probed.

'No war, no peace' syndromes

The patriotic mood of societies is reflected in attitudes towards their armies and the strengthening of their combat capacity. Questions of military spending are seen not through the lens of the dangers of militarization but from the perspective of an evident threat posed by the enemy, and the need to be prepared in case of aggression. Such formulations as, 'the Azerbaijani army must be prepared to take back territories occupied by the Armenians,' or, 'the armies of Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh must be ready and forever prepared to resist Azerbaijani revanchism,' have been a constant in statements regarding possible changes in the post-war status quo over the past eleven years.

It is no surprise that according to opinion polls conducted by the authors in Armenia and Azerbaijan at the end of 2004 the majority of respondents in both countries considered their own army the probable victor in the event of renewed hostilities. Moreover, the respondents did not connect their belief in the victory of their own side to levels of economic development obtaining in their own or the other country, nor indeed with any other factor. It comes as no surprise that with the prominence of these attitudes and in the context of two possible outcomes of the 'no war, no peace' situation, questioning militarism in both Armenia and Azerbaijan is taboo. In each country the logic behind the taboo is different, yet the result is the same. In Armenia the logic is that since the army won the war it has earned the right to be trusted by society; in Azerbaijan, it is claimed that any imposition of review or oversight on the army would obstruct the strengthening of its capacity to re-establish Azerbaijan's territorial integrity.

The 'victor' and 'victim' syndromes in Armenian and Azerbaijani societies are undoubtedly among the key consequences of the Karabakh war. We have focused here on some of the less obvious symptoms of these syndromes, such as taboos on public recognition of militarization. Other aspects of these syndromes are reflected in the results of public opinion surveys carried out by the authors. Victor and victim syndromes affect societies' perceptions of threat: whereas Azerbaijan sees the non-resolution of the Karabakh conflict as the most serious threat to its security, Armenians perceive greater threat from internal political developments and consider the Karabakh conflict 'solved'. Similarly public perceptions of foreign countries and international organizations in Azerbaijan are strongly influenced by their stances on the Karabakh conflict; Armenian perceptions are more differentiated. These views derive from skewed information disseminated by the mass media in each country. The mutual isolation of Armenian and Azerbaijani societies will continue until greater efforts to build new bridges are made.

The cost of stalemate

economic aspects of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict

Phil Champaign

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Since 1994, when the armed conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorny Karabakh gave way to a situation of 'no war, no peace', the different parties have faced mixed economic prospects. While oil has fed the coffers of government and a small elite in Azerbaijan, economic security for the majority remains crippling low. In Armenia the psychological benefits of military victory over Azerbaijan are tarnished by lost economic opportunities, while economic migration to Russia and the West has arguably halved the population. Karabakh itself suffers from severe under-employment and is increasingly dependent on 'external' support, particularly from Armenian diaspora groups in the West and from 'inter-state' loans from Armenia. It seems that only elites are winning.

Balancing symbolic and material resources

On the whole, understandings of the economic costs of conflict are minimal on all sides, while the potential for a 'peace dividend' has not resulted in visible policy changes by any party. What kind of economic leverage can each side bring to bear on the other in the ongoing diplomatic struggle? Azerbaijan has oil and this is certainly part of the dynamic of diplomacy. Not only is the prospect of oil revenues cited to support statements about increased military capacity, but it is also used to court the support of the international community. Research conducted by International Alert in 2003-4, in rural areas of Azerbaijan far removed from Baku, demonstrated that oil was regarded as key to the return of lost territories amongst the Azerbaijani population. A commonly held opinion amongst these communities is that oil brings funds for the army and guarantees support from those Western governments whose companies extract Azeri oil, which will bring an end to economic hardship and, moreover, lead to the return of Karabakh. It is also a theory of change that suits those who want to strengthen stereotypes of the 'Armenian enemy' already prominent within these same communities.



If Azerbaijan has the resources but not the military victory, then Armenia has the victory but lacks the resources. However, it too has its entrepreneurs, who have sought to reach out to Turkey through informal business-to-business contacts. Indeed, in seeking to hold onto victory Armenian business interests look towards strengthening ties with Turkey, rather than towards resolving differences with Azerbaijan. Yet the Turkish option is not an easy one either. Although there are flights from Turkey to Armenia and movement of people across borders in this sense, the physical border between Armenia and Turkey is closed - a diplomatic impasse deriving from a combination of the disputed assessment of the Ottoman Empire's treatment of its Armenian community in 1915 plus Turkey's alliance with its Turkic neighbour Azerbaijan over the Karabakh conflict. Turkey's partnership with Azerbaijan has been reinforced by the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, which strategically aligns Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey and thereby amplifies the conflict fault-line in the region.

Oil: a resource for peace or war?

The significance of oil as an economic force in the South Caucasus and a component of the conflict dynamic is worth unpacking. At one level impacts within Azerbaijan can be categorized in ways suggested by Stanford University's Terry Lynn Karl and others. These impacts are generic in that they can also

be seen in countries such as Angola, Colombia and Nigeria, and Western oil-producing countries, such as the UK and Norway. In particular, large revenues from oil tend to strengthen the currencies of the oil producer, making its exports less competitive ('the Dutch Disease'). According to Caspian Revenue Watch, at a price of US\$25 per barrel, between 2003 and 2010 the government of Azerbaijan's share of oil profits from the Azerbaijani-Chirag and deepwater Gunashli oil fields will amount to about US\$16 billion. At US\$18 per barrel Azerbaijan's total earnings would come to US\$7.2 billion. In such a context it is hard to imagine Azerbaijan's agricultural sector recovering to provide goods for export to Russia, which used to be Azerbaijan's largest agricultural export market.

Oil revenues also fuel corruption and thereby strengthen 'corruption networks' (detailed further below). Oil-driven development, and the opportunities it offers to distribute patronage and largesse, tends to strengthen elites who will do anything to hold onto office given that it becomes the main source of power and prosperity. If efforts to reduce corruption are coupled with the gradual increase in the influence of local 'oil watchdog' non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and with the international community's backing of transparency initiatives such as the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI), then Azerbaijan may yet move decisively towards more transparent state structures that can regulate the

oil-dominated economy effectively. However, if future electoral practice reinforces the clan-based politics of the past, then the business environment in Azerbaijan is likely to remain problematic, with the continuation of patronage politics, neglect of the non-oil sector and, despite Azerbaijan joining the EITI, little or no support for capacity building of NGOs to scrutinize transparency in oil revenues. In particular, communities outside the capital will remain impoverished, fuelling discontent, much of which will be directed towards Armenia in a context of unabated militant propaganda. Oil, seen through the eyes of these communities, then becomes the solution to both economic betterment and the return of Nagorny Karabakh – and a resource for war.

On the other hand, if oil money can be kept within the formal economy and directed towards strengthening the non-oil sector, then there are prospects for the benefits to be felt beyond those cocooned in Baku. If this happens (in tandem with positive policy developments at the international level), there is a possibility that peace will become a greater political and economic motivator for Azerbaijan than conflict. The EITI may then gather momentum and Azerbaijan will begin to develop a more far-reaching economic role as the hub for regional economic development in the South Caucasus region.

Unofficial trade and informal authority

The region's economic dynamic is further characterized by blockades and fault-lines. Land borders between Armenia and Turkey and between Azerbaijan and Armenia are closed, not to mention blockades further north between Georgia and Abkhazia and Georgia and South Ossetia. This has created a particular economic dynamic in the region that is both a consequence and feeder of the conflict. In reality, the blockades are porous, giving rise to unregulated trade across borders, whilst the conventional wisdom of the international community prevents international economic actors from lending economic support to unrecognized entities such as Nagorny Karabakh.

Existing trade links functioning in spite of these conditions are testament to the inevitability of business activity. Trade is a key component of community life in that it provides the lifeblood for employment and income generation. Without trade of some kind, communities cannot survive. Traditionally, trade between Armenia and Azerbaijan was commonplace and dynamic. The official closing of borders put a stop to much of this, but it has not stopped altogether. The Armenian news agency ArCNews estimates that unofficial trade between Azerbaijan and Armenia reached US\$40 million annually by 2002, whilst trade

between Armenia and Turkey reached US\$60-80 million. Georgia and Iran play the role of middlemen to enable Armenian goods to find their way to Azerbaijan and vice versa.

Lacking regulation, this unofficial trade clearly affects the fiscal relationship between the governments of Azerbaijan and Armenia and their citizens. The rhetoric of good governance and democracy suggests that governments elected by the people for the people should have the legitimacy to tax their citizens in order to provide the services required for society's needs to be met. Lack of trade regulation means that these taxes are not collected and that service provision based on democratic principles is replaced by inconsistent provision and 'protection' by what some refer to as 'corruption networks'. In a narrow sense this term refers to the cross-border links between people of comparable levels of authority and resourcefulness. Most often these are local authorities and specialized law-enforcement institutions, namely police, border guards and customs officials. Such a context certainly provides alternatives for survival to those trading in legitimate goods, but it also creates space within which exploitation is commonplace and criminality prospers. Criminal activities, such as trade in weapons and drugs, endure with some degree of overlap with the corruption networks within the public sphere of the South Caucasus sovereign states and unrecognized republics.

Stability without regulation

The Sadakhlo market is a clear example of this dynamic – a space created by the conflict where, amongst other goods, flour, bran and salt are sold into Armenia and Armenian smoked fish into Azerbaijan. Located on Georgian territory at the point where Georgian, Azerbaijani and Armenian borders meet, it was the only place where cross border trade was possible between the two conflicting sides in 1991-92. The dependence of this market on the conflict dynamic is perhaps best illustrated by the nervousness with which its traders view the prospect of an opening up of the Armenian-Turkish border. This would arguably spell the death of the market through the competition it would create. The traders dependent upon Sadakhlo want the stability that it brings, in a context devoid of effective public institutions. The price of stability is the unregulated system, which sustains the 'no war, no peace' situation. For this context to be transformed into positive peace, efforts must be made to establish just, efficient and transparent state structures which can work in partnership with the private sector and civil society. But can the private sector play a role in such a transformation process?

What role for the private sector?

There is certainly potential to engage the 'legitimate' business community (as opposed to those involved in the trade of guns, drugs and people). A meeting of business people from across the South Caucasus convened by International Alert in Trabzon in December 2004 demonstrated that there is an outward-looking business community in the Caucasus aware of the status quo's detrimental effects to their interests, and which in response seeks 'to improve the legal framework for business, strengthen the dialogue between business and state and expand the reach of business from a national to a regional level'. Regional meetings of this nature are one way of establishing a safe space for Azerbaijani and Armenian business people to engage with one another. However, it is impossible to imagine concrete business ventures materializing without a change in the political context. The role of business must therefore be to first lobby for political support for cross-border economic collaboration, and second to prepare to act swiftly when the political context offers opportunities to do so.

The importance of regional approaches

In crafting such roles for business communities, peacebuilding organizations can bring a conflict-sensitive lens to the development of business ideas, for it cannot be assumed that business will always act in the interests of peace. In addition, taking a regional approach to economic cooperation is likely to bring greater rewards. The term 'regional' is used here in the broadest sense of the word, to include a consideration of links between Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia and Turkey, including Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorny Karabakh. Such a regional outlook should ideally also consider Russia and Iran. The debate surrounding potential rail links in the South Caucasus is an example of the importance of taking a regional perspective. Whilst some argue for opening a Baku-Nakhichevan-Yerevan-Gyumri-Kars railway link connecting Azerbaijan and Armenia that would take in Nagorny Karabakh, others suggest opening the Baku-Ijevan-Yerevan-Nakhichevan route, which would avoid and exclude Karabakh. Meanwhile, Georgia actively lobbies for a Tbilisi-Kars rail link that would connect Azerbaijan with Turkey via Georgia, thereby marginalizing Armenia. Economic and political interests are impossible to separate and some kind of regional approach will be required if compromises acceptable to Azerbaijan and Armenia are to be found.

The oil industry operating out of Baku has not as yet managed to lend its considerable weight to such a regional approach, with the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline bypassing Armenia and reinforcing East-West alliances between Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey. However, the new neighbourhood policy of the European Union (EU) does offer potential for a more inclusive approach to economic cooperation. With Turkey now progressing towards membership, the EU may yet offer an economic framework, (succeeding that provided by the Soviet Union before 1990), in which Armenia and Azerbaijan can find ways of developing transparent and regulated economic linkages.

Looking to the future

This article has sought to sketch a picture of some of the economic dimensions of the Karabakh conflict. The conflict has starved the conflicting sides of opportunities for transparent and regulated trade, leading inevitably to a questioning among broader societies of the benefits of transition to a market economy. In place of regulated business, cross-border trade is by necessity conducted through unregulated networks that both feed and feed off corrupt practices. This context is more likely to sustain the 'no war, no peace' status quo than to offer any new openings for positive peace. Local business networks do have the potential to contribute to transforming this context, however, especially if they are able to partner with peacebuilding organizations and adopt regional approaches that provide opportunities for Azerbaijani, Karabakh and Armenian business people to meet. The EU's new neighbourhood policy also has potential to offer a new framework for economic cooperation. In the meantime, each party has its own sources of economic support allowing it to continue surviving the current impasse. In particular, oil in Azerbaijan remains cause for concern, although international and local efforts are being made to ensure that the 'black gold' is more a benefit than a curse.

Opposition supporters clash with police in Baku, October 2003, after Ilham Aliyev was declared winner of the presidential election.

Source: Reuters/Sergei Karpukhin

The Karabakh conflict and democratization in Azerbaijan

Rasim Musabayov

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From its outset, the conflict over Nagorny Karabakh served as a key impulse to the awakening of national sentiment in Azerbaijan, stimulating ethnic mobilization and drawing wide sectors of the population into the movement for social and political reform. It spawned mass political opposition under the Soviet system, paving the way for the first democratic processes in Azerbaijani society. At the same time, the Armenian-Azeri conflict has been, and still is, used by political elites as a pretext to limit the rights and freedoms of citizens and delay much needed political and economic reform.

Karabakh and the crisis of power

The Karabakh conflict initiated a crisis of power in Azerbaijan, beginning with cadre changes in the Communist leadership and later spilling over into a total transformation of the ruling elite and political system. Yet despite elite turnover and Azerbaijani Communist Party leader Ayaz Mütəllibov's introduction of the position of president (to which he promptly elected himself), without Moscow's assistance the old Communist Party *nomenklatura* elite proved incapable of containing the conflict. Ensuing waves of protest served as a catalyst for the emergence of a new counter-elite composed of members of the nationalist intelligentsia. A third grouping was made up of former First Secretary Heydar Aliyev's supporters. The 'Karabakh factor' was used actively both by these rival elites and by individual competing leaders within them to further their cause.

With the onset of full-scale armed hostilities, a pattern was established whereby governments in Baku rose or fell as a result of developments on the battlefield. In March 1992 the pro-Russian Mütəllibov was forced to resign in the aftermath of the massacre of the population of the Azeri village of Khojaly by separatist Karabakh Armenian units and evidence of Soviet troops' involvement in the killings. Following the subsequent fall of Shusha and Lachin, Mütəllibov



unsuccessfully tried to regain power; this attempt ended in the coming to power of the nationalist Azerbaijani Popular Front, led by Abulfaz Elchibey. The Popular Front administration initially enjoyed considerable legitimacy, securing the departure of Soviet military forces stationed in Azerbaijan and creating a national army. However, the new leadership's inexperience, and its inability to either force a military victory in Nagorny Karabakh or have the courage and flexibility to seek a peaceful solution, resulted in widespread disappointment.

The Popular Front government fell following a coup organized from the city of Ganja; Elchibey fled the capital, appealing to Aliyev for help, and both the Popular Front and basic social order disintegrated. Azerbaijan descended into anarchy and lawlessness, in which armed groups and criminality burgeoned; exploiting this situation Armenian forces were able to occupy a further five districts around Nagorny Karabakh. In autumn 1993 Heydar Aliyev gained an overwhelming majority at the ensuing extraordinary elections, thus becoming Azerbaijan's new president. Aliyev preserved the state of emergency instituted under Elchibey: mass demonstrations, marches and meetings were prohibited, and the media were subject to strict censorship. The Karabakh conflict was

becoming an obstacle to stable development, democracy and freedom in Azerbaijan. Yet by early 1993 events on the battlefield were pointing to stalemate. Attempts to advance brought devastating losses to both sides amidst shortages of ammunition, crumbling military hardware and troops in dire need of regrouping. Unable to proceed with vitally necessary economic and political reform for as long as war continued, Armenia and Azerbaijan signed a ceasefire agreement in May 1994.

From chaos to stability

The ceasefire allowed Aliyev to tighten his control of the state administration. He dispensed with prime minister and Ganja coup leader Suret Huseynov. An uprising of the special police force (OPON), led by Karabakh veteran and Deputy Minister of the Interior Colonel Rovshan Javadov, was put down, and Aliyev ensured that opposition forces in the Ministry of the Interior, army, government and regional authorities were duly quelled.

The freezing of armed hostilities allowed Azerbaijan to return to a semblance of political normality. The state of emergency was abolished, political activity resumed and censorship stopped. Yet opinion over the cessation

of hostilities was divided in Azerbaijan. The majority of opposition parties and organizations criticized the ceasefire agreement, summoning the people to fight for the full liberation of all Armenian-occupied territories, a view shared by many in the army and government. Indignation at the prospect of a peacekeeping force, perceived as a return of Russian troops to Azerbaijan, ran high. Swayed by public discontent and the views of Turkish and Western leaders, Aliyev refused to accept unilateral Russian mediation, turning instead to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group.

Differences of opinion on how to deal with the Karabakh problem did not emerge as a salient government/opposition cleavage in the parliamentary elections of 1995 and presidential elections of 1998. Virtually all candidates spoke of the need to restore the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. However, the opposition questioned the effectiveness of the hitherto fruitless negotiations facilitated by the Minsk Group, proposing to strengthen the army in order eventually to return the occupied territories by force. Typically, marginal candidates unburdened by responsibility for their statements proved the most jingoistic. The Karabakh issue was, however, exploited by the authorities to justify harsh measures repressing protest at the conduct of the elections. The regime consistently invoked the need for social stability, claiming that Azerbaijan's defeat in the war had been due to domestic turmoil.

Internal debates

Following the failure of the various Minsk Group proposals of 1997-98 Aliyev made an unusual decision. Ignoring his obligation to keep the negotiations strictly confidential, the president publicized all of the proposals on the table and organized a parliamentary debate on the subject, to which members of the public and political parties were invited. The debate was not constructive. Most speakers expressed their total support for the official line, calling for national unity and swearing their readiness to give anything for the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. A large number of parties in the nationalist/reformist camp, such as the Popular Front and Musavat, ignored the parliamentary debate, seeing it as only a political manoeuvre to offset public discontent with the lack of progress in the negotiations process. Opposition leaders publicly expressed their lack of confidence in Aliyev's strategy of distributing oil contracts to great powers as a means of enlisting their support in lobbying Armenia. However, Aliyev achieved his goals at least in part. Society had been informed and it had been shown that the regime's opponents had no constructive proposals for the resolution of the conflict. The negative reaction to the

leaked proposals further legitimized the search for an alternative format for the negotiations.

The 'Karabakh factor' in Azerbaijani politics

What role does the Karabakh conflict play in the Azerbaijani political arena? Azerbaijan's primitive political system is characterized by clan struggles and competition between regional elites. One of the consequences of the Karabakh conflict was the ascendancy in government and business of Azeris displaced from Armenia (the so-called *yerazis*) and Azeris from the Autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan. These Azeris had had more contact – and direct experience of conflict – with Armenians. Although Azeris from Karabakh were and still are well-represented in business and government, the Armenian occupation of Karabakh and the surrounding regions has significantly reduced their economic and political potential. Other regional elites, such as the Baku-Shirvan, Ganja-Kazakh and Mugan-Lankaran groups, have been completely marginalized by the conflict.

Political parties and elites have sought to use the consistent preoccupation of public opinion with the Karabakh issue to their own advantage. Public consciousness of this ploy is reflected in opinion polls focusing on the factors behind continued Armenian-Azeri enmity, including polls conducted by the author. These have shown that the deployment of the Karabakh issue by internal political forces in their struggle for power, cited by 34.1 per cent of respondents, only marginally trails the interest which competing world and regional powers have in prolonging the conflict (35.4 per cent), a factor consistently emphasized in the media.

Whilst the disputes of clans and elites remain largely secret, political parties have to declare a public position on the Karabakh conflict. However, party positions vis-à-vis the Karabakh conflict are largely superficial and declarative, lacking specific suggestions regarding the format or content of the negotiations or the nature of possible compromises. Opposition parties such as Musavat, the Popular Front, the National Independence Party and the Democratic Party are less inclined to compromise than the ruling New Azerbaijan Party. Opposition leaders claim that it is only national patriotic forces that can mobilize the state's resources to free the occupied territories and restore the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Superficial and facile, the opposition's plan of action involves strengthening the economy by fighting corruption, improving the country's defences and putting increased political and military pressure on Armenia. To a lesser extent, they criticize the ruling elite's corruption and violations of human rights as factors damaging

Azerbaijan's reputation and lessening international support for the country. The highly numerous marginal parties and leaders are still more intractable, seeking to balance a grovelling attitude towards the authorities with a militant stance vis-à-vis Armenia.

In 2001, a group of competent and well-known politicians put forward the so-called 'Karabakh Charter' or 'Charter of Four'. The group was made up of former foreign minister Tofik Zulfugarov, former head of the Presidential Secretariat Eldar Namazov, former president of the state oil company Sabit Bagirov and economist Nazim Imanov. Realizing that criticism of government policy and patriotic rhetoric were not enough to solve the Karabakh problem, the group felt the need for a consolidated standpoint enjoying widespread popular support and understanding. The Charter demanded that the Azerbaijani authorities cease to make unilateral concessions and adopt a phased approach to resolving the conflict, thereby ensuring the return of occupied Azerbaijani territories around Nagorny Karabakh. The Charter was much discussed and gained the support of over 20 political parties, as well as hundreds of public bodies and figures. The Charter established a sort of 'maximum tolerance level' of compromise for Azerbaijan, and fired a warning shot across the bows of the ruling elite that passing this level would elicit wide and consolidated social protest. Subsequent negotiations held at the highest level in Paris and in Key West came close to achieving agreement between the two leaders. Yet on returning to Baku President Aliyev was not able to secure the approval of even his own circle to a plan proposing the release of the occupied territories in return for the *de facto* ceding of Nagorny Karabakh to Armenia.

From the point of view of the opposition and civil society, current government policy on Karabakh is conservative, insufficiently flexible and, where the level of information is concerned, extremely primitive. The concentration of decision-making power exclusively in the head of state, a consequence of the consolidation of authoritarian rule in Azerbaijan, has a deleterious effect on the management of the peace talks. Dialogue between the government and the Armenian side is kept secret not only from the public at large, but also from important politicians, experts and even MPs. The regime reacts nervously to any popular or civic initiatives to advance the process of conflict transformation in Nagorny Karabakh.

Since the accession of President Ilham Aliyev there has been a certain hardening of the official position on the conflict. Bellicose statements about a readiness to resort to force to liberate the occupied territories have been accompanied by a substantial increase in military expenditure (from US \$170 million in 2004 to US \$300

million in 2005) and a rise in the number of ceasefire violations along the line of contact. Simultaneously there has been a marked increase in Azerbaijani diplomatic activity in international forums (the United Nations, the OSCE and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe) aimed at securing a condemnation of the occupation and resettlement of Azerbaijani territory by Armenia. Ilham Aliyev's lower levels of legitimacy compared to his father forces him to take a more hard-line position. On the other hand the growth of oil revenues frees Baku from foreign donors, a factor which strongly differentiates the situation from Armenia's, where nearly one third of the state budget comes from external sources.

External and internal audiences

The behaviour of the ruling elite in Azerbaijan is, in sum, highly contradictory. The current leadership owes its rise to power to skilful manipulation of popular protest over the handling of the Karabakh issue, and to loud pledges to resolve the conflict quickly and without losses to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan. A retreat from this position now would be dangerous and potentially threatening to government's legitimacy. At the same time the need to consolidate its hold over key positions in the governing apparatus and the economy prompts the regime to try, through compromise and concessions, to move from the current unstable scenario of 'no war, no peace' to a more stable situation. Portraying itself to the international community as the 'party of peace' and the opposition as extremists advocating the return of Karabakh by force, the Azerbaijani government is seeking *carte blanche* to quash its political opponents. Yet for internal consumption, the ruling elite continues to churn out populist militant rhetoric. The difficult compromises vital for peace cannot be made until the regime abandons this duplicitous approach and engages in dialogue with authoritative opposition politicians and civil society representatives.

With a significant portion of Azerbaijani territory under Armenian occupation no political party or responsible leader would risk political suicide by suggesting acquiescence with Armenia's territorial claims. Anyone doing so would quickly be branded a 'traitor' and 'collaborationist', with the result that any healthy ideas regarding democratization and reform tied in with such a position would fall on deaf ears. As the party losing the military phase of the conflict, Azerbaijan faces the prospect of significant concessions in the course of the peace process. In these conditions the opposition, as the channel of protest and contrarian views, can only articulate more hard-line positions than the government, explaining the paucity of constructive ideas emanating from the opposition on the Karabakh issue.

New structures, old foundations

state capacities for peace

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Both Armenia and Azerbaijan are characterized by a number of deficiencies in terms of their democratic transitions. Yet it would be a mistake to attribute them to the Karabakh conflict and its consequences. Other post-Soviet states lacking secessionist conflicts do not exhibit superior democratic credentials, as the examples of Belarus or Turkmenistan demonstrate. Rather, the absence of desired levels of democratic development in Armenia, Azerbaijan and other states in the region is due to a combination of regime-induced and inherited systemic problems. Consideration of these problems is relevant because, as case studies have shown, states well endowed with popular mandates and substantive democracy are more likely to provide longer-term solutions to armed conflicts.

Dilemmas of charismatic leadership

After a decade of peace talks since the ceasefire of May 1994, the statements of the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia are telling. Speaking in September 2005 President Ilham Aliyev made it very clear: "We are creating a strong military potential, and the enemy must know that Azerbaijan is capable of liberating its lands at any moment", adding that Baku is doubling its military budget in 2006 to about US\$600 million. His Armenian counterpart, Robert Kocharian, former president and a native of Karabakh, put it more bluntly: "Nagorno-Karabakh has never been part of Azerbaijan and never will be. This is the bottom line. Beyond [that] one can think of some solutions and invent new statuses". To the disappointment of most mediators and outside observers, these statements are not utterances merely for domestic audiences, but a reflection of where the political leaders stand.

Such deterministic views on the part of political leaders have had a great impact on public perceptions. Indeed, the over-dependence on and centrality of individual leaders – rather than institutions and wider society – in resolving the conflict is a major part of the problem.



For instance, in 2002 Heydar Aliyev claimed: “If I cannot resolve the Karabakh problem then no one in the world will resolve it”. Similarly, many think Karabakh-natives Kocharian or Serzh Sarkisian, Armenia’s Defence Minister, are the only people who can ‘sell’ an agreement to Armenians. Since the end of the Soviet Union, virtually all the countries emerging as independent states are run by various kinds of ‘charismatic authority’. As the German Sociologist Max Weber defined it, charisma is “a character specifically foreign to everyday routine structures” of governing, based on “the validity and practice of personal qualities” rather than set rules. This implies a lack of strong state institutions, low and slow levels of democratic development, a crude political environment and related structural capacity problems. Indeed, charismatic authority in these newly emerged republics has put the independence of the various branches of government into question: neither the legislative nor the judiciary branches are independent from the influences of the executive.

In terms of conflict resolution, the question is whether a charismatically led state with critical structural weaknesses – such as Azerbaijan, Armenia or Georgia – is in a position to resolve conflicts within its borders and offer the necessary guarantees of rights to its former autonomous regions. Leadership and governance problems and the lack of structural capacity are

compounded by the absence of convincing plans for resolution of the conflict. The lack of a ‘sellable’ proposal as to how Azerbaijan intends to reintegrate the Armenians of Karabakh into the Republic of Azerbaijan has pushed Karabakh Armenians further away from such a ‘reunion’. Since the ceasefire in 1994, Baku has not provided *credible guarantees* or *tolerant democracy* even within Azerbaijan. If a government is not willing to tolerate political opposition inside the country, its capacity to deal constructively with the ‘enemy’ outside is clearly in question. Other than the promise to grant ‘high autonomy’ to Karabakh, Azerbaijan has not elaborated on the specifics of what it is willing to offer, nor is there any public discussion of what autonomy would mean for the granting state and how would it benefit the receiving society. This lack of public discourse on the promised autonomy and its benefits – coupled with continued bellicose statements by senior government officials in Baku – gives little reason for the Karabakh Armenians to trust Azerbaijani intentions. Instead, the lack of seriousness with which proposals for self-government are treated has contributed to Karabakh’s growing integration with Armenia in recent years.

The ‘Karabakh factor’ in Armenian politics

Armenia also suffers from ‘charismatic authority’, the ramifications of which have played out differently. The

'Karabakh card' has been variously used and exploited by opposition parties in Armenia to denounce the ruling regimes. The most well known case is the forced resignation of Levon Ter-Petrossian, who was accused of defeatist policies on Karabakh by a large spectrum of political parties and former allies. In recent years, President Kocharian's credentials as Karabakh 'war hero' have not allowed him to escape criticism that under his presidency the conflict between Karabakh and Azerbaijan has been transformed into a bilateral conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, with Karabakh sidelined in the negotiations process. As expressed by opposition party leader Stepan Demirchian, the fear is that Armenia might thus be forced to make territorial concessions to Azerbaijan (for example, by ceding parts of Armenia's southernmost Meghri region). The argument is that Armenia's sovereign territory should not be subject to negotiations, a position held by both opposition parties and those in the ruling coalition.

However, the lines between differences over methodologies of conflict resolution and outright criticism of the sitting regime are often blurred. Because opposition parties generally lack broad political bases, their political activity tends to focus solely on criticism of the ruling authorities. Yet their criticisms of the government have been ineffective and do not offer viable alternative political or economic policies for Armenia or for the resolution of the Karabakh conflict. Their scattered public support is less in recognition of their policies or ideology than an expression of dissatisfaction with the Kocharian government. As in Azerbaijan, there is no margin in the political arena for positions associated with compromise. No party in Armenia would want to appear to be 'giving up' Karabakh; when 'moderates' refer to 'territorial concessions' similar to the 'land for peace' approach in Israel, it is the return of occupied Azerbaijani territories *outside* Karabakh, not Karabakh itself, that is implied.

The Armenian diaspora, although expressing growing dissatisfaction with Kocharian's government over corruption, protection of legal rights and a host of socio-economic problems, has on the whole been supportive of Karabakh's bid for separation from Azerbaijan, especially through large financial assistance programs. Armenia and Karabakh have also benefited immensely from the lobbying efforts of diaspora communities in the US, Europe and Russia. However, it is important to note that lobbying efforts are conducted in coordination with Yerevan and Stepanakert, and that the diaspora as such does not represent a different agenda or "vision" for Karabakh. Just as with Armenian-Turkish relations, it is very unlikely that the diaspora would interfere with the Armenian government's or Karabakh Armenians'

policies vis-à-vis Azerbaijan. While certain groups in the diaspora might disagree with the terms of an eventual peace agreement, by and large Armenian-Azerbaijani relations and the resolution of the conflict are considered as matters best decided by the societies affected by it.

Exclusionary politics

The personalization of politics and government has also contributed to extreme forms of 'othering': that is, the demonization and exclusion of the 'other group', whether Armenians in Azerbaijan or Azerbaijanis in Armenia and Karabakh. This has been an overlooked aspect of the conflicts in the Caucasus. The conflicts in this region are primarily rooted in problems of restructuring of minority-majority relations and not necessarily the 'historical' animosities often presented in the media. The 'othering' discourse makes the relationship of the minority (Karabakh Armenians) with the majority (Azerbaijanis) even more tenuous. President Kocharian, for instance, said in January 2003:

"The Armenian pogroms in Sumgait and Baku, and the attempts at mass military deportation of Armenians from Karabakh in 1991-92 indicate the impossibility for Armenians to live in Azerbaijan in general. We are talking about some sort of ethnic incompatibility..."

His Azerbaijani counterpart at the time, Heydar Aliyev, was just as undiplomatic when he claimed in 2001 that, "Armenian aggressors do not differ in any way from Hitler's armies, from German fascism".

Such a discourse overshadows centuries of neighbourly relations among diverse peoples in this region. Especially in recent years, the positive aspects of relations between ethnic groups have rarely been discussed in the societies of the South Caucasus. Only when outsiders or journalists ask do individuals tend to recount examples or experiences of good relationships with the 'other'.

Beyond the structural weaknesses of the metropolitan states and the lack of convincing offers for reintegration of the former autonomies, the ideological and social discourse of 'othering' presents the most formidable problem to conflict resolution. If a lasting peace is ultimately a process of reconciliation between societies, it is imperilled by the persistent demonization of the 'other' prevalent in the South Caucasus. For the Azerbaijanis, the 'othering' discourse is rooted in the sense of military defeat, loss of territory, socio-economic conditions and, most importantly, the plight of the nearly 800,000 refugees and internally displaced

persons (IDPs). The frustration and the enormous problems the refugees and IDPs face in their daily lives present powerful emotional and political bases of 'othering'. The Armenian discourse of 'othering' is primarily rooted in a sense of national victimhood and irredentism rooted in the memory and fear of genocide, both in history and modern times. Further, Armenians popularly equate Azerbaijanis with 'Turks', thus transferring the historical animosity towards Turkey to Azerbaijanis.

The issue is not whether the 'othering' discourse is justified or whether there are legitimate reasons for such a discourse, but its sociological implications for conflict resolution. Crucially, the strict *us-them* divide, as well as the process of projecting individual acts or particular events on entire populations, makes the peaceful resolution of the conflict increasingly unlikely. Instead the extreme 'othering' discourse has led to more militancy in societies that under such circumstances are far from engaging in a process of reconciliation.

New structures, old foundations

Resolving decades-long conflicts has proven to be complex and difficult for far more developed states and fully-fledged democracies such as Israel and Cyprus, let alone developing states such as Armenia and Azerbaijan. The state restructuring process and the modernization of state and government from the remnants of the former system is still ongoing in the South Caucasus. One generalization that could be made is that statehood – or the determination of type of statehood – is still evolving. More than a decade after independence, the question whether to have a presidential or parliamentary model of statehood is still actively debated in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. The constitutions of the three republics are still being amended and reshaped. The make up, sphere of competencies and ethics of the civil service are still under discussion. These questions are also prevalent in Karabakh (and the region's other *de facto* states), but with one important difference: due to international non-recognition and a dire need for essential resources, the question in Stepanakert is about the level and intensity of integration with Armenia.

The radical restructuring of former power relations between the autonomous regions and the metropolitan states, and the *de facto* 'new order' that exists in Karabakh comprise the first phase of the reorganization of the state in the South Caucasus. However, while externally the new order has not been internationally legitimated, the most essential feature of the independence of the former Soviet autonomies is

the comprehensive redrawing of political, social, economic and national boundaries. For the elite and society of Karabakh, this is the most significant achievement of independence. As far as they are concerned, Karabakh Armenians are no longer a minority in a titular state, but the majority in a restructured state. They are no longer dependent on decisions made in distant centres of power, but decide upon their own course of action.

Given this context, compromises and accommodations agreed upon by the parties require basic structural capacities that a granting and receiving entity must have. The question is whether a still-evolving state possesses such stable structures. It is important to distinguish the internal and external bases of structural weaknesses. Internally, the starting point of state rebuilding is the dilapidated infrastructure inherited from Soviet times: South Caucasian states are engaged in a process of building new structures on old foundations. For the *de facto* states, structural weaknesses are largely due to external factors, the most critical of which are the lack of formal international support, foreign investment, aid for rebuilding infrastructure, communications with the outside world (especially in information and technology) and substantial assistance for development of civil society. The denial of such international assistance and engagement, notwithstanding the work of NGOs, is meant to punish secessionism and somehow force a negotiated end to the conflict. But this has had other consequences: deepening isolation and a reinforcement of suspicions that the international community is not impartial and favours the position of the metropolitan states.

Minorities in autonomous republics were not regarded primarily as citizens of the majority's state, but defined by the majority as the 'other': the Armenians were 'non-Azeris', 'settlers' or 'latecomers' in the majority's state. With independence, minorities now see themselves as having eliminated the 'social control' of the majority, the heavy burden of being the 'other'. If Cyprus and Palestine/Israel are any indication, the resolution of the conflicts in the South Caucasus will take a very long time. Mediation and efforts to find solutions should not only look for political will and a sellable agreement, but an understanding of leadership and structural capacity, democratic development and inter- and intra-society discourses.

The politics of non-recognition and democratization

Laurence Broers

Until very recently international organizations and many Western states rejected engagement with Eurasia's *de facto* states (Nagorny Karabakh, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transnistria) as legitimating ethnic cleansing and undermining the primacy of territorial integrity in Western responses to the formation of post-Soviet states. As a result, the region's *de facto* states have rarely been looked at through the same approaches of transition and democratization applied to the region's *de jure* states. Instead of being seen as political environments in their own right, *de facto* states tend to be seen only in the context of their interactions with external actors and peace processes. This omission has been challenged by some *de facto* states, which have increasingly used the language of democratization to further their claims to independence. This strategy appears to have resonated with some Western observers. Since 2003, Karabakh Armenian politicians have drawn attention to Nagorny Karabakh's assessment as 'partly free' in Freedom House's 'Freedom in the World' index. Although the Freedom House index presents a highly simplified system for grading democratic practices, Karabakh crucially scored higher than Azerbaijan, while rivalling Armenia.

If, as is sometimes suggested, democratization is a prerequisite of conflict resolution we need to engage with *de facto* states as political systems in their own right and as participants, albeit in the margins, of the broader processes transforming the post-Soviet space. Furthermore, withholding support for democratic processes in *de facto* states ultimately encumbers the development of genuinely participatory and pluralist politics, on which, as most observers seem to agree, any future settlement must be predicated. Thus engaging *de facto* states could and should be seen as consistent with support for democratic governance, rather than as necessarily inconsistent with adherence to the principle of territorial integrity. The developments outlined above invite a number of questions. How important are recognition and membership of the international state system to democratization outcomes? Can we distinguish between the practice and the rhetoric of democracy? If so, how has the discourse of democracy been incorporated by *de facto* states into their quest for legitimacy in the eyes of the international community? To consider these questions is not to *a priori* legitimate the existence of *de facto* states, but a necessary corollary to any attempt to engage them in peace processes.

Starting points matter

Theories of transition suggest that starting points are critical to the success or failure of democratization. In the case of Karabakh, the unfavourable legacy of violent conflict was mitigated by a number of factors. First, unlike Chechnya, Karabakh's armed forces did not fragment into competing warlord armies rooted in



'clannish' affiliations. Although a power struggle did develop between the *de facto* president, Arkady Ghukasian, and Minister of Defence Samvel Babayan, this struggle was contained and resolved in 2000 with Babayan's imprisonment on charges of an attempted assassination. Second, Armenia's wide-ranging support, in economic and other terms, has mitigated the impact of war losses. Armenia (and beyond, the Armenian diaspora) provides more than half of Nagorny Karabakh's budget, as well as a wide range of goods and services in military, energy and other spheres. Third, although unification with Armenia was the central tenet of the 'Karabakh movement' that emerged in 1988, it also rapidly became identified with a dissident discourse promoting democratic values. As a result the discourse (at least) of democracy was and is accorded a central place in Karabakh Armenian political culture; this provides an important resource for opposition, reflected in references to the contemporary relevance of the political values associated with the Karabakh movement.

Against these factors a number of structural drawbacks need to be considered. Although Karabakh avoided clan wars of the sort that have so debilitated Chechnya's bid for independence, its political culture is nonetheless highly militarized. A regime of martial law is still technically in place, renewed yearly by

presidential decree, while political partnerships between key individuals forged in war remain above critical reflection. While this has not forestalled the emergence of civil politics, continued martial law allows the regime to seclude certain key types of information, such as population statistics, crucial for transparent electoral processes. Second, Armenia's support is a double-edged sword so far as democratization is concerned. While attenuating hardship for the broader population by providing a source of externally derived resources, it alleviates the need for the regime in Stepanakert to negotiate a social contract with local society. This to some extent lends the Stepanakert regime a 'rentier' profile, that is, a regime maintained by resources external to the society over which it rules and before which it is thus less accountable.

A key result of the war was the ethnic homogenization of Nagorny Karabakh through the removal of the Azeri population. This removed a key political cleavage, enabling a certain core consensus on the existence and purpose of the resulting *de facto* state. However, it has also closed off a potential avenue for the articulation of a civic rather than ethnic sense of membership; although multiethnic Abkhazia has yet to reap genuine democratic dividends from incorporating minorities, their existence in itself creates political space for

competing visions of Abkhazian statehood. In Karabakh ethnic homogenization has shut off debates on the nature of political membership and underpinned the effacement of a Karabakh Azeri identity.

Vectors of democratization

How then do the above factors interact with the context of non-recognition to influence democratic outcomes in Nagorny Karabakh? Since declaring itself independent in 1991 Nagorny Karabakh has held three presidential elections and four sets of parliamentary elections. Although they increasingly attract observers from a range of international non-governmental organizations, as well as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), they are not recognized by the international community as a whole. The ruling elite in Karabakh emerged out of the wartime leadership, which since the accession of Ghukasian as president has increasingly turned towards outwardly civic politics ostensibly rooted in multiparty politics. Opposition in Karabakh has developed in response to specifically local factors but also as a function of wider Armenian politics. The main 'opposition' party, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF, or Dashnaks) forms part of the ruling coalition in Armenia and is a major political force in the Armenian diaspora (see *profiles*); previously allied with the government in Karabakh, the ARF went into opposition after a dispute over its representation in government cadres. Other opposition parties have been formed by reform-minded intellectuals, successors to the communist tradition and allies of the ruling elite seeking to fragment the opposition vote. Elections in Karabakh nonetheless revolve less around concrete issues or policy choices than raw questions of power: who gets the impunity conferred by political office?

Regime candidates generally dominated elections until the victory of a candidate for Movement-88, a new reformist party, in the 2004 elections to the mayoralty in Stepanakert. Expectations that oppositional success would be repeated at the June 2005 parliamentary elections proved false, however. The main opposition bloc, composed of the ARF and Movement-88, won only 3 of 33 mandates with 25 per cent of the vote; the regime-backed parties Democratic Artsakh and Free Homeland dominated the vote with 64 per cent between them. Some 130 international observers, including representatives of the CIS, the British Helsinki Human Rights Group and a number of United States policymakers, observed the elections; their assessment was almost exclusively positive. Independent media and civil society representatives, however, articulated complaints regarding the conduct of the pre-election campaign, especially the alleged provision of economic incentives to vote for regime-backed parties, and changes to the electoral code removing the '50 per cent plus' requirement to win in one round and the

second round run-off system where this is not achieved. In sum, observers and opposition representatives did not question their validity or conduct, yet by further entrenching the incumbent regime the elections appeared to move Karabakh no nearer to a genuinely participatory politics.

What explains the divergence between the apparently assiduous conduct of the elections and their failure to act as a mechanism for internal political transformation? At least in part this may be explained by the paradoxical ways in which non-recognition structures the legitimacy of *de facto* governments. The withholding of recognition in a context of permanent insecurity and a homogenized population allows the Stepanakert regime to be a single-issue government embodying the quest for sovereignty. Non-recognition thus locates the internal legitimacy of the *de facto* state in its mere existence, rather than its adherence to democratic principles or responsiveness to society. The reification of 'stability' as the cornerstone of Karabakh politics reflects a tacit consensus across the political arena on the parameters of dissent under conditions of constant 'siege'. The disparagement shown by government and opposition alike to revolutionary events in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan reflects this consensus. This suggests an important distinction between the rules of the game in Karabakh politics as internal players perceive them, and criteria of democracy perceived by external observers.

Nonetheless, the government of Karabakh goes to great lengths to demonstrate compliance with international expectations of democratic states. It has voluntarily implemented a number of international standards applying to *de jure* states. As the 2005 parliamentary elections demonstrated, it also takes great care to ensure procedural and technical regularity in its electoral processes, far more so than many regimes in the region's *de jure* states. Certainly, this strategy may be seen as contributing to the regime's internal legitimacy, yet it may also be seen as a response to Western agendas of democratization, where the presence of certain 'markers' such as regular elections and multiparty politics is taken to indicate a healthy transition. This is a rational response where Western policymakers have framed the issue of recognition in terms of 'standards before status', as they have done in Kosovo.

In this context it seems appropriate to speak of contrasting internal and external vectors of democratization. Internally we are witnessing an uneven and highly contested process of liberalization not dissimilar to that of *de jure* states but where reformists are encumbered by the peculiar conditions of non-recognition. Externally we see the projection of democratic statehood to the outside world in support of Karabakh's claim to sovereignty. The outcome of the

2005 elections may be better understood from this perspective. In their internal function the elections did little to channel the recent emergence of greater pluralism, serving instead to entrench the incumbent regime and fortify it from challengers. Externally, however, the elections successfully projected the ideal of a pluralistic, participatory process worthy of a functioning democratic state.

Mediating between society and the *de facto* state

What levers exist, then, for society to shape the politics of the *de facto* state? Unlike civil societies in *de jure* states empowered by substantial external support, civil society in Nagorny Karabakh faces far greater difficulties in influencing the state. Of about 80 registered non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Karabakh, only a tenth are thought to be active. The key problem for NGO development is the absence of resources, a corollary of the fact that until very recently apart from humanitarian assistance international organizations have been unwilling to engage in single-community programming in Karabakh (unlike Abkhazia and South Ossetia, where the United Nations, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, European Union and a wide range of international NGOs implement activities – in part due to easier access). Civil society actors in Karabakh have been caught between the chairs of inclusion in region-wide initiatives, logistically and politically fraught bilateral initiatives with Azerbaijani partners and the overpowering influence of diaspora-funded and -run activities.

For international donors and the government in Baku single-community programming for civil society development in Karabakh presents a dilemma. On the one hand the implication of a poorly developed civil society is that it will not have sufficient capacity to mediate between society and state in the case of a peace settlement. Any sustainable peace settlement will demand a certain level of consensus within the societies party to it, which can only be reached through the participation of civil society in channelling different agendas, articulating public concerns and establishing the parameters of what is acceptable. On the other hand, single-community programming can and is often seen as capacity building for separatism. Yet a decade of isolation of *de facto* states has not brought the metropolitan states any closer to reincorporating them. It is therefore for international donors and the Azerbaijani state to ponder the wisdom of, respectively, ruling out and obstructing funding for single-community programming in Karabakh.

Rhetoric or real politics?

It is now clear that ethnic ideologies of secession have failed to garner international legitimacy for the *de facto* states, unlike the earlier secession of union republics from the Soviet Union. Much to their chagrin the titular nationalities of the *de facto* states have not succeeded in convincing the world that Georgia, Azerbaijan and Moldova in their Soviet-era boundaries are imperial states as deserving of fragmentation as the Soviet Union. However, the renewed emphasis placed by leading Western powers on notions of ‘democracy’ and ‘freedom’ has opened new rhetorical spaces receptive to the advocacy of sovereignty by and for *de facto* states. In this context we have begun to witness what could be termed ‘competitive democratization’, the attempt to demonstrate indicators of democracy superficially recognizable to Western observers in advance of a significant other, in this case, the metropolitan state.

Is the ‘democratization-for-recognition’ strategy working? Increasing interest across a range of non-governmental Western actors towards political processes in Karabakh may suggest chinks in the wall of non-recognition. However, against this it is evident that external state actors continue to make territorial integrity a precondition of conflict resolution, and, furthermore, accept the legitimacy of *de jure* boundaries regardless of what political conditions for democracy exist within them. This would suggest that any argument linking democratization to recognition is a fallacy.

Implicit in competitive democratization is a claim that beyond historical grievances or ethnic differences, the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict is ultimately a conflict of values, structured by the adherence of Karabakh Armenians to ‘Western’ democratic values and the incompatibility of these values with Azerbaijani political culture. This is suggestive of a disturbing elision of democracy and identity, drawing upon orientalist East/West stereotypes to transplant the ‘clash of civilizations’ thesis to the realm of possible political orders and their compatibility with Armenian and Azerbaijani identities. However, confusing political values with identity carries the danger of elevating these values ‘above’ politics. Karabakh Armenian society currently stands in thrall to the value of independence, an ideal that has become a mission and ‘higher’ vision absolving the regime in Stepanakert of the need to engage in real politics across a range of issues. In this visionary politics ‘democracy’ is being configured as a means to the end of independence, rather than a set of universally binding principles and procedures capable of transforming politics in Karabakh and structuring the inevitable future of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations. This leaves the question: for how long can the promised afterlife of sovereignty outweigh the deficit between the procedural façade favoured by the regime and a genuinely participatory politics?

Key texts and agreements

A selection of texts and agreements from the Nagorny Karabakh conflict and peace process. Texts in bold are printed here; additional materials are available at www.c-r.org/accord

- **Resolution by the Soviet of the Autonomous Region of Nagorny Karabakh requesting incorporation into the Armenian SSR**, Stepanakert, 20 February 1988 [unofficial translation].
- Resolution of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet regarding the decisions of the Supreme Soviets of Azerbaijan and Armenia on Nagorny Karabakh, Moscow, 18 July 1988.
- Joint resolution of Armenia SSR and Nagorny Karabakh Oblast on reunification, 1 December 1989.
- Decision of the Supreme Soviet of the Azerbaijan SSR in connection with the decision of the Supreme Soviet of the Armenian SSR on uniting the Armenian SSR and the NKAO, Baku, 6 December 1989.
- **Law on Secession, USSR, 3 April 1990** [unofficial translation; extracts].
- Zheleznovodsk Declaration, Zheleznovodsk, 23 September 1991.
- Summary of Conclusions of the Council of Ministers of the CSCE, Helsinki, 24 March 1992.
- Joint Declaration by the Heads of State [of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Iran], Tehran, 7 May 1992.
- Agreement between the three foreign ministers of Nagorny Karabakh, Armenia and Azerbaijan on ceasefire, Alma-Ata, 1 September 1992
- Agreement on the halting of hostilities, Sochi, 19 September 1992.
- Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act (Public Law 102-511), Washington, DC, 24 October 1992.
- **UN Security Council Resolution 822**, 30 April 1993.
- **UN Security Council Resolution 853**, 29 July 1993.
- **UN Security Council Resolution 874**, 14 October 1993.
- **UN Security Council Resolution 884**, 12 November 1993.
- Declaration of the Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Moscow, 15 April 1994.
- **The Bishkek Protocol**, Bishkek, 5 May 1994 [unofficial translation].
- Ceasefire agreement, Bishkek, 11 May 1994.
- CSCE Summit Decision on Nagorny Karabakh, Budapest, 6 December 1994.
- Agreement on the Settlement of Incidents [along the ceasefire line], 6 February 1995.
- **Statement of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office**, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe 1996 Summit, Lisbon, 3 December 1996.
- Joint Declaration of the Presidents of the Russian Federation, United States and France, Denver, 23 June 1997.
- **Minsk Group proposal ('package deal')**, July 1997 [unofficial translation].
- **Minsk Group proposal ('step-by-step deal')**, December 1997 [unofficial translation].
- **Minsk Group proposal ('common state deal')**, November 1998 [unofficial translation].
- Council of Europe Resolution 1416, Strasbourg, 25 January 2005.
- Report of the OSCE Fact-Finding Mission to the Occupied Territories of Azerbaijan Surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh, Prague, 6 February 2005.

The resolution of the Autonomous Region of Nagorno Karabakh requesting incorporation in Soviet Armenia

20 February 1988

Special meeting of the 20th session, the Soviet of People's Deputies, Autonomous Region of Nagorno Karabakh.

RESOLUTION:

Regarding mediation for the transfer of the Autonomous Region of Nagorno Karabakh from the Azerbaijani SSR to the Armenian SSR:

After listening to and reviewing the statements of the people's deputies of the Autonomous Region of Nagorno Karabakh Soviet "regarding the mediation of the SSR Supreme Soviet between the Azerbaijani SSR and Armenian SSR for the transfer of the Autonomous Region of Nagorno Karabakh from the Azerbaijani SSR to the Armenian SSR," the special session of regional soviet of the 20th regional soviet of Nagorno Karabakh *resolves*, Welcoming the wishes of the workers of the Autonomous Region of Nagorno Karabakh to request the Supreme Soviets of Azerbaijani and Armenian SSRs that they appreciate the deep aspirations of the Armenian population of Nagorno Karabakh and to transfer the Autonomous Region of Nagorno Karabakh from the Azerbaijani SSR to the Armenian SSR, at the same time to intercede with the Supreme Soviet of USSR to reach a positive resolution regarding the transfer of the region from the Azerbaijani SSR to the Armenian SSR.

Extracts from the USSR's Law on Secession

3 April 1990

Concerning the procedure of secession of a Soviet Republic from the USSR. The law of the USSR of April 3, 1990 (Register of the Congress of the People's Deputies of USSR and Supreme Soviet of USSR. 1990, issue No. 13, p. 252)

Article 1: The procedure of secession of a Soviet Republic from the USSR is conducted in accordance with the Article 72 of the Constitution of the USSR under the present Law.

Article 2: The decision on secession of a Soviet Republic from the USSR is made by the will of the people of that Soviet Republic by means of a referendum.

The decision to conduct a referendum is to be ratified by the Supreme Soviet of a Soviet Republic based either on its own will or on the request made by the 10 per cent of permanent residents who have a right to vote according to the USSR laws.

The referendum is to be conducted according to the referendum law of the USSR, referendum law of a given Soviet or autonomous Republic if they do not contradict this law.

The referendum is to be conducted by a secret vote not earlier than 6 months and not later than 9 months after the decision to conduct the secession referendum has been made by a Soviet Republic.

Citizens of the USSR, permanently residing on the territory of the Republic by the time the decision to conduct a referendum is made and who have a right to vote according to the USSR laws, have a right to participate in the referendum.

No agitation on the subject of the referendum is allowed during the course of the referendum.

Article 3: In case the Soviet Republic has autonomous republics, autonomous regions or autonomous territories within its borders, referendums are to be conducted separately in each of the autonomies. The people residing in the autonomies are given a right to independently decide whether to remain in the Soviet Union or in the seceding Republic as well as to decide on their state legal status.

Referendum results are to be considered separately for the territory of a Soviet Republic with a compactly settled ethnic minority population, which constitutes majority on that particular territory of the Republic.

Article 6: Decision of a Soviet Republic to secede from the USSR must be made by means of a referendum if so voted by not less than two-thirds of the citizens of the USSR, who permanently resided on the territory of the Republic and are eligible to vote in accordance with laws of the USSR by the time the decision was made to conduct a

referendum on secession from the Soviet Union.

Results of a referendum are to be reviewed by the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Republic. In a republic, which has autonomous republics, autonomous regions, autonomous territories or territories with compactly settled national minority population as mentioned in Article 3 of the present Law within its borders, the results of the referendum are to be reviewed by the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Republic jointly with the Supreme Soviet of the autonomous republic and respective Soviets of People's Deputies. The Supreme Soviet of a Soviet Republic then submits the results of the referendum to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. The Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Republic which has autonomous republics, autonomous regions, autonomous territories or territories with a compactly settled national minority population within its borders as mentioned in second part of Article 3 of the present Law submits the results for each autonomous republic, autonomous region, autonomous territory or territory with a compactly settled national minority population to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR separately along with necessary conclusions and suggestions made by respective state authorities. If it is verified that the referendum is conducted in accordance with the law, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR takes it to the Congress of the People's Deputies of USSR for review.

RESOLUTION 822

Adopted by the Security Council at its 3205th meeting, on 30 April 1993

The Security Council,
Recalling the statements of the President of the Security Council of 29 January 1993 (S/25199) and of 6 April 1993 (S/25539) concerning the Nagorny-Karabakh conflict,
Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General dated 14 April 1993 (S/25600),
Expressing its serious concern at the deterioration of the relations between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan,
Noting with alarm the escalation in armed hostilities and, in particular,

the latest invasion of the Kelbadjar district of the Republic of Azerbaijan by local Armenian forces,

Concerned that this situation endangers peace and security in the region,

Expressing grave concern at the displacement of a large number of civilians and the humanitarian emergency in the region, in particular in the Kelbadjar district,

Reaffirming the respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States in the region,

Reaffirming also the inviolability of international borders and the inadmissibility of the use of force for the acquisition of territory,

Expressing its support for the peace process being pursued within the framework of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and deeply concerned at the disruptive effect that the escalation in armed hostilities can have on that process,

1. *Demands* the immediate cessation of all hostilities and hostile acts with a view to establishing a durable cease-fire, as well as immediate withdrawal of all occupying forces from the Kelbadjar district and other recently occupied areas of Azerbaijan;

2. *Urges* the parties concerned immediately to resume negotiations for the resolution of the conflict within the framework of the peace process of the Minsk Group of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and refrain from any action that will obstruct a peaceful solution of the problem;

3. *Calls* for unimpeded access for international humanitarian relief efforts in the region, in particular in all areas affected by the conflict in order to alleviate the suffering of the civilian population and reaffirms that all parties are bound to comply with the principles and rules of international humanitarian law;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Chairman-in-Office of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe as well as the Chairman of the Minsk Group of the Conference to assess the situation in the region, in particular in the Kelbadjar district of Azerbaijan, and to submit a further report to the Council;

5. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.

RESOLUTION 853

Adopted by the Security Council at its 3259th meeting, on 29 July 1993

The Security Council,

Reaffirming its resolution 822 (1993) of 30 April 1993,

Having considered the report issued on 27 July 1993 by the Chairman of the Mink Group of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) (S/26184),

Expressing its serious concern at the deterioration of relations between the Republic of Armenia and the Azerbaijani Republic and at the tensions between them,

Welcoming acceptance by the parties concerned at the timetable of urgent steps to implement its resolution 822 (1993),

Noting with alarm the escalation in armed hostilities and, in particular, the seizure of the district of Aghdam in the Azerbaijani Republic,

Concerned that this situation continues to endanger peace and security in the region,

Expressing once again its grave concern at the displacement of large numbers of civilians in the Azerbaijani Republic and at the serious humanitarian emergency in the region, *Reaffirming* the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Azerbaijani Republic and of all other States in the region,

Reaffirming also the inviolability of international borders and the inadmissibility of the use of force for the acquisition of territory,

1. *Condemns* the seizure of the district of Aghdam and of all other recently occupied areas of the Azerbaijani Republic;

2. *Further condemns* all hostile actions in the region, in particular attacks on civilians and bombardments of inhabited areas;

3. *Demands* the immediate cessation of all hostilities and the immediate complete and unconditional withdrawal of the occupying forces involved from the district of Aghdam and all other recently occupied areas of the Azerbaijan Republic;

4. *Calls on* the parties concerned to reach and maintain durable cease-fire arrangements;

5. *Reiterates* in the context of paragraphs 3 and 4 above its earlier calls for the restoration of economic, transport and energy links in the region;

6. *Endorses* the continuing efforts by the Minsk Group of the CSCE to achieve a peaceful solution to the conflict, including efforts to implement resolution 822 (1993), and *expresses its grave concern* at the disruptive effect that the escalation of armed hostilities has had on these efforts;

7. *Welcomes* the preparations for a CSCE monitor mission with a timetable for its deployment, as well as consideration within the CSCE of the proposal for a CSCE presence in the region;

8. *Urges* the parties concerned to refrain from any action that will obstruct a peaceful solution to the conflict, and to pursue negotiations within the Minsk Group of the CSCE, as well as through direct contacts between them, towards a final settlement;

9. *Urges* the Government of the Republic of Armenia to continue to exert its influence to achieve compliance by the Armenians of the Nagorny-Karabakh region of the Azerbaijani Republic with its resolution 822 (1993) and the present resolution, and the acceptance by this party of the proposals of the Minsk Group of the CSCE;

10. *Urges* States to refrain from the supply of any weapons and munitions which might lead to an intensification of the conflict or the continued occupation of territory;

11. *Calls once again* for unimpeded access for international humanitarian relief efforts in the region, in particular in all areas affected by the conflict, in order to alleviate the increased suffering of the civilian population and *reaffirms* that all parties are bound to comply with the principles and rules of international humanitarian law;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General and relevant international agencies to provide urgent humanitarian assistance to the affected civilian population and to assist displaced persons to return to their homes;

13. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Chairman-in-

Office of the CSCE as well as the Chairman of the Minsk Group, to continue to report to the Council on the situation;

14. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.

RESOLUTION 874

Adopted by the Security Council at its 3292nd meeting, on 14 October 1993

The Security Council,

Reaffirming its resolutions 822 (1993) of 30 April 1993 and 853 (1993) of 29 July 1993, and *recalling* the statement read by the President of the Council, on behalf of the Council, on 18 August 1993 (S/26326),

Having considered the letter dated 1 October 1993 from the Chairman of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) Minsk Conference on Nagorny Karabakh addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/26522),

Expressing its serious concern that a continuation of the conflict in and around the Nagorny Karabakh region of the Azerbaijani Republic, and of the tensions between the Republic of Armenia and the Azerbaijani Republic, would endanger peace and security in the region,

Taking note of the high-level meetings which took place in Moscow on 8 October 1993 and *expressing* the hope that they will contribute to the improvement of the situation and the peaceful settlement of the conflict, *Reaffirming* the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Azerbaijani Republic and of all other States in the region,

Reaffirming also the inviolability of international borders and the inadmissibility of the use of force for the acquisition of territory,

Expressing once again its grave concern at the human suffering the conflict has caused and at the serious humanitarian emergency in the region and expressing in particular its grave concern at the displacement of large numbers of civilians in the Azerbaijani Republic,

1. *Calls upon* the parties concerned to make effective and permanent the cease-fire established as a result of the direct contacts undertaken with the assistance of the Government of the

Russian Federation in support of the CSCE Minsk Group;

2. *Reiterates again* its full support for the peace process being pursued within the framework of the CSCE, and for the tireless efforts of the CSCE Minsk Group;

3. *Welcomes and commends* to the parties the Adjusted timetable of urgent steps to implement Security Council resolutions 822 (1993) and 853 (1993) set out on 28 September 1993 at the meeting of the CSCE Minsk Group and submitted to the parties concerned by the Chairman of the Group with the full support of nine other members of the Group, and *calls on* the parties to accept it;

4. *Expresses* the conviction that all other pending questions arising from the conflict and not directly addressed in the adjusted timetable should be settled expeditiously through peaceful negotiations in the context of the CSCE Minsk process;

5. *Calls for* the immediate implementation of the reciprocal and urgent steps provided for in the CSCE Minsk Group's Adjusted timetable, including the withdrawal of forces from recently occupied territories and the removal of all obstacles to communications and transportation;

6. *Calls also* for an early convening of the CSCE Minsk Conference for the purpose of arriving at a negotiated settlement to the conflict as provided for in the timetable, in conformity with the 24 March 1992 mandate of the CSCE Council of Ministers;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to respond favourably to an invitation to send a representative to attend the CSCE Minsk Conference and to provide all possible assistance for the substantive negotiations that will follow the opening of the Conference;

8. *Supports* the monitoring mission developed by the CSCE;

9. *Calls on* all parties to refrain from all violations of international humanitarian law and *renews its call* in resolutions 822 (1993) and 853 (1993) for unimpeded access for international humanitarian relief efforts in all areas affected by the conflict;

10. *Urges* all States in the region to refrain from any hostile acts and from any interference or intervention which would lead to the widening of the

conflict and undermine peace and security in the region;

11. *Requests* the Secretary-General and relevant international agencies to provide urgent humanitarian assistance to the affected civilian population and to assist refugees and displaced persons to return to their homes in security and dignity;

12. *Requests also* the Secretary-General, the Chairman-in-Office of the CSCE and the Chairman of the CSCE Minsk Conference to continue to report to the Council on the progress of the Minsk process and on all aspects of the situation on the ground, and on present and future cooperation between the CSCE and the United Nations in this regard;

13. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.

RESOLUTION 884

Adopted by the Security Council at its 3313th meeting, on 12 November 1993

The Security Council,

Reaffirming its resolutions 822 (1993) of 30 April 1993, 853 (1993) of 29 July 1993 and 874 (1993) of 14 October 1993,

Reaffirming its full support for the peace process being pursued within the framework of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), and for the tireless efforts of the CSCE Minsk Group,

Taking note of the letter dated 9 November 1993 from the Chairman-in-Office of the Minsk Conference on Nagorny Karabakh addressed to the President of the Security Council and its enclosures (S/26718, annex),

Expressing its serious concern that a continuation of the conflict in and around the Nagorny Karabakh region of the Azerbaijani Republic, and of the tensions between the Republic of Armenia and the Azerbaijani Republic, would endanger peace and security in the region,

Noting with alarm the escalation in armed hostilities as consequence of the violations of the cease-fire and excesses in the use of force in response to those violations, in particular the occupation of the Zangelan district and the city of Goradiz in the Azerbaijani Republic,

Reaffirming the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Azerbaijani Republic and of all other States in the region,

Reaffirming also the inviolability of international borders and the inadmissibility of the use of force for the acquisition of territory,

Expressing grave concern at the latest displacement of a large number of civilians and the humanitarian emergency in the Zangelan district and the city of Goradiz and on Azerbaijan's southern frontier,

1. *Condemns* the recent violations of the cease-fire established between the parties, which resulted in a resumption of hostilities, and particularly *condemns* the occupation of the Zangelan district and the city of Goradiz, attacks on civilians and bombardments of the territory of the Azerbaijani Republic;

2. *Calls upon* the Government of Armenia to use its influence to achieve compliance by the Armenians of the Nagorny Karabakh region of the Azerbaijani Republic with resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993) and 874 (1993), and to ensure that the forces involved are not provided with the means to extend their military campaign further;

3. *Welcomes* the Declaration of 4 November 1993 of the nine members of the CSCE Minsk Group (S/26718) and *commends* the proposals contained therein for unilateral cease-fire declarations;

4. *Demands* from the parties concerned the immediate cessation of armed hostilities and hostile acts, the unilateral withdrawal of occupying forces from the Zangelan district and the city of Goradiz, and the withdrawal of occupying forces from other recently occupied areas of the Azerbaijani Republic in accordance with the adjusted timetable of urgent steps to implement Security Council resolutions 822 (1993) and 853 (1993) (S/26522, appendix), as amended by the CSCE Minsk Group meeting in Vienna of 2 to 8 November 1993;

5. *Strongly urges* the parties concerned to resume promptly and to make effective and permanent the cease-fire established as a result of the direct contacts undertaken with the assistance of the Government of the

Russian Federation in support of the CSCE Minsk Group, and to continue to seek a negotiated settlement of the conflict within the context of the CSCE Minsk process and the Adjusted timetable, as amended by the CSCE Minsk Group meeting in Vienna of 2 to 8 November 1993;

6. *Urges again* all States in the region to refrain from any hostile acts and from any interference or intervention, which would lead to the widening of the conflict and undermine peace and security in the region;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General and relevant international agencies to provide urgent humanitarian assistance to the affected civilian population, including that in the Zangelan district and the city of Goradiz and on Azerbaijan's southern frontier, and to assist refugees and displaced persons to return to their homes in security and dignity;

8. *Reiterates* its request that the Secretary-General, the Chairman-in-Office of the CSCE and the Chairman of the CSCE Minsk Conference continue to report to the Council on the progress of the Minsk process and on all aspects of the situation on the ground, in particular on the implementation of its relevant resolutions, and on present and future cooperation between the CSCE and the United Nations in this regard;

9. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.

The Bishkek Protocol

5 May 1994

Participants of the meeting held in May 4-5 in Bishkek on the initiative of the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, Parliament of Kyrgyz Republic, Federal Congress and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation:

express determination to assist in all possible ways to the cessation of armed conflict in and around Nagorno Karabakh, which does not only cause irretrievable losses to Azerbaijani and Armenian people, but also significantly affects the interests of other countries in the region and seriously complicates the international situation;

supporting the April 15, 1994

Statement by the CIS Council of heads of states, express readiness to fully

support the efforts by heads and representatives of executive power on cessation of the armed conflict and liquidation of its consequences by reaching an appropriate agreement as soon as possible;

advocate a naturally active role of the Commonwealth and Inter-Parliamentary Assembly in cessation of the conflict, in realization of thereupon principles, goals and the UN and OSCE certain decisions (first of all the UN Security Council resolutions 822, 853, 874, 884); call upon the conflicting sides to come to common senses: cease to fire at the midnight of May 8 to 9, guided by the February 18, 1994 Protocol (including the part on allocating observers), and work intensively to confirm this as soon as possible by signing a reliable, legally binding agreement envisaging a mechanism, ensuring the non-resumption of military and hostile activities, withdrawal of troops from occupied territories and restoration of communication, return of refugees; agree to suggest Parliaments of the CIS member-states to discuss the initiative by Chairman of Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly V. Shumeyko and Head of the Assembly's Peacemaking Group on Nagorno Karabakh M. Sherimkulov on creating a CIS peacemaking force; consider appropriate to continue such meetings for peaceful resolution of the armed conflict;

express gratitude to the people and leadership of Kyrgyzstan for creating excellent working conditions, cordiality and hospitality.

[Signatories]

Lisbon Document

3 December 1996

ANNEX 1: STATEMENT OF THE OSCE CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE

You all know that no progress has been achieved in the last two years to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the issue of the territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan. I regret that the efforts of the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Conference to reconcile the views of the parties on the principles for a settlement have been unsuccessful.

Three principles which should form part of the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict were recommended by the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group. These principles are supported by all member States of the Minsk Group. They are:

- territorial integrity of the Republic of Armenia and the Azerbaijan Republic;
- legal status of Nagorno-Karabakh defined in an agreement based on self-determination which confers on Nagorno-Karabakh the highest degree of self-rule within Azerbaijan;
- guaranteed security for Nagorno-Karabakh and its whole population, including mutual obligations to ensure compliance by all the Parties with the provisions of the settlement.

I regret that one participating State could not accept this. These principles have the support of all other participating States.

This statement will be included in the Lisbon Summit documents.

Minsk Group 'package' proposal

July 1997

Unofficial translation of Russian original

Comprehensive agreement on the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict

Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group of the OSCE

Preamble:

The Sides, recognizing fully the advantages of peace and cooperation in the region for the flourishing and wellbeing of their peoples, express their determination to achieve a peaceful resolution of the prolonged Nagorno Karabakh conflict. The resolution laid out below will create a basis for the joint economic development of the Caucasus, giving the peoples of this region the possibility of living a normal and productive life under democratic institutions, promoting wellbeing and a promising future. Cooperation in accordance with the present Agreement will lead to normal relations in the field of trade, transport and communications throughout the region, giving people the opportunity

to restore, with the assistance of international organizations, their towns and villages, to create the stability necessary for a substantial increase in external capital investment in the region, and to open the way to mutually beneficial trade, leading to the achievement of natural development for all peoples, the basis for which exists in the Caucasus region. Conciliation and cooperation between peoples will release their enormous potential to the benefit of their neighbours and other peoples of the world.

In accordance with these wishes, the Sides, being subject to the provisions of the UN Charter, the basic principles and decisions of the OSCE and universally recognized norms of international law, and expressing their determination to support the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions 822, 853, 874 and 884, agree herewith to implement the measures laid out in Agreement I in order to put an end to armed hostilities and re-establish normal relations, and to reach an agreement on the final status of Nagorny Karabakh, as laid out in Agreement II.

Agreement I – The end of armed hostilities

The Sides agree:

I. To reject the use of armed force to resolve disputes between them, including disputes arising in connection with the present Agreement.

II. To withdraw armed forces in two stages:

In the first stage forces positioned along the current line of contact to the east and south of Nagorny Karabakh will be withdrawn kilometres to lines agreed in Appendix I of the High Level Planning Group recommendations, with the aim of securing conditions for the deployment of a forward detachment of international OSCE forces in a militarily secure buffer zone, separating the Sides along this line and guaranteeing security for the second stage of withdrawal.

At the second stage forces will be withdrawn in accordance with the timetable agreed in Appendix I, as follows:

A. The armed forces of Armenia will be withdrawn to within the borders of the Republic of Armenia.

B. The armed forces of Nagorny Karabakh will be withdrawn to within the 1988 borders of the Nagorny Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO; with the exceptions detailed below in Clauses VIII and IX).

C. The armed forces of Azerbaijan will be withdrawn to positions agreed in Appendix I on the basis of the High Level Planning Group's recommendations

D. Heavy weaponry will be withdrawn further to positions agreed in Appendix I on the basis of the High Level Planning Group's recommendations and subject to conditions of transparency and accountability.

E. Upon the completion of withdrawal the buffer zone will be located as indicated in the map shown in Appendix I, along the 1988 borders of the NKAO and the northern part of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border.

III. That territories released as a result of the withdrawal of armed forces will form a division zone, in which OSCE peacekeeping forces will implement monitoring of security conditions in conjunction with a Permanent Joint Commission. Neither side will be permitted to introduce its forces into this zone except by permission of OSCE peacekeeping forces and the Permanent Joint Commission in accordance with the implementation of Appendix II, in which agreed subdivisions are envisaged for customs services, demining and civil police force functions. The Sides agree not to carry out any military flights over the division zone and buffer zone.

IV. To cooperate with the deployment of international OSCE peacekeeping forces in the buffer zone in order to guarantee security in conjunction with the Permanent Joint Commission. OSCE peacekeeping forces will consist of forces appointed by the OSCE, whose mandate will be defined by UN Security Council resolution and renewed on the recommendation of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office.

V. To implement the return of displaced persons to their original places of permanent settlement in the division zone. OSCE peacekeeping forces in conjunction with the Permanent Joint Commission will observe the security conditions for the returning population and provide guarantees to all Sides

regarding the observance of demilitarization in this zone.

VI. That simultaneously with the withdrawal of armed forces measures will be implemented aimed at the restoration of roads, railways, electricity transmission lines and connections, trade and other relations, including any other actions implied in the achievement of these goals. The Sides guarantee the free use of these connections for all, including ethnic minorities, and guarantee the latter access to their ethnic groups located in other parts of the region. Each Side pledges to remove all blockades and to allow the passage of goods and people to all other Sides. Armenia and Azerbaijan guarantee the free and safe rail connection between their territories, including the Baku-Horadiz-Meghri-Ordubad-Nakhichevan-Yerevan route.

VII. To cooperate with the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and other international humanitarian organizations to secure the return of all persons detained as a result of the conflict, ascertainment of the fate of those disappeared without trace and the repatriation of all remains.

VIII. In relation to the following measures concerning the Lachin corridor:

A. Azerbaijan will lease the corridor to the OSCE, which will conclude a contract on the exclusive use of the corridor by the Nagorny Karabakh authorities (with exceptions envisaged for transit, explained below in Clause E).

B. The OSCE will observe security conditions in conjunction with the Nagorny Karabakh authorities.

C. The boundaries of the Lachin corridor are agreed in Appendix II with due consideration of the recommendations of the HLPG.

D. The OSCE will observe the construction of roads around the town of Lachin. Upon the completion of road construction the town of Lachin will be excluded from the Lachin corridor. It will return to Azerbaijani jurisdiction (as part of the division zone) and its former inhabitants will be able to return.

E. Permanent settlement or armed forces are not allowed in the corridor,

with the exception of permitted security force contingents. Representatives of official bodies, observers and OSCE peacekeeping forces have the right of transit subject to prior notification, as do Azerbaijani inhabitants of the region in transit from the Lachin district to the Gubatly district or vice versa. Territory of the Lachin district lying outside of the corridor forms part of the division zone.

IX. With regard to the following measures, concerning the town of Shusha and the Shaumian district:

A. The Sides will withdraw their armed forces from both districts, with the exception of anti-aircraft defences manned with limited crews.

B. The local authorities will assist the deployment of observers from the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the OSCE.

C. Displaced persons will be able to return to their places of former permanent residence. The relevant local authorities will guarantee their security.

D. Returnees will enjoy full civil rights, including the right to form political parties. They will be appropriately represented in parliaments in Baku and Stepanakert and in the elected councils, police forces and security structures of these districts in accordance with their proportional share of the local population.

E. A permanent joint commission will coordinate the allocation of international aid in these locations on the basis of justice and mutual benefit of both parts of the population.

F. Inhabitants of the town of Shusha and Shaumian district will have guaranteed access to roads, connections and other communication links to the rest of Azerbaijan and with Nagorny Karabakh.

X. To establish a Permanent Joint Commission (PJC) to observe the implementation of measures foreseen in the present Agreement addressing the problems of Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh. The PJC has three co-chairs: one Azerbaijani, one from Nagorny Karabakh and one representative of the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE. The implementation of the Agreement forms the principal responsibility of the Azerbaijani and

Nagorny Karabakh co-chairs; mediation and arbitration in case of dispute forms the main responsibility of the OSCE co-Chair. The PJC has the following sub-commissions: military, economic, humanitarian and cultural. The functions of the PJC and its sub-commissions are laid out in Appendix II.

XI. To re-establish full diplomatic relations between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan.

XII. To establish a Bilateral Armenian-Azerbaijani Commission (BAAC), with one co-chair from the Republic of Armenia and one from the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE will be represented in this commission. The BAAC will work to prevent border incidents and will maintain links between the border forces and other corresponding security forces of both countries, and will observe the implementation of measures to open roads, railways, communications, pipelines, trade and other relations.

XII. The United Nations Security Council is the guarantor of the present Agreement.

XIV. The present Agreement will remain in force until the conclusion at the OSCE Minsk Conference of a comprehensive peace agreement, which will, in part, establish permanent security and peacekeeping mechanisms replacing those foreseen in the present Agreement.

[Appendices I & II]

Agreement II – Status

Preamble

The status of Nagorny Karabakh and the preservation of its original ethnic and cultural character are issues of concern for the international community, including the Republic of Armenia. Its status cannot be determined by unilateral acts of either the Azerbaijan Republic or the Nagorny Karabakh authorities. Its status will be determined according to the following parameters:

I. All Sides in the conflict recognize the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and Armenia and the inviolability of their borders.

II. Nagorny Karabakh forms a state-territorial entity within Azerbaijan, and its self-determination comprises

the rights and privileges laid out below, agreed between the Azerbaijan Republic and the Nagorny Karabakh authorities, approved by the Minsk Conference and incorporated into the Constitutions of Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh.

III. Nagorny Karabakh and Nakhichevan have the right to free and unimpeded transport links and communications with Armenia and Azerbaijan.

IV. The administrative boundaries of Nagorny Karabakh are determined on the basis of the boundaries of the former Nagorny Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (Region).

V. Nagorny Karabakh has its own Constitution, adopted by the people of Nagorny Karabakh on the basis of a referendum. This Constitution incorporates an official agreement between the Nagorny Karabakh authorities and Azerbaijan as to the form of self-determination on the basis of the present document.

Azerbaijan will introduce the necessary changes into its Constitution to incorporate these agreements.

Nagorny Karabakh has its own flag, national symbols and anthem.

VI. The Constitution and laws of Nagorny Karabakh are effective on the territory of Nagorny Karabakh. The laws, rules and executive decrees of Azerbaijan are effective on the territory of Nagorny Karabakh only if they do not contradict the latter's Constitution and laws.

VII. Nagorny Karabakh independently forms its legislative, executive and judicial bodies.

VIII. The population of Nagorny Karabakh elects representatives to the parliament of Azerbaijan and participates in elections for the president of Azerbaijan.

IX. Nagorny Karabakh has the right to establish direct external relations with foreign states and international organizations in the spheres of economic relations, science, culture, sport and humanitarian issues, and to have appropriate representatives abroad for the conduct of these relations. Political parties in Nagorny Karabakh have the right to relations with political parties in other countries.

X. Citizens of Nagorny Karabakh have Azerbaijani passports with a special stamp indicating 'Nagorny Karabakh'.

Citizens of Nagorny Karabakh are not considered foreigners with regard to the laws of Armenia, they have the right to emigrate to Armenia at any time, and in case of permanent settlement in Armenia they may adopt Armenian citizenship.

XI. Nagorny Karabakh comprises a free economic zone with the free circulation within it of currencies.

XII. Nagorny Karabakh has a national guard and police force. Citizens of Nagorny Karabakh have the right to do their military service on the territory of Nagorny Karabakh.

XIII. The army, security forces and police of Azerbaijan do not have the right to enter the territory of Nagorny Karabakh without the permission of the Nagorny Karabakh authorities.

XIV. The budget of Nagorny Karabakh is formed of contributions derived from its own resources. The government of Nagorny Karabakh encourages and guarantees the investment of capital by Azerbaijani and foreign individuals and companies.

XV. Nagorny Karabakh has a multi-ethnic character; all citizens have the right to the use of their national language in all official and unofficial contexts.

XVI. The United Nations Security Council is the guarantor of the present Agreement.

Confidence building measures for the Nagorny Karabakh Conflict

As a demonstration of their will to achieve a peaceful settlement of the conflict the Sides may implement, without expectation of any further agreement, any or all of the following measures for the enhancement of trust and security:

A. Azerbaijan and Armenia may take upon themselves responsibility for the resumption of the ceasefire regime without delay along the boundary in the Ijevan-Kazakh sector. This regime, applied in 1992, included a telephone hotline connection and joint border patrols;

B. The Sides may agree on an increase in the OSCE Chairman-in-Office's observer mission, in order to implement additional monitoring in connection with Nagorny Karabakh, for example along the Armenian-Azerbaijani border in the Ijevan-Kazakh sector;

C. Dialogue with the assistance of the UN High Commissioner on Refugees and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in order to assess humanitarian needs (for both displaced Azerbaijani populations and within Nagorny Karabakh itself). This could be implemented in agreement with either the UN High Commissioner or the ICRC;

D. The opening of weekly or daily markets in the Nagorny Karabakh region, open for both Armenians and Azerbaijanis. This will demand the creation of border crossing points and the demining of transport routes to market places and agreement regarding the modalities of transport arrangements and rules of trade.

Minsk Group 'step-by-step' proposal

December 1997

Unofficial translation of Russian original

Agreement on the end of the Nagorny Karabakh armed conflict

Preamble

[not reproduced here – see the near-identical preamble to the 'package proposal']

I. The Sides reject the use of force or the threat of the use of force as a means of settling disputes between them. They will resolve disputes, including such disputes as may arise in connection with the implementation of the present Agreement, by peaceful means, in the first instance by means of negotiations, including negotiations within the framework of the Minsk Process of the OSCE.

II. The Sides withdraw their armed forces in accordance with the following provisions and the detailed discussion in Appendix 1:

A. In the first phase armed forces currently situated along the line of contact to the east and south of Nagorny Karabakh will be withdrawn to the line shown in Appendix 1 and in accordance with the timetable indicated in it, taking into due consideration the recommendations of the High Level Planning Group (HLPG), with the aim of making

possible an initial deployment of multinational OSCE divisions in a militarily secure buffer zone, the separation of the Sides along this line and to guarantee security conditions for the second phase of withdrawal.

B. In the second phase forces will be withdrawn simultaneously in accordance with the timetable laid out in Appendix 1, in the following way:

(1) All Armenian forces located outside of the borders of the Republic of Armenia will be withdrawn to locations within those borders.

(2) Nagorny Karabakh forces will be withdrawn to locations within the 1988 boundaries of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO), with the exception of the Lachin corridor.

(3) Azerbaijani armed forces will be withdrawn to the line indicated in Appendix 1 on the basis of the HLPG's recommendations, and will be withdrawn from all territories of Armenia.

(4) Heavy weaponry will be withdrawn to positions indicated in Appendix I on the basis of the High Level Planning Group's recommendations, to be observed by the OSCE peacekeeping mission and subject to conditions of transparency and accountability laid out in this Appendix.

III. Territory released as a result of this withdrawal of forces forms a buffer zone and a dividing zone, as laid out in detail in Appendix 2.

A. Upon the completion of withdrawal of armed forces the buffer zone will be located along the 1988 boundaries of the NKAO and the north and south boundaries of the Lachin corridor.

The buffer zone will remain without human population and is completely demilitarized, with the exception of elements forming part of the OSCE peacekeeping mission.

B. The dividing zone is demilitarized with the exception of forces assigned to assist the work of the Permanent Joint Commission, as indicated in detail in Appendix 2, including:

(1) Units forming part of the peacekeeping mission;

(2) Units assigned for border patrol and demining purposes;

(3) Civil police forces, the number and permitted weaponry of which are determined in Appendix 2.

C. In the buffer and dividing zones a no-fly zone, into which the Sides will not conduct military flights, is established under the control of the OSCE peacekeeping mission, as detailed in Appendix 2.

D. Security conditions in all districts controlled by the Nagorny Karabakh authorities after the withdrawal of forces in accordance with Article II will be guaranteed by the existing military and security structures of Nagorny Karabakh.

IV. In accordance with the decisions of the OSCE Budapest summit of 1994 the Sides invite and will assist with the deployment of multinational OSCE peacekeeping forces (PKF), which will work together with the Permanent Joint Commission (PJC) and the Armenian-Azerbaijani intergovernmental commission (AAIC) stipulated in Article 7. The PKF observes the withdrawal of armed forces and heavy weaponry, the prohibition of military flights, support of the demilitarization regime and the situation on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border, as laid out in Appendix 2. The Sides call upon the UN Security Council to adopt a resolution appropriate to these objectives for an initial period of not more than one year and to renew the status of this resolution according to necessity as determined by the recommendations of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office. The Sides agree that the overall duration of the peacekeeping mission will be the minimum necessary relative to the situation in the region and the pace of the wider resolution of the conflict. The Sides fully cooperate with the PKF, in order to guarantee the implementation of the present Agreement and to avoid any disruption or interruption of peacekeeping operations.

V. The Sides assist the safe and voluntary return of displaced persons to their places of former permanent residence in the division zone, as laid out in Appendix 2. The PKF in conjunction with the Permanent Joint Commission observes the security conditions for the returning population, in order to provide assurances to all sides of the monitoring of the demilitarization regime in this zone. The Sides conduct

negotiations on the implementation of the immediate, safe and voluntary return of all other persons, other than those covered by the present Agreement or general settlement agreement, who were displaced as a result of the conflict and tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan since 1987.

VI. Simultaneous to the withdrawal of armed forces the Sides implement without delay measures to open roads, railways, electrical transmission and communications lines, trade and other relations, including all actions necessary to achieve this in the shortest possible time in accordance with the timetable and concrete provisions laid out in Appendix 3. The Sides guarantee the use of these connections by all, including ethnic minorities, guaranteeing the latter access to co-ethnic groups in other districts of the region. Each Side pledges to remove all blockades and to guarantee the delivery of goods and people to all Sides without obstruction. The Sides guarantee free and safe railway communications between them.

VII. The Sides cooperate fully with the International Committee of the Red Cross, the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees and other international organizations in order to ensure the swift and secure return of all persons detained as a result of the conflict, investigation of the fate of those disappeared without trace, the repatriation of all remains and the delivery without discrimination of humanitarian and reconstruction aid across territory under their control to regions afflicted by the conflict. The Sides cooperate with the OSCE PKF through the good offices of the Permanent Joint Commission to implement confidence-building measures.

IX. The Sides without delay establish a Permanent Joint Commission (PJC) to observe the implementation of the provisions envisaged in the present Agreement relating to the problems affecting Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh. The chair of the PJC is a representative of the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, working with one vice-president from Azerbaijan and one vice-president from Nagorny Karabakh. The principal obligation

of the PJC is to observe the implementation of the Agreement; the obligations of the OSCE Chair likewise include mediation in cases of disagreement and the sanctioning of measures taken to deal with emergency situations, such as natural disasters. The PJC has sub-commissions for military, economic, humanitarian, cultural and communications affairs. The structure, functions and other details concerning the PJC are laid out in Appendix 4. The Sides establish without delay an Armenian-Azerbaijani Intergovernmental Commission (AAIC) in order to avoid border incidents between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the conduct of communications between border forces and other security forces of both countries and the monitoring and assistance of measures to open roads, railways, communications, pipelines, trade and other relations. The AAIC has two co-chairs, one from Armenia and one from Azerbaijan. A representative appointed by the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE forms part of the Commission. The structure, functions and other details concerning the AAIC are laid out in Appendix 5. The Azerbaijan Republic and the Republic of Armenia establish communications offices in each other's capital cities.

X. The Azerbaijan Republic and the Republic of Armenia enter into bilateral and multilateral negotiations at the appropriate international and regional forums with the aim of securing improved security in the region, including military transparency and complete conformity with the OSCE agreement.

XI. The three Sides in the present Agreement, having thus put an end to the military aspects of the conflict, agree to continue the conduct of negotiations in good faith and with the assistance of the Minsk Conference co-Chairs and other Sides invited as appropriate by the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, aimed at the urgent achievement of a comprehensive settlement for other aspects of the conflict, including political aspects such as the determination of the status of Nagorny Karabakh and the resolution of the problems posed in Lachin, Shusha and Shaumian; following the

attainment of an agreement at these negotiations and its signing by the three above-mentioned Sides, it would be subject to recognition by the international community at the Minsk Conference, to be convened as soon as possible.

XII. Each Side fully respects the security of other Sides and their populations. The Sides pledge to develop neighbourly relations between their peoples, assisting trade and normal interrelations between them, and to refrain from statements or acts capable of undermining the present Agreement or good relations.

XIII. In addition to the concrete provisions concerning peacekeeping and the monitoring of military withdrawal laid out above, and recalling the corresponding principles and obligations of the OSCE, including those expressed in the Helsinki document of 1992 and the Budapest document of 1994, using the appropriate mechanisms the OSCE observes the complete implementation of all aspects of the current Agreement and takes appropriate steps in accordance with these principles and decisions to avoid the violation of the conditions laid down in the present Agreement and opposition to it. Witnesses of the present Agreement, acting through the offices of the Permanent Council of the OSCE and the United Nations Security Council, assist in its complete implementation. In case of serious violation of the present Agreement they consult among themselves regarding necessary measures to be taken, inform without delay the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, the Chair of the United Nations Security Council and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and request that the OSCE Permanent Council or the UN Security Council consider appropriate measures in this regard.

XIV. The Sides take upon themselves mutual obligations to ensure the observance of the provisions of the present Agreement, including guarantees of the security of Nagorny Karabakh, its population and returning displaced persons, and to take any necessary steps for the fulfilment of all obligations flowing from the present Agreement.

XV. The present Agreement comes into force from the moment of its signing and ratification and remains in effect with those exceptions flowing from a comprehensive settlement mentioned in Article XI. The present Agreement can be changed, added to and abrogated by agreement of all Sides. [appendices listed]

Minsk Group 'common state' proposal

November 1998

Unofficial translation of Russian original

On the principles for a comprehensive settlement of the armed conflict over Nagorny Karabakh

Firmly resolved to realize the peaceful settlement of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict in accordance with the norms and principles of international law, including the principles of the territorial integrity of states and the self-determination of peoples, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh agree the following:

I. Agreement on the status of Nagorny Karabakh

The Sides will conclude an agreement on the status of Nagorny Karabakh, which will include the following provisions:

Nagorny Karabakh is a state-territorial formation in the form of a Republic and constitutes a common state with Azerbaijan in the latter's internationally recognized borders. Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh will sign an agreement on the division of spheres of responsibility and the mutual delegation of powers between corresponding state governmental bodies, which will have the status of constitutional law.

Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh form a Joint Committee, which will be composed of representatives of the presidents, prime ministers and speakers of parliament, for the determination of policy areas and activities belonging to spheres of joint jurisdiction.

In order to maintain contacts and coordinate joint activities

representative missions of Nagorny Karabakh and Azerbaijan will be established in Baku and Stepanakert respectively.

Nagorny Karabakh will have the right to enter into direct external relations with foreign states in economic, trade, scientific, cultural, sporting and humanitarian fields, and with regional and international organizations associated with these fields and to have appropriate representative missions abroad for the conduct of these relations. Political parties and social organizations in Nagorny Karabakh will have the right to establish connections with political parties and social organizations of foreign states.

Nagorny Karabakh participates in the implementation of Azerbaijan's foreign policy on issues touching upon its interests. Decisions on such issues cannot be taken without the agreement of both sides.

The government of Nagorny Karabakh may have its representatives in embassies or consular missions of Azerbaijan in foreign states, in which it has special interests, and likewise to send its experts as part of Azerbaijani delegations to participate in international negotiations, if these concern the interests of Nagorny Karabakh.

The borders of Nagorny Karabakh will correspond to the borders of the former Nagorny Karabakh Autonomous Oblast. Their possible clarification or revision can become the subject of special mutual agreements between Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh.

The borders between Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh will be open in both directions for the free movement of civilians. In travelling across these borders and in conducting business they will not be subject to customs duties or other tolls. The right to grant permanent residency rights will fall within the purview of the corresponding governments.

Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh will not use force or the threat of force to resolve disputes between them.

In case of disputes or disagreements not overcome within the framework of the Joint Committee, the Sides may call for the consultative opinion of the

OSCE Chairman-in-Office, which will be taken into consideration before the adoption of a final decision.

The status of Nagorny Karabakh will also include the rights and privileges listed below in the formulations used in the Agreement on the Status of Nagorny Karabakh, approved by the Minsk Conference.

1. Nagorny Karabakh will have its own Constitution, adopted by the people of Nagorny Karabakh by means of a referendum. This Constitution will incorporate the provisions of the Agreement on the Status of Nagorny Karabakh. Azerbaijan will introduce the appropriate changes into its Constitution to incorporate this agreement.

The terms of this Agreement or of those parts of the Nagorny Karabakh and Azerbaijan Constitutions incorporating it cannot be changed without the agreement of all three Sides.

2. On the territory of Nagorny Karabakh the Constitution of Nagorny Karabakh and its laws will have effect. The laws, regulations and executive decrees of Azerbaijan will have effect on the territory of Nagorny Karabakh only if they do not contradict the latter's Constitution and laws.

3. Nagorny Karabakh will have its own flag, national symbols and national anthem.

4. Nagorny Karabakh forms its legislative, executive and judicial bodies independently in accordance with its Constitution.

5. As personal identity documents citizens of Nagorny Karabakh will have Azerbaijani passports with a special stamp indicating 'Nagorny Karabakh'. Only the government of Nagorny Karabakh or a body authorized by it will have the right to issue such passports.

Citizens of Nagorny Karabakh of Armenian origin may emigrate to Armenia and in case of permanent settlement there may receive Armenian citizenship in accordance with the laws of that country.

6. The population of Nagorny Karabakh has the right to elect representatives to the parliament of Azerbaijan and to participate in elections for the president of Azerbaijan.

7. Nagorny Karabakh will form a free economic zone, have the right to its own currency issue, which will circulate equally with Azerbaijani currency issue, and to issue its own stamps.

8. Nagorny Karabakh will have the right to free and unimpeded transport links and communications with Armenia and Azerbaijan.

9. Nagorny Karabakh will possess a national guard (security forces) and police force, formed on a voluntary basis. These forces cannot operate outside of Nagorny Karabakh without the agreement of the government of Nagorny Karabakh.

10. The army, security forces and police of Azerbaijan will not have the right to enter the territory of Nagorny Karabakh without the agreement of the government of Nagorny Karabakh.

11. The Armenian language is the principal official language of Nagorny Karabakh, while Azeri is the second official language. Its citizens can likewise use other native languages in all official and unofficial instances.

12. The budget of Nagorny Karabakh will be composed of contributions generated by its resources. The government of Nagorny Karabakh will encourage and guarantee capital investment by Azerbaijani and foreign companies and individuals.

II. Concerning the Lachin Corridor

The question of the use of the Lachin corridor by Nagorny Karabakh for unimpeded communication between Nagorny Karabakh and Armenia is the subject of a separate agreement, if other decisions on a special regime in the Lachin district are not taken proceeding from the agreement between Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh. The Lachin district must remain a permanently and fully demilitarized zone.

III. Concerning the towns of Shusha and Shaumian

The Sides agree that all Azerbaijani refugees may return to their former places of permanent residence in the town of Shusha. The appropriate authorities of Nagorny Karabakh will guarantee their security. They will enjoy equal rights with all other

citizens of Nagorny Karabakh, including the right to form political parties, to participate in elections at all levels, to be elected to state legislative bodies and institutions of local government, and to work in official posts including those in law enforcement agencies.

Armenian refugees returning to the town of Shaumian will enjoy the same rights.

Inhabitants of the towns of Shusha and Shaumian will have guaranteed access by roads, communications and other means with other parts of Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh. The authorities in Nagorny Karabakh and Azerbaijan will cooperate with the deployment and activities in the towns of Shusha and Shaumian respectively of representative offices of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the OSCE.

The agreement on the status of Nagorny Karabakh will be signed by the three Sides and come into force after its approval by the Minsk Conference.

IV. Agreement on Ending the Armed Conflict

The Sides agree that the Agreement on Ending the Armed Conflict will include the following provisions:

I. The Sides agree to reject the use of force or the threat of the use of force to resolve disputes between them.

They resolve all such conflicts, including those that may arise in connection with the implementation of the Agreement on Ending the Armed Conflict by peaceful means, in the first instance through direct negotiations or within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Process.

II. The Sides effect the withdrawal of their armed forces in accordance with the following provisions and as laid out in detail in Appendix 1:

A. In the first phase forces deployed along the current line of contact to the east and south of Nagorny Karabakh will be withdrawn to the lines shown in Appendix 1 in accordance with the timetable indicated there, taking into consideration the recommendations of the High Level Planning Group (HLPG), with the aim of creating

conditions for the initial deployment of a forward division of multinational OSCE forces in a militarily secure, temporary buffer zone, the separation of the Sides along this line and the guaranteeing of security during the second phase of withdrawal.

B. In the second phase armed forces will be withdrawn simultaneously and in accordance with the timetable set out in Appendix 1, in the following way:

(1) All armed forces of Armenia deployed outside of the borders of the Republic of Armenia will be withdrawn to within those borders.

(2) The armed forces of Nagorny Karabakh will be withdrawn to within the 1988 boundaries of the Nagorny Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO), with the exception of the Lachin corridor until the achievement of an agreement on unimpeded communication between Nagorny Karabakh and Armenia.

(3) The armed forces of Azerbaijan will be withdrawn to lines indicated in Appendix 1 on the basis of the HLPG's recommendations, and will be withdrawn from all territories of the Republic of Armenia.

(4) Heavy weaponry will be withdrawn to locations indicated in Appendix 1 on the basis of the HLPG's recommendations, under the observation of the OSCE peacekeeping mission and in conformity with the demands of transparency and accountability laid out in this Appendix.

III. Territories released as a result of this withdrawal of forces forms a buffer zone and a division zone in accordance with the following provisions and as set out in detail in Appendix 2:

A. Upon the completion of withdrawal the buffer zone will be situated along the 1988 boundaries of the NKAO. Pending the reaching of an additional agreement it could extend along the boundaries of the Lachin district. The buffer zone remains unpopulated and fully demilitarized, with the exception of units forming part of the OSCE peacekeeping mission.

B. The division zone is demilitarized with the exception of forces permitted for the operations of the PKF in cooperation with the Permanent Joint

Commission, as set out in detail in Appendix 2, including:

(1) elements of the peacekeeping operation,

(2) Azerbaijani border patrol and demining sub-units,

(3) Azerbaijani civil police, numbers and permitted weaponry of which are determined in Appendix 2.

C. A no-fly zone is established in the buffer zone and division zone under the control of the OSCE peacekeeping mission, into which the Sides will not allow military flights, as set out in Appendix 2.

D. Security in all regions controlled by the authorities of Nagorny Karabakh after the withdrawal of armed forces in accordance with Article 2 will be guaranteed by the existing security structures of Nagorny Karabakh.

IV. In accordance with the decisions of the OSCE Budapest summit of 1994 the Sides invite and assist in the deployment of multinational OSCE peacekeeping forces (PKF), which will work in conjunction with the Permanent Joint Commission (PJC) and the Armenian-Azerbaijani Intergovernmental Commission (AAIC). The PKF observes the withdrawal of armed forces and heavy weaponry, the prohibition of military flights, support of the demilitarization regime and the situation on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border, as set out in Appendix 2.

The peacekeeping mission is established in accordance with an appropriate resolution of the UN Security Council for an initial period of not more than one year and is renewed as required on the recommendation of the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE. The Sides agree that the overall duration of the peacekeeping mission will be the minimum necessary relative to the situation in the region and the pace of the wider resolution of the conflict. The Sides fully cooperate with the PKF, in order to guarantee the implementation of the present Agreement and to avoid any disruption or interruption of peacekeeping operations.

[V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, XI, not reproduced: near-identical to step-by-step proposal except the latter's point XI is deleted in this proposal]

XII. In addition to the concrete provisions concerning peacekeeping and the monitoring of military withdrawal laid out above, and recalling the corresponding principles and obligations of the OSCE, including those expressed in the Helsinki document of 1992 and the Budapest document of 1994, using the appropriate mechanisms the OSCE observes the complete implementation of all aspects of the current Agreement and takes appropriate steps in accordance with these principles and decisions to avoid the violation of the conditions laid down in the present Agreement and opposition to it.

XIII. The Agreement on Ending the Armed Conflict will be signed by the three Sides and will come into effect after its approval by the Minsk Conference and ratification by the Parliaments of the three Sides.

XIV. The Azerbaijan Republic and the Republic of Armenia establish full diplomatic relations with permanent diplomatic missions at ambassadorial level after the signing of the agreements and their approval by the Minsk Conference.

V. On Guarantees

1. The Sides take upon themselves mutual obligations to guarantee conformity with the above provisions, including guarantees of the security of Nagorny Karabakh, its population and refugees and displaced persons returning to their former places of permanent residence.

2. The UN Security Council will follow closely the implementation of the comprehensive agreement.

3. The Agreement on the Status of Nagorny Karabakh and the Agreement on Ending the Armed Conflict may be signed by the Minsk Conference co-Chairs as witnesses. The presidents of Russia, the United States and France affirm the intention of their three countries to act together to ensure the thorough monitoring of progress in the implementation of agreements and the adoption of the appropriate measures for the fulfilment of this Agreement. In case of need, the OSCE or the UN Security Council may take diplomatic, economic or, in the last instance, military measures in accordance with the UN Charter.

Profiles



Azerbaijan

Heydar Aliyev

Exhibiting a remarkable capacity for adaptation to changing political realities, Heydar Aliyev played a key role in Azerbaijani politics for three decades. He was born in 1923 in Azerbaijan's autonomous republic of Nakhichevan to a family originating from Zangezur in Armenia. These origins allowed him to straddle two of the most influential clan networks in Azerbaijan, the *Yerazi* and Nakhichevanis. In 1967 he became the first non-Russian head of Azerbaijan's KGB, and in 1969 First Secretary of Azerbaijan's Communist Party. In 1982 he was appointed to the Politburo as first deputy chairman of the Soviet Council of Ministers, but was dismissed in 1987 by new Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

Aliyev subsequently kept a low political profile living in Moscow, but his resignation from the Communist Party following the January 1990 killings in Baku signalled the beginning of his return to Azerbaijani politics. In September 1991 he was elected speaker of the Nakhichevan parliament, then in June 1993, after President Abulfaz Elchibey had been deposed by a coup, was invited back to Baku by the Popular Front government. Aliyev then orchestrated his own election as president in October with 99 per cent of the vote. As president, Aliyev skilfully exchanged Soviet for nationalist symbols, consolidated control over internal politics and successfully wooed Western powers with contracts for exploitation of Azerbaijan's oil wealth. He entrenched family members and other loyal figures in key posts and established a new party-state in the form of the Yeni Azerbaijan Party (New Azerbaijan Party or YAP), which became the main forum for what approached a personality cult of Aliyev. He was re-elected president in 1998, but from 1999 was dogged by speculation over his health.

Reportedly enjoying a good personal rapport with Armenian President Robert Kocharian, Aliyev successfully reached wide margins of agreement on core issues of contention during face-to-face talks. However, his political style of absolute control within Azerbaijan precluded engagement and mobilization of wider constituencies for peace. Aliyev died in December 2003, having overseen his son Ilham's succession to the presidency.

Ilham Aliyev

Heydar's only son, Ilham (born 1961) was working in Russo-Turkish business when his father assumed power in the newly independent Azerbaijan in 1993. Ilham was subsequently elevated to influential economic posts, becoming the vice-president of the State Oil Company of the Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR) in

May 1994, where he attracted allegations in the Turkish press of concessions made to a Turkish construction group in Baku in recompense for his alleged gambling debts. Ilham's entry into politics began with his election to the Azerbaijan Parliament through the YAP in 1995. Over time he assumed an increasingly visible public persona, assuming a number of high-ranking positions. In December 1999 Ilham became one of YAP's five vice-presidents. He was appointed prime minister in August 2003, and then elected president in the controversial October elections. Compared to his father, Ilham's inexperience and more fragile mandate, in addition to external pressures for democratization, introduced greater room for manoeuvre for political elites. Although this has prompted him to take a more pro-Russian stance on some issues, Ilham has not wavered from his father's pro-Western, pro-market and secularist agenda. Nonetheless Ilham's grip on government faces significant challenges from internal elite rifts, the 'revolutionary' wave sweeping across former Soviet republics and the conspicuous failure to permit a democratic process in the 2005 parliamentary elections.

The Milli Meclis (Azerbaijani parliament)

The 125-member Milli Meclis is a largely formal institution, packed with clienteles loyal to the president. Parliamentary debates are perfunctory, and the role of the Meclis is largely restricted to approving legislation put before it by the presidency. In August 2002 the Meclis's formal powers were further curtailed by a controversial referendum amending some forty articles of the constitution. These changes included the transfer of power to the prime minister (appointed by the president) in case of the president's incapacitation, rather than the parliamentary speaker, and the abolition of the proportional party list system accounting for a fifth of the Meclis's seats. Opposition parties saw these changes as further marginalizing their chances of representation and protested vigorously, but the referendum passed with a 97 per cent approval rating. Elections to the Milli Meclis in November 2005, in which YAP and pro-governmental 'independents' won a crushing majority of seats according to official returns, were widely condemned by international and domestic observers as failing to comply with international standards. The flawed electoral process posed serious questions regarding Ilham Aliyev's ostensible commitment to reform and indeed the stability of his regime as a whole.

Azerbaijani political parties

Formal multiparty politics has flourished in Azerbaijan since independence, yet meaningful representation and pluralism have been strictly curtailed through systematic falsification of election results. Political parties tend to be weakly ideologically differentiated,

subject to fragmentation and dominated by key personalities and their clienteles. Government-opposition divisions expressed in terms of parties are less politically significant than divisions within influential networks and clans, often underpinned by regional and generational identities. Since 1995 the party of government has been the **Yeni Azərbaycan Party** (YAP), established by Heydar Aliyev in 1991.

Clienteles associated with the Nakhichevani network, intersecting with familial ties (many of the president's relatives are to be found in its higher echelons), dominate the party. Reproducing one-party system norms inherited from the Soviet era, employment opportunities in both public and private sectors are tightly linked to membership of YAP, which numbers several hundred thousand. YAP's platform ostensibly stands for privatization, secularism, market reforms and a Western-oriented foreign policy.

Opposition parties in Azerbaijan have traditionally been noted for their fragmentation and mutual animosity. They also face considerable pressure from the state; many have a history of evictions from their offices, harassment, competing with regime-sponsored namesakes, and bringing unsuccessful legal cases against fraudulent election results. First formed in 1988, the **Popular Front of Azerbaijan** (PFA) movement spearheaded demands for reform in the perestroika period. The only force not composed of former *nomenklatura* elites to have governed post-Soviet Azerbaijan, it swept to power in 1992 partially as a result of catastrophes on the battlefield in Nagorno Karabakh, but also due to the popularity of its reformist, pro-democracy and pan-Turkic agenda. The PFA government, headed by President Abulfaz Elchibey, governed for only one turbulent year before falling to an army-led coup in June 1993. The movement was reconfigured as a political party, the Popular Front Party of Azerbaijan (PFPA) in 1995. Since Elchibey's death in 2000, the PFPA has fragmented. The dominant 'reformers' wing is led by Ali Kerimli, recognized inside and outside the PFPA as its leader, who claims to continue Elchibey's vision for the party.

Musavat ('Equality') claims to be the continuation of the original Musavat party founded in 1911 in Baku. The historical Musavat played a key role in the formation of the independent Azerbaijani state in 1918-20 and was subsequently outlawed by the Soviet regime. The modern Musavat party stands for market reforms, social welfare, secularism and a both pro-Western and pro-Turkic orientation. Its leader Isa Gambar served as parliamentary speaker in 1992-93 and briefly as acting president before Abulfaz Elchibey. Musavat is thought to have received some 30 per cent of the vote in the 2000 parliamentary elections, but official returns

granted it just less than the 6 per cent needed to secure representation in the Milli Meclis. Gambar stood for president in 2003 and while he claimed victory, official returns gave him only 14 per cent of the vote.

The **Azerbaijan National Independence Party** (ANIP) is led by former Soviet dissident Etibar Mamedov and offers a nationalist, centre-right agenda. Mamedov was alone among opposition leaders in standing against Heydar Aliyev in the 1998 presidential election. He is noted for his antagonistic relationship with Isa Gambar, to which the failure of the opposition to field single candidates is often attributed.

The **Azerbaijan Democratic Party** (ADP) is led by Rasul Guliev. Appointed parliamentary speaker in 1993, he resigned in 1996, leaving Azerbaijan and energetically criticizing the Aliyev regime from exile in the United States. The regime responded by convicting him in his absence on charges of embezzlement and accusing him of planning a coup. In 2003 his application to contest the presidential election was rejected by the Central Electoral Commission, resulting in clashes between security forces and ADP supporters in Baku.

Resolving their differences to present a united front for the first time, the PFFA, Musavat and ADP together formed the bloc 'Azadlyq' to contest the 2005 parliamentary elections. ANIP allied with former presidential staff member Eldar Namazov to form the Yeni Siyaset (New Politics, or YeS) bloc.

Karabakh Liberation Organization

Formed in 2000, the Karabakh Liberation Organization (KLO) is a vocal critic of international and civic mediation efforts for failing to identify Armenia as the aggressor in the Karabakh conflict. Formally a civic organization but more of a political movement, it has regularly called for the resumption of armed hostilities against Armenia and has been involved in numerous incidents harassing civil society actors engaged in contacts with Armenian counterparts. Headed by Akif Nagi, the extent of membership and autonomy of the organization are unclear. Although at times its activities have brought it into conflict with the authorities, the KLO may also be seen at least in part as providing a domestic foil of radicalism used to demonstrate the Aliyev regime's inability to compromise in formal peace talks. At the same time it undoubtedly expresses popular sentiments of humiliation and frustration at the lack of progress in the peace process.

Karabakh Azeris and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

A number of different institutions have been created in the name of the displaced population (IDPs) from Karabakh and adjacent occupied territories, but few of them offer concrete opportunities for political representation. Since 1995 IDPs have been able to vote for the members of parliament representing seven electoral districts created to reflect the seven wholly or partially occupied regions around Karabakh and two further seats for Karabakh itself. However, Karabakh Azeris have no elected community leader: the president appoints the heads of 'executive committees in exile' for Nagorny Karabakh and the seven adjacent occupied regions, figures of undefined role led by the head of the Shusha Executive Committee 'in exile', Nizami Bahmanov. The IDP community at large remains politically marginalized, although the lack of elected representatives for it and the Karabakh Azeri community has been the subject of lobbying by IDP activists.

State Oil Company of the Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR)

SOCAR is the key national actor in the exploitation of Azerbaijan's Caspian oil resources, and also has a 10 per cent share of the Azerbaijan International Operating Company (AIOC). SOCAR has until recently been the largest contributor of tax revenue, providing about one third of government revenues, but also the largest debtor due to its provision of significant subsidies, such as discounted fuel to refugees, households and inefficient public sector enterprises, and repaying Iran for energy supplies. Furthermore, until 2003 any profits had to be channelled into the State Oil Fund (SOFAZ). The company's management is tightly knit with the Aliyev family.

State Oil Fund of the Azerbaijan Republic (SOFAZ)

Established by presidential decree in December 1999, SOFAZ is composed of proceeds from hydrocarbon exploitation, and rents and bonuses from foreign firms. It is an independent (and extra-budgetary) legal entity with its own administrative structure; its director is appointed and can be dismissed by the president. The purpose of the fund is to ensure that profits from hydrocarbon exploitation feed into nationwide regeneration. Two major projects financed by SOFAZ to date have been the provision of housing and other basic goods to the refugee and IDP population, and Azerbaijan's share of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline construction. However, the rules for SOFAZ expenditure allocation are ambiguous, and the president has complete control over how the fund is run with no mechanisms in place for external accountability.

Armenia

Levon Ter-Petrosian

The first president of independent Armenia, Ter-Petrosian was born in Syria in 1945; the family migrated to Armenia one year later. His political activity began in the 1960s, a period associated with nationalist demonstrations in Yerevan in 1965-67. In 1988 he became a member of the eleven-man 'Karabakh Committee', which led resistance to Soviet rule in Armenia during the perestroika period. In 1989 Ter-Petrosian became leader of the Armenian National Movement and in 1990 chairman of the Armenian Supreme Soviet. He was elected president of Armenia in October 1991.

Ter-Petrosian's presidency was associated with a 'pragmatic' approach to reconciling the demands of the Armenian 'cause' with what he saw as the political realities of Armenian independence. His refusal to make genocide recognition a precondition of diplomatic relations with Turkey brought him into conflict with the Armenian diaspora and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF). This antagonistic relationship with the diaspora was reflected in Ter-Petrosian's belief that diaspora funds were not a substitute for home grown development of the Armenian economy and state. His political legitimacy was compromised by alleged falsifications of the referendum to adopt the constitution in 1995 and the presidential election of September 1996, which he won with 51.7 per cent of the vote. However, his advocacy of a more pragmatic stance on Karabakh led to his political downfall. His own key ministers, led by Prime Minister Robert Kocharian, rebelled against his endorsement of the Minsk Group's 'step-by-step' plan, forcing him to resign in February 1998. Since his resignation Ter-Petrosian has returned to his academic post, although speculation regarding his potential for a comeback is common.

Robert Kocharian

Born in Stepanakert in 1954, Robert Kocharian rose through a range of local party positions until becoming active in the Karabakh movement from 1988. During the war period Kocharian became the Chairman of the State Defence Committee and then prime minister of Nagorny Karabakh. On 24 December 1994 he was elected president of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic by its regional Soviet, confirmed by popular vote in November 1996.

In March 1997 Kocharian was appointed prime minister of Armenia, and became a key figure in the opposition to President Ter-Petrosian's advocacy of compromise on Karabakh. Kocharian argued that the diaspora could

replace foreign investment in developing Armenia's economy, obviating the need for such compromise. Kocharian played a key role in Ter-Petrosian's resignation and succeeded him as president of Armenia in March 1998. Although Kocharian had not yet fulfilled the residency requirements for formal Armenian citizenship, the Central Electoral Commission's reasoning for allowing him to run for president was based on a past Karabakh declaration of unification with Armenia (notwithstanding the more recent declaration of independence). Kocharian's election resulted in a convergence of Yerevan's position with that of Stepanakert after the rifts associated with Ter-Petrosian's presidency. He was re-elected president in a controversial poll in March 2003; protest at alleged falsification resulted in a Constitutional Court ruling that Kocharian should submit to consultative referendum on confidence in his presidency one year later. In April 2004, with the vote of confidence yet to take place, demonstrations were violently dispersed in central Yerevan. Kocharian has remained above party politics, relying instead on his charisma as a 'war hero' and relationships forged with key individuals in the army and 'power' ministries, many of them his appointees and fellow Karabakh Armenians. Serzh Sarkisian, Armenia's Defence Minister and a fellow Karabakh Armenian, is his closest ally.

The Armenian National Assembly

Armenia's Constitution of 1995 provides for a mixed presidential-parliamentary system, in which the president's strength is derived from majority support in parliament. An oppositional majority in the National Assembly can force the president to accept its choice of prime minister (or resign or dissolve parliament), which happened in 1999 when the Republican Party/People's Party of Armenia coalition forced President Kocharian to appoint Vazgen Sarkisian as prime minister. On 27 October 1999, speaker Karen Demirchian, Prime Minister Vazgen Sarkisian and six other high officials were assassinated by gunmen in the National Assembly. Combined with the influx of many technocrats rather than experienced legislators at the 1999 elections, the massacre served to weaken parliament in the period that followed. The parliament elected in 2003 again reflected the influence of business in Armenian politics.

Armenian political parties

Armenia's multiparty system shares common post-Soviet features, including personality-based parties, fragmentation and transience. Unlike Azerbaijan, however, there has been no consistently dominant party since independence and diaspora support also lends some parties greater ideological and financial consistency. The **Armenian National Movement**

(ANM) developed out of the original Karabakh Committee, essentially diversifying the Committee's single-issue agenda into a multidimensional programme for political and economic regeneration. The ANM formed a winning coalition for the 1990 elections to the Armenian Supreme Soviet, wresting control from the Communist Party of Armenia. As the party of government, the ANM became closely associated with Ter-Petrosian's stance of advocacy for compromise on Karabakh. While retaining a substantial membership and experienced leaders, the ANM has yet to recover from Ter-Petrosian's resignation.

A number of other parties emerged in the early 1990s, including the **National Democratic Union**, the **Republican Party of Armenia** (RPA), the **People's Party of Armenia** (PPA), and **Orinats Yerkir** ('Country of Law'). Composed mainly of former *nomenklatura* elites, the RPA allied with the PPA to contest and win the 1999 parliamentary elections. The PPA was then devastated by the assassination of its leader in the October 1999 parliament shootings. The PPA contested the 2003 parliamentary election as part of Stepan Demirchian's 'Justice' bloc of nine parties, but it was its former partner the RPA that received the largest number of votes in the 2003 parliamentary elections. It formed a government in coalition with the ARF and Orinats Yerkir.

A number of Armenian political parties, historically formed in various diaspora locations, continue to have a strong diaspora following but are also active in Armenian politics. These include the **Social Democratic Hnchakian Party** (or Hnchaks) and the **Armenian Democratic Liberal Party** (or Ramkavars). The principal 'diaspora party' is the **Armenian Revolutionary Federation** (ARF or Dashnaktsutun, Dashnak/Tashnag party), which was historically aimed at securing political and economic rights for the Armenian population in the Ottoman Empire and was re-introduced into Armenia in 1988. International recognition of the 1915 massacres as a genocide became the key aspect of the ARF's ideology. This brought it into conflict with President Levon Ter-Petrosian's decision not to make genocide recognition a pre-condition of opening diplomatic relations with Turkey. In December 1994 Ter-Petrosian banned the ARF in Armenia on the grounds that foreign (i.e. diaspora) control of political parties was illegal, a charge upheld by the Supreme Court (a second charge of terrorist activity was not). The ban was lifted by Robert Kocharian, for whom the range and solidity of the ARF's networks constitute a major asset. The ARF entered the ruling coalition in 2003; it is also active in Nagorny Karabakh.

The Armenian diaspora

Geographically scattered centres of Armenian settlement outside of Armenia have long been a feature of Armenian history. However, the large majority of the diaspora is formed by survivors of the massacres of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire in 1915-17 and their descendents. International recognition of these mass killings as a genocide has subsequently formed the key pillar of diaspora identity and activities. The Armenian diaspora has significant centres in the United States, Western Europe, the Arab Middle East and beyond. In the United States opportunities for lobbying in Washington have made a formidable weapon of the sizeable American Armenian population. Notably, Armenian lobbyists in Washington were able to curtail US aid to Azerbaijan in 1992 by excluding it from the Freedom Support Act providing aid to post-Soviet states. However this exclusion, known as Section 907, has been waived every year since 2002 by President George W. Bush.

Veterans' organizations

Founded by future Prime Minister Vazgen Sarkisian, **Yerkrapah** ('homeland defenders', also known as the Union of the Volunteers of the Karabakh War in Armenia) is a veterans' organization established in 1993. Referring to its members as *azatamaratik* ('freedom fighters') Yerkrapah is a public organization addressing the needs of veterans and bereaved families. Although formally non-partisan and non-political, Yerkrapah has wielded significant influence in criticizing concessionary policies towards Azerbaijan. Ter-Petrosian's 1997 advocacy of compromise on Karabakh induced Yerkrapah to vote against the president, causing him to lose a supportive majority in parliament. Sarkisian integrated into the RPA in 1999, whose coalition subsequently won the 1999 parliamentary election.

Nagorny Karabakh

Arkady Ghukasian

Born in Stepanakert in 1957, Ghukasian joined the Karabakh Movement in 1988. He was imprisoned in 1990 for writing articles condemning the organizers of the anti-Armenian pogroms in Baku. In 1992 he was elected a member of parliament in Nagorny Karabakh and appointed advisor on political issues to the chairman of the Nagorny Karabakh State Committee for Defence. From July 1993 Ghukasian became the foreign minister of the *de facto* Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (NKR), and in the extraordinary presidential elections of September 1997 was elected president. In 2000 an unsuccessful assassination attempt was made on his life, attributed to the former wartime commander and

Minister of Defence Samvel Babayan; Babayan was arrested and imprisoned until 2004. Ghukasian was re-elected president in August 2002 with 89 per cent the vote.

***De facto* power structures in Nagorny Karabakh**

Nagorny Karabakh to date has not adopted a constitution but adheres to a presidential model of government. The president appoints ministers without parliamentary approval on the prime minister's recommendations. The *de facto* National Assembly in Karabakh, composed of 33 seats, is dominated by the pro-regime parties winning the 2005 parliamentary election. These are the **Democratic Party of Artsakh (DPA) and Free Homeland**, parties composed of former *nomenklatura* elites and local business interests. The DPA has been the ruling party since 2000. These parties have been challenged by a number of small reformist parties generally led by civil society activists: **Movement-88, Moral Revival** and the **Social Justice Party**. Movement-88 achieved a striking success in 2004 when its leader Eduard Agabekian was elected mayor of Stepanakert. In addition there are local chapters of parties active in Armenia, including the ARF.

The **Nagorno-Karabakh Defence Army** is a major force, though since the arrest of then commander-in-chief Samvel Babayan, its political role has declined. The *de facto* authorities claim the army comprises some 20,000 soldiers (independent analysts put the figure at 18,500). A large number, possibly a majority, of these are from Armenia. Although substantial input from Armenia in terms of training, equipment and contract personnel is acknowledged in Karabakh, Armenian military presence in Karabakh and the occupied territories is denied.

International actors

Russia

Russia's role in the post-Soviet Caucasus has been complicated and often contradictory, as it has sought to retain influence and power in the territories controlled by Moscow during the Soviet era, while also seeking stability along its southern borders. Russia has sought to dominate the mediation process as a proxy for regional domination, while at times simultaneously undermining it by engaging in separate diplomatic efforts. During the war Russian support, in the form of arms, spare parts and fuel shipments, mainly favoured Armenia, although assistance to Azerbaijan was not unknown. In 1994, under the auspices of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Russia brokered the ceasefire; its subsequent efforts at

mediation were blocked by Azerbaijan and the CSCE Minsk Group (of which Russia was also a member). Russia then became co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group in 1995, and since 1997 has co-chaired with France and the US.

Russia's ambivalent position reflects its regional interests. Since the formation of the CIS in 1991 Russia's policies have aimed at reintegration of its formerly Soviet neighbours through military basing agreements, deployment of border guards to defend common borders of CIS countries and domination of key sectors of CIS states' economies. While secessionist conflicts in Azerbaijan and Georgia have weakened their capacity to resist Russian influence, Russia itself faces security concerns deriving from its conflict in Chechnya since the mid-1990s. Regardless of its actual policies vis-à-vis *de facto* states in the region, Russia thus shares a commitment to the principle of territorial integrity.

Armenia has long had a 'special relationship' with Russia as both an economic partner and a security guarantor in its difficult relationship with Turkey. Armenia's economic dependence on Russia ranges from remittances from Armenians in Russia to Russia's control and supply of energy resources, although recently Armenia has looked to cooperation with Iran to relieve this situation. Russia has three military bases and 2,500 troops in Armenia, a presence assured for 25 years by a 1995 treaty, while a 1997 friendship treaty provides for mutual assistance in the event of a military threat to either country. More recently, however, new difficulties have arisen in Russian relations with Armenia, stemming in part from domestic resistance in Armenia to substantial Russian-owned shares in the country's infrastructure.

Russia's relations with Azerbaijan were strained by President Elchibey's pro-Western, pan-Turkic programme in 1992-93. Heydar Aliyev initially smoothed relations by taking Azerbaijan into the CIS, but Azerbaijan's commitment to CIS structures has always been lukewarm. As Baku looked more towards NATO, Azerbaijan did not renew its membership of the CIS Collective Security Treaty in 1999. Azerbaijan successfully courted Western interests to secure an oil pipeline route sidelining Russia, although Russian firm LUKOIL is a member of the Azerbaijan International Operating Company. Russia bowed to the inevitable in 2002 and dropped its resistance to the BTC pipeline and resolved its dispute with Azerbaijan over the division of the Caspian Sea. With regard to the Karabakh peace process, however, Russia's intentions are still viewed with suspicion in Azerbaijan.

United States

Since 1997 the United States has co-chaired the Minsk Group, at the same time as the South Caucasus has become increasingly important to US interests. American stances on the Karabakh conflict have been shaped by the presence of influential Armenian-American lobbies in the United States, desires to support democracy in the region and countervailing strategic and security interests deriving from Caspian oil and the 'war on terror' respectively. Given the priority of diversifying global energy supply away from the Middle East, it is the latter that ultimately underpins US policy.

US policy towards Armenia and Azerbaijan has been characterized by an open split between the White House and Congress. In 1992 Congress, influenced by American-Armenian lobbyists, passed the Section 907 amendment to the Freedom Support Act, limiting government-to-government aid to Azerbaijan. However, this approach was subsequently moderated by interest in regional stability in order to access Caspian oil. The BTC pipeline was explicitly intended to reward Turkey for its support of the US in the 1991 Gulf War. In 2002 President George W. Bush secured a waiver for the Section 907 ban (renewed annually since then) in recognition of Baku's support for the 'war on terror', and he has effectively blocked genocide recognition efforts in the United States. Nonetheless, the American-Azerbaijani relationship is moderated by realizations that Azerbaijan's oil potential is not as promising as it seemed in the early 1990s, and by ebbs and flows in Azerbaijan's relations with Russia and Iran. The Azerbaijani government has made it clear it will not have any US military bases on its territory, although some opposition groups have seized the opportunity to agitate in favour of them.

Turkey

Turkey has been closely allied to Azerbaijan in the Karabakh conflict. Sharing cultural affinities and a commitment to secularist modernization, Turkey provides a model for many in Azerbaijan. It provided military supplies to Azerbaijan during the war and maintains an economic blockade on Armenia. Nonetheless, early post-Soviet projections of a renaissance of Turkish influence across Azerbaijan and the Turkic states of Central Asia have proved false. Turkey's influence has been limited by energy dependence on Russia, its own desires for integration with Western structures and its less prominent role within the Minsk process.

Turkey's relations with Armenia have been historically extremely strained by the mass killings of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire in 1915-17, which Armenia

campaigns to have internationally recognized as genocide. Ter-Petrosian's administration did not make genocide recognition a precondition of diplomatic relations with Turkey, but Kocharian (1998-present) has insisted it be a subject of bilateral talks with Ankara. An initiative to improve Turkish-Armenian relations, the Turkish Armenian Reconciliation Commission, was established in July 2001 and concluded in April 2004; a number of informal cycles of meetings also take place between diplomats and scholars on each side. Nonetheless, while disappointing Azerbaijani expectations of greater support, Turkey has maintained its blockade of Armenia and provided strategic partnership for Azerbaijan through the BTC pipeline.

Iran

While Iran formally supports the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, geopolitical concerns and historically friendly relations with Armenia have shaped a generally more pro-Armenian stance in the Karabakh conflict. This is conditioned by wariness of irredentism among Iran's own Azeri population (estimated at a quarter of the population), concentrated in the regions bordering Azerbaijan. Iran has not been an actor in the Armenian-Azerbaijani peace process since mediation efforts in early 1992, when it secured a brief ceasefire while working in parallel to the Russian initiatives. Not a member of the OSCE, it has been excluded from the Minsk process, although the Minsk co-chairs and the US State Department have recognized Iran's legitimate interest in remaining briefed on this process.

Iranian trade with Armenia was crucial to the latter's survival during the war. More recently, Iran and Armenia signed an agreement in 2004 to construct a pipeline that would carry natural gas from Iran to Armenia, with substantial financing from Tehran, reducing Armenia's dependence on Russia for energy supplies and bringing Iran closer to European markets. Tensions with Azerbaijan, on the other hand, also exist around Caspian energy resources. Under US pressure, Azerbaijan decided against routing the Caspian pipeline by the cheapest route through Iran, but from Baku to Ceyhan in Turkey via Tbilisi instead. In 2001 Iranian-Azeri tensions over disputed Caspian Sea boundaries almost erupted in military exchanges. Recently Iran has made goodwill gestures towards Azerbaijan, including sanctioning the opening of an Azerbaijani consulate in Tabriz, but Azerbaijan will face pressure from the United States to resist rapprochement.

The Azerbaijan International Operating Company / British Petroleum

In 1994 Azerbaijan signed the 'contract of the century', a thirty-year production sharing agreement regarding the exploration and exploitation of three offshore Caspian oil fields. The contract was to be implemented by the Azerbaijan International Operating Company (AIOC), a consortium of ten major international oil companies and the State Oil Company of the Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR). British Petroleum Amoco (BP Amoco) assumed operatorship of AIOC in 1999 and also has the controlling interest in the consortium that operates the BTC oil pipeline linking the Caspian to the Mediterranean. This is the most controversial pipeline in the region, a major American and British-backed venture routed via Georgia and Turkey. BP was initially sceptical about the commercial viability of the BTC option but its position changed after its merger in 1998 with the American Oil Company (Amoco). The BTC Pipeline Company was formed in 2002 to construct, own and operate the pipeline. Construction began in 2002 and the pipeline opened in 2005.

Multilateral actors

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), known as the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) until December 1994, was founded in Helsinki in 1975 with 35 member countries from both NATO and the Soviet bloc. The CSCE assumed responsibility for mediating in the Karabakh conflict in March 1992, shortly after newly independent Armenia and Azerbaijan had become members. It was envisaged that a conference to this end would be convened in Minsk, Belarus. This was pre-empted by the unfolding escalation of the conflict, and to date the conference has never been held. OSCE mediation efforts instead took the form of the Minsk Group, originally a preparatory body for the conference now transformed into the main forum for mediation. The composition of the Minsk Group has changed over time, but has always included Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, Sweden, Turkey, and the USA. The *de facto* authorities in Karabakh were recognized as an 'interested party'. The group's efforts to bring the parties to the conflict closer to an agreement became known as the Minsk Process.

The High-Level Planning Group (HLPG) was formed in December 1994 and located in Vienna to make recommendations on developing a plan for the establishment of a multinational OSCE peacekeeping force. At the same time, co-chairmanship of the Minsk Group was established between Russia and Sweden.

Finland replaced Sweden in 1995, and when Finland stepped down at the end of 1996, the US and France joined Russia in a co-chairing 'Troika'. The Chairman-in-Office is supported by a Personal Representative, supported in turn by five international staff.

The Minsk Group has presented at least four proposals as a framework for talks: the 'package' solution (May-July 1997), the 'step-by-step' proposal (September 1997), the 'common state' proposal (November 1998) and the so-called 'land swap' proposal (2001). The Minsk Group has often been criticized for its lack of success with any of these proposals.

European Union

The European Union (EU) has become more interested in the South Caucasus in recent years. It extended its European Neighbourhood Policy to the South Caucasus in 2004, a policy that allows a significant degree of economic integration and a deepening of political cooperation with the EU. Correspondingly, it has become increasingly interested in playing a role in the peace process. European Commission President Romano Prodi suggested in May 2004 that the bloc could help "speed up the solution" without interfering with the OSCE's mandate. The EU has pursued a strategy of "triangulation" involving Armenia, Azerbaijan and Turkey, an incremental approach that would see Armenia initiating a pullback of its forces from the occupied areas of Azerbaijani territory surrounding Nagorny Karabakh in order to secure an easing of the border closure with Turkey.

Commonwealth of Independent States

The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is a Moscow-led organization of post-Soviet republics formed in 1991, of which Armenia and Azerbaijan are both members. The CIS has played a role in peace talks between the warring parties. In 1993-94 it competed for influence with the CSCE, both organizations seeking to establish their identity and purpose. In 1994 Parliamentary delegations from CIS countries gathered in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, in May, signing a protocol on a ceasefire that has lasted ever since. The Russians accused the Minsk Group of trying to sabotage their initiative, while the Western powers countered that Russia was trying to wreck the formation of a broader-based alternative peace plan. The rivalry receded with Russia's co-chairmanship of the OSCE Minsk Group from 1995, which has made that the main body for mediation and facilitation of the peace process. CIS meetings continue to be a forum for periodic Armenian-Azerbaijani meetings. However, the CIS appears increasingly redundant as an institution that can advance Russia's political and economic agenda in the former Soviet space.

Chronology

Ancient and medieval history

In pre-modern times the territory including today's Karabakh is thought to have been part of the kingdom of the Caucasian Albanians, a now extinct ethnic group that had converted to Christianity in the fourth century and was partially Armenianized. Waves of eleventh century Seljuk invasion contributed to the Islamization of lowland areas in the early mediaeval period, resulting in a mixed population, some sedentary, some nomadic, with a mixed system of rule by Muslim khans and Armenian *meliks* (princes). During the period of early medieval Armenian statehood, the territory was known to Armenians as the province of Artsakh. Overall sovereignty in the early modern period was exercised by the Persian empire (Iran).

Nineteenth century

Karabakh is formally incorporated into the Russian Empire by the Treaty of Gulistan in 1813. In 1868 it becomes part of the Elizavetpol province of the Russian Empire.

1905

Armeno-Azerbaijani violence erupts in the Karabakh town of Shusha.

1915

Large-scale deportations and massacres of Armenians occur in Anatolia (now recognized by several countries as the Armenian Genocide).

1918

As the Russian Empire collapses in the wake of the Bolshevik-led revolution, massacres of Azerbaijanis (in March) and Armenians (in September) take place in Baku, Azerbaijan. Armenia and Azerbaijan each declare their independence on 28 May. The new regimes quarrel over their common borders, especially regarding Nakhichevan, Zangezur and Karabakh.

1920-21

The Azerbaijani army sacks Shusha in March 1920 in response to an Armenian rebellion. On 28 April, the Bolshevik Red Army takes Baku and deposes the Azerbaijani government, then takes Karabakh in May and Armenia in November. On 1 December, Nakhichevan, Zangezur and Karabakh are declared part of Soviet Armenia by the Azerbaijani Communist leader Nariman Narimanov. His statement is soon retracted – whether it had been a ploy to advance the Red Army's progress into Armenia or the result of duress is unclear.

In the ensuing months, Nakhichevan comes under Azerbaijani control and Zangezur under Armenian control, initiating long-term processes in each region

of corresponding demographic homogenization. In July 1921 the Caucasian Bureau of the Russian Communist party (*Kavburo*) resolves to attach Karabakh to Armenia, then almost immediately reverses the decision, attaching it to Azerbaijan with 'wide regional autonomy'.

1922

The Soviet Union is formed; Armenia and Azerbaijan are incorporated together with Georgia as part of the Transcaucasian Federative Republic.

1923

On 7 July the Nagorny Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) is established as an autonomous region within Azerbaijan. Its borders are drawn a month later.

1936

The Transcaucasian Federative Republic is dissolved and Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia become union republics.

1945

The First Secretary of the Armenian Communist party Grigoriy Arutinov writes to Stalin in November asking for Karabakh to be transferred to Armenia.

1948-50

A further period of demographic homogenization takes place in Armenia, as Azerbaijanis are deported and immigrants settle from the diaspora.

1960s

During the 1960s an ongoing affirmation of Armenian national identity coalesces around the themes of the 1915 genocide, national themes in literature and art, and Karabakh. In 1963, a petition protesting against the cultural and economic marginalization of Armenians in Karabakh with 2,500 signatures is sent to Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev.

1977

Karabakh Armenians demonstrate in Karabakh for attachment to Armenia.

1987

A petition for Karabakh's unification with Armenia with tens of thousands of signatures is sent from Karabakh and Armenia to Moscow in August.

In October, former First Secretary of the Azerbaijani Communist Party Heydar Aliyev is removed from the Politburo, and speaking in Paris in November Abel Aganbekian, one of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's advisors, suggests Moscow might view Karabakh's unification with Armenia sympathetically. Demonstrations take place in the Armenian capital

Yerevan protesting the treatment of Armenians in the area north of Karabakh, and intercommunal violence breaks out in Kafan, Armenia, in November.

1988

January

The first forced population movements of the emerging conflict take place as Azerbaijanis flee Kafan.

February

Demonstrations begin in Stepanakert in mid-February, echoed by mass demonstrations in Yerevan, followed by the local Soviet of Peoples' Deputies' resolution requesting transfer to Armenia. Karabakh party leader Boris Kevorkov is removed from his post.

On 27-29 February anti-Armenian pogroms take place in Sumgait, Azerbaijan, killing up to 32 people according to official sources. Almost all of the town's Armenian population leaves.

May-July

The First Secretaries in both republics are replaced in May and a 'war of laws' begins in June: while the Armenian Supreme Soviet affirms the transfer of Karabakh to Armenia, the Azerbaijani Supreme Soviet affirms its status within Azerbaijan. The latter position is confirmed in July by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. Party official Arkady Volsky is sent to the region as the Representative of the Central Committee of the Supreme Soviet.

September-November

Population movements within Karabakh increase as Armenians are driven out of Shusha and Azerbaijanis out of Stepanakert. In September 'special administration' (direct rule from Moscow) is introduced to Karabakh. In November, Azerbaijanis are expelled *en masse* from Armenia, leading to mass demonstrations in Baku.

December

On 7 December Armenia is struck by an earthquake, killing 25,000 people.

The Karabakh Committee, the eleven-man leadership of the Armenian opposition movement, is arrested (they are released six months later without charge).

1989

This year sees a fragmentation of the bodies claiming sovereignty over Karabakh. On 12 January Volsky establishes a Special Administration Committee for Karabakh; in Karabakh, a 79-person National Council is elected in August declaring it will only co-operate with Volsky's committee on its own terms. In September

Azerbaijan's Supreme Soviet passes a declaration of sovereignty over Karabakh, and direct rule nominally returns to Baku in November. In December the Karabakh National Council passes a joint resolution with the Supreme Soviet of Armenia declaring Nagorny Karabakh's unification with the Armenian SSR.

1990

In Azerbaijan's 'Black January', anti-Armenian pogroms take place in Baku on 13-15 January, killing about 90 and forcing virtually all Armenians to flee the city, and a state of emergency is imposed in Karabakh and the border regions. The state of emergency is declared in Baku from midnight of 19-20 January, when Soviet tanks and troops enter and are met by nationalist protestors, resulting in some 150 civilian deaths. Ayaz Mutalibov becomes party leader in Azerbaijan. Second Secretary Viktor Polyanichko goes to Karabakh to set up a new Organizational Committee as Volsky's team departs.

In May the Armenian National Movement is swept to power in elections for the Supreme Soviet of Armenia. The Karabakh Committee's Levon Ter-Petrosian is elected Speaker in August, and on the 23rd a declaration is passed stating Armenia is heading towards independence.

1991

March

On 17 March Azerbaijan takes part in the referendum on the preservation of the Soviet Union. Armenia does not participate in the vote.

April-July

'Operation Ring' begins in April as part of the plan devised in Baku and Moscow to 'disarm illegal armed formations' in Karabakh. Soviet troops, Azeri police and special forces units initiate attacks on Armenian villages surrounding Karabakh to the north. Operation Ring continues through July.

August-September

In the aftermath of an attempted coup against Gorbachev in Moscow, Azerbaijan declares independence on 30 August. Mutalibov is elected president of Azerbaijan on 8 September. Aliyev is elected speaker of the parliament of the Autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan on 3 September.

Karabakh announces its secession from Azerbaijan on 2 September, proclaiming itself the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. Armenia declares independence on 23 September, as a joint Kazakh-Russian peace plan for Karabakh is signed in Zheleznovodsk, Russia.

October-November

Ter-Petrosian is elected president of Armenia. The Zheleznovodsk peace plan is abandoned after an Azerbaijani helicopter carrying high-ranking Azerbaijani, Russian and Kazakh military personnel crashes over Karabakh on 20 November. Azerbaijan's new National Council votes to revoke Nagorny Karabakh's autonomous status and declare it an ordinary province.

December

On 10 December Karabakh Armenians vote in favour of independence in a referendum. The Soviet Union collapses on 31 December.

1992

January

On 6 January Nagorny Karabakh declares itself independent, but is not recognized by any state, including Armenia; Artur Mkrtchian becomes its first leader as Chairman of its Supreme Soviet (but is killed in mysterious circumstances in April). On 30 January Armenia and Azerbaijan are admitted to the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), which assumes responsibility as mediator for the conflict.

February

On 25-26 February hundreds of Azerbaijanis are massacred in the Karabakh village of Khojaly, leading to President Mutalibov's resignation on 6 March.

March

The Minsk Group is formed at a CSCE conference on Karabakh in Minsk.

May

As Ter-Petrosian and acting Azerbaijani leader Yaqub Mamedov meet in Tehran, signing a communiqué on the general principles of a peace agreement, Armenian forces capture Shusha on 8-9 May.

Mutalibov is temporarily restored to power in Azerbaijan by former Communist deputies on 14-15 May, before being forcibly removed. Armenian forces capture Lachin on 18 May, creating a land link between Nagorny Karabakh and Armenia.

June-July

On 7 June the Popular Front's Abulfaz Elchibey is elected president of Azerbaijan. As Minsk Group negotiations open in Rome on 1 June, they are rapidly overtaken by the recapture of Shaumian region by an Azerbaijani offensive on 12 June, followed by Mardakert (renamed Agdere) in northern Karabakh on 4 July.

August

A new State Defence Committee is established as Nagorny Karabakh's executive body, with Robert Kocharian as its head.

October

On 24 October the United States Congress passes Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act prohibiting US government aid to Azerbaijan.

1993

February-April

Against a backdrop of lacklustre military performance, Suret Huseynov is sacked as Azerbaijan's 'special representative' on Karabakh. Between 27 March and 5 April Armenian forces capture Kelbajar (Azerbaijani territory situated between Karabakh and Armenia), which becomes the subject of UN Resolution 822 (30 April) calling for Armenian withdrawal.

June-August

On 4 June Huseynov initiates an uprising in Ganja against President Elchibey. On 15 June Aliyev becomes speaker of the Azerbaijani Parliament, and Elchibey flees the capital three days later. Aliyev is granted extraordinary presidential powers on 24 June, which he uses to appoint Huseynov as prime minister. This political upheaval in Azerbaijan fuels a number of catastrophic military defeats resulting in the fall of Mardakert in June, Aghdam in July, and Fizuli, Jebrail and Gubatly in August. These become the subject of UN Resolution 853 (29 July), calling for Armenian withdrawal.

September-December

In Moscow to seal Azerbaijan's accession to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Aliyev meets Karabakh Armenian leader Kocharian in secret. On 3 October Aliyev is elected president of Azerbaijan, but at the end of the month Armenian forces again capture more territories: the town of Goradiz and the district of Zengelan. UN Resolution 874 (14 October) stipulates a timetable for the withdrawal of Armenian forces from the occupied territories. UN Resolution 884 (12 November) condemns the occupation of Goradiz and Zengelan. The year ends with a renewed Azerbaijani offensive.

1994

January-February

Both Azerbaijani and Armenian forces suffer heavy losses in fierce fighting from late January to mid-February.

May

At talks attended by Armenia, Azerbaijan, Nagorny Karabakh representatives, the CIS (dominated by Russia) and hosts Kyrgyzstan, the *Bishkek Protocol* is signed and a ceasefire begins on 12 May.

September-October

Azerbaijan signs a contract to develop its offshore Azeri-Shirag-Gunashli oil fields with foreign companies on 20 September. Huseynov flees Azerbaijan as the suspected organizer of an alleged failed coup on 3-4 October.

November-December

In the third round of talks since the ceasefire, Azerbaijan makes new demands for the inclusion of Karabakhi Azeris in the process and insists on a CSCE-mediated peace process. At the CSCE summit in Budapest, in which the CSCE becomes the OSCE, Russia and Sweden become co-chairs of the Minsk Group. The High Level Planning Group of the OSCE is formed 20 December. Robert Kocharian is voted *de facto* president of Nagorny Karabakh by parliament on 22 December.

1995

March

A coup attempt led by Deputy Minister of the Interior Colonel Rovshan Javadov fails in Baku 13-17 March.

April

Finland replaces Sweden as co-chair of the Minsk Group.

May-June

A new round of negotiations in Moscow in mid-May fails, with Azerbaijan insisting that representatives of both Armenian and Azerbaijani communities from Nagorny Karabakh be included as armed – but not political – actors.

1996

January-March

Talks in Moscow fail to make substantial progress, as the sides reject new proposals by the OSCE, Russia and the US.

September

Ter-Petrosian wins the disputed Armenian presidential elections with 51 per cent of the vote on 23 September. A state of emergency is declared after election protests.

November

Kocharian is elected *de facto* president of Nagorny Karabakh by popular vote on the 24th.

December

At the OSCE's Lisbon Summit, the chair-in-office issues a statement on the principles of resolution that support Azerbaijan's territorial integrity. Armenia prevents them being part of the final communiqué: they are instead included as an annex, with Armenia's response recorded in a second annex.

1997

January-February

On 1 January France succeeds Finland as co-chair of the Minsk Group. In response to Azerbaijani displeasure, the US is admitted as a third co-chair on 14 February.

March

Kocharian becomes prime minister of Armenia.

May

The Minsk Group presents a new peace proposal.

June-July

Minsk co-chairs discuss the latest proposals with leaders in Armenia and Azerbaijan, who eventually accept the proposal in principle as a basis for peace, Armenia with "serious reservations". A modified 'package' proposal is worked on by Minsk Group co-chairs after meetings with Aliyev in Baku in July. In late July, Aliyev visits the US, signing treaties on investment with President Bill Clinton. Revealing the confidential peace proposals, Aliyev announces that Azerbaijan would agree to a staged withdrawal from the occupied territories, leaving Lachin under Nagorny Karabakh's control at the first stage.

August

On 25 August Nagorny Karabakh rejects the peace plan submitted in late May.

September

Arkady Ghukasian wins Nagorny Karabakh's presidential elections (condemned by Azerbaijan and Russia). In the wake of the failure of the latest efforts, a modified 'step-by-step' peace proposal is presented by the Minsk Group. Ter-Petrosian endorses the new approach and comments publicly on need for compromise. His move

opens divisions within his own government and sparks a number of opposition demonstrations.

October-November

Armenia and Azerbaijan accept the latest OSCE peace plans as a basis for further negotiations with some reservations. Nagorny Karabakh rejects them, demanding a package approach, citing security concerns with the step-by-step proposal. Ghukasian says a "confederative relationship" with Azerbaijan could be discussed, but not proposals that subordinate the region to Baku.

December

At an OSCE meeting in Copenhagen, no breakthrough is announced and requests by Nagorny Karabakh to be incorporated as a third party are rejected. A step-by-step proposal is discussed and rejected. No new OSCE documents are produced as Armenia blocks a re-iteration of the 1996 Lisbon principles.

1998

January-February

At a meeting of Armenia's National Security Council, powerful figures including Kocharian, Vazgen Sarkisian and Serzh Sarkisian (not related) side against Ter-Petrosian in rejecting the Minsk Group proposal. Ter-Petrosian resigns on 3 February.

March

In Armenian presidential elections, Kocharian wins in the second round in a poll criticized by international observers.

October

Aliyev is re-elected president of Azerbaijan.

November

A Minsk Group 'common state' proposal is rejected by Azerbaijan.

1999

April

Aliyev and Kocharian attend the 50th anniversary summit of NATO in Washington. It is their first meeting since 1993 but is the first of many meetings over the next two years.

May-June

The 'Unity' bloc, consisting of Vazgen Sarkisian's Republican Party and Karen Demirchian's People's Party of Armenia wins parliamentary elections in Armenia in May. Sarkisian is appointed prime minister on 11 June.

October

Aliyev and Kocharian meet on the Nakhichevan-Armenia border. A revival of the so-called 'Goble Plan' for territorial exchange is discussed, provoking resignations among Aliyev's senior officials. It is highly controversial in Armenia as well.

On 27 October gunmen storm a session of the Armenian National Assembly and kill eight high officials comprising the core of the new political elite, including Prime Minister Vazgen Sarkisian and Speaker Karen Demirchian.

December

Prominent wartime commander Samvel Babayan is sacked as chief of the Nagorny Karabakh armed forces. On 29 December President Aliyev issues a decree establishing a state oil fund in Azerbaijan.

2000

March

Ghukasian is seriously wounded in an assassination attempt in Stepanakert; Babayan is arrested in its aftermath.

Armenian Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian admits Armenia's internal troubles following the October massacre have almost "closed down" talks on Nagorny Karabakh.

June

Nagorny Karabakh holds unrecognized parliamentary elections.

September

Kocharian and Aliyev meet at the UN Millennium Summit in New York, reaffirming the importance of the dialogue begun in 1999.

2001

January-March

Azerbaijan and Armenia become full members of the Council of Europe. Aliyev and Kocharian meet in Paris in January and again on 4-5 March. Former OSCE peace plans are leaked to the Armenian and Azerbaijani media in February.

April-July

Peace talks are held in Key West, Florida, which many believe were based on principles established in Paris in March. Despite both presidents' public optimism, over the following weeks the still confidential proposals encounter serious opposition within the Azerbaijani political elite and little encouragement in Armenia.

September-November

Following a slowdown in the peace process since April, Minsk co-chairs visit Yerevan and Baku but are unable to secure sufficient support for an allegedly amended version of the broad agreement discussed at Key West. Contrary to expectations, Aliyev and Kocharian do not meet for one-on-one talks at the CIS Summit on 30 November.

2002

January-March

President George W. Bush of the United States lifts Amendment 907 of the Freedom Support Act restricting American aid to Azerbaijan, in reward for Azerbaijan's cooperation in the 'war on terror'. Minsk co-chairs visit Baku and Yerevan to discuss "new ideas to reinvigorate and energize the peace process."

May-August

Armenian and Azerbaijani Deputy Foreign Ministers meet in Prague in Minsk Group-mediated discussions. On 12 August Ghukasian is re-elected *de facto* president of Nagorny Karabakh. On 24 August a national referendum in Azerbaijan approves significant amendments to the Constitution, including the transfer of power in case of the president's incapacitation to the prime minister and not parliamentary speaker, with a 97 per cent approval rate.

September

Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Vilayat Guliev criticizes the UN Security Council for failing to seek Armenian compliance with its resolutions of 1993.

Construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline begins.

2003

January

The Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, Walter Schwimmer, criticizes President Kocharian for a speech suggesting that Armenians and Azerbaijanis are "ethnically incompatible" and cannot live in the same state.

February

In the first round of voting in the Armenian presidential election, more than 250 opposition activists, supporters and observers are detained.

March

Kocharian is re-elected in the Armenian presidential election run-off with 60 per cent of the vote.

April

The Armenian Constitutional Court rules that the presidential election result should stand, but that government should hold referendum of confidence in Kocharian within one year. Kocharian rejects this. On 21 April Aliyev collapses twice during an official ceremony being broadcast live on television.

May

In parliamentary elections in Armenia, a pro-presidential coalition of the Republican Party, Armenian Revolutionary Federation and Orinats Yerkir parties is elected.

July-August

Defence Ministers Serzh Sarkisian and Safar Abiyev agree on 8 July to ease the tension between the two countries' armed forces after meeting on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border. On 9 July Aliyev is taken to hospital in Turkey; in August he is transferred to Cleveland, USA. On 4 August the Azerbaijani parliament approves Aliyev's son Ilham's appointment as prime minister.

October

In presidential elections in Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev wins in the first round; public disorder and clashes between security forces and protesters ensue. The international community is largely uncritical, with the exception of Norway, although part of the OSCE observer mission dissociates itself from the OSCE Preliminary Statement on the elections as being too mild.

December

The group accused of the October 1999 Armenian parliament shootings is sentenced after a three-year hearing.

Heydar Aliyev's death is announced on 12 December.

2004

January

Ilham Aliyev declares in Paris that Azerbaijan will never accept Karabakh's independence or integration with Armenia. Oskanian dismisses an Azerbaijani offer to lift Armenia's economic blockade in exchange for the return of Armenian-controlled Azerbaijani territories around Nagorny Karabakh.

February

Armenian army officer Lieutenant Guren Markarian, attending a NATO training course in Hungary, is hacked to death with an axe by an Azerbaijani officer.

The European Parliament refuses to back its chief South Caucasus rapporteur Per Gahrton's calls for the return of

Armenian-controlled territories adjacent to Nagorny Karabakh in exchange for the lifting of Azerbaijan's economic blockade of Armenia.

March

The deadline for a referendum of confidence in Kocharian approaches and passes amid rising opposition.

April

The opposition protests in Yerevan against Kocharian and the failure to hold a referendum. Demonstrators are dispersed by force during the night of 13 April, and party offices of Republican Party, National Unity Party and People's Party are raided.

Beginning a regular cycle of meetings known as the 'Prague Process', new Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets his Armenian counterpart Oskanian in Prague on 16 April.

May

The European Union announces intentions to increase its role in the South Caucasus, incorporating Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia within its 'European Neighbourhood Policy'.

July

In a press conference in Yerevan, the Minsk Group mediators announce they will not bring any new proposals for the conflicting sides, saying that Armenia and Azerbaijan bear the responsibility for reaching agreements and settlement.

August

In unrecognized local elections in Nagorny Karabakh the opposition Movement-88 party scores a major success by winning the vote for the Stepanakert mayoralty.

September

The eleventh anniversary of the ceasefire is met with a worsening situation on the line of contact, as each side accuses the other of violations. Presidents Aliyev, Kocharian and Putin meet in Astana, Kazakhstan, on 15 September. They reportedly moot a new idea – Armenian withdrawal from the occupied districts in return for two referenda: one in Karabakh and one in Azerbaijan as a whole. NATO cancels planned manoeuvres in Azerbaijan when Armenian military personnel are refused visas.

Babayan is released from jail and granted a partial amnesty.

October-November

The Council of Europe's PACE adopts a resolution critical of Armenia's democratic record. Azerbaijan urges the United Nations General Assembly to acknowledge Armenian settlement of the occupied territories.

December

The Armenian Revolutionary Federation withdraws its support from President Ghukasian in protest against the sacking of its only cabinet minister, Armen Sarkisian.

2005

January

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopts a resolution criticizing Armenian occupation of Azerbaijani territory and containing references to ethnic cleansing.

February

OSCE officials make their first inspection of Armenian-controlled Azerbaijani territories. They conclude that there is no significant involvement of Armenia in ongoing settlement processes in the occupied territories, while they observe some direct involvement of the Nagorny Karabakh authorities, above all in Lachin and a limited area east of Mardakert.

April

Oskanian and Mammadyarov meet separately with the Minsk Group co-chairs in London.

Ceasefire violations along the line of contact escalate.

May

Presidents Aliyev and Kocharian meet at the Council of Europe summit in Warsaw, reportedly discussing Armenian withdrawal from the occupied territories and approving further meetings between the foreign ministers.

The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline is opened in Baku.

June

Oskanian and Mammadyarov meet in Paris. Oskanian tells the media that "common ground is in sight". On 14 June a statement issued by the Azerbaijani Ministry of Foreign Affairs supports international calls for intercommunal contacts between Karabakh Armenians and Karabakh Azeris.

Political parties loyal to President Ghukasian win a surprise landslide victory in Nagorny Karabakh's parliamentary elections, winning nearly two-thirds of the vote.

July

Anonymous Armenian sources suggest that agreement with Azerbaijan on the possible use of a referendum to determine Karabakh's future status is close. The Azerbaijani Ministry of Foreign Affairs quickly denies this.

August

Azerbaijan's military prosecutor reopens a criminal investigation of the killings at Khojaly in 1992.

Amid rising tensions surrounding the forthcoming parliamentary elections Azerbaijan's Prosecutor-General arrests a youth movement leader on charges of attempting a coup and taking money from Armenian security forces to do so.

Kocharian and Aliyev meet in Kazan on 27 August, but despite calling the meeting positive no further details are divulged. Speculation surrounds reports of new approaches being discussed by Oskanian and Mammadyarov, allegedly comprising a combined 'package' and 'step-by-step' approach to the withdrawal of Armenian forces from the occupied territories and the future use of a referendum to determine Karabakh's status.

November

Despite numerous commitments on the part of President Aliyev to an improved electoral process, parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan are widely criticized. YAP and pro-regime 'Independence' dominate the new Milli Meclis. While the ensuing protests appear to pose no immediate threat to the regime, Aliyev's longer term credibility sustains damage.

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- BakuToday.net: <http://www.bakutoday.net>
- EurasiaNet: <http://www.eurasianet.org>
- Institute for War and Peace Reporting: <http://www.iwpr.net>
- Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty: <http://www.rferl.org>

Peacebuilding websites

- Consortium Initiative: <http://www.consortium-initiative.org>
- South Caucasus Parliamentary Initiative: <http://www.scpi.org.ge>



Abkhaz and Georgian journalists filming their documentary 'Hoping for Peace', which explores the lives of people in the Gal/i region.

conciliation resources

Conciliation Resources (CR) supports people working to prevent violence, promote justice and transform conflict into opportunities for development.

CR's organizational goals are to:

- Support people working at local, national and international levels in developing innovative solutions to social, economic and political problems related to violent conflicts
- Provide opportunities for inclusive dialogue and improved relationships within communities and across conflict divides at all social and political levels
- Influence governments and other decision makers to employ conflict transformation policies that promote alternatives to violence
- Improve peacemaking practice and policies by promoting learning from peace processes around the world
- Strengthen the media's capacities in divided societies to challenge stereotypes and increase public awareness of human rights, conflict and peace issues

In addition to the Accord programme, CR has recently worked with:

- Civic groups in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia
- Kacoke Madit and its partners in northern Uganda
- Non-governmental organizations and officials in the Caucasus
- The Citizens' Constitutional Forum in Fiji

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The Accord series

Accord: an international review of peace initiatives is published by Conciliation Resources (CR). It provides detailed narrative and analysis on specific war and peace processes in an accessible format. The series is intended to provide a practical resource for reflection for all those engaged in peacemaking activities.



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public participation in peacemaking**

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The first thematic publication documents mechanisms for public participation in peacemaking. It features extended studies looking at how people were enabled to participate in political processes in Guatemala, Mali and South Africa. It also contains shorter pieces from Colombia, Northern Ireland and the Philippines.



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This issue provides an overview of more than 25 years of peace initiatives with Colombia's guerrilla and paramilitary groups. It includes analysis of civil society efforts at local, regional and national levels and identifies the necessary elements of a new model of conflict resolution.



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While a meaningful peace process in Northern Uganda remains elusive, this issue documents significant peacemaking initiatives undertaken by internal and external actors and analyses their impact on the dynamics of the conflict and attempts to find peace.



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The Luena Memorandum of 2002 brought an end to Angola's 27-year civil war. This issue reviews Angola's history of peacemaking efforts, and analyses the challenges remaining if the absence of violence is to develop into a sustainable and just peace.



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Accord 12 documents efforts leading to the Bougainville Peace Agreement of 2001. The issue describes an indigenous process that drew on the strengths of Melanesian traditions, as well as innovative roles played by international third-parties.



**Choosing to engage:
armed groups and peace processes**

Issue 16 | 2005

Non-state armed groups, key actors in many internal armed conflicts, have participated in peace processes across the world. This issue draws on these experiences to explore the case for engaging with armed groups, and the different options, roles and challenges for such engagement.

Future issues

The government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement signed a *Comprehensive Peace Agreement* (CPA) in January 2005, yet Sudan continues to be afflicted by violent conflict, especially in Darfur. This Accord issue will document the peace process that led to the signing of the CPA, identifying the challenges that remain for north-south relations and analysing implications for the resolution of Sudan's other conflicts. The issue will also address non-official and civil society initiatives, international roles and the scope for more inclusive peacemaking

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The limits of leadership: elites and societies in the Nagorny Karabakh peace process

Since the ceasefire of 1994, the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia over the region of Nagorny Karabakh has remained firmly deadlocked. An internationally-sponsored peace process based on closed talks between Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders has yielded several proposals but no significant agreement. Rather than preparing populations for possible compromises, leaders in the region have long sought to bolster their domestic ratings with hardline stances. Their zero-sum approaches to the competing principles of territorial integrity and self-determination make renewed violence as likely as a peaceful resolution.

With insufficient space in either society for the articulation of constructive solutions or the identification of common ground, *The limits of leadership: elites and societies in the Nagorny Karabakh peace process* highlights the obstacles to a sustainable agreement. In particular, it explores the central challenge of bridging the gap between potential for agreement at the negotiating table and popular resistance to the compromises this entails.

With distrust in the present process so widespread, could a more inclusive and multi-faceted approach address the dynamics of polarization and provide greater chances of reaching a solution acceptable to all?

Featuring contributors from diverse constituencies, this issue of Accord presents perspectives on the peace process and analysis of the impacts of the conflict. It explores the roles of civil society and the media, the economics of war and peace, and the challenges for further democratization. It also contains key texts and agreements, profiles of key actors and a chronology of the peace process.

Conciliation Resources and the Accord programme

Conciliation Resources (CR) is an international non-governmental organization which supports people working to prevent violence, promote justice and transform armed conflict. CR's Accord programme aims to inform and strengthen peace processes, providing a unique resource on conflict and peacemaking. Working collaboratively with locally based organizations, we document peace processes, increase understanding and promote learning from past and comparable peacemaking experiences.

"[Accord materials]...serve as valuable inputs and ready references for our peace officers as we come up with more creative ways in promoting peace and development on our side of the world."

Rene V. Sarmiento, Presidential Adviser
on the Peace Process, Philippines

"...the series is of utmost importance for me. It provides a very good reference source for empirical research."

Hans J. Giessman, Institute for Peace Research
and Security Policy, University of Hamburg